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The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness



Provost Fatma Mili: Fatma is the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. Fatma is also a Professor of Computer Science in the Seymour and Esther Padnos College of Engineering and Computing (PCEC). [Fatma shared her thoughts on the theme of the 2023-2024 UAS Newsletter through this editorial.](#) This is what she had to say.

When I enthusiastically welcomed the theme of this year's newsletter for its timeliness and importance, I did not know how much more timely and more important it would become. Indeed, the leading conversations in the past few months have been about the topics of shared governance and Laker readiness individually and in combination.

Laker readiness is a shorthand for our mission: our aspiration to be ready to serve Lakers even as, and especially as, their needs, expectations, means, and ambitions keep changing. Laker readiness is a shorthand for our aspiration to be ready to serve Lakers even as we debate, question, and broaden our definition of a Laker; even as we grapple with the tensions between our desire to broaden access and the limits of our capacities. Laker readiness conversations have been about the balancing act of transforming a system from within, carefully synchronizing the different levers while being aware of the risks and consequences of every decision we make.

Shared governance is the best incarnation of an inclusive distributed decision-making system where knowledge and expertise lend voice and credibility. Shared governance is the

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hallmark of higher education institutions because they assemble within their ranks wealth and diversity of expertise combined with passion and commitment to the profession and the institutional mission. There are very strong “utilitarian” arguments for shared governance. Thanks to the diversity of disciplines and multitude of voices, shared governance leads to better decisions, to more innovative approaches, and to a collective commitment to the decision.

There is a less tangible but more powerful argument for shared governance. Shared governance communicates to the members of the community that they matter, that they are valued, and that they add value¹. Shared governance communicates to members of the community that they are valued as individuals and professionals and that time and attention will be expanded to ensure that they are seen and heard. Shared governance communicates to community members that they add value through their expertise, knowledge, and deliberative powers.

I look forward to reading all the entries in this newsletter and to continue exercising shared governance for a GVSU where we are all Lakers-ready and where faculty, staff, and students know that they matter.

Other Contributions from the Provost Office

Ed Aboutafadel: Ed is the Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost and an ex-officio member of ECS and UAS. Ed’s faculty rank is Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). [Ed shared his thoughts on the theme of the 2023-2024 UAS Newsletter by focusing on what he captioned, “What We Can Learn From Successful Family Businesses”.](#) This is what Ed had to say.



In February, Shared Governance was on my mind when I listened to Dr. Justin Craig, the Peter F. Secchia Breakfast Lecture Series speaker. He gave a lively lecture on sustaining family businesses. What does this have to do with GVSU?

Craig discussed a model created by Tagiuri and Davis in the 1980s that helps us understand the different roles and responsibilities in a family business. As a family business grows and matures, the complexity around business decisions increases. In [the first diagram below](#), you have the family (lower left circle), but you also have the owners of the business (top circle), and not all owners are family members. Then there are the non-family managers (lower right circle), which Tagiuri and Davis referred to as “The Business.” The original

¹ Prilleltensky I. Mattering at the Intersection of Psychology, Philosophy, and Politics. *Am J Community Psychol.* 2020 Mar;65(1-2):16-34. doi: 10.1002/ajcp.12368. Epub 2019 Aug 13. PMID: 31407358.

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Students:

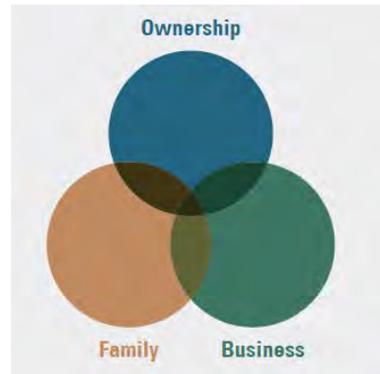
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Magdalyn Hallead (Student
Senate EVP)
Three Student Senators and
Graduate Student
Association President

Ex-Officio, Non-Voting:

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Ed Aboufadel
Bonnie Bowen
Cathy Buyarski
Erica Hamilton
Sean Lancaster
Aaron Lowen
Christine Rener
Bob Smart
Kara Van Dam
Annie Bélanger
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Diana Lawson
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Sherril Soman
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article embraced the fundamental idea of a Venn diagram (which a mathematician like me would appreciate) and identified the kinds of individuals in the intersections of the circles: family members who are owners, owners who are managers, and so on.



In his breakfast lecture, Craig took a non-mathematical turn and identified those intersections as places of potential tension that need to be resolved. For instance, the tension between the Ownership and the Business requires “strategic planning”, so that the two groups are in alignment with the direction of the company and the managers in the Business can then pursue that strategy. More generally, as you see in the diagram below from Dr. Craig, it is critically important to clarify governance rules, practices, and culture.



Some of you may already see where this essay is going, connecting this model to our work at GVSU. Who are the owners of GVSU? The Owners are the citizens of the State of Michigan, represented by our Board of Trustees who are selected by the Governor. Who are the managers, a.k.a. The Business? Those are administrators like the president, provost, and other members of the Senior Leadership Team; the deans and unit heads; and people like me.

And who is The Family? A successful family business needs family members from one generation to the next who are committed to the enterprise, perhaps for a lifetime. In these successful businesses, family members “lean into that business and give it their all.” At GVSU, those are our faculty and staff.

Craig’s diagram emphasizes the importance of governance, what we call *shared governance*. And the following from John Davis himself applies just as well to our work at GVSU:

Each of the ... interest groups identified by the Model has its own viewpoints, goals, concerns, and dynamics. The Model reminds us that the views of each sector are legitimate and deserve to be respected. No one viewpoint is more legitimate than another, but the different viewpoints must be integrated in order to set the future direction for the family business system. The long-term success of family business systems depends on each group's functioning and mutual support.

Replace “family business systems” with “GVSU” in that excerpt, and you get a philosophy of Shared Governance that we should all embrace.

Faculty Respond to the Call for Contribution in the 2023-2024 Senate Newsletter: The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness

Shared governance, a pivotal aspect of our Laker culture, is instrumental in co-creating Laker Readiness. This collaborative approach, involving the active participation of all stakeholders, particularly students, faculty, administrators, and staff, in decision-making processes, shapes the overall student experience.

At its core, shared governance is a philosophy that recognizes the importance of inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration in creating a positive and empowering learning environment. By involving all members of our Laker community in decision-making processes, shared governance ensures that diverse perspectives and voices are represented and considered, leading to more well-rounded and effective decisions.

Shared governance's key advantage lies in its ability to instill a sense of ownership and responsibility among all stakeholders. When students, faculty, and staff actively participate in shaping the student experience, they develop a sense of investment and commitment to its success. This fosters a more engaged and motivated Laker community, dedicated to creating the best possible experience for students.

Moreover, shared governance allows for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to Laker Readiness. By bringing together various perspectives and expertise, decisions can be made that consider all aspects of a student's life, including academic, social, and emotional well-being. This ensures that the student experience is not just limited to the classroom but extends to all aspects of campus life.

Another crucial aspect of shared governance is its ability to promote innovation and adaptability. With diverse stakeholders involved in decision-making, new ideas and perspectives are constantly being brought to the table. This allows for a more dynamic and responsive approach to creating and improving the student experience, adapting to changing needs and expectations.

Shared governance not only influences the student experience but also fosters a culture of trust and collaboration within the Laker community. By involving all stakeholders in decision-making, it nurtures a sense of mutual respect and understanding, leading to a more cohesive and supportive environment for students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

In conclusion, shared governance is vital in co-creating a meaningful and impactful student experience. Promoting inclusivity, ownership, adaptability, and collaboration ensures that all members of the Laker community are invested in creating the best possible experience for our students. As the composition of students, faculty, staff, and administrators of GVSU continues to evolve, shared governance will remain an essential tool in shaping the future of Laker Readiness.

To help faculty in formulating their articles, the following prompts were shared: (1) What has been your experience in shared governance? (2) What is working in shared governance? (3) What is not working in shared governance? (4) What concrete suggestions do you have for improving our GVSU shared governance culture? (5) How can we work together to co-create Laker Readiness? (6) What does Laker Readiness mean to you? (7) How can shared governance help in co-creating Laker Readiness?

Amanda Buday: Amanda is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Annis Water Resources Institute in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Amanda is the Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Co-Chair. [Amanda shared her](#)

thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to her. This is what Amanda had to say.



Amidst the busy academic life at Grand Valley, the facilities we work in may seem like a mere backdrop. However, they are the backbone of our university, shaping the inclusion, collaboration, safety, aesthetics, and care that form the foundation of Laker Readiness. The representation of faculty perspective in facilities-related decisions is not just important, it's crucial. It ensures that investments in GVSU's academic spaces align with the needs of the campus

community and serve essential functions – from experiential learning to innovative research, Lakers get it done.

While some achievements are celebrated, others go unnoticed. This is especially true for student mentoring, a pivotal element in shaping students' professional and personal growth. Ready Lakers may possess self-directed problem-solving skills, but these attributes of Laker Readiness often need to be nurtured. By engaging in faculty governance, FFPAC ensures that campus spaces foster the engagement, inspiration, and dialogue necessary for developing Readiness in all Lakers. It provides the infrastructure for flexible pedagogical practices that cater to the Lakers' needs – both figuratively and literally.

It is my hope that the voice with which FFPAC communicates represents a wide range of faculty experiences and visions, supporting all working to deliver a tailored, personalized learning experience that Readies Lakers to meet their academic and professional goals. FFPAC is grateful to the 243 instructors who took the time to contribute their suggestions to our Classrooms Survey. Your input will provide fresh insight into the upgrades needed to ready Laker learning spaces for the innovative teaching happening across campus.

Susan Harrington: Sue is an Associate Professor of Nursing at the Kirkhof College of Nursing (KCON). Sue is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2023-2024. [Sue shared her thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to her.](#) This is what Sue had to say.



As a nurse, I believe that the idea of shared governance is a significant concept incorporated into our profession. For many of the same reasons, shared governance at the university level also emboldens shared decision-making. This process allows for active engagement from many different perspectives to weigh in on resolutions and determinations. The benefits of open

communication and collaboration encourage the best outcomes and significantly increase employee satisfaction.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the Senate (ECS), I have voluntarily given away every Friday afternoon to participate in a 2-hour meeting with other faculty and administrators at GVSU. The ECS is a self-governing committee that discusses everything and anything according to the bylaws and Robert's Rules and needs of our community, students, staff, and faculty. This committee is extremely committed to improving the teaching and learning experiences at GVSU as concerns are heard, debated, and widely discussed. The conversation is never ad-hominin in nature. The motions and opinions are always respected. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is always present and amenable to

discussions and needs for further task forces. The SLT plays a crucial role in implementing the decisions made through shared governance.

Shared governance is implicit in the promotion and creation of Laker Readiness. Advancing our students through an educational framework that shares opinions, decisions, and discussions allows for student empowerment by giving them a voice, often through mentoring. This structure supports both the student and faculty autonomy through the formation of mutually respectful partnerships. Laker Readiness is augmented by this type of governance in the growth of strong leadership skills.

Chris Haven: Chris is a Full Professor of Writing in the Department of Writing of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Chris is also a member of ECS/UAS for 2023-2024. [Chris shared his thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to him by focusing on what he captioned, “Interdependence and Rethinking Outcome C.”](#) This is what Chris had to say.



I’m listening to the book *The Country of the Blind* by Andrew Leland, and in it he brings up the notion of dependence and interdependence. In his case, as someone with retinitis pigmentosa experiencing a gradual loss of the visual field, he discusses this notion in terms of the philosophy of assistive technology. The dependence model suggests that assistive technology will bridge the deficit between autonomy and dependence. A screen reader, for example, will help him bridge the deficit and allow him to keep reading. This might feel like a utilitarian approach, but the moment he becomes fully blind, the assistive technology loses its effectiveness or usefulness, and by extension, the social implications might be that the blind person also becomes effectively useless.

He and I are much more drawn to the philosophy of interdependence, an approach that still embraces the development of assistive technologies (and other supports) while at the same time acknowledging the value of the person utilizing the assistance. Blind persons have contributed to the development of technologies that have benefited everyone (including screen readers, closed captioning, and many mobility improvements for crosswalks and building access). I also like what he has to say about caregiving, where that relationship can also be mutually beneficial in all sorts of practical, psychological, and emotional ways.

I happen to be reading (yes, I believe “listening to” is reading) this book at the same time that I’m considering the role of shared governance at GVSU. In the past I’ve thought of shared governance, or shared decision-making, as an exercise in compromise. That is: One group fully believes in Outcome A, and another group fully believes in Outcome B, and the result of the process is Outcome C. In this version of the hypothetical, I’m imagining that neither group is fully satisfied with Outcome C, but the process forces compromise, and this outcome represents the best they could do. The first group still believes Outcome A was the best choice and would have been implemented if only the other group wouldn’t have been so stuck in their ways. The second group still fully believes in Outcome B, and they conclude that the first group has questionable priorities.

If this is the model of shared governance, then neither group is truly incentivized to consult with the other. One group might resort to obstruction, while another group might resort to finding ways to avoid the process altogether and hand down decisions by fiat. Let me reiterate that these groups are purely hypothetical.

As I’m thinking about this method now, compromise seems to be a deficit process, one where one group gives or takes ground, and success is measured by how much or how little ground your group is forced to give up.

That's not healthy. Instead, all involved groups should approach shared decision-making with the sense that the group we represent doesn't see the full picture. In fact, we *can't* see the full picture. It's *necessary* to come together so that we can see the benefits of Outcome A that we might not have been aware of, or the possible harm that Outcome B might cause. For shared governance to work, everyone has to come to the table with the belief that Outcome C is the desired one, the one that will be mutually beneficial. Outcome C is the one that, if we only work alone, we can't imagine. We have to come together in order to fully understand the issues. That means we have to take everyone's strengths into consideration, and fully address the consequences as well. When we come together, we can arrive at decisions that benefit everyone. That's true interdependence.

Courtney Karasinski: Courtney is an Associate Professor of Communications Sciences & Disorders at the College of Health Professions (CHP). Courtney is also the Vice Chair of ECS/UAS for 2023-2024. [Courtney shared her thoughts on what "The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness" means to her.](#) This is what Courtney had to say.

Laker Readiness has been on the minds of our entire GVSU community. We consider the readiness of our learners for university life as we observe generational differences, changes in k-12 education, and changes to society in general as we have survived a global pandemic. We think about differences in the knowledge, skills, and experiences they bring and how to



capitalize on their unique strengths, which may differ from the strengths exhibited by previous learners. We consider the readiness of our faculty and staff to adapt to our new learners and their constellation of strengths and areas that we need to help them develop as we facilitate the empowered educational experience, lifetime of learning, and culture of educational equity to which we have committed. If we are to fulfill these commitments, it is imperative that we uphold our shared governance model.

As noted in our University Academic Bylaws SG 1.01.1.1, "The University Academic Senate (UAS) affirms the principles of open discussion, frequent and timely communication, and fair processes that lend legitimacy to decision-making. These principles include involving individuals in the decisions that affect them, explaining the thinking that underlies decisions once they have been made, and stating expectations and standards clearly." This language highlights the collaborative nature of shared governance. Faculty, students, staff, and administration partner to design and update policies and procedures that result in an educational experience that reflects our mission, vision, commitments, and values described in Reach Higher 2025; as such, the UAS includes tenured/tenure-track and affiliate faculty members from each College and the University Libraries, student members selected by Student Senate, and administrators as ex-officio members, including the Provost and designees and the Deans. In addition to the UAS, the Standing Committees, University Governance Committees, and Administrative University Committees are vital to shared governance in which faculty, staff, administrators, and students collaborate to craft and revise policies and procedures as we Reach Higher.

Our shared governance model ensures that the perspectives of all of these groups are considered as we co-create Laker Readiness. The collaborative nature of this model is its strength. We cannot ignore the voices of any of these partners or we will fail to achieve our vision of preparing "globally minded citizens for the future they face and the communities they shape." Without knowledge of what our learners bring to us and what they need, we cannot adequately "empower learners in their pursuits, professions, and purpose," as our mission states. Our learners are doing an excellent job of raising their voices and advocating for getting their needs met. Our Iota Epsilon Chapter organized a movement to, as their President Antonio Green stated, "turn equity into reality at GVSU." This well-organized effort by these learners has highlighted the need for collaborative efforts among the entire

Grand Valley Community. We must continue to elevate the voices of all learners, especially those who have been historically marginalized.

We cannot ignore the voices of faculty, as we are the ones who see the needs of our learners in the academic spaces. We work hard to meet these needs and are devoted to our learners. As we need to update our pedagogical practices to “meet our learners where they are,” we are aware that our time is finite, and we need help from our staff and administrative colleagues. We need to listen to our staff, who work with our learners in different ways and help us understand the needs of our learners in non-academic aspects of campus life, and who can bring other perspectives to enhance our understanding of what our learners need in the classroom. Finally, we need to hear the perspectives of our administrators. As faculty, staff, and students, we see the “trees,” the details of what we are doing and how it works. It is important that we help the administrators understand the trees, as they may be focusing on the “forest,” or “big-picture.” As we witness universities across the country closing their doors permanently (including the one at which I taught my first university course as an adjunct), we need to recognize that our administrators are thinking creatively to avoid this happening to us. We can never lose sight of the individual trees, but we must think about the forest, too.

Our shared governance model gives all of us a voice. Through “open discussion, frequent and timely communication, and fair processes,” we can co-create Laker Readiness. We can be the university that empowers all learners, regardless of background, to engage in a lifetime of learning. This is a challenge worth taking. But it will require a great deal of work from all of us, and central to this work is true collaboration. I cannot envision a fast path to achieving this goal, but it will be achieved faster if we live into the *shared* aspect of shared governance, and will not be achieved at all if we function in “silos” or work in opposition.

Azizur (Aziz) Molla: Aziz is a Full Professor of Public Health at the College of Health Professions (CHP). Aziz is also a member of UAS for 2023-2024. [Aziz shared his thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to him by focusing on what he captioned, “Ethnographic Eyes: Shared Governance Being Observed at the University Academic Senate.”](#) This is what Aziz had to say.



Embarking on a journey of curiosity, I served on the University Academic Senate (UAS) for three years. My initial intent was to unravel the inner workings of the university senate. However, as time passed, my focus shifted towards understanding the dynamics of shared governance among stakeholders. I am eager to share my sequential reflections and experiences with you.

Homework: I attended a UAS session as a proxy before nominating myself to serve on this powerful body. During this first meeting, I observed the room full of mostly known colleagues and a few SLT

members. It surprised me when the UAS Chair asked the Provost to give her report to the Senate. I said, oh my God, so the Provost, the highest position above all the faculty, has to report! Not only that, but she also had to respond to the questions asked by the Senate members. I found a system that is the master here, not the position.

As a citizen of a South Asian country, I found that people with power do not report to anyone except to the boss; the university President is the boss of our Provost. What is this format of reporting?! My eyes were stiff to the podium, but they were reading from memory lane; why does the chief of all faculty have to report to someone other than the president and in front of all the faculty? Rather, s/he should exercise the power of an iron fist, the sign of a good leader – of course, my Asian perspective as a rookie in the democratic process.

When it was time to address other agendas, concerned Senate members needed to focus more on that specific agenda item. Some talked about the document as if they were sharing their take from a chapter of their Ph.D. thesis. They were confident and specific with solid arguments. I liked such an exercise, as everyone was there to develop something best for Grand Valley State University (GVSU).

Shared governance ensures faculty rights: After some experience with how the Senate proceedings progress, I started participating in the discussion. In one meeting, I asked the Provost if her office allows different vacation policies at the college level. I elaborated that being a 12-month teaching faculty, I get two weeks of vacation, but I have to cover those two weeks in any way, virtually or using prerecorded lectures. While I was sharing it, a colleague from Kirkhof College of Nursing (KCON) added that our lives in KCON are the same; we literally do not have any vacations. To make the long discussion short, a colleague from the Provost's office asked me if those requirements are stated in the vacation application and if the CHP Dean approves it. I responded positively. He assured me it should not be like this. Anyway, it will be taken care of. One of my CHP colleagues moved towards me and said, 'Good job!' this should have been shared long ago. In conclusion, the Provost's office took care of it within the first half of the Monday following. All the CHP faculty members received an email from the CHP Dean stating the policy: a faculty member on vacation cannot be responsible for any work during their vacation. This ensured that GVSU's governance was connected with several organs to ensure no injustice could be practiced here.

Reach Higher 2025 proposal: In one of the UAS sessions, we reviewed and discussed the 'Reach Higher 2025' proposal sent by President Mantella. After a lengthy discussion, the Senate did not approve the proposal and motioned to send it back for some modification. It was a massive lesson for me to observe that UAS has the power to send back a proposal sent by the highest official of our university. Again, this demonstrates the merit of shared governance in modifying any document to serve the university best. The President addressed the comments, and the UAS approved it. Such a practice demonstrates mutual respect among the organs of shared governance, with no single stakeholder to be ignored. It is like our brains produce the best outcome, utilizing all its interconnected parts. Shared governance utilizes all of its stakeholders for the best outcome. Such governance is connected in a loop. It ensures all of its participants are involved to maximize the outcome.

A healthy shared governance practice can be measured based on building trust among stakeholders and input from all parties toward making the best policy, equity, and justice. Shared governance also expands ownership of a policy, program, or intervention and energizes parties concerned to accomplish an academic institution's mission.

Shared governance with a caring team: In the recent crisis of shared governance, I observed some tensions arising from two actions by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). One is an admission policy allowing admissions of students with lower GPAs, and the other is creating a position parallel to the Provost. I understood that both actions were initiated without involving UAS and other organs of shared governance. Several UAS special sessions were held to discuss the actions.

There is communication between UAS and the SLT. The most recent meeting between faculty and SLT set a tone of progress using the 'Go Team!' approach. I hope such communication will bring back the old glory of shared governance and even strengthen it further.

I acknowledge that Malinowski, the founder of ‘participant observation,’ an ethnographic method, used his invention more efficiently, making it effective. Many opined that we must allocate enough time to apply such techniques to make the observational data as representative as possible. Another famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead, studied the American Samoa population for several years. So, being a first-time Senate member and observing only a few UAS sessions on shared governance, I could not make the ethnographic eyes the best tool to grasp a complex issue like shared governance. It is the consensus to make shared governance more efficient and effective, improving the overall health of the GVSU landscape as that will boost confidence, energy, and outcomes for the GV family members.



Anne Sergeant: Anne is a Full Professor of Accounting in the School of Accounting of the Seidman College of Business (SCB). Anne is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2023-2024. Anne shared her thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to her by focusing on what she captioned, “Shared Governance — Decentralization at Work for Students.” This is what Anne had to say.

Shared governance in academia is a collaborative decision-making process involving faculty, administrators, and students in the governance and management of academic institutions. It represents a decentralized approach to organizational leadership, wherein decision-making is an inclusive process involving multiple stakeholders. This model recognizes the diverse expertise and perspectives of diverse stakeholders and seeks to leverage their collective wisdom to inform decision-making processes related to academic policies, programs, and priorities. At GVSU, we have enjoyed a long history of strong shared governance processes, where the voices of faculty and students are incorporated into administrative decisions. This collaboration has helped build a reputation for high-quality education in a wholesome environment that prepares our students to be productive members of society—Laker Readiness.

The Value of Decentralization

One of the key strengths of decentralization is information sharing. In academia, faculty are in direct contact with students and have a greater understanding of students’ needs and how to address these needs. Alternatively, the administration has a greater understanding of strategic considerations affecting the organization and the strategic directions selected to meet these demands. To be successful, organizations must develop robust communication channels, where each party is able to communicate their valuable insights and the other party appreciates these insights. Without proper mechanisms for sharing information and coordinating activities, organizations risk inefficiencies, redundancies, and conflicts. Faculty expertise can help the administration determine appropriate direction, while administrative wisdom can help direct all toward common goals. When both parties share their wisdom and experience, the organization will be better off. Students will get a quality education that will prepare them for a lifetime of success.

Shared governance enhances the quality and relevance of academic programs and promotes a sense of ownership and investment among stakeholders in the institutional mission and vision. When faculty and other stakeholders believe they are a part of the process of shaping the strategic direction and operational policies of the institution, they are far more likely to support and pursue administrative objectives. Faculty are workhorses for the administration and can pull in union with the administration or in opposition to the administration. At GVSU, we are all working together as a team to strengthen our students and communities.

We all have students' best interests at heart and want to support them.

Challenges of Decentralization in Academia

Despite its potential benefits, decentralization presents several challenges universities must navigate effectively to realize its full value. One of the primary challenges is establishing the domain of control for administration and for faculty. In theory, through shared governance, academic institutions aim to uphold principles of academic freedom, faculty autonomy, and institutional integrity while fostering a culture of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. In practice, establishing the domain of control is more challenging. If too much control is decentralized, the organization runs the risk of losing focus and spinning out of control. If insufficient control is decentralized, the organization cannot capitalize on the strengths of decentralization. If the faculty domain is limited to their direct classes, considerable wisdom and opportunities may be lost regarding students and their struggles. Likewise, the process may be onerous and chaotic if faculty have too much input. A healthy balance meets faculty and administration's needs, providing the best support for students.

Another challenge for shared governance is establishing a supportive mindset and trusting culture. For students to reap the benefits of shared governance, faculty and administration need to adopt a servant-leadership approach, empowering each to do their job and supporting each other. Developing a culture of transparency, empowerment, and continuous learning is critical for fostering trust and collaboration in decentralized organizations. In the past, many of the administrators were former faculty members, which naturally enhanced trust and cooperation. Going forward, it will be important for faculty and administration to continue to build a trusting, supportive relationship. Students sense the culture and will thrive more fully in an environment of trust and cooperation.

Conclusion

Shared governance in academia serves as a mechanism for promoting institutional resilience and adaptability in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. Shared governance enables academic institutions to respond effectively to internal and external challenges by fostering open dialogue, consensus-building, and collective problem-solving. Together we can build a student success—Laker Readiness.





Brent Smith: Brent is an Associate Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS) of the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies (BCOIS). Brent shared his thoughts on what “The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness” means to him by focusing on what he captioned, “The Covenant of Shared Governance.” This is what Brent had to say.



From nations to businesses to religious organizations and universities, organizing human beings into groups is accomplished by written agreement: constitutions, by-laws, policies, and practices. However, decision-making in an organization is different in that it is often performed through an unwritten, implicit agreement. Decision-making originates in a relationship. How the decision is made and who is a part of the making of the decision is, most likely, unwritten, although an agreement is still at work; I think a much more powerful agreement is maintained by custom and precedent, that is, history. And unwritten agreements are difficult to sustain not just because there is no central document to consult, but mainly because of their nature.

Unwritten, implicit agreements are planted in trust with roots formed by consent. These agreements are covenants, agreements formed in trust, by free consent, and with mutuality. Covenants are shaped by reciprocity and sustained by widespread knowledge of roles and the faithfulness of those occupying the roles to perform them openly; that is, available to the critique, evaluation, influence, and guidance of those with whom one is "in covenant." Coercion is the enemy of covenants. When one enters an organization like GVSU with a long practice of shared governance as its decision-making covenant, and its organizational DNA, one steps into a bond that was formed before one appeared on the scene. It's like stepping into a river whose water molecules you did not form. Thus, it's paramount to learn the kinds of relationships that need to be nurtured because one is now a part of the covenant,

something larger than oneself. One cannot successfully step into the stream without insisting on where it must go or knowing where it's been. Yet, when the organization receives someone into ANY role - in administration, staff, or on faculty - the organization must mentor the new person as a novice in the covenant. Because trust is just too easily depleted unless regularly and intentionally replenished. And roots too easily become tangled beneath the surface, unseen as they are.

For shared governance to serve constructively the organization's central mission, the organization itself has to enact the responsibility of educating each new person that enters its organizational structures. And, this is because people bring understandings into any organization that they've developed from all the previous organizations they've known and been shaped by. And frankly, some organizations and work situations are antithetical to the covenant of shared governance. And, it is a rare person who possesses enough self-awareness regarding their decision-making proclivities to determine how they will fare in such a milieu. From experience, I am leery of those who promote themselves as a "collaborator" and/or a "team player," as it is in performance, not declaration, measured by others and not oneself, that such an evaluation is accurately rendered. But shared governance requires collaborative leadership at all levels and knowing how to play on a team, prizing thoughtful deliberation and strategy; knowing what is and is not one's role, practicing the art of setting and maintaining boundaries, consulting with and enlisting others, and realizing that demands are an anathema upon free consent.

The university's central mission is not to bring in more students, not to lead in education nationally, not to design new programs that citizens want or like and that legislators will fund. At any given time, each might or might not serve as a way to live out the mission. The central mission of the university is simply to educate students. The university's central mission hasn't changed because central missions don't change. The organizational DNA of GVSU has been to do this via liberal education. And since we are a public institution, living out our mission needs to create democratic citizens who value reason's relationship to freedom. All facets of the university should serve this mission, including decision-making through shared governance. And unless we were there when GVSU was born, the best we can do is update the mission's language and, worse, forget it altogether. And, unless we were there when shared governance first appeared as the decision-making means to enact GVSU's mission, to educate students via liberal education, we are inheritors of the covenant and not creators of a new one.

As democracy itself is a form of shared governance, how GVSU conceives of and performs its decision-making process is part of the liberal education of students, which, as educators know, has implications far and wide and for a very long time.

Deana Weibel: Deana is a Full Professor of Anthropology at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Deana is also a member of ECS and UAS for 2023-2024. [Deana shared her thoughts on what "The Role of Shared Governance in Co-creating Laker Readiness" means to her by focusing on what she captioned, "Acclimating to Lead: Embracing 'Laker Ready' in University Culture and the Art of Shared Governance."](#) This is what Deana had to say.



Having just passed a landmark two decades at Grand Valley State University, I feel like I'm in a good position to reflect upon issues of shared governance at the University, especially in terms of how newcomers establish "Laker Readiness." "Laker Readiness" is defined by the Division of Student Affairs as "acclimating to life as Lakers" (<https://www.gvsu.edu/studentaffairs/new-student-success-23.htm>). This beneficial program underscores the link between familiarity with GVSU's culture and a successful experience here. This idea of "readiness" is also important to how my discipline, anthropology,

understands how a person gets “enculturated” into a new community.

When I first became a member of the Academic Senate in 2006, it was part of how I personally became “Laker Ready” and learned the culture of GVSU. I found it fascinating to see how decisions were made. I appreciated the appearance of the Provost at our meetings and the opportunity for faculty to speak directly and be heard. When I became a member of the Executive Committee of the Senate in 2011, one thing I appreciated greatly was the way we Senators and other leaders in the GVSU community were welcomed into dialogue, including being welcomed into the home of the President every year for a holiday celebration where we could meet donors, alumni, Trustees, and other people deeply invested in GVSU. This was not something I had expected, but something I deeply valued, as it highlighted the close unity between people on different levels of responsibility in the Grand Valley community. We in the Senate were in constant communication with the faculty members we represented, and sharing their views in this way was powerful. There was strength in this connection, solidarity in a shared culture.

I’ve had other leadership roles as well. I spent six years (2012 to 2018) as chair of the Department of Anthropology here in CLAS at GVSU. When I took over as chair, I felt “Anthropology Ready,” but it was still challenging. Sometimes I felt like I was spinning plates or juggling knives in a circus, trying to keep everything from crashing down around me. Other times I felt like a swan – even if I appeared to be smoothly gliding on a glassy surface, anyone who bothered to look would see my little webbed feet churning the water below me as I worked hard to keep moving. One of my roles as unit head was similar to my role on ECS, providing a conduit to move faculty ideas and questions to administration and administrative thoughts and queries to faculty. It was crucial to my work as an administrator that I really *was* “Anthropology Ready,” knowing the members of my department well. I ensured I understood their research, service, classes, skill sets, and a wide variety of other things, from hobbies to family situations, communication preferences, and more. This allowed me to make sure that the decisions I made would resonate with the department (at least with the majority). We value consensus in Anthropology – I knew my job there was not to impose what I wanted on the department, but to act on its behalf. When I had to make quick decisions or act when consensus wasn’t possible to ascertain, my familiarity with my colleagues still allowed me to act for the department.

I was asked to be the interim chair for Brooks College’s Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies Department for the 2021–2022 academic year (the programs in IRIS are now part of the new School of Interdisciplinary Studies). I was jointly appointed at Brooks and taught courses for their Religious Studies Program, but I didn’t know the IRIS faculty the same way I knew the Anthropology faculty. I was, frankly, *not* “IRIS Ready.” My training as an anthropologist helped me here. I knew from studying various cultures (and the stories of what happens when different cultures come into contact) that cultural differences are real and important, even in the case of departmental cultures.

If I had assumed that the way we did things in Anthropology was universal at GVSU, I would have fallen into the trap of what’s sometimes called “naïve realism” – a false belief that Anthropology’s way was “normal”, and I could safely count on IRIS to operate the same way. If I had been “ethnocentric,” I would have seen the differences between the departments as marking a problem with the way IRIS ran and might have tried to impose Anthropology’s approaches, seeing them as inherently better. Naïve realism and ethnocentrism have plagued human interactions since time immemorial, and are responsible for a host of human problems, like colonialism and war. If I’m honest, I fell victim to both naïve realism and ethnocentrism sometimes, making assumptions about what IRIS would be like and sometimes expressing dismay that Anthropology’s way, which seemed logical to me, wasn’t being followed in the building next door. That said, I made every attempt, knowing that becoming “IRIS Ready” while saddled with naïve realism or ethnocentrism would have been impossible.

Fortunately, another anthropological concept, “cultural relativism,” was part of my response, and certainly a better part. Cultural relativism is the recognition that cultural difference is normal and not something that needs to be changed. An anthropologist coming

to an unfamiliar culture may be surprised by its practices or values but keeps in mind that those practices and values *make sense within the culture*. The role of the anthropologist is to understand a culture well enough to learn why things are done the way they are done. Anthropologists also know that cultural change happens best when it comes from inside. When change is imposed from outside, like through the forced missionary activity of the *conquistadores* or through colonialism, innumerable problems result. Cultural relativism allows an anthropologist to operate with an open mind, learning how a culture works and developing appreciation.

In my Faculty Activity Report (now Faculty Workload Report) for 2021, my reassigned time section reveals how I was trying to implement cultural relativism in my leadership. I wrote, “Because IRIS is not my home department, there was a steep learning curve to be able to step in as unit head. IRIS is located in a different College than Anthropology, it has a much larger number of faculty (especially adjunct faculty), and the institutional culture is quite different. During the fall semester. I needed to get to know dozens of faculty members and learn policies that were unfamiliar.” I recognized that my main obstacle in leadership was my lack of familiarity with IRIS’s departmental culture. To lead is to make decisions for a group, and in order to be able to make those decisions, the group must be understood. Because of this, I relied heavily on the advice and guidance of assistant chairs, former chairs, staff, and faculty, recognizing that if I didn’t personally have years of deep familiarity with IRIS, my decisions could - and should - be based on the knowledge of those who did, the truly “IRIS Ready.”

The main lessons I’ve learned from my leadership roles at GVSU are important in any kind of shared governance: 1. Leaders *represent* those they are leading, and the decisions made should reflect the views of the group (or the majority within it). 2. The group’s views can’t be guessed at or assumed – strong leadership requires inside knowledge and a deep familiarity with the group’s desires, interests, skills, and strengths. 3. Lack of familiarity with the group (whether a department, a university, a village, or a country) sets a leader up for naïve realism and ethnocentrism, creating situations where apparent “common sense” fails or where a disconnect between leader and group is seen in terms of “right and wrong” instead of simple difference, thereby making consensus more difficult to reach. 4. Learning about a group from the inside is crucial for effective leadership, but it takes time, patience, and an openness to learn how and why the group’s values and views *make sense and are necessary* as part of its culture. 5. True representative leadership can begin Once the leader has been enculturated into the group. Although the idea of being “Laker Ready” is aimed at students, all of us, whether leaders, faculty, or staff, should strive to understand and adapt to GVSU’s institutional culture to “acclimate to life as Lakers.”



Standing Committee Chairs 2023-2024

Most of the work that is done in ECS/UAS comes from the charges that ECS assigns to the Standing Committees (SCs). Each SC is assigned specific charges at the start of the academic year in addition to the regular responsibilities of the SCs as specified in the Shared Governance Policies (SG Policies). As each charge is completed, the SC sends a memo to the Chair of ECS/UAS that becomes a business item for discussion at ECS meetings. Recommendations from ECS are sent to UAS and then to the Provost for approval. The composition of each SC is described in the UAS Bylaws and membership always includes elected college and library representatives, as well as students. The SCs are an important part of our shared governance process. There are twelve SCs and a University Governance Committee (LIFT-MC) that report to ECS/UAS and each of these has a Chair.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	AFFILIATION
AFAC	Jennifer Cymbola	CLAS
APSC	Carolyn Shapiro-Shapin & Mikhila Wildey	CLAS CLAS
EIC	Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury	CECI
FFPAC	Amanda Buday & Laura Stroik	CLAS CLAS
FPPC	Kathryn Stieler	CLAS
FSBC	Bob Hollister	CLAS
FTLCAC	Carmen Fernandez Florez	CLAS
GC	Amy Campbell	CLAS
GEC	David Vessey	CLAS
LIFT-MC	Ji (Miracle) Qi & Sarah Nechuta	SCB CHP
OEMC	Bradford Dykes	CLAS
UAC	Julie Henderleiter	CLAS
UCC	Barb Hoogenboom	CHP



University Academic Senate Report 2023-2024

(Report by Felix N. Ngassa, Chair ECS/UAS, 2023-2024)



The University Academic Senate, UAS, is the highest faculty governance body, with the authority to deal with any academic issue or faculty concern. The *modus operandi* of our shared governance process is such that governance policies are developed collaboratively by the UAS and the Provost. Other policies, such as those approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT Policies) or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT Policies), complement the shared governance policies. At the level of each College and the University Libraries, there are governing bodies that serve as advisory bodies to the respective Deans. The advisory bodies develop policies consistent with the policies and guidelines established by the UAS for their various academic units.

The UAS meets on average once a month during the fall and winter semesters; these meetings are always on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Executive Committee of the Senate, ECS, serves as the clearing house for matters to be presented to UAS. As a clearing house, ECS discusses matters first and then makes recommendations that become business items for UAS. ECS meets once a week during the Fall and Winter semesters, and these meetings are on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Meetings of the ECS are restricted to members of the ECS, their alternates, and others whom the ECS may invite, pursuant to [SG 1.01.7.2](#). Meetings of the UAS are open pursuant to [SG 1.01.6.2](#). All recommendations from faculty governance to the Provost and/or President come from the UAS or, in some cases, from the ECS acting on behalf of the UAS. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the ECS met sixteen times, while the UAS met nine times. UAS made several recommendations that the Provost approved. Some of these recommendations are still pending approval. In this report, UAS work in the 2023-2024 academic year has been categorized under the following headings: *Policies/Guidelines, Endorsement, Acceptance of Reports, Appointments, Task Forces, Curriculum/New Programs, and Presentations.*

I. Policies/Guidelines

All recommended policies, policy changes, and guidelines were initiated by the standing committees of the senate, or directly by ECS/UAS. Policy changes were mostly on the *Shared Governance Policies*. UAS acted on the following policies and made recommendations to the Provost, with some recommendations made to the Provost and the President.

Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Proposal on Affiliate Faculty Retirement Policy: We reviewed a proposal from AFAC requesting that affiliate faculty receive the same official retiree healthcare supplement as all other GVSU faculty and staff who meet

the official retiree status. AFAC was charged with reviewing eligibility for retirement benefits for affiliate faculty and making recommendations. Because other benefit-eligible faculty and staff across GVSU who were hired prior to 1/1/2014 receive the Official Retiree healthcare supplement, AFAC is asking that Affiliate faculty who were hired prior to 1/1/2014 and have reached the 75 number (age plus years of service) receive the same Official Retiree healthcare supplement as all other GVSU faculty and staff who meet the Official Retiree status. In addition, AFAC is requesting that the University consider Affiliate faculty who have retired and met these qualifications between the implementation of the Official Retiree status for Affiliates in 2017 and the implementation of this proposed policy change. The UAS supported AFAC's recommendation on Affiliate Faculty Retirement Policy. The Provost responded that she would be bringing the proposal to the SLT for their consideration.

Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Proposal on Academic Review and Dismissal: We reviewed a proposal from APSC regarding Academic Review and Dismissal. The goal of the proposal is to not consider academic review for dismissal at the end of the Spring/Summer semester, as it is a shorter semester, and it may not be in the best interest of the students to be dismissed after this shorter semester. It is more appropriate for a student's academic dismissal evaluation to occur at the end of the Fall or Winter semesters when the student has taken a larger number of courses and has an increased potential for raising their GPA to 2.500 or greater. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on Academic Review and Dismissal. The Provost approved our recommendation and asked Cathy Buyarski, Vice Provost for Advising and Student Success, to work with the University Registrar to ensure that the University Catalog, as well as websites and other sources of information, are updated to reflect the new dismissal policy.

Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Proposal on Academic Grievances: We reviewed a proposal from APSC regarding Academic Grievances. The goal of the proposal is to review the timeline for academic grievances and make recommendations. The main recommendation states that appeal of decisions must take place 15 working days after receipt of notification. The UAS supported APSC's recommendation on Academic Grievances. The Provost approved and the change will be effective with the Spring/Summer 2024 semester.

Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Proposal on Campus Safety Night Walk: We reviewed a proposal from FFPAC regarding Campus Safety Night Walk. FFPAC proposed that the Campus Safety Survey be discontinued and replaced with an expansion of the GVSU Department of Public Safety (GVPD) Campus Safety Night Walk, an annual event in which the GVPD leads an after-dark tour of the GVSU campus for university administrators, Student Life personnel, FFPAC representatives, and representatives from Student Senate. The walks serve as an opportunity to identify emerging safety concerns and learn about the considerations and strategies that guide the GVPD's work to create a safe and secure environment for all Lakers. For the Fall 2023 semester, the following walks were scheduled: Tuesday, October 3 in Allendale; Thursday, October 5 at the DeVos Center in Grand Rapids; Wednesday, October 11 at the DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health in the Health Campus; Monday, October 16 in Allendale; and Wednesday, October 18 at the DeVos Center in Grand Rapids. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation for the Campus Safety Night Walk. The Provost approved the recommendation.

Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Proposal on Lost and Found: We reviewed a proposal from FFPAC regarding the Lost and Found system. This proposal noted that there is a need to promote the lost and found system and make it more official. The UAS supported FFPAC's recommendation on Lost and Found. The Provost approved some of the recommendations and asked the Senior AVP to keep FFPAC informed of developments as they relate to this recommendation.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Proposal on Bias Training: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC regarding Bias Training. FPPC recommended that the university design and facilitate leadership training and ongoing professional development for all department

chairs with an equity and inclusion lens. Furthermore, FPPC recommended that the university require and appropriately train all evaluators who participate in promotion and tenure processes about how to identify and reduce bias and increase equity in the review of promotion and tenure materials. Acting on behalf of UAS, consistent with SG 1.01.3.2, ECS voted to offer advice to the Provost regarding FPPC's recommendations, acknowledged the workshop organized by EAB on BIPOC faculty, and anticipated that the university would continue to implement changes consistent with FPPC's recommendations. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Proposal on Enhanced Faculty Onboarding: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC regarding Enhanced Faculty Onboarding. FPPC recommended enhanced faculty onboarding and ongoing scaffolded support for candidates going through the personnel process. The FTLC personnel portfolio workshop is kind of an onboarding, but it is voluntary. Acting on behalf of UAS, consistent with SG 1.01.3.2, ECS voted to offer advice to the Provost to ask the college Deans to offer enhanced faculty onboarding with specific attention to personnel actions and orientation for faculty going through the personnel process one year prior to their scheduled action in order to provide scaffolded support of the candidate and formal opportunities to clarify tenure and promotion expectations. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Proposal on Bias Statements for Students and Faculty: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC regarding Bias Statements for Students and Faculty. Statements were drafted last year with FFPC and the I & E Office, which was approved by UAS, but someone at UAS shared about potential backlash if a statement was included. It was noted that a statement could increase defense mechanisms or decrease student participation. FFPC delved into the research around this, and the review of the literature was inclusive. FFPC tapped psychology faculty to review the submitted draft statements. None of the psychology colleagues objected to the statements based on unintentional harm, but they did suggest revisions to make statements clearer and less accusatory in tone. Many faculty did not feel as though the statements would mitigate bias. FFPC went forward with the statements as these can educate, and it is a public acknowledgment for those who have suffered from bias that we strive to uphold standards of equity and inclusion. The UAS supported FPPC's recommendation on Bias Statements for Students and Faculty. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Proposal on Modifications to FPPC Bylaws: We reviewed a proposal from FPPC regarding Modifications to the FPPC Bylaws. The proposal recommended changing the FPPC bylaws regarding the Timeline for electing a Chair. The chair will be elected each year "during the second to last meeting of the Winter semester," instead of "during January." The proposed change will result in a change in shared governance policies, **SG 1.02.d.iii**. ECS acted on behalf of UAS pursuant to SG 1.01.3.1 to support the FPPC recommendation on FPPC bylaws and send it to the Provost. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Graduate Council (GC) Proposal on Independent Study Policy: We reviewed a proposal from GC regarding the Independent Study Policy. This proposal addresses an issue within the standing responsibility of the GC under the bylaws in **SG 1.02.g.iv.b**. The independent study policy has not been reviewed for over 15 years. GC reviewed and updated the existing policy to be consistent with current practices and terminology. The policy is housed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog within the Graduate Academic Policies and Regulations section. The UAS supported GC's recommendation on the Independent Study Policy. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Graduate Council (GC) Proposal on the Use of AI in Dissertations and Theses: We reviewed a proposal from GC regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Dissertations and Theses. This proposal addresses an issue within the standing responsibility of the GC under the bylaws in **SG 1.02.g.iv.b**. Artificial intelligence (AI), when generating a research project, thesis, or dissertation, must adhere to some minimum standards to ensure academic integrity and uphold quality standards. The policy is housed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog within the Graduate Academic Policies and Regulations section. The

UAS supported GC's recommendation on the Use of AI in Dissertations and Theses. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

General Education Committee (GEC) Proposal on Modifications to GEC Bylaws: We reviewed a proposal from GEC regarding Modifications to the GEC Bylaws. The proposal recommended adding "b) to provide materials to assist instructors in teaching and assessing the general education knowledge and skills goals" to the bylaws language, making this a standing charge of GEC. GEC has been doing this to help instructors teach the skills goals, and thought it made sense to add it to the standing responsibilities. The UAS supported GEC's recommendation on Modifications to the GEC Bylaws. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC) Proposal on Instructional Modality Definitions: We reviewed a proposal from OEMC that recommended clear definitions for course modalities. The UAS supported OEMC's recommendation on Instructional Modality Definitions. The Provost approved the recommendation and the change has taken effect.

Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC) Proposal on Program Modality Definition: We reviewed a proposal from OEMC regarding Program Modality Definition. The goal of the memo is to help students understand the programs' delivery modes. The intent is to be clear to students. Online means fully online, and face-to-face means fully face-to-face. Hybrid and low residency programs are specifically defined. Most of the programs that will be advertised as online and low residency courses will be targeted toward adult students and those who cannot be here on campus. If a program advertises that they are online or low residency, they will need to guarantee a pathway for their students in that format. The UAS supported OEMC's recommendation on Program Modality Definition. The Provost approved the recommendation.

Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC) Proposal on Faculty Course Approval: OEMC was charged with reviewing policy for review of online and hybrid courses and considering whether approved courses should be approved for all modalities. We reviewed a proposal from OEMC that recommended all courses (current and future) should be automatically approved for all offering modalities (in-person, hybrid, online, and multiple delivery). In addition, OEMC recommended the removal of SG 2.01.D (Hybrid and Online Curriculum Proposals) from the Shared Governance Policies (Handbook). The UAS supported OEMC's recommendation on Faculty Course Approval. The Provost approved the recommendation and the change has taken effect.

Proposal to Amend SG 1.03.B.5: The proposal changes the reporting of the International Education Committee (IEC) to UAS/ECS rather than UCC. The Provost approved the change to the Shared Governance Policy with immediate effect.

International Education Committee (IEC) Proposal on IEC Bylaws Change: We reviewed a proposal from IEC regarding IEC Bylaws Change. The proposed change will change the Shared Governance Policies in SG 1.02.B. The significant change in membership composition is recommending two representatives from CECI (currently, four are from CLAS, and one is from each of the remaining colleges and the University Libraries). For student membership, it is recommended that one student be selected by the Student Organization, which represents international students. Other changes were mainly to conform with the current terminology. For example, **Faculty Led** for Study Abroad, **Executive Director of Padnos International Center** for Director of International Education, and **Padnos International Center** for Office of International Affairs. The UAS supported the IEC's recommendation on IEC Bylaws Change. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Proposed Changes to the University Conduct Pool, SG 1.03.C.4: We reviewed a proposal from Student Affairs recommending changes to the University Conduct Pool. Our policies were not consistent with Student Affairs policies. This is a Student Affairs committee, but faculty are involved. The Provost approved the change to the Shared Governance Policy

with immediate effect.

Proposed Changes to the Campus Life Committee, SG 1.03.B.3.iv: We reviewed a proposal to change the reporting of the Campus Life Committee to reflect the change in administrative structure within Academic and Student Affairs. The Campus Life Committee will report to the VP for Student Affairs, the Provost, and UAS. The UAS supported the recommendation and the Provost approved. The change in our Shared Governance Policies, SG 1.03.B.3.iv has been made.

Proposed University Definition of Digital Literacy & Proposed Inventory Process: We reviewed a proposal from the Digital Literacy Taskforce on the University Definition of Digital Literacy. This group was convened in the Fall of 2023. They drafted a definition and sought feedback from several groups. The proposed definition is “*Digital literacy is the ability to use, create, evaluate, and engage critically with digital technologies to complete tasks safely and ethically in professional and civic contexts.*” The task force would also like to develop a digital literacy inventory. The UAS supported the recommendation of the Digital Literacy Taskforce, and the Provost approved it.

Proposed Policy on Establishment, Review, and Discontinuing Academic Centers, SG 2.06 & 1.03.B.14: We reviewed the proposed new language to replace the current language in SG 2.06. The current title of SG 2.06, “Procedure for Establishment of Non-Academic Institutes, Centers, and Offices” will be replaced with the new title, “Policy on Establishing, Reviewing, and Discontinuing Academic Centers.” In addition, it is recommended to insert a new section SG 1.03.B.14 to establish an additional University Governance Committee. The UAS supported the Proposed Changes to the Policy on Establishing, Reviewing, and Discontinuing Academic Centers, SG 2.06 & 1.03.B.14, and the Provost approved.

FARES II Task Force Proposal on ECS/UAS Membership: The recommendation is that the Chair of AFAC will be a voting member of ECS and UAS, and a second AFAC member, who must hold an affiliate appointment, will be a voting member of UAS. AFAC will move from a University Governance Committee to a Standing Committee of ECS/UAS. This proposal would bring the percentage of ECS members on UAS up to just below 40%, which is close to what it was when the reorganization of 2004 was completed. The UAS supported the FARES II Task Force recommendation on ECS/UAS Membership. The Provost approved the recommendation.

FARES III Task Force Proposed Bylaws Language Change: Because AFAC is now a standing committee of UAS rather than a University Governance Committee, AFAC will be listed under SG 1.02 instead of SG 1.03. SG 1.02 carries over language from AFAC and updates the committee description. SG 1.01 is the main set of ECS/UAS bylaws. Now that we are specifying a role for affiliates, there are places where we need to acknowledge affiliates and how they fit into our governance structure. The key changes in SG 1.01 pertain to Section 4, particularly 4.4, which specifies from where the members are selected, 4.4.2 has to do with who the second affiliate senator will be. AFAC should try to identify a member of AFAC who is an affiliate, and who can serve on UAS. If not, the second member can be selected from the broader pool of affiliates, with preference given to those who have served on AFAC or in other relevant roles. Section 6.7 says that if the affiliate UAS member needs to send an alternate to UAS, this alternate should come from AFAC, and can have either affiliate or tenured/tenure-track status. Section 7.6 states that if the AFAC Chair is unable to serve on ECS, the Vice-Chair of AFAC will serve. The proposed change to Section 8 changes the timeline for sending ECS/UAS agendas from one week prior to the meeting to 4 working days prior to the meeting; we don't need to require that this be done Friday night or over the weekend. The UAS supported the FARES III Task Force's recommendation on proposed bylaws language change. The Provost approved the recommendation on the proposed bylaws change with immediate effect.

UAS Memo on Consent Agenda for UAS: We reviewed a proposal generated from within UAS on Consent Agenda for UAS Meetings. The proposed language was recommended to be placed in the prior section as an appendix to SG 8.2.4. ECS could vote to put items on a consent agenda, but any member of UAS has the power to bring an item off the consent

agenda. This is designed for things that need no discussion and go immediately to a vote. Still, if a member feels we should discuss it, a member can email/contact the chair and have it removed anonymously or move to have it removed from the consent agenda during the meeting. Otherwise, it will be adopted at the start of the meeting by unanimous motion. If something is moved off, the chair puts it on the regular agenda. The UAS supported the recommendation on the Consent Agenda for UAS Meetings. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

University Curriculum Committee (UCC) Proposal on Course Designation for Study Abroad: We reviewed a proposal from UCC regarding Course Designation for Study Abroad. UCC recommends the creation of a permanent course designation specific to study abroad. The recommendation results from collaborations with the Padnos International Center (PIC), the International Education Committee (IEC), and the University Registrar's Office. The UAS supported UCC's recommendation on Course Designation for Study Abroad. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

II. Endorsements

Under the responsibilities of the UAS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies (SG 1.01.2.4)*, UAS may vote to express its endorsement of policies, events, and initiatives that support and advance the university's mission and values. For the 2023-2024 academic year, UAS endorsed the following initiatives.

Endorsement of Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Proposal on Annual Salary Adjustment Request for 2024-2025: We reviewed a proposal from FSBC requesting that next year's raise should be more than CPI plus 1.5% to address recent shortfalls. The UAS supported FSBC's recommendation on the Annual Salary Adjustment Request for 2024-2025. The Provost's response to the UAS recommendation is still pending.

Endorsement of the Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Virtual Commemoration for Winter 2024: ECS reviewed and discussed the Winter 2024 commemoration for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Acting on behalf of UAS, ECS unanimously endorsed the Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. commemoration for Winter 2024 and encouraged all faculty to participate in the scheduled events as they are able. The keynote speaker was Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry, educator, and author. Other speakers included the following: Dr. Dar Mayweather, founder of an inclusive leadership consulting business, and leadership studies faculty member at the University of North Carolina Wilmington; and Tarita Johnson, senior vice president of Talent and Diversity at The Right Place in Grand Rapids.

Endorsement of the UAS Letter of Appreciation to the eLearning Technologies Team: UAS reviewed and discussed a letter of appreciation to the eLearning Technologies Team. UAS voted to endorse a letter of appreciation to the eLearning Technologies Team, which has been very helpful to faculty in the transition from Blackboard to Blackboard Ultra.

Endorsement of the Provost's Appointed Faculty Representatives to the Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC): Pursuant to SG 1.02.k, UAS discussed and endorsed the Provost's appointed faculty representatives to the OEMC.

Endorsement of Provost's Proposal to Reorganize Padnos College of Computing and Engineering (PCEC): In the proposal shared by the Provost, there were several reasons for considering separating PCEC into two colleges. These include the following. Technology Week reflected the increasing focus of the Grand Rapids community to want to become a tech hub for the region. Technology is playing an increasing role in everything. In MI the economy is changing faster than in other places as we move from fuel-based to renewal energy, a blue and green economy. Our governor wants our economy to become greener and to build on our water resources. The two colleges would fit within the Blue Dot ecosystem that the university is investing in to be the core of the engagement of GVSU with the rest of the community in technology. There is a need to grow our capacity to produce engineers and computer scientists. The two disciplines are at different stages. Engineering is in the phase of the changing face of engineering. Computing is different because it is both a discipline and a platform for everything else. People cannot do their work without some understanding

of computing, whereas in some fields people do not need to have knowledge of engineering. The proposal will include a College of Engineering with resources needed to grow and expand in additional subdisciplines and a College of Computing to grow to meet the needs of students who want to major in computing as well as students who need digital literacy and to collaborate with other disciplines. We have compared GVSU to other Michigan universities. We have a lot of capacity for growth. Other Michigan universities have a larger percentage of graduates who are in engineering or computer science. UAS discussed and endorsed the proposal to split PCEC into two colleges.

Endorsement of the COACHE Survey: On the Discussion of the COACHE Survey: Ed Aboufadel, Senior Associate Vice President, shared information about the COACHE survey, which will be administered. COACHE stands for *Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education*, which GVSU has joined for 2023-2026. The rationale for joining and conducting the survey is that GVSU is committed to fostering an environment where faculty/staff/students can thrive. This partnership came from a recommendation from the GVSU Network of Advisors initiative and a desire for up-to-date data on faculty morale and workload. COACHE was established more than a decade ago, and more than 250 colleges and universities have become partners. The satisfaction survey was crafted by and for academic leaders. A steering committee has been established at GVSU, which consists of faculty, staff, and administration, led by the Office of the Provost. UAS has representation. Communication about COACHE will begin after Thanksgiving. COACHE is different from HERI and the myGVSU Climate Survey. Plans are in development for dissemination and utilization of the survey results in fall 2024. ECS discussed and endorsed the COACHE survey on behalf of UAS.

Endorsement of the UAS Response to the White Paper on Educating Adult Learners at Scale: A number of concerns were raised about the White Paper on Educating Adult Learners at Scale. One concern was that decisions about the programs being provided to adult learners do not appear to be made within Academic Affairs. It was clarified that the programs themselves will remain in their colleges, but the administrative portions of providing the programs to adult learners will be handled by the new framework. Many aspects of what was described in the white paper are already being done by VP Van Dam's Office. UAS members appreciated the acknowledgment of the miscommunications that have occurred around this framework. Faculty expressed concern about control over the programs and decisions on whether or not to allow programs to be delivered within the new framework. Specifically, untenured and affiliate faculty may not feel free to say, "no." Additionally, course materials created using GVSU resources are considered GVSU's intellectual property, so GVSU can use the materials created by faculty. It was noted that the white paper did not seem to include any risk assessment. There was a question about whether the urgency of sending a response to the white paper immediately was needed. The UAS response to the white paper was drafted asynchronously via Google Docs. At the end of the discussion, UAS passed the following motion: "The University Academic Senate fully accepts the White Paper response, having the response available to all faculty, send the response to the Senior Leadership Team, and to the Board of Trustees." The motion was approved unanimously.

Endorsement of a Statement of Concern Document on Admission: UAS engaged in a robust discussion of the statement of concern drafted by UAS members. Two main issues identified were whether administrators and faculty have the same definition of shared governance, and faculty needs for serving the current and future students. Unit heads have indicated a need for more tenure-track faculty lines. The following language will be added to the memo, "We request to immediately increase the number of tenure-track faculty lines, particularly in areas with lots of large sections serving first and second-year students." The motion to modify the statement and send it to the President and Provost was supported by UAS. In addition, the following faculty members, Chris Haven, Bob Hollister, Figen Mekik, Chris Pearl, Mary Bower Russa, Anne Sergeant, and Andrew Spear, joined ECS/UAS Vice Chair Courtney Karasinski and ECS/UAS Chair Felix Ngassa to meet with President Mantella and Provost Mili on April 12 to discuss faculty concerns and shared governance expectations.

III. Acceptance of Reports

Under the responsibilities of the UAS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies (SG 1.01.1.2.4)*, UAS receives proposals initiated by a variety of individuals and groups. The ECS has the authority to act for the UAS within the range of the Senate's responsibilities (*SG 1.01.3.1*).

Acceptance of the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee (AFAC) Report on Optimal Membership and Faculty Representation: ECS entrusted AFAC with the crucial task of reviewing its standing responsibilities and, considering its workload, determining the optimum and appropriate faculty membership and representation of AFAC. After a thorough discussion of the committee's responsibilities and workload, AFAC recommended keeping the current committee size and makeup. ECS voted to accept the AFAC recommendation and thanked AFAC for their work.

Acceptance of the Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Report on Repeat Course Approval Policy: We reviewed a report from APSC regarding the Repeat Course Approval Policy. APSC recommended that a "student may repeat any course three times (for a total of 4 attempts) without approval from an academic advisor. Some programs may have stricter guidelines on course repeats, and these program guidelines take precedence." The motion to support with a recommendation from ECS was not supported by UAS. In our discussion, we considered the concerns from the students' perspective that changing the current policy from 1 repeat to 3 repeats will set the student up for failure, a waste of money and time. It was also noted that the recommendation in the memo was anti-student-centric because if a student is failing a class 3-4 times, it means there is a deeper problem that needs to be addressed. There were other factors considered such as a third repeat course not being eligible for financial aid. UAS asked for the memo to be returned to APSC for further review.

Acceptance of the Academic Policies and Standards Committee (APSC) Report on Workday Implementation: We reviewed the APSC Report on Workday Implementation. APSC was charged by ECS to "review the implementation of Workday (WD) Student and determine if policy changes are needed to allow us to use business processes within WD Student." APSC determined that there are no policy changes needed at this time but proposed some working guidelines to be followed in the event of an error or disruption in processes connected with the Workday implementation if it falls within the scope of APSC. A motion was passed to accept the memo and thank APSC for their work.

Acceptance of Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) Report on Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Students Across Colleges: We reviewed the EIC Report on Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Students Across Colleges. Data suggest that we continue to present ourselves as a predominantly white institution. UAS accepted the report and thanked EIC for the report.

Acceptance of the Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Report on Active Learning Spaces: FFPAC has been charged over the past several years with Active Learning Spaces (ALS). A survey was conducted a year ago. This year's charge is to figure out who is responsible for what. A question was asked about lowering room capacities, which creates scheduling challenges as enrollment increases. This question will be brought to the Academic Space Committee. ECS thanked FFPAC for their work and sent the report back for revision and specific recommendations.

Acceptance of the Faculty Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FFPAC) Report on Classroom Issues and Innovations: This report recommends that the new survey developed by FFPAC be administered every three years and used as a tool to work with Facilities Services and IT. The survey is likely to come out in January. AVP Aboufadel noted that the last time this was done was in 2018, which was beneficial. It went to the Academic Space Committee. ECS thanked FFPAC for their work and charged FFPAC with conducting a survey on Classroom Issues and Innovations and reporting back to ECS.

Acceptance of the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Report on Bias in Personnel

Processes from the EPP Task Force Recommendations: We reviewed a report from FPPC in response to a charge from ECS requesting FPPC to consider the EPP Task Force recommendations regarding bias in personnel processes. There were some concerns about ambiguity and the inability of ECS to charge UPRC, I & E, and HR to craft policy. The Provost shared that she has already given this to the deans to begin to address. She stated that she knows this must be coordinated with a task force from UAS. She agrees with the need to review our processes to start the work. UAS did not support this memo, and the plan is to take the memo back to ECS.

Acceptance of the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee (FPPC) Report on Evaluation of Teaching: This report was submitted with two accompanying documents: **Faculty Fora Summary on Evaluation of Teaching** and **Teaching Evaluation Considerations and Suggestions**. FPPC concluded that this charge was beyond FPPC's scope and expertise. To provide a robust and researched-based evaluation of teaching, FPPC recommends that the entirety of the materials concerning the Evaluation of Teaching found in the Faculty Handbook and on the Provost's Website, including those materials that FPPC has recommended and not yet approved, be examined together for consistency, and reconsidered in light of the most recent research. We recommend a multi-year task force to work in cooperation with the faculty and in collaboration with a past or present representative from FPPC, FTLC-AC, EIC, EPP, LIFT-MC, CECI Education Faculty and other disciplinary experts who have been actively engaged in the groundwork. A task force would ideally begin with a thorough investigation of what is already being enacted in units/colleges across campus and continue by researching, designing, piloting, implementing, and regularly assessing an improved teaching evaluation process. ECS accepted the FPPC recommendation on the Evaluation of Teaching and placed it on the ECS agenda for the spring and summer retreats.

Acceptance of the FPPC Report on Merit Ratings in Workload: This report was submitted with an accompanying document, the **FPPC Report on How to Submit a Faculty Review Document in Workday**. FPPC recommended expanding the current three evaluation designations to five. If approved, this proposal will result in the change of our shared governance policies, **SG 3.08.2**. The proposed new evaluation designations are: [1. Does Not Meet Expectations](#); [2. Needs Improvement](#); [3. Succeeding](#); [4. Exceeding](#); [5. Exemplary](#). ECS voted to place the FPPC recommendation on Merit Ratings in Workday on the ECS agenda for the spring and summer retreats.

Acceptance of the FPPC Report on Annual Evaluation Considerations: FPPC offered this report as insight for future ECS consideration. ECS voted to place the FPPC recommendation on Annual Evaluation Considerations on the ECS agenda for the spring and summer retreats.

Acceptance of the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC) Report on Updating Faculty Governance Structure: We reviewed a report from FSBC recommending that we consider reimagining our current governance structure to ensure it is relevant, given the change in the current university administrative structure. It has been a long time since our current shared governance structure was implemented, and the university has changed a lot since then. At the recent ECS meeting on November 3, ECS passed a motion to form a task force to investigate shared governance realignment adapting to the new structure of the university that has evolved over the past decade.

Acceptance of the General Education Committee (GEC) Report on Development of Assessment Materials: GEC updated ECS on their development of assessment materials as charged by ECS. ECS accepted the report and thanked GEC for their work.

Acceptance of the General Education Committee (GEC) Report on Example Curriculum Assessment Report: GEC updated ECS on their generation of exemplars. ECS accepted the report and thanked GEC for their work.

Acceptance of the General Education Committee (GEC) Report on Training Materials for GEC Members: GEC updated ECS on their work on developing training materials for

committee members. These materials will be posted on the faculty governance website and the GEC Blackboard site. ECS accepted the report and thanked GEC for their work.

Acceptance of the General Education Committee (GEC) Report on Teaching Materials: GEC was charged by ECS to “evaluate the training material that was developed in 2022-2023 and make revisions as necessary.” GEC completed the Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Integration, and Ethical Reasoning teaching materials. These were uploaded to the Gen Ed website in October 2023. ECS passed a motion to accept the report and thanked GEC.

Acceptance of the General Education Committee (GEC) Report on the GEC Website: GEC was charged by ECS to “evaluate the functionality of the GEC website and make revisions as necessary.” The website went live in October 2023, and minor revisions are ongoing. ECS passed a motion to accept the report and thanked GEC.

Acceptance of Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching Management Committee (LIFT-MC) Report on LIFT Student Perception Data: The questions on LIFT do not align with our definition of effective teaching. One recommendation was the midsemester evaluation of teaching (MIT). Questions were raised about the validity of the MIT. No other institutions use MITs in a summative manner; there is a correlation between student learning and MIT feedback when MIT feedback is used formatively. BOT policy says that effective teaching must be documented by self-, peer, and student evaluations, not that effective teaching measures student learning. As we accept and publish reports stating that LIFT doesn’t measure our definition of effective teaching, are we out of compliance with BOT policy? We use LIFT to measure teaching quality and student learning, but LIFT does not measure those things. There were thoughts of not abandoning LIFT until we had another measure to replace it. Multiple recommendations have been made over the years about using LIFT, but these are not reflected in policy. ECS accepted the report and thanked LIFT-MC. ECS plans to form a task force to frame prior LIFT recommendations and share findings at the summer retreat.

Acceptance of the Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC) Report on Faculty Certification for Online and Hybrid Teaching: The three main recommendations from this report are: [1. A continuation of the current GVSU practice regarding initial approval for faculty teaching online and hybrid courses](#); [2. Approval is valid for five years](#); and [3. Faculty must renew professional development/training once every five years to continue teaching online/hybrid courses](#). ECS members asked about what training is offered and why re-training every five years is recommended. GVSU provides training through FTLC, E-learning, and external online asynchronous opportunities. The recommendation to re-train every five years resulted from a review of what peer institutions are doing. The OEMC is trying to make things less demanding by not needing to propose courses as online/hybrid and providing some autonomy for faculty by not prescribing that everyone has to go through the same course but supporting faculty in teaching excellence. A question was asked about who will keep the list of qualified faculty for online teaching updated, as the current list seems outdated. The Provost’s Office maintains it in partnership with the Dean’s Offices. The data sources are being updated. It could be demanding for faculty. Once faculty complete the training, the expectation is that faculty will keep current. Members noted that they would instead address potential problems as they come up than require everyone to complete training every five years. ECS passed a motion to thank the committee for their work and send the report back to the committee to reconsider the requirement to renew the online training every five years.

Acceptance of Report on Proposal to Modify SG 2.06: We reviewed a report on a proposal from Vice Provost Bob Smart of the Provost Office on modification to SG 2.06. Questions have been asked about centers, especially those that take many resources to maintain. There is a process for creating centers but not for reviewing them. This proposal would provide a policy on reviewing centers, which allows us to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated. There was a question about non-academic centers in the original policy; this meant not a teaching unit. If it relates to teaching/research/engagement in Academic Affairs, these are academic centers. Additional nuance to academic/non-academic. This handbook

language needs to be developed collaboratively. SG 2.06 was designated non-academic to ensure it did not run afoul of the SG bylaws. In SG 1.01, we have language about shared responsibility. ECS accepted the report, thanked Vice Provost Bob Smart, and recommended that he work with Charles Pazdernik and Amy McFarland from ECS to formulate appropriate bylaws language for SG 2.06.

Acceptance of College of Health Professions (CHP) Report on the CHP College Personnel Committee (CPC) Representation: A reorganization of CHP with multiple units merging decreased the number of representatives on the CHP CPC. The ECS discussion revealed that the BOT policy 4.2.10.2 may need updating for various colleges as reorganizations have occurred. ECS moved to refer the memo to FPPC with a charge to consider the BOT policy to recommend revisions to policy and survey CPCs and faculty councils to recommend what needs to be done to bring the colleges into compliance with those recommendations.

Acceptance of the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Advisory Committee (Pew FTLCAC) Report on Assisting FTLC with Goals on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The report outlined the efforts of Pew FTLCAC. They met with Matt Ruen from libraries to understand the process. Materials are available through Scholarworks. The committee is working on the new related charge. A question was raised about how these will become policy and where the document will appear when it is ready. The answer was through FTLC and Scholarworks, but the committee is open to other suggestions. Question: does this include published work? Yes, submit it to the library, and they will work to get the permissions. Question: where are sabbatical reports? In the archives. ECS accepted the report and thanked Pew FTLCAC for their work.

Acceptance of the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Advisory Committee (Pew FTLCAC) Report on Supporting Faculty Best Practices for Online Pedagogy and Content Delivery: The report outlined the accomplishment of Pew FTLCAC last academic year. Many recommendations have been communicated to FTLC and eLearning and are already underway. This charge has not been continued this year, but Pew FTLCAC does have a standing charge for digital literacy. ECS accepted the report and thanked Pew FTLCAC for their work.

Acceptance of the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Advisory Committee (Pew FTLCAC) Report on Relationship with FTLC: The report outlined the work done toward formalizing the relationship with FTLC. ECS accepted the report, thanked Pew FTLCAC for their work, and urged that the charge be continued.

Acceptance of the Research-Intensive Course Designation Report: Anna Hammersmith, Faculty Fellow in OURS, and Susan Mendoza, Director of OURS, presented this proposal, which aims to recognize courses at GVSU that contain embedded undergraduate research experiences. A research-intensive (RI) course designation is proposed to be attached to specific course sections and courses to elevate and recognize research efforts. The body asked several questions, many centering on the need to include more examples of how humanities courses could fit the criteria for the research-intensive designation. Questions were also raised about the process for this designation appearing on transcripts. UAS passed a motion to table this discussion and have the proposers obtain input from humanities faculty on incorporating relevant language for their fields and from the Registrar's Office on how this designation would appear on transcripts and the amount of work required.

Acceptance of the Test-Optional and Holistic Admission Task Force Report: The report from the Task Force was discussed. UAS members received emails from colleagues about the report. Most support the recommendations of the Task Force. Many said a GPA requirement is needed, although others were in favor of waiving a GPA requirement. Faculty expressed that administrators seem to be telling students that our curriculum and teaching are the reasons for student failure, when in fact, many students who fail do so due to absences from class and non-submission of assignments. Struggling students need basic help with reading and writing. The Student Senate President shared that from a student perspective, the recommendations in the report need to go further to address the retention issues, and students are also concerned about this. It was noted that the President is

ultimately responsible for establishing admission requirements for the institution (**BOT 10.1**). UAS members expressed a desire for increased hiring of tenure-track faculty to help achieve our mission. UAS voted to support the recommendation of the task force.

IV. Appointments

Under the responsibilities of the ECS as specified in our *Shared Governance Policies* (SG 1.01.3.4), the ECS serves as a nominating committee for membership for all committees, task forces, and boards elected by the UAS. In addition, according to SG 1.01.3.1, ECS has the authority to act for the UAS within the range of the Senate's responsibilities.

Appointment of Faculty to the Online Education and Microcredential Council (OEMC): UAS approved the Provost's faculty appointment to the OEMC. The following faculty colleagues were confirmed as members of OEMC: Robert Adams; Krista Benson; Kelli Damstra; Cheryl Dunn; Bradford Dykes; and Rick Geisel.

Appointment of Faculty Representatives to the Laker Impression of Faculty Teaching Management Committee (LIFT-MC): ECS selected the following faculty to serve a 3-year term in LIFT-MC: Wei Gu (CECI); Sarah Nechuta (CHP, Co-Chair); and Christopher Shaffer (ANT, CLAS). The returning members of the committee are Whitt Kilburn (PLS, CLAS), Ji (Miracle) Qi (MGT, SCB, Co-Chair), and Wei Sun (ECON, SCB).

Appointment of Faculty to the SHared Governance Review (SHGR) Task Force: ECS discussed the selection of faculty to serve in a new task force to review and reimagine our current faculty governance structure to make sure it is relevant to the current administrative structure of the university. The following faculty were selected: Chris Cruz (ECON, SCB); Brian Deyo (ENG, CLAS); Denise Goerisch (BCOIS); Raymond Higbea (CECI); Maya Hobscheid (ULs); Bob Hollister (BIO, CLAS); Barb Hooper (KCON); Figen Mekik (GEO, CLAS); Azizur Molla (CHP); Wendy Reffeor (PCEC); Andrew Spear (PHI, CLAS); Chris Haven (WRT, CLAS); and Ed Aboufadel (Provost Office).

Appointment of Faculty and Staff to the Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2: (Group 1: Admissions Standards Group): The Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2 is a group that reviews admissions standards that consider a broad range of student attributes and achievements, not just standardized test scores. On Friday, February 16, 2024, the University Academic Senate (UAS) passed a motion to form a task force to continue working on admissions standards and conditions and reviewing the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Report/Recommendation. During the ECS meeting on March 22, ECS decided to divide the task force into two groups: Group 1 (Admission Standards Group) and Group 2 (Student Support Group). Faculty and staff were nominated for both groups, and the following faculty/staff members were selected to serve in the Admission Standards Group: Nick Baine; Matt Boelkins (Chair); Jen Drake; Bob Hollister; Aaron Lowen; Jakia Marie; Ernest Park; Michelle Rhodes; Jen Smart; Mike Stoll; Danny Velez; LuWanna Williams. It is anticipated that the Student Senate will still determine a student representative.

Appointment of Faculty and Staff to the Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2 (Group 2: Student Support Group): The Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2 is a group that reviews admissions standards that consider a broad range of student attributes and achievements, not just standardized test scores. On Friday, February 16, 2024, the University Academic Senate (UAS) passed a motion to form a task force to continue working on admissions standards and conditions and reviewing the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Report/Recommendation. During the ECS meeting on March 22, ECS decided to divide the task force into two groups: Group 1 (Admission Standards Group) and Group 2 (Student Support Group). Faculty and staff were nominated for both groups, and the following faculty/staff members were selected to serve in the Admission Standards Group: Cathy Buyarski; Keigh-Cee Bell (Co-Chair); Jennifer Cymbola; Joy Gianakura; Nikki Gaines; Aaron Haight; Brian Hatzel; Jennifer Jameslyn (Co-Chair); Jessica Jennrich; Sal Lopez-Arias (Co-Chair); Amy Masko; Mike Messner; Mike Saldana; Andrew Spear; Anna White. It is anticipated that the Student Senate will still determine a student representative.

V. Task Forces

When confronted with issues that need focused attention, broad representation, and results within a short time frame, ECS/UAS creates task forces to deal with these issues. For the 2023-2024 academic year, there were eight task forces: (1) **FACULTY REAPPORTIONMENT ON SENATE (FARES)** Task Forces I, II, III; (2) **OWNERSHIP OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS** Task Force; (3) **TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY** Task Force 1; (4) **REVISION OF SG 1.01.2 AND SG 2.05** Task Force; (5) **WORKLOAD AND SIGNIFICANT FOCUS** Task Force; (6) **SHARED GOVERNANCE REVIEW (SHGR)** Task Force; (7) **TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY** Task Force 2: **ADMISSIONS STANDARDS GROUP** Task Force; and (8) **TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY** Task Force 2: **STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP** Task Force.

FARES I, II, III Task Forces: The original FARES I task force was formed with the following roles/charges: According to the report of the 2021 Affiliate Faculty Representation on Senate (AFFARES) Task Force, formulate one or more proposals for revising Board of Trustees policies defining the membership of UAS and ECS (BOT 3.1.4.1) in order (i) to provide for the participation of Affiliate Faculty representatives in those bodies and (ii) to address changes in the relative distribution of faculty among the Colleges/Libraries since the 2004 University reorganization that are not reflected in the current number and apportionment of seats on ECS. The subsequent task forces, FARES II and III, continued the work of FARES I. The final recommendation on the BOT language change was submitted and approved by the BOT. The corresponding proposals to change shared governance policies have been reviewed and approved by UAS, but the Provost's decision on the recommendations is still pending.

OWNERSHIP OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS Task Force: This task force looked at protecting the rights of faculty members and ways to use language to convey that this is a shared value. We have a policy because we believe the documents delivered by faculty members are the way GVSU provides an education and a way for GVSU to distinguish itself by advertising that copyright stays with the faculty. In the fall semester, ECS asked the task force to consider the additional document, "Navigating Copyright Issues in Expanded Online Education and Events," in framing the recommendation. There were no concerns about the philosophy of the document but a desire to ensure consistency with the document that was shared. One problem was that there was no legal representation for a faculty member who may have brought a dispute. The Definition and Ownership of Instructional Materials is a new policy that will be covered in SG 6.06. Decisions based on SG 6.06 cannot conflict with or contradict the language in BOT 4.1.10.2. The proposal from the task force also recommends the creation of an Intellectual and Instructional Materials Review Panel (SG 1.03.C.5), which will be convened on an as-needed basis to resolve a dispute or uncertainty arising under BOT 4.1.10.2 and SG 6.06. Another new recommendation is SG 1.03.C.6, which explains the Affirmation of Copyright Holders Right to Transfer Pursuant to 17 U.S.C. Sects. 201 and 204. The task force's final report was submitted, and ECS/UAS is scheduled to review the report on Friday, April 19, 2024.

TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY Task Force 1: At its summer retreat on June 22, 2022, ECS resolved to form a task force on "Test Optional and Holistic Admission Policy." ECS was responding to a request from the Student Senate in which the Student Senate had asked for the current Test-Optional Admissions Policy to be extended for 1-2 years. In its deliberation, ECS considered the "big picture" and implications on recruitment, retention, and resources supporting students and faculty. To that end, ECS decided to incorporate Holistic Admission in the discussion and thus created the "Test Optional and Holistic Admission Policy Task Force." ECS asked questions regarding a potential paradigm shift in admission requirements, including the following: How do we maintain our brand as we expand opportunities for more diverse learners? What is the algorithm for admission decisions? How do admission policies affect the curriculum? How do we match admission policies with resources to set students up for success? In terms of accountability, how would we know if the new policies are working? The task force was

formed with the following roles/charges: (1) Engage with members of the Division of Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach to develop shared understanding with faculty and students about admissions standards, processes, and outcomes, including the impact of test-optional admissions decisions; (2) Understand the theory and implementation of holistic admissions at GVSU and its relationship with traditional measures of academic preparation and college readiness; and (3) Report on key findings and make recommendations. The task force submitted its final report, which ECS reviewed on December 8, 2023.

REVISION OF SG 1.01.2 & SG 2.05 Task Force: At its spring retreat on May 11, 2023, ECS resolved to form a task force to revise SG 1.01.2 and SG 2.05. **Membership:** Courtney Karasinski (Chair); Amy McFarland; Chuck Pazdernik; Karyn Rabourn; Deana Weibel; Ed Aboufadel (*ex-officio*). **Charge:** Review and propose language to make SG 1.01.2 and SG 2.05 less ambiguous; Reflect on what went wrong in past reorganizations (communication breakdown) and propose how to circumvent these going forward. The work of the task force is still ongoing.

WORKLOAD AND SIGNIFICANT FOCUS Task Force: At its spring retreat on May 11, 2023, ECS resolved to form a task force on workload and significant focus. **Membership:** Salvador Lopez-Arias; Rachel Campbell (Chair); Chris Cruz; Amy McFarland; Aaron Lowen (*ex-officio*). **Charge:** Create survey questions for Unit Heads and Deans to see what practices around workload/significant focus are in place in colleges. The results are anticipated to provide some data to supplement anecdotal feedback from the faculty forums. Determine a timeline for sending the survey, collecting responses, and analyzing responses to be shared. Determine if we need to extend the study to all faculty and how we will share the results. The work of the task force is still ongoing.

SHARED GOVERNANCE REVIEW (SHGR) Task Force: ECS discussed the selection of faculty to serve in a new task force to review and reimagine our current faculty governance structure to make sure it is relevant to the current administrative structure of the university. **Membership:** Chris Cruz (ECON, SCB); Brian Deyo (ENG, CLAS); Denise Goerisch (BCOIS); Raymond Higbea (CECI); Maya Hobscheid (ULs); Bob Hollister (BIO, CLAS); Barb Hooper (KCON); Figen Mekik (GEO, CLAS); Azizur Molla (CHP); Wendy Reffeor (PCEC); Andrew Spear (PHI, CLAS); Chris Haven (WRT, CLAS); and Ed Aboufadel (Provost Office). **Charge:** On Friday, December 8, 2023, ECS discussed the charge and timeline for the Faculty Governance Committee Structure task force. It was agreed that the task force's work would be broken down into two steps, with an interim step in which the task force would check with ECS on progress made. The following were agreed upon: the charges, steps, and tentative timeline.

Step 1 (January 12-March 20, 2024): (1) Review our current Faculty Governance Structure to determine where efficiencies can be created by consolidating Standing Committees or creating new Standing Committees, and (2) Benchmark our peer institutions to determine what governance structures exist and how these governance structures work within governance systems.

Interim Step (ECS Meeting of April 5, 2024): The task force checks with ECS on progress made, and ECS determines if the task force is going in the right direction.

Step 2 (ECS Retreat of Spring 2024): ECS will invite the task force to discuss the possibilities and proposals for the next step.

TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY Task Force 2: ADMISSIONS STANDARDS GROUP Task Force: The Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2 is a group that reviews admissions standards that consider a broad range of student attributes and achievements, not just standardized test scores. On Friday, February 16, 2024, the University Academic Senate (UAS) passed a motion to form a task force to continue working on admissions standards and conditions and reviewing the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Report/Recommendation. During the ECS meeting on March 22, ECS decided to divide the task force into two groups: Group 1 (Admission Standards Group) and

Group 2 (Student Support Group). **Membership:** Nick Baine; Matt Boelkins (Chair); Jen Drake; Bob Hollister; Aaron Lowen; Jakia Marie; Ernest Park; Michelle Rhodes; Jen Smart; Mike Stoll; Danny Velez; LuWanna Williams. It is anticipated that the Student Senate will still determine a student representative. **Charge of the Admission Standards Group:** Review admission standards and SEMP report/recommendations. Based on your review of the SEMP report, clearly articulate what holistic admission means based on GVSU practice. Make recommendations.

- Continue to review and report on the current GVSU admissions standards, criteria, and decision-making practices in collaboration with leadership. This includes analyzing and considering the SEMP recommendations, which focus on enhancing student diversity, improving retention rates, and optimizing resource allocation.
- Act on the original Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force Report recommendation #2 and the Administration response dated 22 Feb 2024 regarding recommendations for meaningful, institution-appropriate standards for admission based on established scientific data, using the evidence-based research to formulate actions for assessing the outcomes and identifying possibilities of change/adjustments.

Tentative Timeline: The Task Force would be asked to provide a preliminary report by the end of June and a final report by September 30, 2024.

TEST-OPTIONAL AND HOLISTIC ADMISSION POLICY Task Force 2: STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP Task Force: The Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force 2 is a group that reviews admissions standards that consider a broad range of student attributes and achievements, not just standardized test scores. On Friday, February 16, 2024, the University Academic Senate (UAS) passed a motion to form a task force to continue working on admissions standards and conditions and reviewing the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Report/Recommendation. During the ECS meeting on March 22, ECS decided to divide the task force into two groups: Group 1 (Admission Standards Group) and Group 2 (Student Support Group). **Membership:** Cathy Buyarski; Keigh-Cee Bell (Co-Chair); Jennifer Cymbola; Joy Gianakura; Nikki Gaines; Aaron Haight; Brian Hatzel; Jennifer Jameslyn (Co-Chair); Jessica Jennrich; Sal Lopez-Arias (Co-Chair); Amy Masko; Mike Messner; Mike Saldana; Andrew Spear; Anna White. It is anticipated that the Student Senate will still determine a student representative. **Charge of the Student Support Group:** Review resources and student support services and make recommendations.

- Act on the original Test-Optional and Holistic Admissions Task Force Report recommendation #4, including collaboration with leadership to make concrete, action-oriented recommendations to guide institutional support and proactive intervention policies to improve retention and graduation of admitted students, particularly historically underserved students.

Tentative Timeline: The Task Force would be asked to provide a preliminary report by the end of June and a final report by September 30, 2024.

VI. Curriculum/New Programs

The Governance Procedure for establishing a new program involves two stages: (1) The Prospectus for a New Program and (2) The Proposal for a New Program. The New Program/New Academic Unit Council (SG 1.03.B.13) met and approved the following:

- New Program Prospectus: Minor in Computing, Intelligence, Values
- New Program Prospectus: Minor in Japanese
- New Program Prospectus: Major in Climate Science
- New Program Prospectus: Minor in Climate Science
- New Program Prospectus: Environmental Science
- New Unit Proposal: School of Interdisciplinary Studies in BCOIS



VII. Presentations

We continued our senate tradition of inviting different campus authorities to give a presentation followed by discussions on topics that interest faculty, staff, and students. This 2023-2024 academic year, there were presentations and discussions on the following topics.

Presentation Topic	Presenter(s)
Benefits Update	Tara Bivens, Mychal Coleman & Tammi King
Update on Blue Dot	Ed Aboufadel
Update on the COACHE Survey	Ed Aboufadel
University Budget	Greg Sanial
Discussion on University Efforts to Respond to Sexual Misconduct Complaints and Employee Movement Between Institutions	Jesse Bernal & Kevin Carmody
Discussion of the Rapid Response Team Report	Amanda Buday, Rachel Campbell, Bradford Dykes, Anna Hammersmith, Aaron Lowen, & Betty Schaner
Discussion on Capturing DEI-AB Work in Digital Measures	Dwayne Tunstall
Discussion on Course Designation	Erica Hamilton, Anna Hammersmith & Travus Burton
Discussion on Faculty Working 100% Remote	Ed Aboufadel, Annie Belanger & Mark Schaub
Academic Affairs Budget	Fatma Mili & Bonnie Bowen
New Complaints and Grievance Process	Ed Aboufadel
Presentation on Educating Adult Learners at Scale	Kara Van Dam
I&E Strategic Framework	Alisha Davis, Marlene Kowalski-Braun & Sean Lancaster
Debrief of 2023 Teach-In	Karen Gipson
Admission Standards and Conditions	Jenny Hall-Jones, Fatma Mili & Donta Truss
Employee Core Competencies	Lindsey DesArmo
Preliminary Discussion on Resources and Funding Priorities for Academic Affairs	Fatma Mili
Update from the Office of Employee Ombuds	Elisa Ortega-Schultz
GVSU Perception Research	Jennifer Allard

