

Colleagues

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GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Grand Valley State University has named Anne Mulder, Ph.D., as Interim Dean of The School of Education.

Mulder replaces Robert Hagerty, Ed.D., who served as Dean from 1996 through the 2000-2001 academic year.

Several new tenure track professors have been named to positions, including Jennifer Mahon, Sherie Williams and Roger Wilson in the Education Department and Ellen Schuller and John Shinsky in Graduate Studies. In addition, Diane Hollums, Randy Remenap and Jerry Victor have been named to tenure track positions.

Also new to the staff are visiting professors Russ Barneveld, Don Bruckman, Pam Page, Ron Postma and Julia VanderMolen.



Education graduates celebrate at Spring 2001 Convocation ceremonies.

FALL CONVOCATION SCHEDULED FOR DEC. 7

Convocation for December 2001 Education graduates is scheduled for Dec. 7 at the Kentwood Community Church, located at 1200 60th Street SE in Kentwood.

The ceremony begins at 7 p.m., with reception immediately following.

Distinguished Alumni for The School of Education's 2001 Fall Convocation are Jack Manciu as Administrator of the Year; Sheila Larson as Teacher of the Year, and Lori Tubbergen Zahrt for Outstanding Alumni Achievement.

ON THE COVER: Several new faces are shaping the state of education at Grand Valley State University and the state of Michigan, including a formidable trio at the Fall Education Lecture Series, upper right, consisting of incoming GVSU President Mark A. Murray, School of Education Interim Dean Anne Mulder, Ph.D., and newly appointed State Schools Superintendent Tom Watkins Jr. Author Jane Strosben, upper left, proved to be a prized presenter at the 2001 Celebrate Literacy Conference. Helen Young, lower left, reads with a student at GVSU's Rising Star Camp during the summer.

ANNE MULDER, Ph.D. DEAN'S CORNER



TOGETHER, WE MUST ADAPT TO FACE CHALLENGES AHEAD

First of all, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to serve as Interim Dean of The School of Education at Grand Valley State University. This outstanding institution and this fine school have been remarkable assets to the broad community they serve. I delight in being part of such an enterprise.

In my 30-plus years as an educator, I have witnessed an array of external forces that have produced decided changes in the way that we as educational institutions operate. While those changes may be most evident in the K-12 systems, higher education has been equally challenged. The discussions around these forces and subsequent changes have created a certain amount of discomfort to be sure. How we integrate political and legislative agendas with our institutional mission, how we cope with the shifting and uncertain financial patterns, how we develop and utilize technologies in our academic environments and how we cope with the increased competition for services and support are the realities of our lives as educators.

I would like to suggest another challenge, one that does not emanate from an outside constituency, but rather one that is at the core of the existence within our institutions. It is the traditional culture of the higher education community itself. I believe that overcoming the traditional culture of the university may well be the first challenge we must confront if we are to meet the demands of a 21st century society. I would even go so far as to say that educational organizations who are paralyzed by their own history, tradition, culture and inability to adapt to change may well not survive at all.

In many cases, the governance and management of our organizations have simply eroded around us. We have created what one colleague of mine called "a higher immune system." Peter Drucker wrote "A business actually grows if it sloughs off activities that do not contribute." I cannot help but wonder if we have been open to that within our educational organizations.

Our system of higher education has often-times encouraged inefficiency: burdensome government structures, intra-sector competition, labor unions and -- yes -- even tenure have sometimes stifled the system.

Refocusing on mission, restructuring our organizations, or right-sizing, are imperatives that any healthy organization must undertake and accomplish if it is to survive in the century ahead. And, like it or not, survival is dependent upon economic strength and viability. That strength and viability will not come from increased tuition, federal grants and more money. Our social welfare system has taught us that we cannot solve a condition by just throwing more money at the problem. Solutions will come with serious attention to mission and a

new approach to management that may be far different than what we have traditionally experienced. For example, we may see increased privatization of services within the educational arena and within our institutions as well. We will certainly see new collaborations between colleges and universities, educating entities, other agencies and the institutions themselves. We will most assuredly see the advance of technology in our delivery, be influenced by the corporate sector by the global economy and we will be expected to be more responsive to the society from which we derive our fiscal and human capital.

In his book, "The Wealth and Poverty of Nations," historian David Landes explores what he calls the "gospel openness" to new ideas -- meaning a willingness to adopt best practices from other places, groups and organizations -- whatever the injury to established interests. He is essentially talking about what is called "new growth" theory based upon the rapid developments in technical economics. He relates the story of a Spanish physician in the late 1600s, who lamented that his colleagues would not discard the long-standing Galenist doctrine in favor of Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. He wrote "It is if we were always the last to learn of new knowledge."

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I sometimes fear that our educational institutions, supposedly the repository of knowledge, are the last to adapt to new knowledge to our own environment. If change is to occur, I suggest that we must be about the business of changing the culture itself. We must not be afraid to question if we ourselves have created a disconnect from the broader world of which we are most assuredly a part. I would also suggest that we must become reactors in a new design that can reform the higher education community itself.

It is my hope that in the year ahead, we can engage in thoughtful discourse about our role in such a change process. I welcome your comments.

(Anne Mulder, Ph.D., is the Interim Dean of the School of Education. She may be accessed via e-mail at muldera@gvsu.edu)