

GVL DIGEST News in Brief

Commencement speaker, award winners announced

The president and CEO of Spectrum Health will provide the keynote address at commencement on Dec. 6.

Richard Breon, a former chair of the Michigan Hospital Association, has served in health care administration for more than 30 years.

He is a board member for the Alliance for Health and The Right Place, and was appointed to Michigan's Certificate of Need Commission and the State of Michigan Hospital Advisory Commission.

He joined Spectrum Health, which offers helicopter transportation services, long-term and continuing care services, home care and hospice care services, in 2000.

Spectrum Health has 140 service locations and employs about 14,000 people, including 1,500 affiliated medical staff members.

The Alumni Association will recognize two members of the Grand Valley State University community during commencement as well.

Deborah Clanton will receive the Distinguished Alumna Award and Lois Tyson will take the Outstanding Educator Award.

Clanton is the magistrate and director of probation services for the 62nd District Court of Kentwood.

She became the first Black magistrate in the Grand Rapids area when she was appointed in 1992.

She earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from GVSU in 1976 and her master's degree in public administration from Western Michigan University in 1992.

Tyson, an English professor, has served as a member of GVSU's faculty for more than 26 years.

She is the faculty development coordinator for the English department and her text, "Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide," is in its second edition.

Road crews' overtime hours slashed for winter months

The Michigan Department of Transportation is cutting back its road crews' overtime on several highways, including Lake Michigan Drive and Chicago Drive.

MDOT is dividing roads into two sections based on traffic volume, with lesser-density roads not getting plowed during overtime hours.

Those designated as orange routes signify regional significance and include Interstate 96.

Blue routes, such as M-45, indicate more local activity.

Each route will be treated similarly during storms, but afterward, road crews may not use overtime to finish clearing out the blue routes.

Instead, they will come back during regular working hours to finish such roads.

Subdivision roads will not be plowed during overtime either, unless they have accumulated more than 6 inches of snow.

Ottawa County Road Commission workers picked up about 16,200 hours of overtime last winter, piling on \$4 million beyond the projected budget.

The state may save 10 percent this year on salt and overtime costs, with most of it coming from counties with more MDOT blue routes.

Medical device company begins with aid from GVSU

A West Michigan company has received start-up capital from three venture firms to create new medical devices.

TransCorp, Inc., which is operating with the West Michigan Science and Technology offices inside GVSU's Cook-DeVos Center, is developing neurosurgical and orthopedic instruments and implants.

Engineering, prototyping and patents are currently pending, so TranCorp's innovations are being kept confidential for now.

However, the company may have a marketable product in 12 to 18 months.

CO2 research project wins \$84,000

By Lauren Fitch
GVL Staff Writer

A Grand Valley State University research project on the ocean's absorption of carbon dioxide recently received an \$84,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

Figen Mekik, a biology professor at GVSU for the past 10 years, is leading the three-year project.

There will be four students, chosen from all majors, hired to assist in the project. Mike Wicker, Sarah Clark and Jonathon Cutting have already been selected for the team.

"I'm very excited about it," Mekik said. "It's fun to work with the students and see (their work) published."

Mekik has been involved with different phases of this research project throughout her career and received funds from NASA's Michigan Space Grant in the past.

The NSF said it awarded the grant because of the importance of the research but also because of Mekik's record of working with undergraduate students to get their work published in peer-reviewed journals.

The purpose of the study is

to determine the mechanism and speed with which the ocean can regulate the excess CO2 in the atmosphere.

The GVSU researchers test sediment samples from the ocean floor for calcite. The amount of calcite dissolved in the ocean sediments correlates with how fast the ocean can absorb CO2.

The first phase of the research involved creating a proxy for estimating the amount of calcite

dissolved in relation to the amount of CO2 absorbed. All of these tests were done with small samples of sediment in the lab.

With the most recent grant of \$84,000, researchers will complete the next stage of testing actual

ocean samples to look for patterns in past years.

"In order to understand the future, we need to look to Earth's past," Mekik said.

The past 20,000 years since the last Ice Age have been a natural global warming period, Mekik added.

Researchers will look at how the ocean responded to increased CO2 in the past to predict how it will keep up in the future.

Since the Industrial Revolution, CO2 emissions have increased drastically.

"I'm very excited about (the research) ... In order to understand the future, we need to look to Earth's past."

FIGEN MEKIK
GVSU BIOLOGY PROFESSOR



Courtesy Photo / News and Information
Grant research: Geology professor Figen Mekik teaches a class in Mackinac Hall in November 2007. Mekik is leading a research project on the ocean's absorption of CO2. The GVSU project recently received an \$84,000 grant from the NSF.

All of this research is dedicated to developing new technology to reduce the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere.

One idea for new technology is a sort of cloth hung across fields to extract the CO2 from the atmosphere and replace it with water vapor, Mekik said.

Once the CO2 has been removed, it has to be injected somewhere and the research about ocean absorption will reveal whether ocean water would be the best method of eliminating the CO2.

Most of the grant awarded to GVSU will be used for analysis

expenses and student salaries.

Mekik said the grant will have a positive impact on GVSU because it gives students the opportunity to participate in a research project, which often helps them get into a better graduate school.

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Budgeting system for RSOs revamped

By Ellen Hensel
GVL Staff Writer

Spotlight Productions, Grand Valley State University's only student-run programming board, has a working budget of \$85,410 for the school year.

From concerts to comedy shows, the club has one of the largest budgets on campus because of the vast number of programs they produce.

On Dec. 4, Spotlight Productions along with about 160 other registered student organizations eligible for funding through the Student Life Fund will learn approximately how much

money they will receive for the next academic year.

The Student Senate Finance Committee facilitates the budget process. This year, however, they are implementing a different process to not only increase organization accountability but also give the organizations more say in where their funds go.

With a budget of \$1 million, the Student Life fund is first split into 13 different categories that include ones similar to the Cultural Organization budget and the Media and Entertainment Budget.

These overarching categories are then broken down further into individual organizations.

Individual organizations were required to submit tentative budget requests by Nov. 14. These requests are used to guide Student Senate deliberations.

"What we are attempting to do is to make sure that we give student organizations more control over their funding," said Mike Krombeen, Student Senate vice president of

Finance. "Instead of one lump sum, we will allocate the funds throughout the year."

This system is different from past years, where the Finance committee had more of a say in where the money goes, as opposed to individual organization's boards. They will not vote on a specific club's budget, such as the Biology Club, but will instead decide how much money the Academic Club Committee gets and allow that committee to designate funds for their respective organizations.

Furthermore, the money will not be given in one lump sum but instead allotted incrementally to ensure the money is being used fully.

Despite a beleaguered economy, Associate Director of Student Life Michelle Burke said she does not anticipate a decrease in funds in regard to student life.

"Our fund is unlike others in the sense that it is just part of the general budget of the university," Burke said. "At other schools there is an (activities) fee. We are treated like a university department. Our money is based on enrollment. More students on campus, more money for student life."

However, Burke added the number of student organizations at GVSU has increased significantly and the funding available has not always been proportionate to that increase.

"Our funds are in really high demand," Burke said.

President of Spotlight Productions Courtney Jones said although money is always difficult to come by, it does allow these organizations to better serve the students.

"With the price of entertainment, money is always tight," Jones said. "I feel with proper budgeting, which is something we always strive for, we can put on the quality of entertainment that GVSU students have become accustomed to."

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Krombeen

"Instead of one lump sum, we will allocate the funds throughout the year."

MIKE KROMBEEN
STUDENT SENATE VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE



GVL Photo Illustration / Nicole Somerville
Recognizing signs: A growing movement for suicide prevention is the practice of writing "love" on one's arms.

Counseling Center's QPR strives to end suicide, raise awareness of telltale signs

By Ryan Hanna
GVL Staff Writer

Suicide is a tragedy that affects the lives of everyone close to the victim.

Grand Valley State University's Counseling and Career Development Center hosts a program called QPR – Suicide Prevention every week to demonstrate even though suicide is a tragic part of life, it can be prevented.

"QPR – Suicide Prevention gives everyday people the basic skills they need to recognize if a person is suicidal," said Eric Klingensmith, the

coordinator of Crisis Intervention and a GVSU counselor who occasionally hosts the program. "The more people we train to recognize suicidal behavior, the better the chance of helping suicidal individuals."

The program is held every Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Counseling and Career Development Center. Those who wish to attend must call the Counseling and Career Development Center to reserve a space in the program.

Each week, the program focuses on a three-step method called QPR that was designed by the QPR Institute. QPR stands for question, persuade and refer, and it is vital to the program.

"QPR helps people question what's going on with a suicidal person, persuade that suicidal person to see there is hope and refer them to community resources for help," Klingensmith said.

Kelli Ostrom, a senior dual majoring in advertising and public relations, said she agrees with the program's goals.

"I know three people who have committed suicide," Ostrom said. "If someone could have seen the signs, maybe my friends would still be around."

Sue Dilworth, a GVSU counselor who also hosts the program, said she believes QPR is important because everyone should know how to ask if someone is suicidal.

"Most people don't want to ask someone if (he or she is) suicidal because they are afraid of how that person will react," Dilworth said. "The

program helps people feel comfortable reaching out to those in need."

Dilworth added QPR is helpful because it teaches people how to refer suicidal individuals to places where they will receive help.

The counseling centers on GVSU's Allendale, Pew and Meijer campuses are just a few of the places that offer help, she said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is one completed suicide for every 100 to 200 attempted suicides among individuals 15 to 24 years old in the U.S.

Dilworth said the large number of attempted suicides makes programs like QPR – Suicide Prevention even more necessary.

"We hear about people who have completed suicide, but we don't always think about those who attempt it," she said. "We need (community members) to be our eyes and ears and help bring in suicidal individuals for help."

Even community members who do not believe those around them are suicidal should consider attending the program, Dilworth said.

"You never know when you're going to come across a person who might be at risk," she said. "You might be the only person who can help them."

The program teaches community members how to recognize certain symptoms of suicide, such as when a person is depressed, isolated or gives away prized possessions.

Kristin Prins, a sophomore majoring in Spanish, said she believes everyone should pay attention to signs of suicidal behavior.

"If you don't recognize a person's suicidal symptoms, you might not get a chance to fix it," Prins said. "That's something you might regret for the rest of your life; afterwards, it's too late."

To learn more about QPR – Suicide Prevention, visit the Counseling and Career Development Center, or go to <http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>.

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