

The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center

Hello and welcome everyone. My name is Aruna, and I am a staff member in the Graduate School at Grand Valley State University. At Grand Valley, we do our very best to ensure that our graduate students have as many resources available to them as possible to help them succeed within their program. GVSU encourages the campus to embrace a social justice and intersectional identity approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Therefore, the University has established four Social Justice Centers, the Gayle R. Davis Center for Women and Gender Equity, the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Peter Secchia Military and Veterans Resource Center. Today we will be learning more about the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center.

The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center advocates for institutional equity, promotes community-building, and provides educational opportunities to create an informed, cohesive, and diverse community that accepts, supports, and fosters discussion about the LGBTQIA+ community. This is the center where community members of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender presentations are supported and welcomed. The LGBT Resource Center collaborates with campus and community partners to create an inclusive and equitable environment where all are empowered to be their authentic selves.

After many years of advocacy and unwavering dedication by students, faculty, and staff members, the LGBT Resource Center opened its doors in the Kirkhof Center in 2008 under the direction of Dr. Milton E. Ford. The Center was created as a unit in the Division of Student Services. The opening was celebrated with a campus-wide event, "Three Centers: One Vision," acknowledging the partnerships with the Gayle R. Davis Center for Women and Gender Equity and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Identity is one of the essential aspects of a human and choice to identify as you want is the biggest liberty. One of the ways the LGBT Resource Center provides support to people is by managing the program called Display Your Chosen Name with My Name for those who want to change their name. There are some limitations, but you are able to change your name for your GVSU ID and in Banner.

The LGBT Resource Center have six super active Clubs that host weekly programs for social activities, sharing experiences, and building support systems here on campus. The six clubs are Neuro Queers, T2 (Trans Tuesdays), Bi-Furious, First Year Queer Alliance, The General Queer Alliance (GQA), Colors of Pride, and Ace of Clubs. These clubs help build community and support among peers in the groups. If you want to visit the center, it is located at 1161 Russel H. Kirkhof Center.

Neuro Queers is a club for students who are both LGBTQ+ and neurodivergent. It is a space to make friends, have fun, and be supported.

T2 (Trans Tuesdays) is a place for Trans and Non-binary students, as well as anyone who is questioning or exploring their gender, to safely and freely express themselves.

Bi-Furious is a social group for students who identify as bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, sexually fluid, or otherwise non-monosexual.

First-year Queer Alliance (FQA) supports LGBTQIA+ and allied students by helping them build community, engage in shared learning on social justice topics, and develop strategies for a successful first year.

The General Queer Alliance (GQA) supports LGBTQIA+ and allied students by helping them build community, learn, and have fun alongside peers throughout their time at GVSU.

Colors of Pride is a weekly program for LGBTQIA+ students of color. Students in Colors of Pride will celebrate the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ people of color while building community and strengthening connections to each other, the LGBT Resource Center, and the university.

And finally, Ace of Clubs. This is a program for all GVSU students who identify on the asexual or aromantic spectrums.

The Milton E. Ford LGBTQ Center welcomes everyone for the celebration of individual diversity we have within and creates a space to express with others. To learn more about the activities, groups, and clubs, please visit www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/ or email at lgbtcenter@gvsu.edu. Thank you for your time and hope you have enjoyed the podcast.