



Bill Number:	W-25-06	Sponsored By:	Senator Brin DeVries
Introduced On:	March 20th, 2025		
Voted On:	March 27th, 2025		
Result:	PASSED		
Vote Count:	37-0-2		

A BILL TO: Expand Faculty and Staff Training to Include Disability Awareness and Inclusion.

Recognizing, Grand Valley State University’s (GVSU) Reach Higher 2025 plan states a commitment to “sustain a sense of belonging, promote diversity and respect, and address systemic issues that impact outcomes for those who have been historically excluded from higher education”¹ and “embrace(s) our role as a leader in urgently advancing equity for all learners”²; and

Recognizing, the word “disability” is intersectional, in that it crosses all aspects of identity³ and that inclusion is defined as “the action, practice, or policy of including any person in an activity, system, organization, or process, irrespective of race, gender, religion, age, ability, etc.”⁴; and

Recognizing, the number of degree-seeking students in the United States with disabilities has increased⁵; and

Recognizing, faculty are required to participate in some mandatory training⁶; and

¹ <https://www.gvsu.edu/reachhigher/values-32>

² <https://www.gvsu.edu/reachhigher/why-do-we-need-to-change-23>

³ <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psychology-teacher-network/introductory-psychology/disability-as-dei>

⁴ <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/inclusion>

⁵ <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts>

⁶ D. DeVries, personal communication

Recognizing, the GVSU Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) website only refers to disability once in all its pages⁷ and the sole, explicit mention of disability is linked to Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) under the Campus Resources page of Useful Links tab⁸; and

Recognizing, as of February 2025, the EIC is only offering one event that explicitly mentions disability⁹ for the rest of the 2024-2025 academic year; and

Recognizing, students with disabilities have reported to SAR that certain college sponsored activities (such as orientation) and course requirements and experiences are inaccessible, and that necessary accommodations were not made proactively¹⁰, despite knowing that outdoor or experiential learning and physical activities may be inaccessible to students using mobility devices, writing assignments may be inaccessible to students with fine motor difficulties, and verbal participation may be inaccessible to students with communication barriers; and

Whereas, the most direct and efficient way to remedy this is through education; and

Whereas, not every professor has experience with or has taught a student with a disability and may not be aware of implicit bias, but it is important that they are equipped with the tools that will prepare them to incorporate students with disabilities in a successful way^{11 12}; and

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved, that Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, recommends providing learning resources, starting in Fall 2026, and recommending, with intent to require in the future, that faculty complete annual training, focusing on a different topic each year, on the inclusion of disabled students in experiential and classroom activities to accommodate the diverse needs of the student body, while reflecting Grand Valley State University's stated values and commitment to diverse student needs while ensuring the success of all students.

⁷ <https://www.gvsu.edu/eic/>

⁸ <https://www.gvsu.edu/eic/campus-resources-useful-links>

⁹ Offerings focused on education about mental health are excluded from this count as the topic is already covered extensively.

¹⁰ Witcher, Shontaye PhD and Vanderveen, Kathleen PhD, Student Accessibility Resources. Zoom meeting. February 28th, 2025

¹¹ B. DeVries, personal experience

¹² S. Piasecki, personal communications