

2023

GVSU Press Releases, 2023

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For Immediate Release

January 10, 2023

Contact: Chris Knape, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

*MEDIA NOTE: Audio commentary clips and a transcript of those clips are available [via our Dropbox](http://gvsu.edu/s/2cv).
<http://gvsu.edu/s/2cv>*

GVSU report: Key manufacturing indicators end year on down note

Employment index remains bright spot in final 2022 survey of purchasing managers

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- Three key indices in a closely watched survey of West Michigan purchasing managers turned sharply negative in December, closing out 2022 on a decidedly downward trend that aligns with national economic surveys.

Survey leader Brian Long, director of supply management research at Grand Valley's Seidman College of Business, said he expects the National Bureau of Economic Research and other economists to declare a "mild recession" over the next few months. In previous months, Long indicated West Michigan is already in a mild recession by some measures.

The Current Business Trends survey showed its purchasing index reaching a 30-month low as reports on new orders and production also slid.

Long said he isn't worried about an economic meltdown.

"I've called previous reports flat or modestly negative, but this report is significantly negative," he said. "That said, I still don't expect to collapse like we had at the onset of the Great Recession or the recent pandemic recession."

The same survey's employment index, though sliding lower, remained in positive territory, indicating a reticence to layoff or furlough employees that manufacturers have struggled to attract, Long said.

"Despite all the talk about a possible recession, it appears that some firms are continuing to backfill some of their open positions, and others are just plain reluctant to begin laying off any part of a workforce that they've worked so hard to build over the last two years of tight labor markets," he said.

Office furniture orders remain soft as employers continue to retrench and assess their office needs, Long said.

But the survey showed automotive suppliers are still showing fairly healthy orders as they work through a backlog of orders and supply chains are finally showing signs of returning to pre-pandemic normalcy.

Here's a look at the year-end key index results from December's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

- New orders index (business improvement): -24 versus -2 in November
- Production index (aka "output"): -10 versus +7 in November
- Employment index: +14 versus +20 in November
- Lead times index: -14 versus -5 in November

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys [are available on the Seidman College of Business website](#).

For Immediate Release

January 9, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

MEDIA NOTE: Photos of keynote speakers are available to download: <http://gvsu.edu/s/2c4>

Slate of GVSU events planned to commemorate legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

ALLENDALE, Mich. — Grand Valley State University will commemorate the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with presentations from three keynote speakers, a silent march on campus and a day of service.

Events will run January 16-21. They are free and open to the public; some require online registration. The week's events are outlined below, for details, visit gvsu.edu/mlk.

This marks the second year Grand Valley will close on the King federal holiday, January 16, giving students, faculty and staff members an opportunity to attend community events.

GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said she hopes the campus community continues to find King's legacy relevant to today's issues.

"As we pause to reflect on Dr. King's life and the indelible impact he had on history, I hope our students and community members continue to take up the charge for educational access and social justice," Mantella said. "It can be a daunting task, but let's remember what Dr. King himself said, 'If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.'"

The theme for GVSU's commemoration week is #RaceAndDemocracy.

Jan. 16: 37th Annual Community Commemoration, with keynote presentation from Eddie Glaude Jr., 6 p.m., Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St. NE, Grand Rapids.

Glaude is professor and chair of African American Studies at Princeton University. A prolific political commentator, Glaude is a regular MSNBC and Meet the Press contributor. He has written many books, including "Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul" and "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own." This event is a collaboration among Davenport University, Grand Rapids Community College and GVSU, with support from local sponsors.

Jan. 17: Eddie Glaude Jr. will give an in-person presentation on the Allendale Campus, Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room, at 10 a.m. This event will also be shared via a Zoom webinar; visit gvsu.edu/mlk for the link.

Jan. 18: Silent march on the Allendale Campus will begin at 4 p.m. at Zumberge Hall. It will be led by GVSU alumnus Jerry Wallace, who will then give a presentation at the Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room, at 4:30 p.m. Wallace is the president of Danville Community College in Virginia. He graduated from GVSU in 2009 and played basketball and ran track for the Lakers. Wallace, a native of Muskegon, earned a master's degree from Western Michigan University and a doctoral degree from St. Thomas University.

This event will also be shared via a Zoom webinar; visit gvsu.edu/mlk for the link.

Jan. 19: The Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies and the Division of Inclusion and Equity present a keynote presentation by Mary Frances Berry, professor of American social thought and history at the University of Pennsylvania. Berry will discuss, "Race, Protest, & Politics: Where Do We Go From Here?" at 6 p.m. at the DeVos Center on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus. For more than 40 years, Berry has been an activist for civil rights, gender equality and social justice. As chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Berry led the charge for equal rights and liberties for all Americans during four presidential administrations.

This event will also be a Zoom webinar; visit gvsu.edu/mlk for the webinar link.

Jan. 21: MLK Jr. Day of Service and Solidarity, presented in collaboration with GVSU's Talking Together initiative. Students and the public will engage in community service followed by lunch and an intergenerational panel discussion. Buses are available to transport students to Grand Rapids. Register online by Jan. 18 at gvsu.edu/service.

For Immediate Release

December 8, 2022

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Grand Valley receives NCAA award for diversity, inclusion

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- The NCAA has announced that the Grand Valley State University Athletics Department is the [2023 recipient of the NCAA and Minority Opportunities Athletic Association Award for Diversity and Inclusion](#).

The selection committee, composed of MOAA members, the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics, cited Grand Valley's work with its Laker Inclusion Team, [the SEA of Change initiative](#), commemorating the [50th anniversary of Title IX](#) and Black History Month celebrations.

Since 2013, the NCAA and the MOAA recognize a university or conference which embraces and enacts policies and practices of diversity and inclusion across intercollegiate athletics.

"The dedication and contributions highlighted in Grand Valley State University's nomination powerfully illustrated the intentional, strategic and consistent efforts that are designed to foster an inclusive campus environment for student athletes, coaches and administrators," said Felicia Martin, senior vice president of Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement at the NCAA.

The Laker Inclusion Team was created to initiate meaningful and measurable action that enhances diversity, equity and inclusion within the athletics department and campus community.

One of the team's initiatives — SEA (Supporting, Elevating, Activating) of Change — fosters engagement, communication and understanding among student athletes. This year's workshops covered issues related to social action in college athletics, the LGBT community and understanding the Black student experience.

Subsequently, input from student athletes helped to develop the Waves of Change program, which continues conversations initiated through SEA of Change and focused on topics like social justice, voting and mental health.

"This award is a testament to the difficult work that Laker Athletics has committed to," said Grand Valley President Philomena V. Mantella. "This work not only supports our commitments in [Reach Higher 2025](#), but it shows our current and future student athletes that we are committed to their success. This work far extends past our athletes and ultimately helps support our diversity and inclusion work for all students and our campus."

Grand Valley will be honored on January 13 in San Antonio, Texas, during the Saluting Excellence Luncheon at the 2023 NCAA Convention.

Previous recipients of the award include: Northern Illinois University (2022); Towson University (2021); University of Oregon (2020); University of Wisconsin, River Falls (2019); State University of New York at Buffalo (2018); Bowling Green State University (2017) and Northern Illinois University (2016).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

Health Check report explores impact of pandemic on health systems

Access to care increased, but so did delays in seeking some types of care

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- Data compiled for the annual Health Check: Analyzing Trends in West Michigan report adds weight to the anecdotes and assumptions experts made about how health care was consumed at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[The report](#), released February 3 by Grand Valley State University's Seidman College of Business and Kirkhof College of Nursing, found that while access to health insurance surged – particularly among non-white individuals – during the pandemic, preventative care access saw a sharp downturn.

Among all people, close to 40 percent of individuals delayed care in the United States during the pandemic, the report said.

“It's important because delaying care not only increases morbidity and mortality risk associated with treatable and preventable disease, but it can also contribute to excess deaths directly or indirectly related to the pandemic,” said Erkmen Aslim, assistant professor of economics for the Seidman College of Business and one of the report’s authors.

Aslim noted rollouts of vaccines resulted in a sharp uptick in those seeking preventative care for non-COVID related issues, particularly among underserved populations.

“It seems like vaccination is beneficial for everyone,” he said. “But there are also differential trends here and it tells us that maybe minority groups as well as those with lower socioeconomic backgrounds are benefiting from vaccine rollout more than the other groups. We think that this is an important finding because medical innovations maybe reduce pre-existing disparities moving forward.”

Daniel Montanera, another co-author of Health Check and assistant professor of economics at Seidman, pointed toward lower overall in-patient hospitalization rates, reflecting people's decisions to delay elective care, and hospitals also temporarily limiting access to some treatments as they struggled with the pandemic and staffing issues.

He also noted an unusual uptick in outpatient visits to Grand Rapids hospitals while outpatient visits in other regions decreased during the pandemic.

He theorized Grand Rapids may have become a magnet for people from the Detroit area who could not or would not visit hospitals that were grappling with spikes in COVID-19.

The complete Health Check report and its associated data are available on the [GVSU Health Campus website](#) along with past editions of the report.

Health Check is in its 14th year. The ongoing and consistent analysis of health-related data over time is designed to serve as a tool for informed decision-making processes and policies in government, health care systems, education and business.

The report is compiled using data from insurance providers Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Blue Care Network and Priority Health along with information from the American Hospital Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other sources.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2023

Contact: Mary Eilleen Lyon, GVSU University Communications, lyonme@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

MEDIA NOTE: Courtesy photos of Hall and Padnos may be downloaded from the [GVSU Dropbox](http://gvsu.edu/s/2ep) <http://gvsu.edu/s/2ep>

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer appoints new GVSU Trustees

Business leaders Shelley Padnos and Ronald E. Hall will serve 8-year terms

ALLENDALE, Mich. – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer named Shelley Padnos, a former chair of the board of trustees and long-time university donor, and Ronald E. Hall, a Southeast Michigan business leader and attorney, to the Grand Valley State University Board of Trustees. Padnos and Hall begin their eight-year terms February 2.

Padnos is an attorney and the current executive vice president of PADNOS, a company known for its innovative recycling process. Hall, of Bloomfield Township, is the president and chief executive officer of Bridgewater Interiors LLC, an automotive interiors manufacturing firm located in Detroit.

Before his time at Bridgewater, Hall served as a captain in the U.S. Army and then worked as an associate attorney at Dykema and corporate attorney at Johnson Controls. He serves on several executive boards, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago – Detroit Branch, Corewell Health, the Skillman Foundation, the Detroit Regional Chamber, Business Leaders for Michigan, Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association – Original Equipment division, and Detroit PAL's advisory board. He earned a bachelor's degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Michigan Law School.

Hall said he is impressed with the innovative efforts of Grand Valley and is optimistic about its positive trajectory and the role he can play in its future.

"I am honored by this appointment and humbled by the confidence being placed in me by Gov. Whitmer," Hall said. "Educational opportunity expansion is a personal passion of mine, and I have supported various entities in the space my entire career. GVSU is doing great work educating and preparing future leaders and citizens for Michigan, and I look forward to joining their efforts."

Padnos, of Fennville, formerly served on the GVSU board from 2007-2014 and received an honorary doctorate from the university in 2017. In addition to her role at PADNOS, she has served as the president of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, the national trade association representing scrap processors and recyclers across North America. She has a long history of supporting the university. Padnos and Carol Sarosik created the Padnos/Sarosik Center for Civil Discourse, which is housed in the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies. She has been a Grand Valley University Foundation director for three decades.

Padnos said she is eager to rejoin the board and continue to invest in the future of GVSU.

"I am grateful to Gov. Whitmer for my appointment and am very much looking forward to rejoining the board of Grand Valley," Padnos said. "Universities face huge challenges going forward, and it is my goal to add value crafting solutions and directions for GVSU."

Padnos earned a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and her Juris Doctorate from Thomas Cooley Law School.

Padnos and Hall will replace Megan Rydecki and Victor Cardenas, whose terms expired at the end of last year. Their appointments are subject to the advice and consent of the Michigan State Senate.

About Grand Valley State University:

Grand Valley State University attracts more than 21,000 students with high-quality programs and state-of-the-art facilities. Grand Valley is a comprehensive university serving students from all across Michigan and dozens of other states and foreign countries. Grand Valley offers 100 undergraduate and 45 graduate degree programs and has campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids and Holland. The university offers programming and classes from outreach centers in Battle Creek, Detroit and Traverse City; the Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute and the Muskegon Innovation Hub are located in Muskegon. The university is dedicated to individual student achievement, going beyond the traditional classroom experience, with research opportunities and business partnerships.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 2, 2023

Contact: Peg West, GVSU University Communications, ensingm1@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2222

ADVISORY: GVSU expert available on historic Super Bowl quarterback matchup

ALLENDALE, Mich. – A Grand Valley State University historian and expert on the intersection between race and sports is available to talk about the historic matchup of Black quarterbacks starting for each Super Bowl team for the first time.

Louis Moore, GVSU professor of history, is an expert on African American history and sports history. He is the author of two books: "I Fight for a Living: Boxing and the Battle for Black Manhood, 1880-1915" and "We Will Win the Day: The Civil Rights Movement, the Black Athlete, and the Quest for Equality."

Moore is also currently writing a book on the history of Black quarterbacks that explores their experiences with coaches, stereotypes, rigid offensive schemes and more.

Moore's contact information:

Twitter: @loumoore12 (profloumoore)

Email: moorelou@gvsu.edu

Phone: (616) 331-2852

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

MEDIA NOTE: Courtesy photos of Paul Isely and Kuhelika De from today's event are [available via our DropBox, http://gvsu.edu/s/2ei](http://gvsu.edu/s/2ei)

Forecast for Grand Rapids economy: Slow growth, but better than national expectations

Recession in second half of 2023 should have less impact on West Michigan, report says

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- Expect the West Michigan economy to continue to slow in 2023 as interest rate increases and inflation could hamper some sectors of the economy more than others. But the Grand Rapids area will still grow at twice the rate of the national economy.

That's the conclusion of the [annual Grand Rapids Economic Forecast](#) by Grand Valley State University's Seidman College of Business.

The report by Seidman Associate Dean Paul Isely, Associate Professor Kuhelika De and graduate assistant Marcus Lynch, based its conclusions on surveys of business leaders along with research of local and national business trends. Isely and De presented the report February 1 at the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting.

The data for West Michigan shows a slowdown in 2023, compared to 2022, the report concludes. However, that slowdown will be uneven with construction and interest sensitive industries slowing and services continuing to show some strength.

Isely and De said they expect West Michigan to fare better than the rest of the nation as automotive suppliers work through order backlogs and supply chain concerns ease. An uptick in office furniture purchases that had been delayed by the pandemic, may help offset some of the natural downturn that industry often sees during economic slowdowns.

"One of the things that we realize here is we're seeing a slowdown, but we're seeing a slowdown that is nowhere near what is expected for the rest of the nation," Isely said.

Favorable demographics for economic growth (more young people than old), a steady automotive sector and resilient housing market are the main factors helping West Michigan stay ahead of national expectations, Isely said.

The forecast calls for a mild recession in the second half of 2023, but De said West Michigan should be more insulated from such a downturn in economic activity because its main industries and its housing market are on more solid footing than many other areas.

De said to keep an eye on how far the Federal Reserve will go in raising interest rates as a means to bring down inflation, as increases will cause the economy to slow down.

“We may have to tolerate some slowdown in economic activity to bring down inflation,” De said, noting that the regional inflation rate is expected to track with the national forecasted inflation rate of 5 percent.

One unique aspect of the economic situation in the year ahead will be to watch how consumer spending shifts, Isely said, noting that the bottom 50 percent of the population by wealth saw its net worth increase by 140 percent from the start of the pandemic.

It remains to be seen whether lower income populations will cut spending and preserve any of that additional wealth or if inflation will end up draining savings. So far, signs are pointing toward a spending slowdown even as credit card debt goes up, a sign that some consumers are running out of savings accumulated during the pandemic.

Isely said there’s reason to hope for an “unexciting year” ahead amid uncertainty around the world.

“Unexciting is not bad this year,” he said. “Unexciting is that housing prices might drive a little lower, maybe a little higher. But we don’t expect massive movement. We expect inflation to start to drift lower.”

High-profile job cuts at large tech firms like Google, Meta, Amazon and Microsoft could even help buoy lower profile companies in need of talent.

Cuts at larger companies are “freeing up labor that is going down to small and mid-sized firms that haven’t been able to hire for years now,” Isely said.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU faculty available following Gov. Whitmer's address

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- With Governor Gretchen Whitmer scheduled to deliver her State of the State address on January 25, Grand Valley State University faculty members are available for analysis and interviews with the media.

Education is expected to be one of Whitmer's priorities during the address, particularly the MI Kids Back on Track plan which focuses on tutoring. Faculty in the College of Education and Community Innovation and the director of GVSU's K-12 Connect tutoring program are available to discuss what Whitmer's announcement means for K-12 education in Michigan.

Members of the political science faculty are available as well for general analysis of Whitmer's address.

Education

Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury

Director of Engagement for Educational & Community Innovation, GV NextEd Co-Lab

Office: (616) 331-6485

baileych@gvsu.edu

Amirah Vosburgh

Director of K-12 Connect, which provides academic support to K-12 learners through virtual, high-dosage tutoring.

Office: (616) 914-9020

vosburga@gvsu.edu

Available on Thursday

Political science

Whitt Kilburn, associate professor

Topics: Public opinion, elections, voting behavior

Office: (616) 331-8831

Cell: (616) 516-2936

kilburnw@gvsu.edu

Roger Moiles, senior affiliate professor

Topics: State, local midterm races; Michigan referenda; national outcome of midterms

Office: (616) 331-3283

moilesr@gvsu.edu

Best availability is Wednesday.

For Immediate Release

Feb. 7, 2023

Contact: Peg West, GVSU University Communications, ensingm1@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

MEDIA NOTE: Find additional contacts below with the information about employers. Photos of employer leaders are available [at this link](#).

GVSU, employers form partnership to accelerate talent creation in Michigan

ALLENDALE, Mich. – Grand Valley State University is launching a work-and-learning program with five inaugural West Michigan-based partners designed to accelerate the connection between talent and employers. The partners invest in GVSU students who become employees during college and after graduation.

The program, the [Laker Accelerated Talent Link](#), will pair Grand Valley students with partner companies that will provide an enhanced co-op experience for students. Five employers have joined the partnership: Acrisure, Amway, Cascade Engineering, Corewell Health and Michigan Software Labs. GVSU will also serve as an employer partner.

An initial cohort of 25 students, primarily from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, will work with the partners for one year and commit to one additional year of employment after graduating. The students will also earn a certificate in an area related to business or technology that best matches the employers' needs. The program will launch in August.

Besides providing critical workplace experience for Grand Valley students, the employers are also supporting the development and implementation of the program.

This unique program integrates a career-ready certificate with a paid internship and results in a bachelor's degree designed to meet high-demand competencies like digital analytic, systems thinking while recognizing the importance of a broad based, liberal arts education.

Grand Valley President Philomena V. Mantella said this program enhances Grand Valley's role as a key talent producer in the region. The university has more than 100,000 alumni in Michigan, 90 percent of whom have stayed in West Michigan.

"We are grateful to these leading employers in the region for taking this initial step with us to equip dynamic and diverse professionals for the workforce," Mantella said. "We are addressing labor-shortage concerns and creating a positive impact on the business community. This program will highlight Grand Valley students' human-centered skills and deep knowledge of their disciplines, and the companies will benefit from well-prepared employees."

Representatives for the employers said they value the opportunity to work with Grand Valley on this effort to invest in local students and help hone their high-demand skills.

- "As a company that is renowned for its growth in the insurance brokerage industry, one of our biggest challenges is filling open roles at a rate that keeps pace with our ambitious targets," said Acrisure Co-Founder, Chairman & CEO Greg Williams. "We're thrilled to be partnering with

Grand Valley to help bring young talent into the fintech and financial services space and create a pipeline of candidates for Acrisure.”

- “As Amway continues to grow, attracting and retaining the best and brightest technology talent is more critical now than ever before. Led by our 15,000 incredible employees and health and wellness entrepreneurs across the globe, it is our commitment to deliver an unrivaled digital experience for Amway business owners and the customers that they serve,” said Amway CEO Milind Pant. “Working alongside GVSU and other incredible businesses and community partners is an avenue to achieve that, which will help solidify West Michigan as a hub for technology and talent.”
- “As Cascade Engineering celebrates 50 years as a business in West Michigan, we are exhilarated by the opportunity to work with and source talent from Grand Valley through this initiative. We’ve been invested in community from day one and view this as a means of emphasizing our Triple Bottom Line and our commitment to Grand Rapids,” said Kenyatta Brame, executive vice president of Cascade Engineering.
- “We appreciate GVSU’s innovative commitment to preparing students for the modern digital workplace and we look forward to participating in the LATL program,” said Jason Joseph, chief digital and information officer for Corewell Health.
- “We at Michigan Software Labs are thrilled to be a part of this innovative program that connects top talent with leading employers in the region,” said Josh Hulst, managing partner, Michigan Software Labs. “As an employer of high-tech software careers, we are eager to create more pipelines of talent like this. Through the Laker Accelerated Talent Link program, we are addressing the industry’s labor shortage concerns and creating a positive impact on the business community. We are proud to be part of a program that not only helps our business but also provides a path for students to have a bright future in software. This program will help to provide our company with well-prepared team members through our Associate program. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Grand Valley State University and other partners to equip the next generation of professionals for the workforce.”

These inaugural partners will help Grand Valley shape the Talent Link, but Mantella said Grand Valley intends to scale the program and is actively seeking other corporate partners. To learn more, visit the site for the [Laker Accelerated Talent Link](#).

About Acrisure:

Acrisure is An Extraordinary AdvantageSM for millions of clients worldwide. The Company combines human and high tech to deliver a broad array of products including Insurance, Reinsurance, Cyber Services, and more. In the last nine years, Acrisure has grown in revenue from \$38 million to nearly \$4 billion and today employs over 14,000 colleagues in 21 countries. Learn more at www.acrisure.com.

CONTACT: Elliott Bundy, Chief Communications & Marketing Officer, (347) 561-0276;
ebundy@acrisure.com

About Amway:

Amway is an entrepreneur-led health and wellness company based in Ada, Michigan. It is committed to helping people live better, healthier lives across more than 100 markets worldwide. According to Forbes magazine, it is among the Top 50 privately held, family-owned companies in the United States. Top-selling brands for Amway are Nutrilite™, Artistry™ and XS™ energy drinks – all sold exclusively by entrepreneurs who are known as Amway Business Owners. Amway is the No. 1 direct selling business in the world, according to the 2022 Direct Selling News Global 100 list. For company news, visit www.amwayglobal.com/newsroom/.

CONTACT: Susan Nemes, (616) 724-7751, susan.nemes@amway.com

About Cascade Engineering:

Cascade Engineering Family of Companies is a family-owned business that is committed to creating an inclusive work environment in which every employee know they are valued. We have found that a culture based on inclusion unlocks each employee's full potential and empowers them to be fully engaged and committed to our mutual success. We believe diversity drives our innovation and as an organization, we thrive on collectively solving difficult challenges that will improve our community, our environment, and our financial prosperity. Visit www.cascadeng.com for links to our career openings and additional information about our company.

CONTACT: Caitlin Townsend Lamb, Director of PACES (People Advancement + Cascade Enterprise Systems), (616) 975-4880; caitlin.townsend.lamb@cascadeng.com

About Corewell Health™:

People are at the heart of everything we do, and the inspiration for our legacy of outstanding outcomes, innovation, strong community partnerships, philanthropy and transparency. Corewell Health is a not-for-profit health system that provides health care and coverage with an exceptional team of 60,000+ dedicated people—including more than 11,500 physicians and advanced practice providers and more than 15,000 nurses providing care and services in 22 hospitals, 300+ outpatient locations and several post-acute facilities—and Priority Health, a provider-sponsored health plan serving more than 1.2 million members. Through experience and collaboration, we are reimagining a better, more equitable model of health and wellness. For more information, visit corewellhealth.org

CONTACT: Sarina Gleason, (517) 256-5618, sarina.gleason@corewellhealth.org

About Michigan Software Labs:

Michigan Software Labs develops custom mobile, web, and Internet of Things (IoT) software for clients ranging from locally owned businesses to Fortune 500 companies. The company, located in their new office in Ada, has generated \$20 billion in revenue for their clients. Recognized as a leader in UX/UI design, with 400 million end users to date, Michigan Software Labs was named one of the Top Software

Development and UX Design Companies in the U.S. by Clutch and Inc. Magazine's Best Places to Work Award. Learn more at www.MichiganLabs.com

CONTACT: Craig Clark, Clark Communications, (616) 550-2736, craig@clarkcommunication.com

About Grand Valley State University:

Grand Valley State University attracts more than 21,000 students with high-quality programs and state-of-the-art facilities. Grand Valley is a comprehensive university serving students from all across Michigan and dozens of other states and foreign countries. Grand Valley offers 100 undergraduate and 45 graduate degree programs and has campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids and Holland. The university offers programming and classes from outreach centers in Battle Creek, Detroit and Traverse City; the Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute and the Muskegon Innovation Hub are located in Muskegon. The university is dedicated to individual student achievement, going beyond the traditional classroom experience, with research opportunities and business partnerships. For more information, visit gvsu.edu

For Immediate Release

February 6, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

New degree program at GVSU helps students step quickly into jobs they want

ALLENDALE, Mich. — A unique degree program at Grand Valley State University was designed to get people who have technical training into the jobs they want – and quickly.

The Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree program will begin in the Fall 2023 semester. Enrollment is now underway. It was created for students who earned associate of applied science degrees (AAS) and want to advance their careers.

Melanie Shell-Weiss, associate dean for Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies, called it a program designed for people who may have met "the glass ceiling" in their current roles.

"There is a population of people who were very tempted to join vocational programs right out of high school, maybe because they had to be the breadwinners in their families," Shell-Weiss said. "Then they work for a number of years and find that it becomes harder and harder to transfer into a traditional bachelor's degree program."

With four majors to choose from, all BAS programs are offered online and get students to the finish line faster by accepting up to 80 credits of an associate degree plus life experience.

- [Technology Project Management](#): This program, presented in a semester-long format, builds on a technology-based degree like robotics or welding. Students will learn skills in CAD, programming, drafting, safety and management.
- [Web Design and Development](#): This program, presented in a semester-long format, builds on technical skills and adds computing language for front-end web development and programming. Classes in writing for web and graphic design will help with the artistic side of web design.
- [Leadership and Business Fundamentals](#): Students will gain skills in accounting, finance, management, marketing, organizational dynamics, leadership and team-building. Classes are offered in an accelerated, six-week format.
- [Professional Innovation](#): Students in this program can choose from stackable credentials in a variety of specialized areas: health care, hospitality, leadership and more. Classes are offered in an accelerated, six-week format.

Each major requires an internship, giving students practical experiences. Lindsay Corneal, associate professor of engineering, said an internship could be completed at a student's current employer.

"Students in the BAS program will have real-world experience from an internship plus take classes from which they will develop problem-solving and design thinking skills," Corneal said. "These are the skills employers want in their leaders today."

The [BAS program will enroll students six times a year](#), meeting the flexibility of adult learners.

For Immediate Release

February 15, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

MEDIA NOTE: Audio clips from Brian Long are available to download: <http://gvsu.edu/s/2fj>

Strong indicators show 'great start' in 2023 for area's economy, according to GVSU expert

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Key manufacturing indicators in West Michigan rose sharply in January, a sign that the area's economy is rebounding, according to a Grand Valley State University economic expert.

Brian Long, director of supply management research at the Seidman College of Business, said another takeaway from his monthly survey of manufacturers and distributors is that layoffs continue to be minimal.

"Despite ongoing recession fears, the employment situation in West Michigan remains surprisingly strong," Long said, noting only 5 percent of survey respondents reported layoffs for December.

The new orders and production indices rose in January. Long said new business is coming to West Michigan automotive parts producers and aerospace subcontractors. The new orders (business improvement) index rose to +18, over -24 in December. The production index was +21, over -21 in December.

Long said all factors represent a "great start" for West Michigan businesses in 2023 but he also issued a caution.

"Even though the direction of the economy for the rest of 2023 is still unclear, we can still expect our automotive parts producers to offset much of the weakness in other industries, especially office furniture," he said. "That said, our survey numbers may still bounce around until the threat of a recession or an actual recession has passed."

Other statistics from Long's report are below:

- Employment: January +13, December +14
- Purchases: January +11, December -19
- Lead Times from Suppliers: January -16, December -14

The West Michigan survey is patterned after a nationwide survey conducted by the Institute for Supply Management. Each month, the respondents are asked to rate eight factors as "same," "up" or "down."

For Immediate Release

February 10, 2023

Contact: Chris Knape, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

MEDIA NOTE: *Media are welcome on campus to cover this event. Please contact University Communications to confirm attendance.*

- **What:** Campus vigil and earthquake relief event
- **When:** 1-1:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 15
- **Where:** Cook Carillon Tower, Allendale Campus
- **Who:** Campus leaders and the campus community will gather for the event. After a moment of reflection or prayer, attendees will learn more about how to help relief efforts and hear from members of the Syrian and Turkish communities at Grand Valley.
- **Why:** To raise awareness, show support and take action to help relief efforts in Turkey and Syria, where more than 20,000 have died and hundreds of thousands have been left homeless.

Vigil planned to support Syria and Turkey earthquake relief efforts

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- Members of the Grand Valley State University campus community will gather around Cook Carillon Tower in Allendale at 1 p.m. Feb. 15 to pause for a moment of silence in memory of the lives lost in Syria and Turkey.

The campus carillons in Allendale and Grand Rapids, which normally play at the top of each hour, will be silenced for the vigil.

Monday's earthquake and subsequent aftershocks near the Turkish-Syrian border caused widespread damage that has killed more than 20,000 people while leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless.

"Our carillons usually bring joy as their bells sound. I asked that they be temporarily silenced as we pause in a moment of silent reflection or prayer over the tragic loss of life and the on-going crisis in Turkey and Syria," President Philomena V. Mantella said. "I invite our campus community to gather together around the carillon in a show of unity with the people of Syria and Turkey and those who have responded to their calls for help. Those who can't join us at the towers may pause where they are."

After a moment of reflection or prayer, Wednesday's event at the Cook Carillon will provide an opportunity to learn more about how to help relief efforts and provide a chance for members of the Syrian and Turkish communities at Grand Valley to share their stories.

Mantella has reached out to members of the Grand Valley community who are from Syria and Turkey to offer her support and prayers. She encouraged the campus community to do the same with friends and family who have been affected by the earthquake.

[Grand Valley's University Counseling Center](#) is also available for students who need assistance.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Knape, GVSU University Communications, 616-331-2953, knapech@gvsu.edu

March 1, 2023

MEDIA NOTE: Photos of key speakers are available to [download from our Dropbox](#).

Gentex's Steve Downing to Keynote the Michigan Automotive Suppliers Symposium at GVSU

Event also features CEO of Shape Corp., industry outlook from S&P Global Mobility

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- Gentex President and Chief Executive Steve Downing will give the keynote address at the 24th Michigan Automotive Suppliers Symposium March 9 at Grand Valley State University.

The event, hosted by GVSU's [Van Andel Global Trade Center](#), also features:

- A fireside chat between Mark White, president and CEO of automotive component supplier Shape Corp., and Thomas Manganello, a partner at Warner Norcross + Judd who specializes in the automotive industry,
- An automotive industry outlook from GVSU Alumni, Mike Wall, executive director of automotive analysis with S&P Global Mobility,
- A team from Plante Moran discussing the mergers and acquisitions market.

The Michigan Automotive Suppliers Symposium is a yearly event bringing together business owners, senior management, and decision-makers from all tiers of the automotive industry.

"As the global automotive industry continues to adjust to new requirements and challenges, it is important, now more than ever, to be knowledgeable about the dynamic changes taking place in the electric vehicle landscape," said Sonja Johnson, executive director of the Van Andel Global Trade Center. "The automotive industry has always been vital to the economy of Michigan as well as the global market. This year's event is sure to continue the long tradition of providing creative and innovative solutions as industry leaders share ideas and establish a strategy for success in the future."

The symposium runs from 8 a.m. to noon at the Loosemore Auditorium on GVSU's Pew Grand Rapids Campus. [Registration is \\$205, or \\$155](#) for members of the Van Andel Global Trade Center.

The symposium is sponsored by Plante Moran, ArtiFlex, Bluewater Hayes, Chase Bank, S&P Global, the Michigan Economic Development Corp., Morrison Industrial Equipment, The Right Place, and Warner Norcross + Judd.

For Immediate Release

March 1, 2023

Contact: Julianna Schrier, GVSU University Communications, schrieju@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-9508

GVSU to celebrate Women's History Month with campus events

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- Grand Valley is marking Women's History Month with campus events throughout March. The theme this year is "celebrating women who tell our stories."

The Center for Women and Gender Equity (CWGE) is running programs throughout the month of March, including the [20th annual EqualiTEA](#) featuring keynote speaker Kyra Harris Bolden, '10, Michigan Supreme Court justice and former state representative. This event will take place on Thursday, March 16 from 12 - 1:30 pm in the Kirkhof Center Grand River Room 2250.

Other events include:

[Girls of Color Summit](#)

- Friday, March 3
- 10 am - 3 pm
- Kirkhof Center, Pere Marquette Room 2204

Talk Back Tuesday: Expanded, with Fatma Mili, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs

- Tuesday, March 21
- 4 - 5:30 pm
- Kirkhof Center Room 2266

[NIARA: Fill Your Cup Sis](#)

- Thursday, March 23
- 4:30 - 6:30 pm
- Kirkhof Center Room 1142

CWGE is also holding a Self-Care Drive throughout March. Donation boxes will be set up around campus and at EqualiTEA. There are also [resources available at Replenish](#) all month.

Visit [the CWGE website](#) for more information about these programs and the other resources that the Center offers.

For Immediate Release

February 22, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Agreement between GVSU, LSSU fills need for public health in northern Michigan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- A partnership between Grand Valley State and Lake Superior State universities helps fill a need for public health education in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Leaders from the two institutions signed an articulation agreement, which guarantees admission into GVSU's Master of Public Health program for up to five qualified LSSU students who earned bachelor's degrees in kinesiology.

Ranelle Brew, professor and program director for GVSU's Master of Public Health, said this agreement is similar to one established with Northern Michigan University in 2019.

"This partnership between GVSU and Lake Superior State really aims to fill a need and an interest in public health for our partners from northern Michigan regions," Brew said. "We have had some incredible students join our program from northern Michigan who are interested in filling the gap and need for more public health trained individuals."

Joseph Susi, chair of LSSU's School of Kinesiology and Behavioral Sciences, said the agreement provides a natural pathway for students who want to further their education.

"This arrangement will streamline the process for LSSU kinesiology students to secure graduate education in public health," Susi said. "The job opportunities are many and varied, including health education, health and wellness coaching and worksite wellness."

GVSU's [Master of Public Health program](#) offers hybrid and in-person options.

For Immediate Release

February 20, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU Quest Series looks at issues surrounding Turkey, Syria earthquakes

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- A webinar discussion presented by Grand Valley State University's Office of the Provost and led by Provost Fatma Mili will examine several of the topics surrounding the devastating earthquakes that affected Turkey and Syria.

The Türkiye-Syria Earthquake: Earth-Science-Human Collision forum at 4 p.m. February 22 is part of the GVSU Quest Series. Mili and the panel of GVSU experts will discuss the science behind earthquakes, the region's historical and political issues and ways the Grand Rapids community can help with humanitarian efforts.

The live webinar is open to the public, and [viewers need to register online to participate in the forum](#).

For Immediate Release

March 6, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU president, radio host to be honored on International Women's Day

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- Grand Valley State University President Philomena V. Mantella and WGVU host Shelley Irwin will be honored at noon on March 8 in downtown Grand Rapids as part of an International Women's Day event hosted by the nonprofit organization SowHope.

International Women's Day celebrates the social, cultural, economic and political achievements of women around the world. SowHope will present Mantella with a Cultural Achievement Award in recognition for her contributions to higher education in the Grand Rapids community while Irwin will receive a Social Achievement Award for her broadcast work at WGVU.

The event will also include a one-mile march through downtown Grand Rapids, culminating at Rosa Parks Circle.

"International Women's Day is not well known in the United States, and we'd like to stand with the rest of the world and celebrate all the achievements of women," said Mary Dailey Brown, SowHope's founder and CEO and a 2009-10 fellow of the Cook Leadership Academy at Grand Valley.

In 2019, Mantella was appointed Grand Valley's fifth president and the first woman to be selected as the university's top administrator. Under her leadership, Grand Valley has implemented several programs which have garnered state and national attention, said SowHope:

- The Lifelong Educational Attainment for Determined Students (LEADS) program provides an avenue for adult learners to obtain an accelerated bachelor's degree with a certificate.
- The Rapid Education Prototyping (REP4) initiative puts the power and incentive of establishing equitable educational systems in the hands of students.
- The Reach Higher 2025 initiative is GVSU's strategic plan to provide an empowered educational experience, promote a culture of educational equity and cultivate a lifetime of learning for all students.

"Grand Valley is committed to creating a variety of educational pathways toward higher education for all learners and providing an environment of equity on campus," Mantella said. "I'm deeply honored and share this moment with women from across the West Michigan community deeply connected to our global community."

Shelley Irwin has been integral to WGVU Public Media for more than 20 years. She is the award-winning host of WGVU's "The Morning Show," and her honors include the Fred Meijer Service Above Self Award and five consecutive Gracie Allen Awards from American Women in TV and Radio for excellence as a program host.

"As a 'woman of social achievement,' I am empowered to continue serving as a messenger and community advocate to support women's advancement and equity," Irwin said.

SowHope is a nonprofit organization based in Rockford, Michigan, dedicated to helping poor and oppressed women around the world by promoting wellness, education and economic opportunities.

International Women's Day has been celebrated since 1911 when 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York City demanding better pay, shorter hours and voting rights.

For Immediate Release

March 7, 2023

Contact: Peg West, GVSU University Communications, ensingm1@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Poem by retired GVSU professor, former Grand Rapids poet laureate going to the moon

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- A poem by Patricia Clark, professor emerita of writing and former poet laureate of Grand Rapids, is slated to be launched to the moon as part of the "Lunar Codex" project.

The poem, "Astronomy 'In Perfect Silence,'" will be part of a time capsule headed to the moon in 2024.

[Lunar Codex project leaders say they are using surplus payload space](#) for multiple moon missions to archive the works of more than 30,000 artists from around the world on the moon.

Clark's piece, which will be stored on archival technology, is part of the "Polaris" collection, which is scheduled to launch in November 2024. The poem is also in an anthology named "[The Polaris Trilogy: Poems for the Moon](#)."

She was invited by an editor soliciting poems for the project to contribute a piece, an invitation that Clark eagerly accepted. She learned that her poem was chosen with an email that opened with, "You're going to the Moon! Well, to be more precise, your poem is."

[Read the poem on Patricia Clark's website.](#)

For Clark, who was poet laureate for Grand Rapids from 2005-2007 and also served as Grand Valley's poet-in-residence, it is a thrill for her poem to be included in the payload carrying artistic material that is set to stay at the moon in perpetuity.

"My husband says he's going to look up there and think about my poem," Clark said.

Poets were asked to tell the judges if they were writing about the moon, stars or sun. Clark said she chose a form called abecedarian, which is a 26-line poem where each line starts with a letter, A-Z, in order of the alphabet (and with a little poetic license where necessary, as Clark did with the line starting with "X.").

The poem is a celebration of astronomy and the wonder of space.

Her inspiration was an astronomy professor from her undergraduate time at the University of Washington whose enthusiasm for the subject stayed with her even though she never pursued the discipline professionally.

"When I saw the call for work, I was immediately excited because I thought, 'This will give me a chance to write about this experience I had.' I thought I'd start writing about the experience of the class and see what I get to," Clark said.

A key reason she knows that class stuck with her is because she still has the book, one of the few from college that she saved after multiple decades and many moves. She valued the star charts, too.

Though the poem notes that Clark had forgotten the professor's name, she contacted her alma mater to see if they could figure out who the professor was. She soon learned that the professor was George Wallerstein, who had sadly died in recent years.

But the poem is a testament to his inspiration as a teacher and the importance of a well-rounded education, she said. While she didn't dig deeply into the field, she has a deep appreciation of it because of this teacher.

"It might not be something you spent your life on, but it mattered to you. That's what liberal education is all about," Clark said. "The magic of space and the wonder of it all is still there because of this class and this professor who was so jazzed about it all."

For Immediate Release

March 8, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

MEDIA NOTE: Audio clips and a transcript of those clips may be [downloaded via our Dropbox.](http://gvsu.edu/s/2hb)
<http://gvsu.edu/s/2hb>

January 'euphoria' fades as economic indicators swung negative in February

GVSU Current Business Trends survey shows strength in automotive, weakness in more rate-sensitive sectors

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- The “back-to-work euphoria” of January has faded and economic indicators edged back into negative territory in West Michigan during February, according to the latest survey from Grand Valley State University’s Seidman College of Business.

The Current Business Trends survey of West Michigan manufacturers released March 8 found key indexes sliding as new orders and production soured after an unexpectedly rosy outlook in January.

“Overall we had expected business conditions to soften in 2023 and this month’s report is a confirmation of that trend,” said Brian Long, director of supply chain management research at Seidman. “We expect interest rate-sensitive industries to retreat, but are still expecting that the pent-up demand for automotive will keep the West Michigan economy positive.”

Based on responses from the survey, Long said he also expects a positive outlook from aerospace firms, while the prospects for the office furniture business “remain far less certain.”

“However, even if the markets for office furniture remain soft, a major collapse like we’ve seen in other downturns is unlikely,” Long concluded.

Both the short- and long-term business outlook indexes slid back into negative territory after showing a more upbeat outlook in January.

Broader indicators are showing the world economy proving resilient despite the war in Ukraine, Long said.

“The world economy is not as grim as you might imagine,” he said. “The J.P. Morgan international survey of purchasing agents indicates that we are absolutely at break-even now. Some countries are down, but enough countries are up right now that the average is at a break-even point.”

GVSU’s Current Business Trends survey indexes are tracked based on whether survey respondents report “up,” “same,” “down” or “N/A” to questions about business conditions. Here’s a look at some key indexes:

- Sales (new orders): -17 in February vs. +18 in January
- Production: -7 in February vs. +21 in January
- Employment: +17 in February vs. +18 in January

Lead times also improved in the survey, which Long noted was a strong indicator that supply chains are continuing to loosen up, despite continued shortages and high prices for specific commodities.

View the complete March 2023 report and an archive of previous reports at the [Seidman College of Business website](#).

For Immediate Release

March 13, 2023

Contact: Peg West, GVSU University Communications, ensingm1@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

MEDIA NOTE: For immediate results from Saturday's competition, contact Chelsea Ridge, ridqec@gvsu.edu, msor12@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-3172

GVSU to host Michigan Science Olympiad regional competition

ALLENDALE, Mich. -- The Region 12 Michigan Science Olympiad returns to Grand Valley State University, where middle school and high school students from three counties will showcase their STEM capabilities.

[The competition will be held March 18](#) at locations throughout Grand Valley's Allendale Campus, with the headquarters at the Fieldhouse Arena. Students from 52 teams and 39 districts throughout Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon counties will compete, said Chelsea Ridge, tournament co-director.

Seven middle school and six high school teams will qualify for the state tournament, Ridge said.

The 50-event schedule at Grand Valley includes a lab competition in disciplines such as anatomy and physiology and environmental chemistry, along with build events such as bridges, flight and trajectory, Ridge said. The competition runs from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with an awards ceremony at 4 p.m. that will include remarks by Fatma Mili, GVSU provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs.

Ridge said GVSU's long history hosting the tournament, which includes event supervisors who have participated for 30 years or more, is a point of pride.

"The supervisors' commitment to local students is impressive," Ridge said. "It is exciting and an honor to host schools from our region. It provides us an opportunity to showcase our high-quality facilities and faculty as well as providing local students an opportunity to see themselves as GVSU students."

Students will also be encouraged to use break time to participate in new activities as well as some that haven't been offered since 2019, including the Atomic Object Tech showcase, the pool and rock-climbing wall and an exhibitor showcase with 12 local business partners and organizations for students to engage and win prizes.

The competition is sponsored by Disher, Haviland Enterprises, Gentex Corp., Webb, NDIA – Michigan and GWM MiSTEM Network.

For Immediate release

March 24, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications vernellb@gvsu.edu

WGVU recognized as finalist for station excellence award

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - WGVU-FM announced on March 24 it is a finalist for the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Station Excellence Award. The award recognizes Michigan radio and television stations that demonstrate excellence in overall performance, including programming, community service and marketing.

The MAB's Broadcast Excellence Awards Gala will be April 29 at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit.

This year, WGVU-FM was honored with five best-in-category awards, including Feature/Use of a Medium; Marketing Materials & Promos; Musical Programming; Newscast; and Special Interest & Cultural Programming. Additionally, WGVU-FM is a finalist for Community Involvement.

"Individual successes are always celebrated," WGVU News & Public Affairs Director Patrick Center said. "This past year proved WGVU has many talented colleagues performing at a high level. Taken together, the MAB accomplishments demonstrate an impressive team effort."

WGVU-FM strives for excellence in broadcasting by providing quality programming for its listeners and engaging in meaningful community outreach initiatives.

"It's exciting to see the hard work our local team puts in each day recognized for its impact and excellence," WGVU General Manager Jim Rademaker said.

WGVU's broadcast stations are licensed to Grand Valley State University as public radio and television facilities, operating from the Meijer Public Broadcast Center, as part of the university's Pew Grand Rapids Campus.

WGVU serves the Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo-Battle Creek designated broadcast market. It is the 41st largest market in the United States, reaching over 2.4 million television viewers in 24 counties and over 1.3 million radio listeners from Grand Rapids to the Lakeshore.

For immediate release

March 27, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications coffillm@gvsu.edu (616) 331-2221

Local experts will discuss adult mental health at next Health Forum of Northern Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. - Local experts at the Health Forum of Northern Michigan will discuss adult mental health at an event that will include the Rural Health Awards presentation.

The health forum is Wednesday, April 12, 8-9:30 a.m. at the Hagerty Center at Northwestern Michigan College's Great Lakes Campus, 715 East Front St. The event is free and open to the public; [RSVP online](#). It will be live streamed.

Speakers are listed below:

- Lisa Thomas, dean of students, Northwestern Michigan College
- Pennie Foster-Fishman, Northwest Michigan Behavioral Health Initiative
- Terri Lacroix-Kelty, service line executive director for behavioral health, Munson Healthcare

Awards to celebrate rural health practitioners and organizations will be presented after the panel presentation. Sponsored by Grand Valley State University's Traverse City Regional Center and Northwestern Michigan College, the awards recognize outstanding accomplishments of individuals and organizations who support and promote health care education in the area.

The [Health Forum of Northern Michigan](#) is offered annually in the fall and spring; it is a collaboration between the GVSU Traverse City Regional Center and Northwestern Michigan College. It is supported by a planning committee of community leaders in the Grand Traverse area. The event is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of West Michigan and Blue Care Network.

For Immediate Release

APRIL 3, 2023

CONTACT: Tory Martin, Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, MartinV@gvsu.edu, 616-331-9039
Chris Knape, University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, 616-331-2953

Lesley D. Slavitt, Ph.D. named eighth executive director of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University in Michigan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - After a broad-reaching national search, Lesley D. Slavitt, Ph.D., an Illinois native with nearly three decades of experience in philanthropy and higher education, has been named the next executive director of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University. Slavitt begins her role today: April 3, 2023.

Across her career, Slavitt has held several leadership positions at corporate foundations. As COO of the Bank One Foundation, she helped steer its merger with the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and served as senior advisor to the chairman of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. She also served as the Head of Civic Engagement and CEO of Fiat Chrysler's Foundation.

Slavitt also previously oversaw civic affairs and communications for Roosevelt University in Chicago (one of the most diverse private universities in the Midwest) and worked in urban innovation. In 2020, she led initiatives in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 response. Slavitt holds a Ph.D. in Planning from The Bartlett School of the Built Environment at University College London. "Dr. Slavitt brings a wealth of experience and expertise that will help the Johnson Center elevate its nationally recognized work helping people and organizations advance and strengthen their philanthropic efforts," said Philomena V. Mantella, president of GVSU. "She brings a global perspective and a keen understanding that the Johnson Center is a rare and exciting opportunity for deep impact."

Slavitt joins the Johnson Center at a dynamic moment in its history. The center is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Its researchers are helping to lead groundbreaking studies on donor advised funds, giving circles, and international philanthropy, and its professional development offerings are expanding to provide opportunities for philanthropy practitioners to serve communities with excellence and a commitment to equity.

"The Johnson Center is at the forefront of translational work bridging research and practice that catalyzes the philanthropic sector's advancement. As an organization with a track record of valuing people, data-informed decision making, and life-long learning, it is a center of excellence that reflects and extends the ideals of GVSU," says Slavitt. "It is a privilege to join such dedicated and talented colleagues and serve as executive director of this unparalleled organization as it enters its fourth decade of transformative work."

The Johnson Center was established at GVSU in 1992 with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and GVSU. Their mission is to be a global leader in helping individuals and organizations understand, strengthen, and advance philanthropy, resulting in a smart, adaptive sector that helps create strong, inclusive communities.

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU Current Business Trends Survey: Key local economic indicators rebound in March

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - A March survey of local purchasing managers reflects their fluctuating beliefs regarding the state of the West Michigan economy. Survey leader Brian Long, director of supply management research at Grand Valley's Seidman College of Business, sees three trends emerging from his March Current Business Trends report for the region.

The report shows rebounds in the new orders index (business improvement), production index (output) and the employment index, even as the national economy remains flat.

Reports over the past several months had shown shifting results. Long said the December report dipped downward, followed by a January report that showed improvements, with the February report sliding back, only for the March report to tick upward.

"Looking at the same data, reputable economic forecasters could often come up with very different conclusions," Long said. "According to some of these forecasts from just a few months ago, we should already be in a recession.

"Clearly, we are not even though some aspects of our economy are obviously beginning to slow."

In his report, Long said it appears supply chains are returning to the pre-pandemic levels, and for automotive parts producers, the future business outlook remains positive. While the market may be softening for other industries like office furniture makers and construction, Long said a sharp drop is not expected.

Here's a look at the key index results from March's survey:

New orders index (business improvement): +2 versus -17 in February

Production index (output): +13 versus -7 in February

Employment index: +13 versus +12 in February

Lead times index: +2 versus -19 in February

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys [are available on Seidman's website](#).

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Leaders from GVSU, Corewell Health celebrate inaugural cohort of scholars

One year ago, both institutions created unique program to combat nursing shortage

Media Note: several photos from the April 10 event are available to download: <http://gvsu.edu/s/2jb>

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Leaders from Grand Valley State University and Corewell Health celebrated the inaugural cohort of students who received scholarships from a program meant to address the nursing shortage.

Nearly 30 students were recognized as the first Corewell Health Nurse Scholars during a reception April 10 at the DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health on GVSU's Health Campus.

One year ago, the two institutions announced a [unique partnership to address the nursing shortage](#).

Corewell Health pledged to invest more than \$19 million over six years into the program that will create opportunities for 500 students to pursue a nursing degree at GVSU. Grand Valley agreed to increase its infrastructure support for students.

Students like Gabriel Martinez, who at 29 has had a diverse career that includes being a high school wrestling coach and a nurse technician.

It was his role as a coach that pushed him to finish his degree. "I wanted to walk the talk I was telling our students about going to college and getting a degree," Martinez said.

GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella congratulated the scholars who are nearing the end of their first semester. She also advised the students they bear some responsibility for the program's success.

"I want you to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment for what you have done so far, but also a sense of responsibility," Mantella said. "This program is innovative and serves as a model for others around the country. Your success will help place more nurses in health care."

Tina Freese Decker, president, and CEO of Corewell Health, welcomed students to the organization and reiterated the support available to them throughout their journey.

"You have nurse coaches teaching and mentoring you along the way and we have a nurse residency program to help with the transition to practicing health care," Freese Decker said. "You are part of our family now, and we are here to support you and help you grow in this role."

Martinez said the scholarship money made it possible for him to finish a degree. "Everything aligned — the scholarship and the fact that I will have a job at Corewell Health when I'm done," he said.

For Immediate Release

April 12, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, (616) 331-2221, coffillm@gvsu.edu
Sherri Belfield, JCSU Communications and Marketing, (704) 378-1032, sbelfield@jcsu.edu

Leaders from GVSU sign articulation agreement with North Carolina HBCU

Agreement offers JCSU student's opportunities to earn master's degrees at GVSU

Media note: Photos from today's event are available to download at <http://gvsu.edu/s/2jo>

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina - Leaders at Grand Valley State University and Johnson C. Smith University signed an agreement April 12 that provides pathways for North Carolina students to earn master's degrees at Grand Valley in engineering or athletic training.

JCSU is the fifth Historically Black College or University (HBCU) to join the [HBCU/Hispanic Serving Institution Consortium](#). The consortium advances Grand Valley's goals of increasing educational access and empowering learners. JCSU is a professional liberal arts college in Charlotte, North Carolina. GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said students from JCSU will enrich Grand Valley's campus and add strong and diverse talent to the West Michigan workforce.

"Partnerships like this are how higher education works best. We are collaborating, not competing, with one another and share a common goal: to help students succeed," Mantella said. "I'm very grateful to the teams who worked on this agreement and am excited to partner with Johnson C. Smith University." JCSU offers bachelor's degree programs in computer engineering, mathematics, and public health, in addition to a minor in sports medicine. The agreement provides opportunities for qualified students to earn GVSU master's degrees in engineering or athletic training, beginning in the Fall 2023 semester. JCSU President Clarence Armbrister said: "For 156 years, Johnson C. Smith University has been a leader in providing education to underserved communities. We are grateful that we aren't doing it alone. We want to make sure our students have a seamless pathway when they leave JCSU, and our announcement today is that this agreement will provide a guided pathway for JCSU and GVSU." JCSU students will receive in-state tuition rates, financial aid and many other GVSU resources to support their journey, including co-op and internship experiences at West Michigan employers.

B. Donta Truss, GVSU vice president for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach, said JCSU students will be set up for success because of the support systems built into the consortium pipeline program. Truss added that the program will hit a milestone in April when the first student from an HBCU will earn a GVSU master's degree in cell and molecular biology.

"We know that JCSU has extremely talented students," Truss said. "Through our combined efforts we want to connect these students to West Michigan business and industry leaders who are very much interested in diversifying their fields.

Paul Plotkowski, dean of GVSU's Padnos College of Engineering and Computing, said that college was founded four decades ago at the request of West Michigan industry leaders who wanted to identify local talent to meet the needs of the area.

"I'm so pleased to support students from HBCUs who come to Grand Valley and to connect them with industry, which begins early in their academic careers," Plotkowski said.

The connection between the two institutions was a JCSU alumnus who lives in Grand Rapids. Lorenzo Bradshaw, principal of Brookwood Elementary in Kentwood, heard about the HBCU/Hispanic Serving Institution Consortium and sent information to his connections at the North Carolina university.

For Immediate Release

April 17, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Reach Higher Showcase to highlight GVSU's student, faculty research

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Grand Valley State University President Philomena V. Mantella will announce two new university initiatives prior to the inaugural Reach Higher Showcase on April 21 at the DeVos Center on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus.

The Reach Higher Showcase is an interactive, multimedia exhibition highlighting the research and work of students, faculty and university departments that propels Grand Valley toward the commitments of the university's [Reach Higher 2025](#) strategic plan.

[The Reach Higher 2025 commitments](#) are focused on creating an empowered education for all learners, developing a lifetime of learning opportunities and providing a culture of educational equity.

Mantella will start the day's events for presenters and media at 10 a.m. in the Loosemore Auditorium of the DeVos Center with her announcement of two initiatives focused on the university's future, both of which will draw upon collaborative efforts from faculty and identify key innovations for future investment.

Following Mantella's announcement, the Reach Higher Showcase will open to the public and media at 11:30 a.m. Mantella, Provost Fatma Mili and Felix Ngassa, chair of the University Academic Senate, will provide general remarks and a welcome to officially open the showcase at noon.

"This first showcase will be a fun opportunity for the campus and West Michigan communities to truly experience what we mean when we say this university enriches society through excellent teaching, active scholarship, advancement of equity and public service," Mantella said.

"Empowered learning, innovative research, entrepreneurial ideas, community outreach and other work at Grand Valley improves our campus and builds a stronger Michigan economy."

Media are invited to join presenters and university leadership for breakfast at 9:30 a.m. at the DeVos Center. Media are also welcome to attend the showcase's events in the afternoon.

For Immediate Release

April 21, 2023

Media contact: Chris Knappe, University Communications, (616)331-2953 knapech@gvsu.edu

Reach Higher Showcase provides stage for action and innovation developed at Grand Valley State University

Mantella announces two initiatives that challenge the status quo and advance new thinking in higher education

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - The inaugural Reach Higher Showcase kicked off on April 21 with Grand Valley State University President Philomena V. Mantella announcing two new initiatives designed to challenge preconceived notions about how classes are taught and how curriculum is developed.

The first, Project Grand Path, is the region's first and only student-led maker community creating learning opportunities between the physical and virtual world. This experiential model in XR (mixed reality) engages a multidisciplinary team of GVSU student coders and designers. Coached by faculty, staff, and select industry partners, they will develop products and offerings that create high-impact immersive learning environments.

Project Grand Path is being developed by Julie Goldstein, assistant professor of film and video production, and Jonathan Engelsma, director of GVSU's Applied Computing Institute.

The second initiative, Laker Learning Futures, is designed to identify new opportunities for innovation in learning and teaching and then rapidly deploy and assess their viability with organized faculty groups. Designed by Robert Talbert, professor of mathematics and presidential fellow for the advancement of learning, Laker Learning Futures will support the testing of new instructional approaches and rigorously evaluate how these approaches affect student success.

"These initiatives, as well as many other creative, challenging and important works being shown today, are our community in action, delivering a radical impact and elevated value to our students, our community and our state," Mantella said. "Innovations in higher education like these will help unlock the potential of our emerging leaders and set the course for Michigan's future. I am grateful to the many faculty, staff, and student innovators leading the way."

The two programs highlighted were among over 130 showcased. The day drew hundreds of visitors from West Michigan to learn about innovations emanating from GVSU.

The exposition at the DeVos Center on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus showcased innovative research, physical and virtual environments, and new approaches to education.

The Showcase highlighted the real-world ways GVSU is fulfilling its commitments to delivering an empowered educational experience, a culture of educational equity and a lifetime of learning. For more information on the Reach Higher Showcase, [visit the event website](#).

For Immediate Release

April 24, 2023

Contact: Sarah Dudinetz, GVSU University Communications, dudinesa@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2228

More than 3,000 GVSU students to participate in Commencement ceremonies, former Ford & Steelcase CEO James Hackett to be guest speaker

Media note: Skybox 101A and 101B at Van Andel Arena is reserved for media. It offers a mult box and an elevated, unobstructed view of the podium and platform.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - GVSU students are scheduled to cross the stage during Grand Valley's Winter 2023 Commencement ceremonies on Friday, April 28 and Saturday, April 29 at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids.

Ceremony details for the 3,043 graduates are outlined below:

Friday, April 28, at 7 p.m.: College of Education and Community Innovation, Padnos College of Engineering and Computing, Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Saturday, April 29, at 10 a.m.: Seidman College of Business, College of Health Professions, Kirkhof College of Nursing

Saturday, April 29, at 3 p.m.: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

James Hackett, former CEO of Steelcase and former president and CEO of Ford, is this year's guest speaker at the Saturday morning ceremony only. He is expected to receive an honorary doctorate degree, pending approval of the board of trustees on Friday.

The student speaker at Friday's ceremony is Priscila Onteveros Chucatin, an international student receiving her bachelor's degree in computer science. At the Saturday morning ceremony, the student speaker will be Judith Eguzoikpe, an international student receiving her master's degree in public health. At the Saturday afternoon ceremony, the student speaker will be Javier Guillen, a graduate student receiving his master's degree in cell and molecular biology. Guillen is the first graduate of the HBCU/HSI consortium with GVSU.

President Philomena V. Mantella will give the Commencement address. Felix Ngassa, chair of the University Academic Senate, and Fatma Mili, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs will also give their remarks.

Notable student story: Mother and daughter to graduate together

Corinn VanWyck and daughter Eva VanWyck are graduating from Grand Valley at the same time. Eva is earning an exercise science degree while Corinn, from Ludington, is earning an integrative studies degree through GVSU's LEADS program, an accelerated degree path for adult learners. Because their degrees are from different colleges, each will be able to watch the other's ceremony.

"I'm excited," Eva said. "How many people do you know who get to graduate with their mom?" Corinn and Eva are available for interviews.

A livestream of the event will be available for those unable to attend.

For Immediate Release

April 26, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, (616) 331-2221, coffillm@gvsu.edu

Leslie Blair, Talladega College, (737) 703-9549, lblair@asher-blair.com

GVSU expands pipeline pathways for diverse students to education

Leaders from GVSU, Talladega College sign articulation agreement

Media note: Photos from the signing event are available to download at <http://gvsu.edu/s/2kq>

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - The pathways for students from diverse colleges or universities to earn graduate degrees at Grand Valley State University have expanded to education.

Leaders from GVSU and Talladega College in Alabama signed an articulation agreement April 26, providing students with opportunities to earn master's degrees in education and school counseling, in addition to Michigan teaching certification.

Talladega College is the sixth partner to join the HBCU/Hispanic Serving Institution Pipeline Consortium. Leaders signed the agreement on GVSU's Pew Grand Rapids Campus. Agreements with the five other institutions have focused on graduate degrees in STEM fields.

GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said the agreement with Talladega College will help alleviate a shortage of teachers in Michigan while diversifying the talent pipeline. The agreement provides pathways for qualified students to earn Michigan teacher certification, and master's degrees in higher education, school counseling, instructional technology and instruction and curriculum.

"I'm so pleased to welcome Talladega College to the pipeline consortium," Mantella said. "Expanding the pathways to graduate degrees in education means more access for students, which is a critical aspect of Grand Valley's mission."

Talladega College President Gregory Vincent said: "We are excited to develop the partnership with Grand Valley State University as part of our strategic plan to ensure our students have increased opportunities to attend graduate school. This partnership is especially valued because GVSU is so aligned with our goals and values, including our student-first perspective, and is a university that recognizes the merits HBCU graduates bring to graduate and professional school."

Sherril Soman, dean of GVSU's College of Education and Community Innovation, said graduate students in the program will have opportunities for high-impact field experiences in the classroom, which will also benefit pre-K-12 students.

"All students benefit from having teachers of color, but this is especially true for students of color," Soman said. "It is important that the educator workforce reflects the diversity of school populations. We are honored to partner with Talladega College on this goal."

B. Donta Truss, vice president for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach, said the pipeline consortium will reach a milestone during GVSU's commencement ceremonies on April 29, when the first HBCU student to enroll at GVSU will earn a graduate degree in cell and molecular biology.

"Students who choose to come to Grand Valley for a graduate degree will find an institution with many of the same values as Talladega: diversity, integrity and a student-first mindset," Truss said. "They will be supported by a myriad of student resources and services, including being welcomed by several cohorts of HBCU students who think of themselves as a family."

For Immediate Release

May 4, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

WGVU Public Media Wins 2023 Michigan Association of Broadcasters Station Excellence Award for Public Radio

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - WGVU Public Media recently received the 2023 Michigan Association of Broadcasters Station Excellence Award for Public Radio at the association's annual awards ceremony. The award is among the most prestigious in the Michigan broadcasting industry, recognizing outstanding achievement in programming, community service and overall station operations.

In addition to the Station Excellence Award, WGVU Public Media also won seven other best-in-category awards, including [Feature/Use of Medium](#), [Best Musical Programming](#), Best Marketing Materials & Promos, Best Newscast and [Best Special Interest & Cultural Programming](#).

"I am proud of the work the WGVU-FM team does to serve our community each day," said WGVU General Manager Jim Rademaker. "It is gratifying to see their excellence recognized not just by our community, but also by our peers across the state."

WGVU Public Media has served the West Michigan region for more than 50 years, providing a diverse range of programming, from news and public affairs to music and entertainment. The station is committed to providing a platform for community voices, in-depth reporting of local news and promoting civic engagement.

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, (616) 331-2221, coffillm@gvsu.edu
Simon A. Thalmann, KCC Marketing and Communications, (269) 303-0298, ThalmannS@kellogg.edu

KCC students who want to transfer to GVSU benefit from agreement

Leaders from both institutions sign articulation agreement to improve pathways to GVSU degrees

Media note: Photos from today's signing are available to download: <http://gvsu.edu/s/2kQ>

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. - Leaders from Grand Valley State University and Kellogg Community College signed an institutional articulation agreement on May 5 that will provide smooth transitions for KCC students who want to continue their education at GVSU.

The agreement was signed at KCC's Binda Performing Arts Center on campus in Battle Creek. The overarching agreement between the two institutions allows seamless transfer along multiple academic pathways among various GVSU degree programs and KCC programs.

GVSU is the second-most popular destination for KCC students who transfer their credits to a four-year university. GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said she is pleased to partner with KCC and help increase educational access for students.

"This is an important partnership as the agreement helps to ensure students who have an associate degree from KCC will not face any barriers at Grand Valley when it comes to transferring credits, receiving financial aid, duplicating coursework or any other resource a student needs," Mantella said. KCC President Paul Watson said the articulation agreement exemplifies the schools' continued dedication to empowering students to reach their full potential.

"Kellogg Community College is pleased to enhance its longstanding collaboration with Grand Valley State University, offering students a smoother transition from KCC to GVSU," Watson said. "This articulation agreement reflects our ongoing commitment to providing accessible, high-quality education to our students, providing more opportunities for them to pursue higher education seamlessly."

Students must also meet all other standard admission, curriculum, and graduation requirements of KCC and GVSU. Separate program agreements will be finalized between the two institutions.

Photo caption: From left are Tonya Forbes, KCC vice president for instruction; Paul Watson, KCC president; Philomena V. Mantella, GVSU president; Fatma Mili, GVSU provost.

About GVSU: Grand Valley State University attracts nearly 22,000 students with high-quality programs and state-of-the-art facilities. Grand Valley is a comprehensive university serving students from across Michigan and dozens of other states and foreign countries. Grand Valley offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in 300+ areas of study from campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids, and Holland, and from regional centers in Battle Creek, Detroit, Muskegon, and Traverse City. The university is dedicated to individual student achievement, going beyond the traditional classroom experience, with research opportunities and business partnerships.

About KCC: Kellogg Community College, founded in 1956, serves approximately 4,800 students annually via five campuses, customized training, and online coursework. The College offers customizable transfer pathways for students in addition to 39 associate degree programs, 29 certificate programs, seven categories of professional certifications and dozens of short-term, non-credit courses.

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

Report: Economy flattening, concerns rise over employment picture

Survey author expects unemployment could rise by summer amid uncertainty in manufacturing

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - West Michigan manufacturers continue to signal a slowing economy as Grand Valley State University's closely watched monthly purchasing managers' survey showed continued softness and increased caution.

"We are well aware that the office furniture business remains soft, and we had hoped that the pent-up demand in automotive would help keep the West Michigan economy afloat, even if other economic segments soften," said Brian Long, the survey's author and director of supply chain management research at the Seidman College of Business. "Although one month does not make a trend, we now need to be a little more cautious going forward."

While some key survey measures in the Current Business Trends report Long titled "Return to Flat Growth" saw little movement from the data released in April, the employment and production indices were lower than last month's more rosy outlook.

Long said while the percentage of companies indicating they are adding jobs remained positive, there could be clouds on the horizon.

"Based on the current state of the economy, we can expect the unemployment rate for West Michigan to begin rising late in the summer," he wrote.

Here's a look at the key index results from April's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

New orders index (business improvement): +0 versus +2 in March

Production index (output): +5 versus +13 in March

Employment index: +3 versus +13 in March

Lead times index: +3 versus +2 in March

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are [available on Seidman's website](#).

For Immediate Release

May 8, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU, regional partners to hold beach clean-up event to showcase innovative plastic litter capture technology

MUSKEGON, Mich. - Grand Valley State University's Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI), through its partnership with the charitable arm of the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#) (CGLR) as part of the [Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup](#), will showcase how a new, innovative, remote controlled beach cleaning robot, developed by Niteko ROBOTICS, is helping capture and clean up plastic litter and other debris on Michigan beaches. The technology was purchased by CGLR and is being deployed this summer with a number of partners in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin, thanks to a \$1.5 million plus donation from Meijer.

During the event, representatives from the media and members of the community will have an opportunity to see the 100% electric, eco-friendly technology, also known as the BeBot, in action, and the litter it collects, at Pere Marquette Beach on May 11 during an Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach clean-up event organized with Meijer team members, Unilever, the Alliance, and CGLR.

Event Details

Date/Time: May 11 at 10 a.m.

Location: Pere Marquette Beach, Muskegon, Michigan

Speakers: Jonathan Seyferth, Muskegon city manager; Lauren Moran, Unilever Meijer lead; Olivia Reda, Alliance for the Great Lakes; Mark Fisher, president and CEO, Council of the Great Lakes Region; Mark Luttenton, interim director of AWRI, and Jamie Cross, AWRI.

Background

The Great Lakes make up 84% of North America's surface freshwater, providing drinking water for 40 million residents in the United States and Canada and sustaining plants and wildlife. Like our oceans, the Great Lakes face a growing plastic waste and litter challenge, with studies estimating that as much as 22 million pounds of plastic could be entering the lakes every year through different sources and pathways, polluting the lakes and their surrounding watersheds, something that will cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually to combat and curtail.

Since 2022, Meijer has donated more than \$1.5 million to the CGLR in the United States to deploy three types of innovative litter capture and clean-up technologies. The BeBot and [Pixie Drone](#), developed by Ranmarine, will be deployed at 18 beaches and waterway locations along Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin lakeshores. In addition, more than 60 stormwater filtration systems called the Gutter Bin, developed by Frog Creek Partners, have been installed at nine Meijer supercenters to capture litter, sediment, and oil residue from parking lots before it can enter local waterways, and ultimately the Great Lakes, following high precipitation weather events. Meijer began its partnership with the Alliance for the Great Lakes in 2019, sponsoring various Adopt-a-Beach clean-up events across its footprint.

About the Alliance for the Great Lakes and the Adopt-a-Beach Program

The Alliance for the Great Lakes is a nonpartisan nonprofit working to protect our most precious resource: the fresh, clean, and natural waters of the Great Lakes. The Alliance works across the region with staff in Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin as well as Washington, D.C. For more than 30 years, [Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach volunteers](#) have worked to keep Great Lakes shorelines healthy, safe and beautiful. Every year, thousands of volunteers join clean-up events on the five Great Lakes and the eight Great Lake states. Adopt-a-Beach volunteers remove tens of thousands of pounds of litter from their local beaches, about 85% of it is plastic. This year marks the [20th year Adopt-a-Beach volunteers have collected data at clean-up events](#). Researchers use Adopt-a-Beach data to study the sources of plastic pollution, and this information helps decision makers make the case for policies that protect the lakes. To learn about the Alliance for the Great Lakes and Adopt-a-Beach, visit greatlakes.org

About the Council of the Great Lakes Region

The Council of the Great Lakes Region is a binational network of organizations comprised of the CGLR USA, an Ohio-based trade association; the CGLR Foundation, an Ohio-based public charity and the CGLR Canada, a not-for-profit corporation. Together, these organizations are leading a new era of economic growth, environmental protection, and individual well-being by building the region's long-term competitiveness and sustainability today. For additional information, please visit councilgreatlakesregion.org.

About the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup Initiative

The Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup, an initiative of the Council of the Great Lakes Region and Pollution Probe with support from a network of funders and collaborators, uses innovative plastic capture technology to quickly capture and remove plastics and other litter from Lake Ontario to Lake Superior and everywhere in between and is one of the largest initiatives of its kind in the world. Through research, outreach and education, the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup is gathering data on litter entering our waterways and identifying how government, industry, and consumers can work together to reduce, reuse, and recycle material waste. To learn more, visit greatlakesplasticcleanup.org.

About the Grand Valley State University's Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute

AWRI is a multidisciplinary research organization with GVSU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. AWRI's mission is to integrate research, education, and outreach to enhance and preserve freshwater resources. To learn more, visit gvsu.edu/wri.

For Immediate Release

June 7, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

Audio Clips and a transcript of those clips are available from our DropBox, <http://gvsu.edu/s/2mc>

West Michigan manufacturing indicators swing positive in May.

Grand Valley State University survey continues to show yo-yo-like activity in industrial sector.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - May's survey of purchasing managers shows the West Michigan economy continuing to slow at a measured pace as key indices continued a month-to-month yo-yo pattern signaling uncertainty – and reason for optimism.

The Current Business Trends Report, authored by Brian Long, director of supply management research for the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University, included upticks in areas like sales, output, employment and purchases in May after flat or lower results in April.

"Since we instituted this survey many years ago, we've seen our numbers bounce around, and this month our bounce was to the upside," Long said. "Our index of new orders came in much stronger than expected. But of course, one month does not make a trend. So, when we add up June at the end of the month, the numbers we get may be a little bit less robust."

Office furniture makers continue to report soft market conditions - though no major layoff announcements have been made. Meanwhile, automotive parts suppliers remain steady with backlogs and upside potential thanks to "reshoring" - or bringing manufacturing of certain parts that had been made overseas back to U.S.-based suppliers.

"This is where I think West Michigan is well positioned to pick up some additional business," Long said. "The problem is, of course, reshoring in the industrial market takes time to identify and qualify new sources so it won't happen overnight."

Here is a look at the key index results from May's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

New orders index (business improvement): +19 versus +0 in April

Production index (output): +13 versus +5 in April

Employment index: +13 versus +3 in April

Lead times index: +2 versus +3 in April

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on Seidman's website.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

Audio clips for this month's report and a transcript of those clips are available from our Dropbox. <http://gvsu.edu/s/2ng>

Manufacturing report: West Michigan economic signals remain positive despite headwinds.
Auto industry continues to buoy local sector as national surveys sour.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - There is no sign of recession - at least, not yet.

That is the conclusion of the June Current Business Trends survey of West Michigan manufacturers, which showed a slowdown, but mostly positive signals despite expectations around the country of an economic slump.

"Even though our local survey of business conditions is still positive, at the national level both of the major surveys have turned negative and one of them has turned sharply negative," said Brian Long, director of supply chain management research at Grand Valley State University's Seidman College of Business. "This indicates that other parts of the country are beginning to slide as far as the economic picture is concerned, not necessarily yet to a recession, but still, they are softening."

The survey in June showed new orders, production and employment continued to be in positive territory, though the orders and production indices softened from the May survey.

Once again Long attributed West Michigan's resiliency to the automotive industry as it continues to deal with a backlog that he thinks could last for another year. While office furniture, another key West Michigan industry, is seeing a slowdown, the sector has not collapsed, he said.

"Even if we do slide into a recession, the chances are it may not affect West Michigan nearly as much as it does other places in the country," Long said.

Here is a look at the key index results from June's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

New orders index (sales): +9 versus +19 in May

Production index (output): +6 versus +13 in May

Employment index: +14 versus +13 in May

Lead times index: -17 versus -2 in May

More information about the survey and an archive of past reports are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

For Immediate Release

July 11, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Media note: Here is a link to photos from today's event is available.

GVSU, Jackson College team to create new pathways for students, strengthen nursing talent pipeline.

State funds available for community colleges to partner and design nursing bachelor's degree

JACKSON, Mich. - Leaders at Grand Valley State University and Jackson College signed an agreement July 11 that includes a nursing pathway for Jackson College students to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing from GVSU, strengthening the talent pipeline in that field.

Funding for the nursing partnership comes from \$56 million in state appropriations for community colleges to partner with four-year universities and design a bachelor's degree in nursing specific to that community.

The agreement also provides other Jackson College students with seamless pathways to complete their bachelor's degrees at GVSU and gives Grand Valley a physical office at Jackson College's main campus on Emmons Road. Starting this fall, the office will be staffed by a jointly hired student services coordinator to offer broad-ranging transfer and student support.

GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said the agreement benefits and empowers Jackson College students to continue their education without barriers.

"We are so pleased with this agreement that develops a deep partnership with Jackson College and the surrounding community," Mantella said. "Having a physical presence will allow us to collaborate on joint programming and community engagement. The nursing partnership builds health equity and educational equity in Jackson by meeting the needs of area residents."

Jackson College President Daniel J. Phelan concurred with Mantella's comments.

"Not only will the agreement provide more opportunities for area nurses to build upon their credentials, but the permanent presence of GVSU in the Jackson College University Center will provide the greater Jackson community with a solid educational pathway to other instructional areas, with a highly reputable public university — all without leaving the area," Phelan said. "I am grateful to Dr. Mantella and her team for making this partnership possible."

Nursing faculty from both institutions will soon co-design a curriculum for current Jackson College students and graduates who hold an associate degree in nursing and want to continue their education. Jackson College students will have access to Grand Valley support services like financial aid, advising and tutoring.

Patricia Thomas, dean of GVSU's Kirkhof College of Nursing, said it is an innovative approach removing educational barriers.

"Nurses who have their bachelor's degree are often called upon for more leadership positions, more doors are open to them," Thomas said. "We look forward to this partnership as a strategy to ensure our future nurses address health care disparities in their community while advancing the nursing profession."

Heather Ruttkofsky, Jackson College dean of Health Sciences, Career and Technical Trades, said: "From this innovative collaboration, it is exciting to see that students in our communities will consider Jackson College their choice for a bachelor's degree instead of a transfer pathway."

"From the time we first came together with Grand Valley, the conversations we had showed that this program was a clear fit with each institution's mission. We are excited for this new opportunity for our students and the possibility for future collaborations."

About GVSU: Grand Valley State University attracts nearly 22,000 students with high-quality programs and state-of-the-art facilities. Grand Valley is a comprehensive university serving students from across Michigan and dozens of other states and foreign countries. Grand Valley offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in 300+ areas of study from campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids and Holland, and from regional centers in Battle Creek, Detroit, Muskegon, and Traverse City. The university is dedicated to individual student achievement, going beyond the traditional classroom experience, with research opportunities and business partnerships.

About Jackson College: Jackson College has been serving Jackson County and the south-central Michigan area for 95 years. It has campuses in Jackson, Hillsdale, and Lenawee counties, and around the world via online learning through Jackson College Global. The College educates about 5,000 students annually and is committed to student success and making higher education accessible, so each student may accomplish their goals.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

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For Immediate Release

July 11, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Media note: Here is a link to photos from today's event is available.

GVSU, Jackson College team to create new pathways for students, strengthen nursing talent pipeline.

State funds available for community colleges to partner and design nursing bachelor's degree

JACKSON, Mich. - Leaders at Grand Valley State University and Jackson College signed an agreement July 11 that includes a nursing pathway for Jackson College students to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing from GVSU, strengthening the talent pipeline in that field.

Funding for the nursing partnership comes from \$56 million in state appropriations for community colleges to partner with four-year universities and design a bachelor's degree in nursing specific to that community.

The agreement also provides other Jackson College students with seamless pathways to complete their bachelor's degrees at GVSU and gives Grand Valley a physical office at Jackson College's main campus on Emmons Road. Starting this fall, the office will be staffed by a jointly hired student services coordinator to offer broad-ranging transfer and student support.

GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said the agreement benefits and empowers Jackson College students to continue their education without barriers.

"We are so pleased with this agreement that develops a deep partnership with Jackson College and the surrounding community," Mantella said. "Having a physical presence will allow us to collaborate on joint programming and community engagement. The nursing partnership builds health equity and educational equity in Jackson by meeting the needs of area residents."

Jackson College President Daniel J. Phelan concurred with Mantella's comments.

"Not only will the agreement provide more opportunities for area nurses to build upon their credentials, but the permanent presence of GVSU in the Jackson College University Center will provide the greater Jackson community with a solid educational pathway to other instructional areas, with a highly reputable public university — all without leaving the area," Phelan said. "I am grateful to Dr. Mantella and her team for making this partnership possible."

Nursing faculty from both institutions will soon co-design a curriculum for current Jackson College students and graduates who hold an associate degree in nursing and want to continue their education. Jackson College students will have access to Grand Valley support services like financial aid, advising and tutoring.

Patricia Thomas, dean of GVSU's Kirkhof College of Nursing, said it is an innovative approach removing educational barriers.

"Nurses who have their bachelor's degree are often called upon for more leadership positions, more doors are open to them," Thomas said. "We look forward to this partnership as a strategy to ensure our future nurses address health care disparities in their community while advancing the nursing profession."

Heather Ruttkofsky, Jackson College dean of Health Sciences, Career and Technical Trades, said: "From this innovative collaboration, it is exciting to see that students in our communities will consider Jackson College their choice for a bachelor's degree instead of a transfer pathway."

"From the time we first came together with Grand Valley, the conversations we had showed that this program was a clear fit with each institution's mission. We are excited for this new opportunity for our students and the possibility for future collaborations."

About GVSU: Grand Valley State University attracts nearly 22,000 students with high-quality programs and state-of-the-art facilities. Grand Valley is a comprehensive university serving students from across Michigan and dozens of other states and foreign countries. Grand Valley offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in 300+ areas of study from campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids and Holland, and from regional centers in Battle Creek, Detroit, Muskegon, and Traverse City. The university is dedicated to individual student achievement, going beyond the traditional classroom experience, with research opportunities and business partnerships.

About Jackson College: Jackson College has been serving Jackson County and the south-central Michigan area for 95 years. It has campuses in Jackson, Hillsdale, and Lenawee counties, and around the world via online learning through Jackson College Global. The College educates about 5,000 students annually and is committed to student success and making higher education accessible, so each student may accomplish their goals.

For Immediate Release

July 25, 2023

Contact information: Chris Knappe, (616)331-2953, knapech@gvsu.edu

MEDIA ADVISORY

Producers/Editor's note: Photography and B-roll will be available from this event. Contact Chris Knappe, knapech@gvsu.edu

GVSU's President, President Philomena V. Mantella to Showcase REP4 Alliance at Capitol Hill Briefing July 26

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Grand Valley State University President Philomena V. Mantella will join elected officials and Congressional staff to showcase REP4, a national movement to empower diverse high school and college students to shape the future of higher education.

"We are inspired by young learners with keen perspectives on what their future can be. These learners gave us ideas that will play a key role as we lead the national conversation on a new vision for education," Mantella said prior to departing for Washington. "Their insights will help us create a model for an education system designed for learners by learners."

REP4 - short for Rapid Education Prototyping - mobilizes students to become designers of their own education. Grand Valley State University, REP4's organizer and convener, is the founding Midwest partner. The six other founding partners are: Amarillo College, a community college in Texas; Boise State University, a Research II university in Idaho; California State University San Marcos, an HSI (Hispanic-Serving Institution) and AANAPISI (Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution) in California; Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, a system of 17 public colleges and universities; Fort Valley State University, an HBCU (Historically Black College or University) in Georgia and Shippensburg University, part of the state system in Pennsylvania.

The briefing will include educational thought leaders from think tanks, associations, Capitol Hill committee staff and the administration.

WHEN: July 26 – 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

WHERE: 2043 Rayburn House Office Building, 45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC

For Immediate Release

July 28, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Inventor named Lakeshore Innovator of the Year

MEDIA NOTE: Photos of the event are available by contacting Brian Vernellis, vernellb@gvsu.edu. This year's award winner, Lisa Spaugh, is available for interviews. Contact her at info@ezbeachsteps.com.

MUSKEGON - Lisa Spaugh's innovative solution to her evolving lakefront property earned her the 2023 Lakeshore Innovator of the Year honor, presented by Grand Valley State University's Muskegon Innovation Hub on July 27.

Spaugh has lived in her home along Lake Michigan since 1997 and has seen the lake's awe-inspiring beauty and its destructive power. She said she watched over a three-year span as her waterfront deck and stairs were swallowed by shifting dunes and blowing sands. It prompted her to devise a way to maintain her beach access.

"Waves and erosion kept taking things away and people were terrified of putting money down there," Spaugh said. "I thought, 'What if we could create a set of stairs that changed as the dunes changed?'"

Her solution, EZ Beach Steps, is a portable system of stairs that can easily be transported and relocated by homeowners.

Receiving the award was an emotional moment for Spaugh, who designed the steps with the help of her father, who recently died. Spaugh told the crowd of finalists and their guests that she and her father finalized the design at her kitchen table. Later, he introduced her to suppliers who could manufacture it.

"My dad dropped out of high school, and he was a machine mechanic," Spaugh said. "He knew everything you could possibly know about materials and mechanical stuff. He just had a brilliant mind, and he never, ever said no to anything."

Spaugh's invention is gaining traction among lakeshore residents along Michigan's sweeping coastline and beyond, she said. Most recently, she said she shipped her first set of EZ Beach Steps outside of Michigan to a customer in Puget Sound, Washington.

"It's been really fantastic. The word spreads," Spaugh said. "Once one neighbor installs it, then all the neighbors do it."

This year's finalists included:

Mike Franzak, City of Muskegon

Under Franzak's leadership on the city's development services team, Muskegon is looking to become a leader in the state in addressing the housing crisis. Since 2019, Franzak's team is utilizing a piece of state legislation addressing the development of brownfield areas. Muskegon has infilled more than 130 housing units, either for sale or for rent on city-owned vacant lots. Muskegon is also marketing new construction homes for less than \$170,000.

Leo McCormick, Sean McManus & Tom Michalak, Grand Valley

GVSU's Facilities Service Energy Engineering Team of McCormick, McManus and Michalak developed technology, which they called CO2 Hound, which improves the performance and efficiency of heating and air conditioning systems on campus by measuring the amount of carbon dioxide in the air being returned to the system. The trio estimates the sensor technology results in 25 percent energy savings per building.

Samantha Otto, The Woven Trifecta

Otto is the innovator behind The Woven Trifecta, “a balance of food, farm and education,” as she calls it. The Woven Farmstead produces market crops that are certified naturally grown. The Woven Wellness offers in-person or online workshops to educate customers on the connections between food and wellness. And, the Woven Words is the social engagement piece, utilizing a blog, a podcast and speaking engagements to spread the Trifecta’s mission.

Erin Peyer, Arts Council of White Lake

As executive director of the arts council, Peyer has introduced innovative programs to keep patrons engaged. She teaches Music Together, a music and movement class with an international curriculum for young children. In 2020, she established a residency for emerging young artists of color. Artists between the ages of 17-21 are paired with a local artist of color who acts as a mentor and guides them through their emerging career.

For Immediate Release

August 8, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

West Michigan economy flattens in July, GVSU researcher says

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Local manufacturers are seeing the West Michigan economy flatten as sales across some industries have slowed and market demand has stabilized, according to a monthly survey conducted by a Grand Valley State University researcher.

Brian Long, director of supply chain management research at GVSU, said his August report shows several key indicators from July have flattened after fluctuating from the previous few months.

"Our most important index in our survey of purchasing managers is new orders," Long said. "When new orders are coming in strong to just about any firm, they start buying more materials, more equipment, more industrial services and eventually of course, hiring more people, but the impact on the financial and employment statistics may not show up for weeks or even months.

"So right now, with most of our recent orders indexes turning in flat or stable, we have to declare that the West Michigan economy is stable, neither expanding or contracting."

While the strong demand for cars and light trucks is helping the automotive industry prosper, suppliers in the office furniture sector are seeing their segment soften, Long said.

"Statistically, this month's survey of purchasing managers in West Michigan is about as flat as it can possibly be," Long said. "However, it is our automotive parts producers that are holding us up. Other industries like office furniture are softening, but again, I say softening and not collapsing like we would expect in a recession."

Here's a look at the key index results from July's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

- New orders index (business improvement): 0 versus +9 in June
- Production index (output): -3 versus +6 in June
- Employment index: +7 versus +14 in June
- Lead times index: -7 versus -17 in June

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

August 17, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

MEDIA ADVISORY

Media invited to join GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella as she welcomes students on Aug. 23

ALLENDALE, Mich. - Media are invited to join Grand Valley State University President Philomena V. Mantella as she welcomes students moving into campus housing on Aug. 23.

Mantella will also be available to the media for interviews on Aug. 23 before visiting GVSU's living centers to greet students and their families. This year's incoming class is the largest in school history as well as the most diverse.

"The excitement and energy of move-in week make it one of the best times of the year on campus," Mantella said. "The size of this year's incoming class shows our commitment to preparing students for a lifetime of learning, prosperity, and growth. Our value is resonating with students and parents."

WHAT: Media availability with GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella

WHEN: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 23

WHERE: Kleiner Commons, 11015 Residence Drive, Allendale. Short-term parking is available on campus in Lots D1 and D2. Contact Brian Vernellis, vernellb@gvsu.edu, for more information.

- More than 6,200 new undergraduate and graduate students comprise this year's incoming class.
- This year's group of incoming students represents an 18 percent increase from last year's incoming class.
- Incoming undergraduate students achieved a median 3.65 GPA.
- GVSU projects a 2 percent to 3 percent increase in total students enrolled for the Fall 2023 semester. Final enrollment figures will be available after the semester begins.

Grand Valley's 2023-2024 academic year opens with Convocation at 7 p.m. on Aug. 24 at the GVSU Fieldhouse Arena. The first day of classes is Aug. 28.

For Immediate Release

August 24, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

GVSU program for veteran entrepreneurs coming to Battle Creek

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. - Grand Valley State University will hold a three-month entrepreneurship and acceleration program for military veterans in Battle Creek, ending with a pitch night that will award \$20,000 in prize money.

The Michigan Veteran Entrepreneur-Lab (MVE-Lab) is offered through GVSU's DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI). In a cohort model, veterans work with mentors from the community to hone or launch their small business start-ups.

MVE-Lab Battle Creek will run each Monday evening from September 11-December 4 at the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce, 34 Jackson St. W, Suite 3A.

Veterans, their spouses, or dependents over age 18 are encouraged to register online before September 4.

The cohort will be led by Michael Hyacinthe, U.S. Navy veteran and CEO/founder of Wimage, a children's media company; and Charles Solano, former Marine and owner/operator of Biggby Coffee shops in Battle Creek.

Shorouq Almallah, director of the DeVos CEI, said the MVE-Lab began in 2018 and, since its launch, has successfully trained 150 veterans and their families in 11 cohorts and five different regions in Michigan.

More MVE-Lab statistics:

- \$175,000 in startup grants has been deployed through partnerships with banks, foundations, and financial institutions
- More than 65 percent of graduates remain in business, with gross annual sales of \$799,516 and a gross capital investment exceeding \$3.1 million.

Hyacinthe said mentors are critical to the success of MVE-Lab.

"Creating social capital through MVE-Lab is integral to creating a rigorous and supportive platform for veteran entrepreneurs," he said. "We invite professionals, entrepreneurs and business leaders who are passionate about helping veteran-owned businesses to engage in the program as mentors and coaches to provide feedback, valuable connections, and business acumen."

The Battle Creek MVE-Lab is supported through a partnership with the Battle Creek Chamber of Commerce and the GVSU Battle Creek Regional Outreach Center. Questions about the program can be sent to mve@gvsu.edu or call (616) 331-7582.

For Immediate Release

August 24, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Events at GVSU's Hauenstein Center focused on 'empowered citizenship'

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Grand Valley State University's Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies begins its 23rd year of programming with a series of panels and discussions examining the role of citizenship on national and global scales.

Focusing on the theme of "empowered citizenship," the Hauenstein Center welcomes nationally respected authors, lecturers, and scholars to address the responsibilities of citizenship and what it means to be a citizen in today's society, said Megan Rydecki, director of the Hauenstein Center.

"Leadership begins with how each of us chooses to show up in the world on a daily basis, and our choices should be informed by continuous exploration of what it means to be a citizen in contemporary times," Rydecki said.

The center's first event of its fall calendar presents Eric Liu, CEO of Citizen University, and Victor Davis Hanson, author, historian and visiting professor at Hillsdale College, for a bipartisan discussion on overcoming the barriers to becoming an empowered citizen.

The discussion, "Citizenship in Crisis: Re-Empowering the American Citizen," is scheduled for 7 p.m. on September 7 at the Eberhard Center on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus.

Liu will also lead a lunch workshop, beginning at noon on September 7, exploring the cultural milestones, historical events and civic skills that construct a foundation for being an effective American citizen.

The center honors Constitution Day with a lecture by Vincent Phillip Muñoz, founding director of the Center for Citizenship & Constitutional Government at the University of Notre Dame. Muñoz will speak at 6 p.m. on September 19 at the DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus.

The Hauenstein Center and GVSU's Frederik Meijer Honors College partner to host Faye Richardson-Green, the new Meijer Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, as she opens the 2023-2024 Wheelhouse Talks series on September 29. Each year, the Wheelhouse Talks welcome community leaders to share their leadership philosophy and experience with students in GVSU's Peter C. Cook Leadership Academy.

Christopher McKnight Nichols, professor of history at Ohio State University, will lead a discussion, "Citizens of the World: Global Citizenship and U.S. Foreign Relations," on October 12, examining how we can balance our ethics and shared humanity on a global scale with the nation's interest and security.

"Through study of the presidency, our nation's history and current civic landscape, we look forward to further understanding what it means to be a citizen, the rights and responsibilities it entails, and how we can all unite to foster progress and greater understanding," Rydecki said.

For more details on these and other Hauenstein Center events on “empowered citizenship” this fall, visit the center’s events webpage.

For Immediate Release

August 30, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Media advisory: GVSU leaders launch ambassador network in Detroit

DETROIT - Leaders from Grand Valley State University will join alumni and business leaders to learn about university initiatives in the region, expand awareness and grow the area's network to support students.

President Philomena V. Mantella and others will attend the relaunch of the Southeast Michigan Ambassadors program August 30 at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Media members are encouraged to attend.

Details:

GVSU Southeast Michigan Ambassadors

August 30, 4-6 p.m.

Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E Warren Ave.

Joining Mantella will be B. Donta Truss, vice president for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach; William Pickard, former GVSU trustee and Detroit entrepreneur; and Mikyia Aaron, current GVSU trustee.

Enrollment facts:

- More than 14,000 Laker alumni make their homes in this region
- More than a quarter of GVSU students come from Southeast Michigan
- The ambassador program started in 2021 and includes more than 40 area leaders

For Immediate Release

September 11, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

West Michigan economy remains flat in August, GVSU researcher says.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Local manufacturers said the West Michigan economy has flattened this summer, according to a monthly survey conducted by a Grand Valley State University researcher. Brian Long, director of supply chain management research at GVSU, said his September report of businesses and executives shows conflicting statistics, but the general belief is that the local economy has remained flat through August.

"Our key cyclical industries in West Michigan are automotive, office furniture and, to a lesser degree, aerospace," Long said. "Aerospace is doing fine, and office furniture is a little on the soft side, but not collapsing.

"Automotive is doing OK in advance of what appears to be an almost certain strike. Even then, I think the strike will slow the West Michigan economy somewhat, but not collapse it."

Long pointed out in his report that new orders, the report's index for business improvement, turned slightly negative from July. On the other hand, the production, or output index, turned significantly positive from July.

Long said local unemployment rates should see a slight increase, given the responses from his survey.

"For our August survey, the employment index still remains fairly positive, but 13% of the month survey respondents reported staff reductions, which is up from 6% in July," Long said. "This should translate to slightly higher unemployment rates over the next few weeks."

Here's a look at the key index results from August's survey of West Michigan manufacturers:

New orders index (business improvement): -4 vs. 0 in July

Production index (output): 14 vs. -3 in July

Employment index: 2 vs. 7 in July

Lead times index: -14 vs. -21 in July

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

For Immediate Release

September 12, 2023

Contact: Chris Knape, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

Grand Valley State University announces record enrollment for incoming class, increased fall enrollment.
Most diverse first-year class in university history

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Grand Valley State University today reported a record-breaking incoming class of 4,974 students - nearly 25% larger than last year's - and increased fall enrollment, countering enrollment headwinds in higher education.

Overall enrollment is up 3% from last fall, with 22,269 students. In addition, both the incoming class and overall enrollment have the highest-ever percentages of students of diverse backgrounds, reflecting a dedication to outreach that supports the university's commitment to provide an equitable education to all, GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella said.

"At Grand Valley, we champion an atmosphere of progress, adaptability and inclusivity to meet the needs of today's students and our community," Mantella said. "This growth in enrollment is a positive sign that learners are seeing our commitment to ensuring educational opportunities are readily available. That effort is ongoing, and we will continue to work tirelessly to be a flagship for the future of education."

Students of color account for about 28% of the incoming class and nearly 23% of the overall student enrollment. Of the entire student body, the percentages of Hispanic/Latino students (7.6%), African American or Black (6.8%) and Asian or Pacific Islander (4.4%) are the highest levels ever.

The wide opportunities for an education that GVSU provides is also reflected in the incoming class, where the enrollment of first-generation students, veterans and students age 20 or older is also up. Once students access a Grand Valley education, they are prepared for a lifetime of learning through a well-rounded liberal education foundation and hands-on learning, Mantella said. One-way GVSU is achieving that goal is by forging partnerships with employers such as the Laker Accelerated Talent Link enhanced co-op experience, the Corewell Health Nurse Scholars program to address the nursing shortage and the Veterans Advance progressive work-based learning program.

These innovative programs benefit both students and employers and help GVSU graduates see the possibilities for careers in Michigan, where GVSU has more than 100,000 alumni, 90% of whom have stayed in Michigan.

"This fall, Grand Valley welcomed more Lakers than ever before, who are now on lower-cost paths to good-paying, high-skill, and in-demand careers," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "I am proud to see another Michigan university break an enrollment record because of our efforts to lower the cost of higher education with the Michigan Achievement Scholarship. The scholarship is lowering costs by thousands of dollars for the majority of first-year students who started at community, private, or public colleges this fall and will continue to save them money for years so they can graduate with little or no debt."

The growth at Grand Valley is a result of dedicated work from Admissions and Recruitment staff to travel throughout the state and beyond to ensure students know about the opportunity a GVSU education presents, said B. Donta Truss, vice president for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach. This year the Grand Valley community includes students from all 50 states, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico, students from every Michigan county and the university's highest-ever enrollment of international students.

"Every day, our team has the honor of sharing the GVSU story and enlightening prospective students and their supporters about the unlimited possibilities for Lakers," Truss said. "As we can see, Grand Valley's commitments to equitable, empowered education resonates widely, and we remain steadfast in our work to ensure everyone has a chance to experience GVSU."

Facts about GVSU's fall enrollment

Record-breaking incoming class:

- Largest entering class ever with 4,974 students, up 24.6% over last year and 13.6% over previous high (Fall 2016)
- The 1,397 students of color enrolled in the entering class account for 28.1% of incoming students, the highest ever. Enrollment of first-year African American or Black students is up 51.6%, while the number of first-year Hispanic/Latino students is up 41.8%, also both records.
- Highest-ever number of first-generation students (2,149)
- Veteran first-year enrollment up 19% from last year
- Students entering Frederik Meijer Honors College up 34% from last year; highest number since 2016

Increased overall enrollment:

- 22,269 total, up 3% from last fall
- Percentage of students of color (22.7%) is highest ever; also, highest ever percentage of students who are Hispanic/Latino (7.6%), African American or Black (6.8%) and Asian or Pacific Islander (4.4%)
- Highest levels ever of international students, up 17.7% from the previous high of last year
- Students enrolled from all 50 states (plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico) and all 83 Michigan counties

Source: GVSU Division of Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach

For Immediate Release

September 28, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

North Ed, GVSU partner to address teacher shortage using available state funding

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. - Northwest Education Services (North Ed) has partnered with Grand Valley State University to offer full funding to school employees in northern Michigan who are interested in earning teaching certification at the elementary level.

GVSU's Northern Michigan Graduate Teacher Certification program is a six-semester, hybrid program beginning in January 2024. In-person meetings will be held at Grand Valley's Traverse City Regional Center, 2200 Dendrinos Drive. State funding has allowed the program to be offered at no cost to participants.

Qualified students need to have a bachelor's degree or higher and be employed at any school district in North Ed's region. Applications are due by November 1. Details can be found online at gvsu.edu/tcteach. Nick Ceglarek, North Ed superintendent, said this pathway is one step toward addressing the critical shortage of educators in Michigan.

"We are grateful for this state funding, the support of the Michigan Department of Education and our strong community partners like GVSU," Ceglarek said. "By removing barriers like the cost of tuition for those who want to become teachers, we can bolster the educator pipeline and ensure that every child in school has a qualified, caring adult to lead them in the classroom."

Brittany Palmer, a teaching assistant at the Life Skills Center, has plans to earn teaching certification credentials when she graduates with a bachelor's degree next year. Life Skills Center is a regional center operated by North Ed that serves students 16-26 who have moderate or severe cognitive disabilities. Palmer is enrolled in Grand Valley's LEADS accelerated program, which will lead to a bachelor's degree in integrative studies. State funding, such as that offered by North Ed and GVSU, partly drove her decision to do the initial step of earning a bachelor's degree.

"There's a significant teaching shortage and there is money from the state to help to go back to school. This is the right decision for my family; there was no reason to say 'no,'" Palmer said. Shannon Owen, director of GVSU's Traverse City Regional Center, said Palmer is the model for why this program was created.

"The program has been thoughtfully designed with working adults in mind, providing the convenience of part-time coursework accessible online and at the Traverse City Regional Center," Owen said. "It offers the flexibility required for these educators to reach their professional goals."

For Immediate Release

Sept. 28, 2023

Contact: Sarah Dudinetz, GVSU University Communications, dudinesa@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2228

GVSU holds first-ever Laker Con comics celebration

ALLENDALE, Mich. - GVSU will be hosting its first-ever Laker Con, a three-day comics celebration, Sept. 29-Oct. 1.

Laker Con will take place in the Grand Atrium of GVSU's Mary Idema Pew Library. The free event will bring presentations from award-winning professionals, an artist market, a cosplay contest and more to the GVSU community and the public. No registration is necessary.

A celebration of the entertainment arts, comics literacy, and the merits of sequential storytelling, Laker Con has been an effort years in the making after initial efforts were stymied by COVID-19.

"We want people to connect in a shared love of the comic arts and entertainment arts," said Briana Skerpan, president of the Student Interest Group for Illustrators. "It's a chance to connect current students, the community, alumni and professionals all in one space."

Attendees can hear from GVSU faculty members as well as award-winning experts like Scott Hampton, who has illustrated such iconic properties as Batman, Sandman and Black Widow, Christopher Moeller, who has worked on Justice League, Wonder Woman for DC Comics and Magic the Gathering, and many more.

The following will also take place during the event:

Activities and programs to make zines and comics for kids and adults

Comics-inspired/themed movie showings

Portfolio reviews

Event hours, parking information and more can be found at gvsu.edu/lakercon.

Media note: Briana Skerpan and other event organizers are available for interviews upon request.

For Immediate Release

October 9, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Audio clips for this month's report and a transcript of those clips are available from our Dropbox:
<http://gvsu.edu/s/2sR>

West Michigan economy continues to slow, GVSU researcher says

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Key indicators from an economic report by a Grand Valley State University researcher continue to point toward a slowing West Michigan economy; however, a recession is unlikely to happen at least through early 2024.

Brian Long, director of supply management at GVSU, said the rumors of a recession have been persistent for years now, but the responses to his monthly survey of local businesses and manufacturers indicate the odds of an imminent recession are waning.

"Depending on what news source you're listening to, we've been talking about a recession for close to two years now. Now it's October and with the numbers coming in, we can easily conclude that there isn't going to be a recession in 2023," Long said.

"In fact, unless there's a major economic catastrophe that we just can't see right now, it's doubtful we'll see a recession in early 2024. Now for the rest of 2024, that's still in question."

Long attributes the slowing West Michigan economy to several factors highlighted in the September survey. Indexes measuring new orders, production and purchases have slid further from the August survey.

"According to September's survey, the West Michigan economy still shows no sign of an impending recession, but is continuing to slow," Long said. "And that's not all bad because the Federal Reserve wants the economy to gradually slow in order to reduce inflation."

"With that said, the Fed still doesn't want the economy to slow too fast. It's like trying to balance a basketball on top of a pencil."

Long said given the survey responses, and the Fed's hiking of interest rates, it will take a major economic disruption for the West Michigan and U.S. economies to fall into a recession.

"Interest rates are now obviously at the highest rate we've seen in years resulting in the economy continuing to slow," Long said. "The Federal Reserve's dream of a soft landing is still intact, but the soft landing assumes that the economy continues to taper at the current rate."

"But another war, a collapse in the UAW negotiations, several more bank collapses or any other kind of major disruption could easily disrupt this glide path toward the soft landing."

Here's a look at the key index results from September's survey of West Michigan businesses:

New orders index (business improvement): -9 vs. -4 in August

Production index (output): -5 vs. 14 in August

Purchases: -22 vs. -17 in August

Employment index: 0 vs. 2 in August

Lead times index: -13 vs. -14 in August

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

GVSU panel to address U.S. foreign relations in light of global conflicts

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - With the war between Ukraine and Russia showing no signs of dwindling and the hostilities between Israel and Hamas escalating, national experts in international relations and history will examine the role of the United States and its foreign policy during a panel discussion at Grand Valley State University.

Grand Valley's Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies presents author and historian Christopher McKnight Nichols who will moderate the discussion entitled, "Citizens of the World: Global Citizenship and U.S. Foreign Relations," at 6 p.m. on October 12 at the DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus.

Joining Nichols on the panel will be:

Polly Diven, professor of political science and director of the international relations program at Grand Valley

Emily Conroy-Krutz, associate professor of history at Michigan State University

Jeffrey Engel, founding director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University

"It seems imperative for the citizens and policymakers in the United States to have a clear-eyed sense of what the nation can hope to achieve and how it can make a positive difference in this chaotic world," said Nichols, professor of history and Wayne Woodrow Hayes Chair in National Security Studies for the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at Ohio State University.

"The panel will draw out some of the most important ideologies that have historically guided U.S. foreign policy and discuss how that history and those ideologies influence and shape the policies and priorities of the present."

Nichols said the panel will also discuss what it means to be a global citizen and its ethics and challenges as nationalism and isolationism gain footholds around the world.

"I'm aiming for us to have a dynamic discussion of an age-old set of hot button issues centered around how best to understand 'American interests' and debate over how best to balance national interests, ethical and humanitarian considerations, and domestic needs and priorities at home," Nichols said.

Thursday's panel is part of the Hauenstein Center's 2023-2024 programming theme of "Empowered Citizenship." Throughout this academic year, the Hauenstein Center welcomes authors, lecturers and experts to examine what it means to be a citizen in modern society and the responsibilities it entails.

For more information, visit the Hauenstein Center's website.

For Immediate Release

November 2, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

**GVSU receives federal grant to improve nursing workforce readiness through simulation.
*Grant also enhances training to better serve diverse populations.***

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Grand Valley State University received a \$1.5 million federal grant to improve nursing workforce readiness by increasing high-impact learning opportunities for students using multiple-patient simulations.

Tricia Thomas, dean of the Kirkhof College of Nursing, said the three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) also enhances training and education to better serve underrepresented and diverse populations. Thomas said two of KCON's practice partners, Corewell Health and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, will collaborate to design simulations for nursing students.

Grand Valley is uniquely suited for this grant because of its state-of-the-art Simulation Center, in the DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health. The 68,000-square-foot center includes an operating suite and hospital suite.

"Our students will have opportunities to go among two or three patient rooms and learn to make decisions about triage and patient care," Thomas said. "Our graduates will be better prepared to care for multiple patients immediately after graduating because they have a better understanding of clinical judgment and reasoning."

She called simulation education a gift, as students learn and make mistakes in a supportive environment.

"This is really empowered education. Nursing students read material ahead of a scenario, complete the scenario and then debrief with faculty," Thomas said. "The psychological safety of the simulation leads to a sense of belonging and really benefits a student's education."

Multiple-patient simulations will begin in the winter semester. The grant money will be used to purchase equipment, hire affiliate and clinical faculty members and coordinate simulations with practice partners.

For Immediate Release

Nov. 3, 2023

Contact: Peg West, GVSU University Communications, ensingm1@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2222

GVSU Board approves creating college focused on computing and advanced technology.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Grand Valley State University's Board of Trustees took a bold step toward launching a new college focused on computing and advanced technology.

The board voted on November 3 to move ahead with a plan to create the as-yet unnamed new college by elevating and expanding the School of Computing that is currently part of the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing into its own college by fall of 2024.

The move will create additional capacity for GVSU's computing and engineering programs, enabling each program to reach the university's goal of delivering three times as many graduates in high-tech disciplines over the next 10 years to help meet the needs of Michigan employers.

"This new college represents a visionary investment that will allow Grand Valley to stay at the forefront of technology and innovation by preparing students with future-ready skills that will drive both the local and state economies," said President Philomena V. Mantella. "At the same time, the Padnos College of Engineering can sharpen its focus on broadening the robust engineering programs, experiential learning and community partnerships that have long set our graduates apart."

The board's vote was the culmination of a comprehensive, inclusive planning process that sought to best align the programs for the future. GVSU computing-related programs, which range from computer science to cybersecurity to health informatics and bioinformatics, have experienced strong growth – such as a nearly 50% increase in master's degrees in 2021-2023 – with potential for more to meet student and employer demand.

"Along with addressing the high student demand for programs specifically related to computing disciplines, this new college will also allow us to deepen our interdisciplinary approach with all students as we prepare them for the futures they face," said Fatma Mili, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs. "We are proud to build on Dean Paul Plotkowski's legacy and PCEC's track record of innovation and forward-looking approach to education and engagement. We will continue to nurture the strong relationship with industry partners and the unique experiential learning experiences of our students. Our faculty is energized by the new college's potential for expanding such opportunities in other disciplines."

Much work remains on this change, including establishment of programs for each college and creating a transition for current students, as well as naming the college focused on computing programs and hiring deans for that college and the Padnos College of Engineering. Current students' programs will not be affected by the creation of the new college.

Plotkowski, the current dean of the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing, plans to retire at the end of the academic year.

In other board action:

The board approved the construction of additional restroom and concession facilities at the northwest corner of Lubbers Stadium. New restroom fixtures will expand restroom capacity. Meanwhile, concession areas will be expanded on both the lower and upper levels. In addition, the project calls for providing elevator access to the upper areas of the stadium. The project is slated for completion before the start of the 2024 football season.

For Immediate Release

November 7, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Audio clips for this month's report and a transcript of those clips are available from our Dropbox: gvsu.edu/s/2uW

West Michigan economy continues slowing trend: GVSU researcher.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - A monthly economic report by a Grand Valley State University researcher suggests that the West Michigan economy is continuing to slow in part due to the recent United Auto Workers strike and the Federal Reserve's rising interest rates.

Brian Long, director of supply management at GVSU's Seidman College of Business, said his survey shows growing pessimism among local manufacturers and businesses.

Several of the key indicators in Long's report continued their downward trend in October. New orders, employment and lead times all slumped last month.

"It's not too much of a surprise that our October numbers show a little bit of softening in the West Michigan economy," Long said. "Some additional softness can be attributed to the UAW strike that affected some of our local firms. But the strike is now over, and the West Michigan economy is slowing, but that's what the Fed wanted the economy to do to tame inflation."

In his report, Long said he doesn't forecast an imminent recession, but noted that surveyed businesses are preparing more for an economic slowdown than a collapse. Many are feeling the pinch of the Fed's higher interest rates, they said.

"For October, our local unemployment index posted the first significantly negative reading we've had since the pandemic," Long said. "Although some of the softness may relate to the UAW strike, which is of course now over, there is nonetheless plenty of evidence that the West Michigan economy is in fact slowing."

Here's a look at the key index results from October's survey of West Michigan businesses:

New orders index (business improvement): -13 vs. -9 in September

Production index (output): -4 vs. -5 in September

Employment index: -10 vs. 0 in September

Lead times index: -17 vs. -13 in September

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

For Immediate Release

November 9, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Muskegon Innovation Hub recipient of \$1.7 million grant from Michigan

Hub is one of 27 organizations across the state to receive funds

ALLENDALE, Mich. - Grand Valley's Muskegon Innovation Hub will receive \$1.7 million in grants to provide guidance and resources for West Michigan entrepreneurs and help support small businesses. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced November 9 that the Muskegon Innovation Hub was one of 27 organizations selected from hundreds of applicants to receive grant funds from the state's Small Business Support Hub program.

Kevin Ricco, director of the Muskegon Innovation Hub, said the grant will allow the center to have a broader and deeper reach across its footprint through Muskegon, Oceana, Newaygo, Mason and western Kent and northern Ottawa counties.

"The grant is going to allow us to really grow what we do and definitely reach further into those communities that we know we serve and represent," Ricco said. "We just haven't had the staff or the resources to do it."

Ricco added that a \$200,000 segment of the grant will help provide funding directly to small businesses and entrepreneurs who may struggle in securing capital.

"There are a number of grant programs that exist at the state level to help high tech companies," Ricco said. "But then there are a lot of other entrepreneurs and small businesses that struggle to find funding and help. This is going to give us an opportunity to help that segment that doesn't have another alternative."

Ricco said he sees the Hub providing more programming opportunities for entrepreneurs in rural communities and minority-owned businesses as a result of the grant.

"The beauty of this particular grant program was that it was not ultra-restrictive," he said. "This is actually industry agnostic. We can provide assistance to the service sector, food businesses and product-related entrepreneurs."

Funding for the program comes from a one-time appropriation using American Rescue Plan Act dollars to create and operate programs to support small businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

"Small businesses are the backbone of Michigan's economy, and this investment to support their growth from President Biden's American Rescue Plan will build on Michigan's economic momentum," Whitmer said.

"These 27 entrepreneurial hubs across the state will shore up our small business ecosystem, providing economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs and small businesses with the support they need to keep growing and expanding right here in Michigan."

According to the state, small business growth has surged with 137,000 new small business applications submitted in 2022.

For Immediate Release

November 22, 2023

Contact: Chris Knape, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

**\$2.2 million in gifts will support Johnson Center philanthropic research for generations.
*Frey Foundation and anonymous donor secure Grand Valley's first fully endowed chair***

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - A \$1.2 million grant from the Frey Foundation combined with a \$1 million matching gift from a generous donor will create Grand Valley State University's first fully endowed chair at the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy.

The Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy – the first of its kind in the nation – was created at the Johnson Center as a result of a \$1.5 million grant from the Frey Foundation in 2008. The additional \$2.2 million creates a permanent funding stream for the position.

"As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Frey Foundation in 2024, this grant will help secure the Frey family's long-standing legacy of support for family philanthropy at Grand Valley," said Holly Johnson, president of the Frey Foundation.

Grand Valley President Philomena V. Mantella said the gifts will enhance the internationally recognized work being done at the Johnson Center and ensure it continues as a global resource in advancing meaningful, effective philanthropy.

"These gifts from the Frey Foundation and another generous donor will fully endow a chair position that will benefit the philanthropic community for generations to come and further elevate the important work being done at the Johnson Center," Mantella said.

Giving by families in the U.S. is at an inflection point today, one that combines a historic process of wealth transfer (Generation X and Millennials stand to inherit as much as \$84 trillion by 2045) and a worrying decline in the number of U.S. households that say they give to charity (that number has dropped below 50% for the first time). The work of the Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy at the Johnson Center is therefore especially important as the nonprofit sector and countless engaged donors and community members wrestle to understand these phenomena and adapt their fundraising, engagement, and service models.

"By investigating urgently relevant questions about how families want to give and engage key stakeholders around these questions, the Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy plays a critical role in helping to navigate a time of immense dynamism and complexity," said Lesley D. Slavitt, executive director of the Johnson Center. "We are deeply grateful for the Frey Foundation's belief in the importance of this work and transformative generosity."

The Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy, along with a network of partners, pursues a comprehensive, international program of applied research, speaking and writing, professional education and teaching, and other activities.

In 2010, Michael Moody was appointed inaugural Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy at the Johnson Center. His work defined an area of study that did not previously exist in academia and

positioned GVSU as a global center of excellence in family philanthropy. During his time as Chair, Moody's groundbreaking work to engage and understand next-generation donors and their values, aims, and strategies was recognized as transformative for the sector.

Moody left the post earlier this year to serve as professor of philanthropic studies at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. A search is underway for the next chair.

For Immediate Release

November 30, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Veterans involved in GVSU entrepreneur program will pitch final ideas.

– Public invited to watch and participate in voting for 'people's choice'

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. - Veterans involved in a Grand Valley State University entrepreneurship and acceleration program will pitch their business ideas before a panel of judges December 4 at the Kool Family Community Center.

The Michigan Veteran Entrepreneur-Lab (MVE-Lab) Pitch Night will run from 5-9 p.m. on Monday at the community center, 200 W Michigan Ave. The public is invited to watch and vote on their favorite startup idea.

MVE-Lab is offered through GVSU's DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI). In a cohort model, veterans work with mentors from the community to hone or launch their small business start-ups. The Battle Creek cohort has been meeting since September.

Shorouq Almallah, director of the DeVos CEI, said the MVE-Lab began in 2018 and, since its launch, has successfully trained 150 veterans and their families in eleven cohorts and five different regions in Michigan.

Michael Hyacinthe, U.S. Navy veteran and CEO/founder of Wimage, a children's media company; and Charles Solano, former Marine and owner/operator of Biggby Coffee shops in Battle Creek, are leading the Battle Creek cohort.

For Immediate Release
December 1, 2023

Contact: Michele Coffill, GVSU University Communications, coffillm@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2221

Media opportunity: GVSU nursing students will complete first multi-patient simulation under \$1.5 million federal grant.

Corewell Health nurse coaches to assist, serve as extras.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - GVSU students and faculty from the Kirkhof College of Nursing will perform the first multi-patient simulation since receiving a \$1.5 million federal grant that helps improve workforce readiness.

Media are invited to observe the simulation, details below:

Tuesday, December 5, 1-3 p.m.

DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health, Simulation Center (third floor); 333 Michigan St. NE
Nurse coaches from Corewell Health will assist, serving in a variety of roles like pharmacist, charge nurses and social workers.

Grand Valley is uniquely suited for this grant because of its state-of-the-art Simulation Center, in the DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health. The 68,000-square-foot center includes an operating suite and hospital suite with an ICU room, nine hospital rooms and a maternity suite.

The three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) also enhances training and education to better serve underrepresented and diverse populations.

Media interested in attending Tuesday's event can contact Michele Coffill, coffillm@gvsu.edu.

For Immediate Release

December 5, 2023

Contact: Sarah Dudinetz, GVSU University Communications, dudinesa@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2228

More than 1,300 GVSU students to participate in Commencement ceremonies, Shannon Cohen to be guest speaker.

Media note: Skybox 101A and 101B at Van Andel Arena is reserved for media. It offers a Mult box and an elevated, unobstructed view of the podium and platform.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - More than 1,300 GVSU students are expected to participate in the fall commencement ceremony, set for 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 9, at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids.

GVSU alumni Shannon Cohen, '00 and '11, will be the ceremony's guest speaker. Cohen, a first-generation college student, is the founder and CEO of Shannon Cohen Inc., where she develops customized emotional intelligence, equity and wellness trainings for organizations such as Procter & Gamble and Steelcase. Her inspirational product line, Tough Skin, Soft Heart, is available at retailers nationwide. Cohen is the 2023 recipient of the "Woman of Courage" award from Michigan Women Forward.

President Philomena V. Mantella; Felix Ngassa, chair of the University Academic Senate; and Fatma Mili, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs will also give their remarks.

Those interested in interviewing Shannon Cohen, or any graduating students can contact Sarah Dudinetz at (616) 331-2228.

A livestream of the event will be available for those unable to attend.

For Immediate Release

Dec. 7, 2023

Contact: Chris Knappe, GVSU University Communications, knapech@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-2953

REP4 National Convening celebrates student architects of higher education change

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - A national alliance dedicated to transforming higher education by empowering students to shape their educations is growing and ready to showcase a dynamic year that included meeting with elected officials and other leaders on Capitol Hill.

Leaders for REP4, which stands for Rapid Education Prototyping for Change, Learners, Community, Equity, will present a National Convening at 1 p.m. Dec. 13 that highlights the progress and continued momentum of the national alliance founded by Grand Valley State University and a diverse set of learner-focused colleges and universities across the country.

The National Convening will also include an opportunity to view student pitches and prototypes designed to strengthen and transform education. Register and watch the National Convening on the REP4 website. Viewers and visitors to the REP4 website will have the opportunity to upvote their favorite pitches after the premiere.

"The solutions being created by REP4's students demonstrate the benefits of giving learners the opportunity to be architects of their educational journey and our universities," said GVSU President Philomena V. Mantella. "The confidence and skills that REP4 brings out in students will help us grow the changemakers and leaders of the future."

Illinois Institute of Technology recently joined the national alliance, which besides Grand Valley also includes Amarillo College, Boise State University, California State University San Marcos, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities, Fort Valley State University and Shippensburg University. Together, the alliance schools serve over 200,000 learners.

The mission of REP4 and the emphasis on student agency made it a good fit for Illinois Institute of Technology to join the national alliance, said President Raj Echambadi.

"REP4 is an inspiring model for reimagining higher education designed by students for students," Echambadi said. "I believe these student-centered innovations have the profound potential to transform the lives of learners, driving opportunity not only for themselves but also for their families, communities, and societies. As a comprehensive technology university committed to expanding and fueling student access and success, we are honored to participate in the REP4 Alliance."

Some other key moments in the National Convening presentation include REP4 leaders traveling to Washington, D.C. to meet with Capitol Hill officials as part of the first Unified Day of Advocacy. Viewers will also see highlights from a gathering in Boise, Idaho where leaders and students assessed their work so far and discussed broadening REP4's reach. Key supporters Daniel Williams, president and CEO of the Steelcase Foundation, and Jen Wells, senior program officer of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also offered remarks regarding the power and potential of REP4 practices.

REP4 has engaged more than 850 learners since its 2021 inception, giving many students an introduction to higher education that they may not have otherwise received. These students have participated in the central features of the program, including annual regional summits where learners brainstorm and develop prototypes to provide more equitable access to education.

Some of that work is already coming to fruition.

For instance, a prototype developed and presented in 2021 has helped launch a financial literacy platform that is in testing now at Grand Valley with a plan for wider distribution. Another 2021 prototype in development is creating assessments beyond scores and grades to show a broad range of the strengths and capabilities that indicate students have a place at college.

Just as they are in REP4, student voices are prominent in the National Convening presentation, where viewers will hear about learners' ideas and inspirations as well as how important it is for them to be heard and serve as architects for the future of higher education.

Ngun Hniar, a first-year student at GVSU and a T4 scholar, said participating in REP4 has inspired a change in perspective.

"REP4 allowed us to know ourselves as creators and to think creatively and unconventionally about our educational system. The steps I took in leaving my comfort zone in high school allowed me to climb to many new opportunities," Hniar said. "I could not have imagined that REP4 could have helped me land a full scholarship, but most importantly be granted such an amazing opportunity for higher education as a Burmese immigrant."

For Immediate Release

December 12, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Audio clips for this month's report and a transcript of those clips are available from our Dropbox: gvsu.edu/s/2wR

West Michigan's economy continues sluggish pace: GVSU researcher.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Despite showing some modest gains, the West Michigan economy continued its sluggish pace through November, according to a Grand Valley researcher and his monthly survey of local businesses and manufacturers.

Brian Long, director of supply management research at GVSU's Seidman College of Business, said while there have been upticks in key indices, the local economic forecast remains modestly negative.

"The Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates for what is now almost two years," Long said. "But according to the [recent] survey results that we've just tabulated for West Michigan, the economy continues to slow in a fairly orderly fashion.

"And despite the higher interest rates, there is still no immediate sign of a recession waiting for us in the next several months."

Long said while unemployment numbers have remained relatively stable, the employment numbers of his survey have turned negative for the last two months while 20 percent of survey respondents reported workforce reductions.

"Unemployment is a classic laggard statistic, so it's no surprise that our employment situation in West Michigan remains relatively stable at this time," Long said. "So, the laggard effect of the unofficial unemployment statistics probably won't show up for another two or three months."

Long forecasts strong auto sales into 2024 as auto parts suppliers should stay busy following the end of the United Auto Workers strike in late October.

"Probably by mid-2024 the pent-up demand will eventually be met, and the market will probably turn more competitive again, and it may even suffer from oversaturation," Long said.

Here's a look at the key index results from November's survey of West Michigan businesses:

New orders index (business improvement): -10 vs. -13 in October

Production index (output): -4 vs. -4 in October

Employment index: -5 vs. -10 in October

Lead times index: -8 vs. -17 in October

More information about the survey and an archive of past surveys are available on the Seidman College of Business website.

For Immediate Release

December 18, 2023

Contact: Brian Vernellis, GVSU University Communications, vernellb@gvsu.edu, (616) 331-8138

Blue Dot, big impact: Gov. Whitmer visits GVSU, signs bill with \$30 million for tech hub

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - With the stroke of a pen, backed by leaders from around the state, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Monday signed a \$616 million supplemental funding bill during a ceremony at Grand Valley, providing a \$30 million boost to the university's Blue Dot initiative.

The funding, approved by the Michigan Legislature in early November, will spark a major overhaul of the Eberhard Center in downtown Grand Rapids for the Blue Dot Lab, a computing, and data science hub to support multidisciplinary educational opportunities, community partnerships and entrepreneurship.

Grand Valley President Philomena V. Mantella hailed the supplemental appropriation as a groundbreaking investment in the future of Michigan's economy. She welcomed Whitmer and dozens of guests to DeVos Center on the Pew Grand Rapids Campus for the signing ceremony on December 18.

"Governor Whitmer and a bipartisan group of elected officials are investing in innovation and the infrastructure that will power Michigan's future," Mantella said. "Our Blue Dot Lab will transform the way Grand Valley uses data science, AI and computing technology to forge new opportunities for our students and our state."

The lab's mission is to build a talent pipeline of students focused in data analytics and computer skills, while increasing the digital literacy skills of all Grand Valley students. Blue Dot also will provide students with opportunities for collaboration with tech startups and business partners.

"Grand Valley State University's Blue Dot Lab is a forward-thinking project that will help establish Michigan as the destination for high-skilled talent looking to lead the future," Whitmer said.

"I am so proud that we were able to support the Lab in our supplemental, capping off a productive year that saw record funding for education from pre-K through postsecondary. Let's keep working together to make Michigan a great place to learn and pursue your potential."

Two events this fall showcased the technology and opportunities available for students through the Blue Dot ecosystem, which will include the new downtown lab and other spaces throughout GVSU's campuses.

In September, Mantella highlighted Grand Valley faculty and students working with extended reality technology. Held in conjunction with Tech Week Grand Rapids, GR in XR on the Blue Bridge gave a glimpse into the virtual/augmented reality platform and its applications for West Michigan and Grand Rapids.

In November, Mantella unveiled the futurEDlab at the Consumers Energy John G. Russell Leadership Center. The futurEDlab engages students with innovative technologies and prepares them for the future of Michigan's economy.

Some of the projects on display at the futureEDlab included work from REP4, which seeks to center student voices in the future of higher education and the Laker Accelerated Talent Link, which recently kicked off.

“Every GVSU graduate in a growing and diverse campus community will have digital literacy, real world experiences and the capacity to immediately contribute,” Mantella said. “The delivery of education through radical co-collaboration possible in this Blue Dot facility will contribute to our businesses, our communities, and our state.

“The track record is strong, with GVSU's graduates growing in number and growing in demand. With 80% of our alumni staying in Michigan, GVSU creates Michiganders who are ready and rising.”