Provost Mili 10-5-22

- Intros: Glad to be here, finishing up third month; recognized things about GVSU like focus on students, commitment to mission, saw level of ownership by faculty and staff of university, provides confidence that things are going in the right direction because people care about it so deeply
- Liberal arts education is so important, not just about training students for a job; need to educate them as a whole person, for their long life; engagement with community and created by community shows in many different ways; art everywhere says a lot about the institution; glad to be around good people
- Acknowledge we are living in challenging times, if we are "back to normal," some stress and panic; lots of the things we've experienced have not gone away; demographics of the faculty and staff have changed, university has been fiscally conservative and avoided layoffs, etc. through voluntary retirements, but the flipside is that the impact is not uniform and there are big gaps to fill in certain areas where those who are left are shouldering the bulk of the work; we all got used to working remotely, but the core of our business is human interaction and that can be tough for retention
- Rituals are important in our lives as we go through transitions; during covid, those rituals (eg retirement parties) couldn't happen, and we relied on institutional knowledge that we have now lost
- This is a relational place, so the fast pace of change has required quite a bit of adjustment
- We are aware of all of this; the university is its people and taking care of our people is the highest priority. We won't function well if people don't feel they have what they need to succeed. Hopefully we will find some solutions and make successful transitions. There is a renewed energy in having more face to face events. Zoom does not replace face to face.
- We know there are some negative effects. Does it help to put them out there? We have to name them in order to address them. Now we need to figure out what's next, how we build on this. Planning to discuss this more at length with everyone, particularly in Provost's Council, and welcome thoughts. Went through the process of assigning faculty positions, now doing the staff piece. Relying on department chairs and deans to communicate what the needs are.
- *How do we address long-term adjunct staff*?
    - Getting requests from deans to transition people to tenure-track/permanent positions. Don't have visibility into that, relying on deans to share that information.
- *Appreciate that you are naming this because it can be hard to come forward with concerns. It has not always been received in the way that you are receiving it.*
    - Grateful that people are being candid and open. Hear you that we complain because we care. Whatever plan we build, we have to know where we are first and taking advantage all of the things that are good about this place.

- Enrollment management seems to be making promises and admissions decisions without regard to ability to support programs and students. How do you plan to bridge the divide between Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management?
    - *New to the team, don't know that there is a division. The units are designed to work together and still in the process of knowing other VPs. So far, it has been all positive. First position I hired was data analytics, so working with others to understand who are students we're admitting, who's successful and who needs more help. Have a better understanding of where we are and now need to determine which tools we already have and which ones we need.*
    - *As we diversify the student body, we are making an implicit promise to them that they will be able to succeed. I don't have a magic wand, but aware of importance of this. We need to make sure we do everything to help these diverse classes succeed. We are all aware of this and there is no gulf.*
- What do you see as the immediate fix to the staffing shortage as well as the increase in staff departures across Academic Affairs?
    - *I don't know that I have an immediate fix, but important to allocate positions. Need to invest more during hard times. Some of the work we're doing in the Provost's Office is to look at how to move things around as student numbers change in programs. Not sure how much difference it will make quickly, but GVSU is a great value and has a lot to offer. We need to come together to sell what a great university this is.*
- CLAS is an extremely large college and many of my colleagues feel that they receive favoritism as a result over other colleges. Is there consideration into breaking up CLAS to create a fair and balanced equitable number of students?
    - *No such plan for now. I don't see that as the most pressing. I have seen presidents and provosts come and start reorganizing, but that is not the plan.*
- Today we are facing a large increase with inflation and a lack of funds for additional pay increase by the university, what incentives would you suggest to SLT to help boost morale upmost staff?
    - *Appreciation first, that is sincere and heartfelt. We are in this together. Professional development is another component, creating pathways for staff to continue growing into other positions. We have all the resources to do this. Plan in place to create this for faculty and staff. Balancing the load and keeping an eye on that, and also communication.*
- What are your top three priorities that you will tackle in relations specifically related to staffing issues?
    - *The well-being and morale of faculty and staff is number one. Still in the process of understanding the other two priorities. Noticed within the first two weeks the superiority of the staff here in terms of educational level, professionalism, commitment. It's our job to make sure we are recognizing and rewarding that.*
- What's your vision for online education at GVSU?
    - *Traditional students are still developing and need that face to face, cannot be replaced by distance learning. I'm a strong believer in lifelong learning, specifically in areas where things are changing quickly. Need to have the offering*

to support the adult students who are employed, have family obligations, have other reasons for not being able to be in the classroom. There are things that we can do only online and other that can be hybrid.

- How do you define quality in online instruction?
    - *Depends on for whom. Quality is responsive and listens to what the target population wants.*
- The CLAS VOYAGE project is meant for all CLAS students to have a minimum of 2 high impact experiences during their time at GV. This is exciting. Can you talk about how this will be staffed? And will this project carry over to other colleges?
    - Right now there is not a push to adopt it everywhere. Early on, I asked what we were doing for first year and the deans are working collaboratively to learn from each other.
    - In terms of resources, TBD. Retention and student success are the priority. We will see what high impact experiences are available and what they entail.
- What are you looking forward to about Michigan winter?
    - Donated all of my coats when I moved to NC, so I'm looking forward to shopping for new coats. Forgot how beautiful Michigan is. Looking forward to the fall and don't mind the winter.
- Appreciate that there is recognition for student-facing positions.
    - Yes, not alone in that and understand that these students need our support.
- We see frustration and room for improvement when folks who are student facing aren't always involved in decision making process.
    - We have to break some barriers and some reflexes and be deliberate in making sure people are at the table.