



***A message from DL, Director of the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center:***

Hello and welcome to GVSU fall semester 2023! I first want to thank everyone who has shared their name and email with our Center. This allows us to keep you up to date with latest news, events, group activities, and just generally check in with you. Our mission is to foster an environment that demonstrates in many ways that you matter and are needed, because at the end of the day we care about you and your well-being immensely.

With that, congratulations! We all have made it to the end of the first week of classes and we get a very much needed break after the coordinated chaos that is move-in and navigating new classes (GVSU is closed September 4th)!

Next, I would like to express gratitude for all of you who shared and showed up for the LGBT Resource Center's Rainbow Social. The theme of Rainbow Social is always engagement and no one disappointed. It was a beautiful day with close to 200 people who relaxed, ate, danced with Queens, and overall created a sense of community. So, thank you.

I wanted to also recognize that there was a difficult situation at the end of the drag show where there was an individual who loudly protested our joy. It was unwarranted, aggressive, and totally out of line. They were luckily escorted out of the building without causing further damage or emotional labor.

As we know, the LGBTQIA+ community has always been considerably vulnerable to oppression and hate, and it shows itself in many compounded layers of our lives. Please note that myself and the rest of the LGBT Resource Center team have been working tirelessly over the summer to create pathways of accountability that ensure that GVSU takes a zero tolerance stance toward hate on this campus. We have been in meeting with senior leadership, including President Mantella, and GV's General Counsel to create systemic change that truly makes this university for everyone.

See something, say something. As you navigate the school year please remember, the LGBT Resource Center is more than just a physical space. You'll often hear us call it the hub, as it encompasses and stretches into many areas and resources. Our Center is the landing pad of dialogue, empowerment, support, celebration, and learning. We are here for you, and we will fight for you. So, we ask that if you see something, say something. Let us support not only your healing but also allow us to activate and stand up with you and find justice.

We will have staff on hand through the end of the first week of school to process and work through the incident and we will have an official processing space event that will provide snacks, calming activities (coloring, bracelet making), and possible counseling center support on Tuesday, September 5th, 11am-2pm. As we step into these spaces, continue trauma informed care by checking in with each other first before speaking on incidents/topics/phrases that could be triggering for others. Joey, El, D., and myself have made the commitment to check in with each other with short phrases such as "content warning, I may mention a tough topic around (specific topic). Can I proceed?" as an example.

Outside of these processing times, please lean into our other supportive services such as our seven student clubs (see clubs and times [here](#)) or our Queer Connections mentorship program ([applications](#) are now open).

If you ever have questions, concerns, or ideas for improvement, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your voices matter, please help us amplify them.

**DL McKinney, Director**

