



<b>Resolution Number:</b>	<b>W-21-03</b>	<b>Sponsored By:</b>	Senator Faith Kidd
<b>Introduced On:</b>	<b>4 March 2021</b>		
<b>Voted On:</b>	<b>18 March 2021</b>		
<b>Result:</b>	<b>Passed</b>		
<b>Vote Count:</b>	<b>Unanimous</b>		

**A RESOLUTION TO:** Further Standardize Online Learning Shells to Increase Cohesion, Understanding, and Engagement.

---

**Recognizing**, that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the college learning experience has been shifted to online formats; although the online formats are very accessible to students,

**Whereas**, Student Senate would like to propose further standardization and adjustments to online shells to increase overall cohesion and student understanding of online classroom organization and as an effect, promote student engagement, as an essential component of community based learning,<sup>1</sup>

**Recognizing**, that according to Grand Valley's website, courses are offered in a variety of methods including traditional, hybrid, and fully online formats<sup>2</sup>, and much of the course information is found on Blackboard or another online learning platform,

**Recognizing**, that in recent times, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the learning experience and as a result, Grand Valley State University has observed an overwhelming lack of engagement from students in online courses; which was noted by Provost Maria Cimitile during Student Senate meetings during the fall semester,<sup>3</sup>

**Recognizing**, that Grand Valley State University lacks a universal structure within their online learning formats,

**Recognizing**, that this project would be beneficial for both students and faculty because it would provide a basic outline for online structure and organization regardless of the department or course level,

**Whereas**, as a student learning in this environment, it is recognized that some of the lack of online engagement is because of confusion about course requirements due to the limited organization within online learning shells,

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/facultygov/cbl-designation-background-213.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/facultygov/oec-policies-and-procedures-174.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [https://lanthorn.com/79698/laker\\_life/adjusting-to-asynchronous-learning/](https://lanthorn.com/79698/laker_life/adjusting-to-asynchronous-learning/)

**Whereas,** to decrease confusion on behalf of both students and faculty, Student Senate recommends implementing a universal structure for online classes, specific but not limited to those accessed through Blackboard,

**Recognizing,** that to improve the online learning environment, the following changes should be made, or introduced as a part of required faculty workshops related to online learning,

**Whereas,** professors using online shells should utilize the Gradebook feature as well as the Calendar feature to inform students of assignments and due dates,

**Whereas,** there should be a module designed to link students with campus resources; including, but not limited to tutoring links, career center links, disability services, and counseling services,

**Whereas,** an Instructor Information/Contact Information tab should be required to provide students with the instructor's contact information,

**Whereas,** instructors should implement a time on task portion each week, so students can plan their work around the expected time required for the course content,

**Whereas,** the online content should be delivered in weekly folders or modules, since we are not reminded of the course structure in class when courses are offered fully online or hybrid,

**Whereas,** introduce announcements on online learning shells at the beginning of the week, reminding students of office hours, the weekly content, and the expectations that week,

**Whereas,** the group option on online learning shells should be utilized in order to attempt to increase virtual interdependence between classmates;

**Whereas,** the delivery method of the class should be explained in the syllabus, or through an email before the class begins, if it is a synchronous online course; students will have to ensure that it still fits into their class schedule,

**Whereas,** altogether, although these are just a few outlined suggestions, Grand Valley State University should provide universal organization for their online learning; having a coherent, cohesive online shell will greatly improve online learning for students, by decreasing confusion, and increasing cohesion, engagement and communication,

**Whereas,** the online course shell standardization could be a component of the mandatory faculty workshops that are already occurring to prepare professors to teach alternate formats,<sup>4</sup>

**Therefore, Let It Be Resolved,** that the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, recommend that Grand Valley State University further standardize online learning shells in order to increase student understanding of online classroom organization and as an effect, promote student engagement,

**Furthermore, Let It Be Resolved,** that following the COVID-19 pandemic, Grand Valley State University will continue to offer online courses; further standardization is an opportunity to

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/ftlc/onlinehybrid-teaching-2020-2021-faculty-workshop-options-346.htm>

improve and maintain our online formats, and as a result, further increase the quality of education.