



## GVSU Welcome Letter Fall 24'

Welcome to campus for a new academic year! As we come together once again (or if we are meeting for the first time!), my heart is filled with joy and optimism for the year ahead. Every beginning of the academic year, there is something truly special about the energy that comes with being back on campus—reconnecting with old friends, discovering new passions, and contributing to the vibrant communities we find ourselves a part of. Monday was amazing, being able to hear and see so many of you excited for the day ahead and so many stories and experiences to share.

Yet, I want to acknowledge that for many in our community, specifically our LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, and students, this moment is also a challenging one. Yesterday, the presence of the anti-LGBTQ+ speaker at the clocktower sent ripples of pain, fear, and frustration through many of us. I want you to know that we see you, we hear you, and the gravity of what happened is not lost on us. We, as the LGBT Resource Center, are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that our campus remains not just a place of learning, but a place where everyone feels valued and that they can bring their best self into every space.

We see that our university's core values—specifically integrity and inclusive and equitable community—are more than just ideals to the LGBT Resource Center. As a resource center we are committed to each other's well being and please know that we are actively in conversations with the institution on not only understanding the law behind expressive speech but how the university's policy and Reach Higher values align with community support and safety.

As we move forward together, let's draw strength from our unity and our shared commitment to building a community where everyone can thrive. I encourage you to reach out, to lift each other up, and to engage in the ongoing dialogues that will help shape a future where every member of our university feels seen, heard, and valued. To make these efforts tangible, here are some opportunities where you can connect.

*We have several clubs available for LGBTQ+ students that meet in the evenings, providing a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and build friendships. You can explore the options and find more information about these clubs [here](#).*

*Additionally, I am excited to announce that applications are now open for **Queer Connections**, a program designed to help LGBTQ+ students navigate their time at GVSU with support from peers and mentors. You can learn more and apply [here](#).*

Before I end this long message, if you encounter any challenges or have concerns, please know that the [GVSU LGBT Resource Center](#) is here to help. I am emphasizing that you reach out to us immediately and we can assist you in navigating various support systems within the university, including:

- GVSU Ombuds ([Employee](#) and [Students](#)): For confidential, impartial guidance on resolving workplace or academic issues.
- [CARE Team](#): A resource for addressing student concerns related to well-being, safety, or behavior.
- [Campus Climate Concerns](#): A system for reporting and addressing issues related to the campus environment.
- [Victim Advocacy](#): Support for individuals who have experienced sexual violence or harassment.
- [Civil Rights and Title IX](#): Resources and support for addressing discrimination and ensuring equal access to education.

Visit us by the Zumberge pond today at 12pm for free food, swag, and resources at [The Rainbow Social 2024!](#) Thank you and we look forward to connecting throughout the year

DL McKinney and the LGBT Resource Center Team

