

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Annie Bélanger
Dean of University Libraries

Dear Colleagues,

As a new Dean and a newcomer to Grand Valley State University, I am grateful every day for the commitment to the student experience and the belief in quality education for our students. I see this commitment across the campus and in abundance within the Library faculty and staff who always ask “how will this benefit our users, our students?” before they act. It is this core belief and value in students that attracted me to Grand Valley State University, and I have not been disappointed!

In conversations since my arrival, University Libraries are praised for their service-orientation and spaces geared to emerging learning needs. The Libraries attest that it is not the buildings, but what is done within them that has a lasting impact on students. By offering spaces where students can learn to be emerging scholars and spaces for reflection, the library offers Laker the opportunity to engage in shared community.

Through our deliberate and intentional hiring of student employees, engagement in student research projects, and provision of peer-to-peer support, we strive to support the lifelong success of the next generation of active citizens armed with the necessary skills to find and evaluate information for civic engagement.

It can be said that libraries are the place where it is quiet enough to hear yourself become who you will be and at times loud enough to know you are not alone in this journey. And our Libraries seek to support our students and scholars as they discover the roads they wish to travel. Libraries offer this support through space, community, and services that advance the creation and preservation of knowledge. Additionally, we offer this support through significant student employment.

Student employees are an integral part of our workforce. Interwoven with our staff, they serve as the daily face of University Libraries in roles ranging from service delivery to peer-to-peer consultants as well as technical support. In all student positions, we strive to provide skills that will translate in their future employment.

As we move forward, our student-centered commitment and desire to advance student retention will create new high impact work opportunities for student employees. This might range from short-term project opportunities for existing student employees to the creation of strategic positions with a low barrier to entry, furthering our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

In the year ahead, University Libraries will be developing inclusive hiring for student employees, engaging with them to learn what they value in their roles and what opportunities they wish for. We will be reflecting on the pathways we can create through student positions.

And so, it is with the pride of becoming a Laker that I invite you to enjoy this issue focused on our wonderful and talented student employees throughout University Libraries.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'ABelanger', written in a cursive style.