

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Kathryn A. Rogalski

September 2026

Fall Enrollment Update

Overall: Following our fall count date on Sept. 3, our official fall enrollment number is 12,382 students for our credit-bearing programs. This was slightly less students than last fall, less than 1%, however, our fall billing units are slightly over 1% higher than last year.

Over 800 (815) Promise Zone students are enrolled this fall, the highest semester enrollment to date, with 74% coming from Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS). Of the eligible Promise Zone Class of 2026, nearly 27% enrolled at GRCC, including nearly 30% of eligible GRPS students. This represents an increase of 2.22 percentage points and 0.52 percentage points, respectively, compared with this time last year.

Great job and many thanks to teams across the college for their efforts to support students in having a strong start to the fall term. This year's academic calendar included a very short break between the summer and fall semesters, which meant a big lift among our financial aid, Registrar's and advising areas, to name a few.



Legislative Advocacy

On Friday, Aug. 28, Senator Gary Peters visited GRCC's new Automation Lab at our Leslie E. Tassell MTEC, highlighting nearly \$1 million in federal investment to GRCC. Peters toured the lab with GRCC faculty member John Doneth who provided a firsthand demonstration of a collaborative robot, illustrating programming to welding. In the lab, students learn to program, operate and troubleshoot the same advanced robotics and automation equipment they will encounter in West Michigan manufacturing facilities. The lab was created with \$998,000 in federal funding secured by Peters and will serve students preparing for careers in advanced manufacturing and automation, as well as current workers seeking additional skills and credentials.

Faculty Focus

Associate professor Erin Busscher has been honored with a 2026 Outstanding Advisor Award by NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. Erin serves as an academic advisor within GRCC's Academic Advising & Transfer Center. This award recognizes Erin's many contributions to the advancement of the academic advising profession, as well as her exceptional commitment to supporting student success. In conferring this honor to Erin, NACADA shared "the impact of advising on student success is well-documented, and it is through efforts such as those of Erin that we are able to share new advances with others." Please join us in congratulating Erin for her years of dedication to the academic advising profession, to GRCC, and to the students we serve.



Student Focus

The Center for Counseling and Well-Being hosted World Suicide Prevention Day on Sept. 10. Attendees participated in mental health screenings and received self-care items. Faculty and staff members wore t-shirts to support awareness and shared helpful resources.

In addition, our Center for Student Life and Leadership and Campus Common Reading teams sponsored a robust slate of Constitution Day events on Sept. 17. This included the Spirit Day theme of Red White and Blue in honor of Constitution Day and 250 years, all-day interactive discussions where our campus community was invited to explore the relevance of the Constitution in today's society, the distribution of educational materials supporting a deeper understanding of civic responsibilities as well as offering valuable insights and opportunities to connect with fellow students passionate about making a difference.

Community Partnership

As part of West Michigan Tech Week, the GRCC School of STEM and The Right Place hosted a Tech Week event on Sept. 15 for 2,300 middle school students at the Ford Fieldhouse. This is in addition to six other events that were sponsored or co-sponsored by GRCC.



Scholarfest '26

Last week, the Foundation team hosted Scholarfest, our annual fundraising event celebrating student success and community support. Throughout the evening, we showcased the talents of our students in the Secchia Institute for Culinary Education, enjoyed performances by our music students and heard powerful stories from our scholarship recipients. Proceeds from the event benefit student scholarships, and we look forward to sharing our final fundraising totals as soon as they are tallied.



Investiture

I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for Friday's investiture. It was an incredibly meaningful day for me and my family, and I was deeply grateful to share it with so many members of the GRCC community, along with family, friends, colleagues and mentors who have been part of my journey. I also want to offer a special thank you to everyone who helped plan the ceremony and to all those who participated in making the day so memorable. I know an event like this requires a great deal of work behind the scenes, and I am truly appreciative of the care and thought that went into it. More than anything, the day reinforced how fortunate I feel to serve as president of this remarkable college. I left the ceremony even more excited about what is ahead for Grand Rapids Community College and the work we will continue to do together for our students and our community.

2026-27 Employee Giving Campaign

The Foundation recently launched its 2026-27 Employee Giving Campaign, "Fill Your Cup with Impact." This year-long campaign encourages faculty and staff to make an impact through giving at any level and highlights the collective difference GRCC employees can make in supporting our students. Employees who make a one-time gift of \$78 or commit to \$3 per paycheck will receive a GRCC Foundation limited edition mug as a thank-you for their support.

