

## GRCC Enrollment Hits Record High

High demand for excellent, affordable education creates a conundrum. Doors are open, but chairs are full.



### From Russia With Love

Fulbright Scholar brings new literature course to life



### Alumnus Dave Custer

"Smile When You Say That"



### Sustainability on campus:

Partnering with Mother Earth

### Plus:

Mature Workers Everywhere *except* over the Hill

Student Life

Faculty "Bests"

Building Blocks in Holland

Mariachi Magic

# What's New at GRCC?



Juan Olivarez

Hello!

Just a quick walk through our campus this fall will give you a clear picture of the diversity – in students, for-credit and non-credit programming, clubs, faculty, services, staff and delivery of classes – that enlivens GRCC.

The variety of topics covered in this, our first Community Connections magazine of the '06-'07 academic year, reflect that vitality.

We'll tell you about developments that demonstrate our commitment to **sustainability** and introduce you to our **Mature Workers program**.

You can see pictures of our popular **Mariachi Band** as they perform at various locations around the state – but you really should hear them!

We want you to meet one of our many excellent faculty members, who through a Fulbright Scholarship, got to do some very interesting class prep for a brand new course, **"Russian Literature in Translation,"** over this past summer. And we shine the **spotlight on two other faculty members** and their accomplishments as well.

You'll also see a story on **GRCC's all-time, record-high enrollment** and why that is both good news and bad news to those of us who hold our mission as a community college very close to our hearts.

Reading about our enrollment will certainly set the stage for our **"Open Door" campaign update**. We need your support as demand for programs increases exponentially as our state regains its economic footing.

We hope to see you on our campus this year, whether for college credit classes, professional development opportunities, a concert, a play, an art exhibit, a Diversity Lecture Series offering, a cooking class, a family event like our Family Matters expo and - if you're really brave - our Haunted House this fall.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juan R. Olivarez".

Juan R. Olivarez, Ph.D.

President, Grand Rapids Community College



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### COMMUNITYConnection

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## Sustainability on Campus

GRCC's efforts to incorporate the philosophy of sustainability into the classroom take various forms, from training for faculty to extra-curricular activities and the creation of multimedia education tools like web-accessible streaming video.

Recent critical acclaim for Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" underscored the growing importance of sustainability in the modern world. All organizations are under increasing pressure to refine their operations to ensure that they're not only committed to enhancing profitability, but social justice and environmental friendliness as well. Grand Rapids Community College is an organization that has long dedicated itself to sustainability, and an adherence to that principle is recently bearing more fruit.

For the past several years, GRCC's Sustainability Advisory Council has been working in three areas; introducing sustainability into the curriculum, incorporating sustainability into the college's facilities, and engaging the community in sustainable thinking. Comprised of GRCC faculty, staff and students – the Council is uniquely positioned to affect change in these areas.

The keystone of GRCC's efforts is its annual Sustainability Plan, which was revised earlier this year. The plan is critical in turning the college's good intentions into tangible results.

### Curriculum

GRCC's efforts to incorporate the philosophy of sustainability into the classroom take various forms, from training for faculty to extra-curricular activities and the creation of

multimedia education tools like web-accessible streaming video. Perhaps the most significant endeavor, however, is the creation of a 30-credit certificate that will be available to students beginning in Fall of 2007. The certificate is patterned after one offered by Western Michigan University, and offers students the chance to credential themselves in modern sustainable design.

## Facilities

A myriad of changes are taking place on GRCC's campus to infuse sustainable design into every aspect of the physical structures that house the college's learning environments. Twenty new classrooms were completed in August based on a model classroom built in Room 416 of the Peter and Pat Cook Academic Hall (formerly the North Building) a year ago. The rooms incorporate a variety of sustainability-minded improvements:

- Low-V.O.C. (volatile organic compound) paints to minimize the toxins, such as aldehydes, ketones, and hydrocarbons, that can be released by traditional paints as they cure.
- 100 percent recyclable carpeting that, when worn out, will have both the yarn and backing reclaimed and fashioned into new carpeting.
- Ceiling tile made of 80 percent post-consumer recycled content.
- Low-voltage lighting that is fully-dimmable to reduce energy consumption.
- Tack boards, whiteboards and furniture that are all designed so that the majority of its components are recyclable.



GRCC's recently renovated classrooms include furniture, tack boards and whiteboards made up of easily recyclable materials. Newly installed carpet is 100% recyclable, while ceiling tiles are made of 80% post-consumer recycled content

Elsewhere on campus, sustainability projects are in constant motion. The college's recycling program, already in progress, has been beefed up. Last year, GRCC was able to recycle 34 tons of paper. The program has expanded to include batteries, and now electronic components such as computer parts and handheld electronic devices (a pilot program that was far more successful than was originally anticipated). To limit pollution from storm water runoff, GRCC recently incorporated porous surfaces into its newest parking lot that retain excess water, and the newly-formed student "Earth Club" is gearing up to establish a "water garden" on the southwest corner of the lot near GRCC's Applied Technology Center.

—continued on page 14



Installing sensors in new classrooms is one of many energy conservation efforts on campus

# Project Mature Worker

**A**nother focus of the project will be to educate area employers on the value of hiring, retaining, and training older workers.



Associate Director of GRCC's Older Learner Center Mike Faber along with Project Assistant Josephine Prince

*Older workers exhibit many desirable qualities – they have fewer accidents, exhibit less turnover, and are absent less than younger workers.*

According to a recent study by the U.S. General Accounting Office, one in four adults between the ages of 55 and 64 have saved less than \$5,000 for retirement and will have to work either full- or part-time to maintain their standard of living.

## **Grant from Grand Rapids Community Foundation**

To address the shifting dynamics of the Grand Rapids workforce, Project Mature Worker was created by GRCC's Older Learner Center with financial support from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation's "Creating Community for a Lifetime" initiative. The goal of the program is to make employee assistance and job training for displaced workers age 55 and older more user-friendly.

Though the project will reach out to job-seekers aged 55 and older through public open houses, the primary focus of the program is to work with employment services personnel and job training instructors to assist them in becoming more aware of the different needs of mature workers. In working with mature workers, for example, it's important to use larger print and sharply-contrasting colors in print materials. In addition, constant communication is necessary due to factors like diminished hearing and a fear of asking questions (due to intimidation) on the part of those re-entering the workplace.

## **Valuable Assets to Employers**

Another focus of the project will be to educate area employers on the value of hiring, retaining, and training older workers. Conventional wisdom might argue that older workers are unattractive to employers; but studies have shown that they can in fact be more desirable for a variety of reasons. According to AARP, older workers exhibit many desirable qualities – they have fewer accidents, exhibit less turnover, and are absent less than younger workers. All too often, the 55 and older population is not identified as a priority group for job training and employment services – despite the fact that they're one of the most at-risk and growing demographics.

Mike Faber, Associate Director of the Older Learner Center, notes that the basic components of Project Mature Worker were "developed in response to needs identified by research, as well as modeled on the success of similar mature worker projects developed and administered by GRCC in partnership with the Area Agency on Aging back in the '80s and '90s."

A public open house to launch of the program is scheduled for Friday, October 27, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. in GRCC's Leslie E. Tassell M-TEC. Under- or unemployed workers over 55 are encouraged to attend for help in connecting with the resources to transition them into the workforce.

*Additional information on Project Mature Worker and the October 27th program launch are available at the following GRCC web page [www.grcc.edu/matureworker](http://www.grcc.edu/matureworker).*



# Record GRCC Enrollment

## *Good News, Bad News*

Classes at Grand Rapids Community College opened to a record 15,425 for-credit students and an anticipated 5,000–7,000 more non-credit students, putting an immediate strain on the college's capacity.

Class availabilities reached their limits over the summer, many even earlier, and a few weeks before Fall semester, college leadership had to limit enrollment.

Kicking off the fall semester for GRCC's 650 full-time and approximately 300 part-time faculty and staff, President Olivarez announced that GRCC had never before exceeded "the 15 [thousand] mark."

That number is the number of students who come to GRCC for credit-earning coursework. The additional 5,000–7,000 students come to the GRCC campus for

professional development, workforce skills updates, and business training opportunities, as well as life enrichment workshops like culinary classes and Older Learner Center offerings.

Availabilities for those workshop and seminar-type courses are also expected to close out soon.

*"The good news," says GRCC President Juan Olivarez, "is that people recognize the value of education in determining our future as individuals and as a community, and that puts our excellent and affordable programming in high demand. The bad news is that the demand now exceeds our supply of space, of staff and, most importantly, of funds."*

# From Russia with Love

## GRCC Faculty Member Gets Fulbright

### *to Integrate First-Hand Experience into*

Students in GRCC's new *Russian Literature in Translation* course are getting more than a rigorous reading list; they'll get to see, hear and feel Russian culture through the experiences of Professor Kim Wyngarden, whose Fulbright Scholarship allowed her to spend a month of intensive study and travel in Russia this past summer.

Wyngarden wanted students to study the works of the period's great Russian authors—including Dostoevsky, Chekov, Tolstoy and Gogol among others—in the context of the times and cultural environment in which they were written.

"This class has been great so far," says student Mike Wallis. "I was really excited to hear she'd received a Fulbright because the awareness about the time period in Russia's history and the

popularity around class has expanded. Last fall GRCC cancelled the class due to lack of enrollment. Now it's nearly full."

Wyngarden applied for the Fulbright and based her application on the value she could add to the intellectual pursuit of students by gathering information and impressions to highlight her teachings and was one of only 17 educators – all from community colleges across the U.S. – to receive the award. Wyngarden feels understanding other cultures is critical – not just in the classroom, but to the future of the global village.

The Fulbright Scholarship made the Russian trip possible and an Instructional Improvement and Professional Development grant from the GRCC Foundation paid for virtually every expense not covered by the Fulbright funds.

"The 19th century was the absolute pinnacle of Russia's literary tradition," says Wyngarden, who will be able to share the hours of discussion she had with Dostoevsky's great grandson in one of the author's former homes as well as her thoughts while visiting a Russian gulag that was still in operation as late as the 1980s.



Kim Wyngarden

*Wyngarden feels understanding other cultures is critical – not just in the classroom, but to the future of the global village.*

# Scholarship

## New Russian Lit Course

Wynyarden's journey included 225 miles of walking and 110 hours of lectures on everything from government to humanities – all of which she found “thoroughly engaging.” The group visited St. Petersburg, Moscow, authors' homes, historic sites, architecturally significant buildings, an orphanage and the gulag, or prison, to fully experience the spectrum of Russian life.

The Midwest Institute for International and Intercultural Education (MIIE) made the trip possible. MIIE, established in 1992 with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, is a self-funded consortium of two-year colleges located in the Midwest. Its primary objective is to support curriculum and professional development by organizing curriculum workshops, fall and spring conferences, overseas projects for faculty and students, assistance with grant development, and providing faculty mentoring and professional networking opportunities. The administration of the consortium is done at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

For additional information on MIIE go to [orgs.kvcc.edu/midwest](http://orgs.kvcc.edu/midwest).

# Faculty Members Honored for Best Practices of Chemistry



Bill Faber

GRCC's General Chemistry course taught by **Bill Faber**, and Survey of General Chemistry course taught by **Tom Neils**, were identified as examples of “Best Practices of Chemistry” in a national study of courses conducted by the Center for Educational Policy Research at the University of Oregon.



Tom Neils

A total of 166 courses from across the United States were reviewed to identify good teaching practices that could assist in the redevelopment of high school AP programs across the country. Both instructors teach in the Physical Science Department at GRCC.

“What an honor,” said Faber. “It’s good to know that we’re setting examples, not just for other colleges but, for high school programs across the country.”

“I was very pleased with the news,” added Neils. “I know Bill and I live for this stuff, so it’s certainly a good feeling to be recognized in our field.”

For Every Person Educated,

# A Door Is Opened



Dave Custer  
President,  
Custer Workplace Interiors

To make a contribution  
to your community's  
college, please call  
(616) 234-3939.

*As a GRCC alumnus,  
I am often disturbed  
when I hear people say,  
“Well, you can always go  
to Community College.  
Anyone can get in there.”*

I am disturbed because this line is often delivered as if GRCC was a school of last resort. The truth is just the opposite!

Providing higher education to anyone who seeks it is the mission of Grand Rapids Community College. That role is a distinct one among educational institutions. GRCC does not have strict entry criteria; it is their job to be an open door to a brighter future to everyone.

Want to test our ability to fulfill that goal? Ask people you encounter in your daily business if they ever attended GRCC.

Ask your automotive technician, your child's school teacher, your favorite chef, your accountant, your toddler's day care provider, your x-ray technician, dental hygienist or nurse. Ask a bio-med worker, a local author, poet or journalist. Ask anyone. The more people you ask, the more you'll come to realize the impact GRCC has on our community.

Academic excellence has been our cornerstone from the day GRCC first opened its doors in 1914 as Grand Rapids Junior College, a prep school for University of Michigan-bound students. In time, the state, along with business and industry, recognized that GRCC was a natural conduit for educating our workforce and increasing economic development. Now we are known for excellence in education in both Liberal Arts and Workforce Development.

*Want to test our ability to fulfill that goal? Ask people you encounter in your daily business if they ever attended GRCC. Ask your automotive technician, your child's school teacher, your favorite chef, your accountant, your toddler's day care provider, your x-ray technician, dental hygienist or nurse. Ask a bio-med worker, a local author, poet or journalist.*

**A***sk anyone. The more people you ask, the more you'll come to realize the impact GRCC has on our community.*

Raise Your Hand Proudly  
**If you went to  
 GRCC/JC**



**The Grand Rapids Community College Alumni Association  
 wants to connect with you!**

We want to locate as many GRCC/JC Alumni as possible. Visit our Alumni Association Web site at [www.grcc.edu](http://www.grcc.edu) or call Alumni Relations at (616) 234-3939 to reconnect. We are also searching for alumni-owned businesses. E-mail us at [alumni@grcc.edu](mailto:alumni@grcc.edu) to connect with other alumni.



A GRCC/JC alumni is anyone who has earned 30 credits or more at GRCC.

Today, GRCC is at its highest enrollment ever, well over 15,000 students; over 20,000 if you include those who attend our many workshops and life enrichment classes. GRCC is the number one higher education choice for high school graduates -- not just in Grand Rapids, but across the suburban school districts of Kent County, too. We anticipate this trend will continue because people can appreciate the value of academic excellence that is so affordable.

Keeping GRCC's doors open to everyone demands vigilance. As our enrollment climbs, financial aid requests increase and facilities reach capacity, we, as a community, can not afford to have GRCC's mission jeopardized. We don't want our community college to cut corners on the very standards that have created their long history of excellence. But we can't expect that state funding will stay the same or increase anytime soon. The irony is that, even as our state economy struggles with its budget, a community college that creates an

educated, innovative, technology-savvy workforce is more critical than ever.

**If GRCC is to continue to hold open the doors to higher education to everyone, your help is crucial. GRCC has undertaken a \$10 million, advancement campaign to raise funds to ensure that GRCC remains, as always, right for the times.**

Student success requires market-ready skills, academically solid programming, scholarships, grants, current technology and facilities capable of distance learning as well as face-to-face instruction.

Continuous professional development for faculty and staff is

expected by students who know they need to be taught by the best if they are to find meaningful employment or advancement in today's competitive environment. These are the areas where Open Door attention and funds will be directed.

For each individual that succeeds at GRCC, our whole community benefits. It is in the best interest of us all to make sure that there continues to be an Open Door for all who seek higher education.

With your help it will always be true that, "You can always go to Grand Rapids Community College. Anyone can get in there."



# Building



*Jubilee Ministries' purchase of one of Holland's most historic city blocks led to a partnership with GRCC that will help reshape an entire community.*

# Blocks

**“We** build communities,” says Ferguson. “We put ‘community’ in the name community college.”

To most Holland residents it doesn't look like much. On one corner is the old E.E. Fell building, long since vacated, on the other is the former Holland High School whose doors shut nearly 50 years ago. Old houses fill in the rest of downtown Holland's southeast block of 15th Street – running from South River Avenue to Pine Street – all in all just another run-down city block.

To Reverend Curt Bush, it's opportunity to produce dollar signs. Not for himself, and certainly not for Jubilee Ministries, the non-profit business that purchased the block from the city for \$775,000 this spring. Rather, dollars for the type of residents Bush has been helping for the last decade through Jubilee's employment services program.

## Dollars and Dreams

A specialized minister through the Reformed Church of America, Bush has been dreaming up ways to help boost the Holland area job market for low-income families for years, and he saw the purchase as a starting point for something on a much larger scale.

“In the beginning we were just helping people put out resumes and getting them through job interviews,” says Bush. Before long Bush began concerning himself with Holland's historic district and

the “stressed houses that were in poor shape.” His desire to refurbish the area and to offer those remodeled homes to Holland residents quickly developed into assisting interested entrepreneurs with small business ventures.

## Economics and Employment

With the purchase, Jubilee now has adequate space to offer any Holland resident both employment opportunities and small business start-ups, not to mention the local economic boost that will keep Holland dollars circulating through Holland, bringing hope to a workforce that's grown used to commuting out of Holland for work according to Bush.

But there's still a lot of work to do on the historic, yet run-down, city block. This is where GRCC's Residential Construction program, just recently offered through the college's Holland based Patrick A. Thompson M-TEC, comes in. (*M-TEC is an acronym for the state's many Michigan Technical Education Centers, of which GRCC has two.*)

“When I first contacted Reverend Bush we were just hoping to help out in any way possible,” says GRCC Thompson M-TEC instructor Keith Ferguson.

After witnessing two successful years of partnership between Habitat

for Humanity and GRCC's Grand Rapids-based Residential Construction program (offered through the Leslie E. Tassell M-TEC in downtown GR). Ferguson, whose past includes a successful construction business, sought a similar opportunity. But when plans with Habitat fell through at the last minute, he was left scrambling to fill the void.

## Blessings and Luck

What Ferguson calls a stroke of luck, Bush calls a blessing. “It was the best inconvenience I've ever had,” Bush says of their first meeting.

And since their sister program at the Leslie E. Tassell M-TEC is already focusing their training on *new* construction, Ferguson thought it best to offer remodeling at the Thompson.

With the help of GRCC's nine students just enrolled in the 18-week program, Bush and Ferguson expect final renovations on the two buildings to be completed much sooner than expected.

“We build communities,” says Ferguson. “We put ‘community’ in the name community college.”

This house, from one of Holland's historic blocks, was moved to a new location where GRCC students built a new foundation with a basement.





—continued from page 5

## Community Engagement

GRCC is involved in a variety of efforts to challenge the West Michigan community to adopt sustainable practices; from partnering with neighborhood associations to clean up neighborhoods, to providing screenings of films like “An Inconvenient



Truth” supplemented with roundtable discussions, to providing incentives in the GRCC bidding processes to win contracts with the college for goods and services.

Perhaps the most significant endeavor is GRCC’s partnership in the Community Sustainability Partners (CSP), a group committed to adhering to the “triple bottom line” of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social justice. The CSP was initially comprised of Aquinas College, the City of Grand Rapids, the Grand Rapids Public Schools and Grand Valley State University, but has grown to include nearly 100 local public and private organizations. In May of 2006, the CSP held its first conference featuring local speakers and a keynote by Kent Portney of Tufts University who spoke about “Taking Sustainable Communities Seriously.” Planning for next year’s conference is already underway.

*For more information, or to become involved—contact the Sustainability Team or any of the organizations mentioned using the website addresses provided.*

### Resources:

[www.grcc.edu/sustainability](http://www.grcc.edu/sustainability)

[www.grpartners.org](http://www.grpartners.org)

[www.wmsbf.org](http://www.wmsbf.org)

[www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)

# Q&A with GRCC Sustainability Team's Student Representative Greg Jackson

**Q** What prompted you to join the Sustainability Team?

**A:** The importance of being involved with this team comes from many different aspects—the general education of the public and being able to do something about the effects of the degrading world environment. Furthermore, and most important to me, is the proper education of my children and teaching them how to protect the earth against the obliteration of our natural resources.

**Q** What have you found most rewarding about being on the team?

**A:** Being able to make a difference in people's lives throughout our community and our school. With coordinated efforts within our team we have helped build homes, reduced electricity use and the increased recycling of paper waste. We have inspired people to take the threat on the environment seriously—not just talking about helping, but acting to improve.

**Q** Have you seen the impact of the team in the classroom?

**A:** Here at the college I have seen numerous efforts to combat the effects on the environment, however there is still work to be done. With the inception of the new student organization called "Students for Sustainability," I foresee more action and education from our school.

**Q** Do you have any favorite projects or aspects of the team?

**A:** With the help of four other team members, we have started a focus group that will enrich our community through outreach education about the environment and how they can protect it. There are some programs within our community and even specialized schools that are based on the fundamentals of teaching about the many aspects of the environment. This is our goal: to teach children and adults; to make this synonymous with math, reading and writing; to make all aware.

## Actors' Theatre Opens its 26th Season

*tick...tick...BOOM!* by Jonathan Larson (musical)  
November 30 - December 2 & 7 - 9, 2006

By the creator of *RENT*, this musical focuses on the days leading up to Jonathan's birthday and was posthumously presented after his untimely death just before *RENT* made its New York debut. Winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway musical in 2001, it reminds us of the courage it takes to follow your dreams, especially if that dream is to create the great American musical.

## GRCC Players Announce Their 2006/2007 Season

*Terra Nova* by Ted Tally  
November 1 - 4, 2006

This drama tells the story of the ill-fated Antarctic expedition of Robert Falcon Scott and "employs an ingenious free-form construction to capture the sweep-and personalities-crucial to this compelling study of heroism in the face of bitter failure." "...explores the heart of courage in a white hell of adversity." – *Time Magazine*.

*Desdemona, a Play About a Handkerchief*  
by Paula Vogel

December 13 - 16, 2006

As the wrongly accused wife of Shakespeare's Othello, Desdemona has long been viewed as the "victim of circumstance." Now we introduce Pulitzer Prize-winner Paula Vogel's comic deconstruction of Shakespeare's play – "aligning tongue-in-cheek humor while raising serious questions as to the role of women through the ages – Desdemona was far from the quivering naïf we've all come to know." "Vogel remains one of the smartest, most original and engaging playwrights to come along in the last few years." – *NY Newsday*.



Tickets available by calling GRCC's Spectrum Theater Box Office at (616) 234-3946

# Student Life

## The Student Activities Office has a new name

*and there's a*

*"The benefits that students gain from participating in activities outside of my classroom are immeasurable."*

The Student Activities Office has always facilitated the planning behind dozens of yearly events involving Grand Rapids Community College students. The recent name change to *Student Life* doesn't change that, but instead is intended to heighten GRCC students' understanding that getting ready for a satisfying life isn't all about books and tests.

"We want our students to gain the experiences and develop the skills that will go along with them," says Eric Mullen, Director of Student Life. "When they move on to another school or start a new career they should be well-rounded people, not just book smart."

Three years ago Mullen began a series of meetings between Student Life staff and administrators and faculty about how life is experienced in colleges with residence halls and how to create some of those kinds of life experiences for GRCC's many commuter students.

"We quickly introduced our Campus Activities Board in 2004," says David Selmon, assistant director of Student Life. The student run group, charged with conceiving and conducting all student activities, was asked to "provide fun, community-building experiences for our students."

### **New Program Creates Buzz**

When Student Life's focus evolved to include collaborating with faculty from various academic departments it created a





# good reason for the change

buzz of excitement, especially around one new idea, the Co-Curriculum Program which encourages students to access outside activities and sources pertaining to their academic studies. Through numerous outside opportunities geared to challenge student thinking, faculty now have another tool to help students grasp a concept from the classroom and apply it to real life.

“The benefits that students gain from participating in activities outside of my classroom are immeasurable,” says Duane Davis, music instructor. “Whether they continue their education beyond GRCC or choose to join the workforce, the experience of

participating, decision making and providing a voice can prepare GRCC students for doing what any citizen of the community should do: Get involved, make a difference.”

Through instructors like Davis, and over a dozen others, the college hopes that the Co-Curriculum program will set the stage for other student success driven ideas coming from Student Life.

## Offering More Opportunities to Students

Ongoing meetings between student run organizations like the Campus Activities Board, Student Congress and the President’s Leadership Academy – a group that meets regularly with GRCC President Juan Olivarez - and faculty and administration are critical to the evolution of Student Life as they begin to institute more and more programs for students.

“We want to partner with our Job Placement department so students understand how to transfer their education to future employers,”

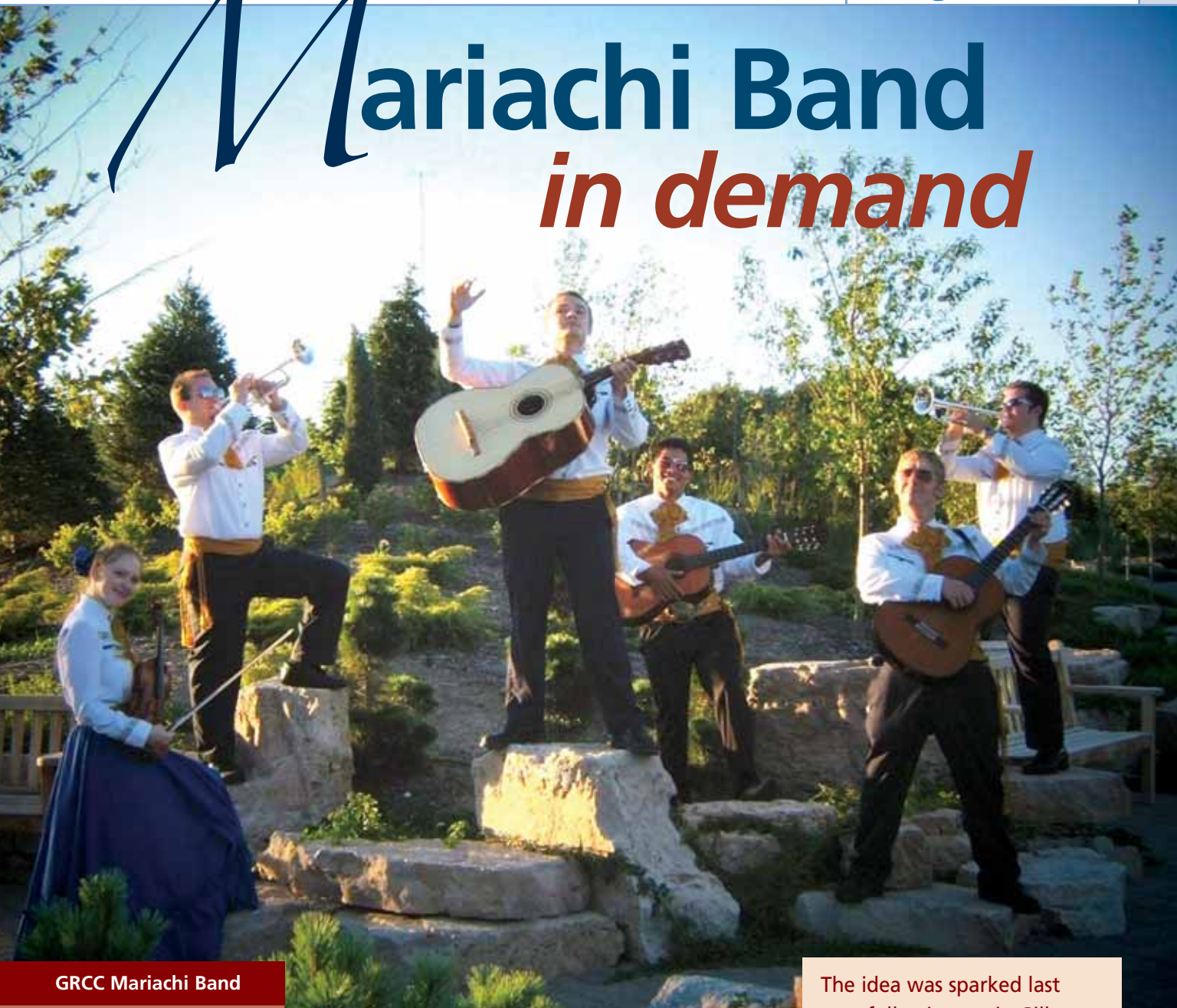


Mullen adds. “We’ll continue to do work with outside sources that provide expos, lectures and discussions on social topics like AIDS, drinking and driving, and political processes too.”

And according to Mullen, there’s plenty more ideas on the horizon. In the meantime, popular student events like Welcome Week and Finals Relaxer, along with events for the whole community like Family Matters, the Haunted House and the Computer Clinic are “in good hands and constant development.”



# Mariachi Band *in demand*



GRCC Mariachi Band

You may have read about GRCC's popular Mariachi Band, conceived and lead by Mike Gillan, in our last issue of Community Connection. The band has received many calls to perform at civic and private events in the last few weeks, especially during Hispanic Heritage Month in September.

The band is seen here performing at Frederick Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park. They also played with the Holland Symphony in Kollen Park, at the Battle Creek Hispanic Center, and at St. Cecilia's Music Society's World Music Café.

The group just accepted the honor of playing at the Music Educators' Convention in Grand Rapids this January 2007. Thousands of music educators from across the state of Michigan are expected to attend.

The idea was sparked last year following a trip Gillan made to Union High School. "In band class I saw only two or three Hispanic students participating. There wasn't an effort to reach their culture through music."

Gillan began the Mariachi Band as an outreach program aimed at elementary, middle and high school students.

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Dave Selmon

Tim Staszkiwicz

Weslee Tweedale

Ian McLellan

## diversity<sup>2006 – 2007</sup> lecture series XII

November 29, 2006



### Vali Nasr

Author, Professor, Consultant

***The Many Faces of Islam: Conflict, Faith and Politics***

Vali Nasr is a leading expert on the Islamic world and Muslim politics. He has advised Congressional senior policy makers and often lends his expertise to CNN, BBC, *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* and NPR. As a consultant to the Department of State he has provided testimony to the U.S. Senate. Nasr is the author of several books on politics and Islam, most recently, *Democracy in Iran* and *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*.

February 7, 2007



### Nikki Giovanni

Poet, Author, Activist

***An Evening With Nikki Giovanni: Reflections on Race***

Nikki Giovanni is one of the most widely read American poets, recognized for her use of poetry to inspire individual change and growth. She is deeply committed to human rights, equality and the understanding of art both as the reflection of society and as its accompanying influence. Giovanni has written more than two dozen books, including children's books and essays. Her latest book is *Racism 101*. Her three most recent volumes of poetry were winners of the NAACP Image Award.

March 14, 2007



### Paula Crisostomo

Social Activist, Community Leader

***The Struggle for Equity in Education: A Defining Moment in Chicano History***

Paula Crisostomo, as a high school student in the '60s, led 20,000 Chicano students from five East Los Angeles high schools in the first major protest against racism and substandard teaching in their schools ever undertaken by Mexican-Americans – a watershed in the struggle for equal rights. Her story has been made into a 2006 HBO movie, *Walk Out*, directed by Edward James Olmos. This event has also been the subject of numerous books and featured in the PBS documentary *Chicano: Taking Back the Schools*.

- Free and open to the public, however due to limited space, seating will be on a first-come basis.
- Small fee for on-campus parking.

- All lectures begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Grand Rapids Community College Applied Technology Center Banquet Rooms (corner of Fountain Street and Ransom Avenue).
- A book signing will follow each lecture.



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For information, please call (616) 234-3390.

2006-2007  
**TRAVEL & EVENTS**  
For GRCC Alumni & Friends

*The GRCC Alumni Association invites alumni and friends to participate in its 2006-2007 travel and events series. Proceeds support the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Reservation Forms may be downloaded from the GRCC Alumni Web site at [www.grcc.edu/alumni](http://www.grcc.edu/alumni) or call (616) 234-4039 and one will be mailed to you.*



- Return of the Raiders Bash
- Alumni Basketball Game
- Chicago Lights Festival
- Mardi Gras Festive Dinner
- Flanagan Golf Outing
- Distinguished Alumni Award

**Return of the Raiders Bash** ■ \$25.00 ■ Saturday, October 14, 2006, 4 p.m. Radisson Hotel Grand Rapids Riverfront, 270 Ann Street NW. Food, Live Band and fellowship with alumni athletes, coaches and fans. Proceeds benefit the GRCC Athletic Hall of Fame. For more information [www.grcc.edu/returnoftheraiders](http://www.grcc.edu/returnoftheraiders) or call (616) 234-4270.

**Alumni Basketball Game** ■ Saturday, October 14, 2006, 11 a.m. Gerald R. Ford Fieldhouse. Donations accepted at the door. Proceeds benefit the Fred Hoffert Scholarship Fund. If you desire to play, call Coach Selmon at (616) 234-4163.

**Chicago Lights Festival** ■ \$45.00 ■ Saturday, November 18, 2006. Reservations due before November 13. Travel by deluxe motor coach. Includes coffee, doughnuts and door prizes.

**Mardi Gras Festive Dinner** ■ \$55.00 ■ Monday, February 19, 2007. 6:30 p.m. Heritage Restaurant. RSVP before February 12. Imagine you and your friends at a fun dinner, with masks, beads, king cake and ubiquitous purple, green and gold.

**Distinguished Alumni Award** ■ TBA. Stay tuned to the Alumni Web site for more details or call (616) 234-4039.

**Flanagan Golf Outing** ■ Thursday, May 24, 2007, Boulder Creek Golf Club, 18 holes, Golf Cart and Dinner. For more information call Cherry at (616) 234-4033 before May 5.

 Grand Rapids Community College  
**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

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