



Statement Reaffirming Values of Inclusiveness & Community

April 9, 2015

Dear Grand Valley Community:

Several weeks ago, senior administrative leaders and students representing several Black and African American campus organizations met to discuss the current state of diversity and inclusion at Grand Valley. We applaud these students for their leadership and dedication. We join you in reaffirming our commitment to create a rich and inclusive learning and working environment that attracts, retains, and supports a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.

As a University, we are guided by [values of Inclusiveness and Community](#). We seek to build institutional capacity and strengthen our liberal education commitment by providing a welcoming environment where all members of the Grand Valley community can safely and proudly be their authentic selves. All members of the community deserve equitable opportunity for success. We also strive to foster a healthy and diverse environment where we act with integrity, communicate respectfully, and accept responsibility for our words and actions. Hatred and bigotry are antithetical to the mission and values of Grand Valley.

At the same time, we acknowledge our need to constantly re-commit, re-energize, and re-think our strategies. This summer, the Division of Inclusion & Equity will undergo a strategic planning process to support this effort. To ensure an inclusive and deliberative process, the Division will form a leadership council, which will include faculty, staff, and students, to guide planning, and also provide many opportunities for broad community input and engagement. All community members can provide immediate and ongoing feedback via email (inclusion@gvsu.edu).

Looking forward, the next phase of our commitment includes sustaining our efforts to ensure equity is embedded across the campus and ingrained in all of our functions and decision-making. We will also redouble our efforts to eliminate inequities and advance access, and continue to do all we can to create a campus climate that is welcoming and inclusive for all.

We all have a stake in this work – equity and inclusion makes us all better and is fundamental to what it means to be a Laker. Diversity, in all its forms, is at the heart of Grand Valley's mission to provide a liberal education that will help shape lives, professions, and societies.

On behalf of the Senior Management Team, we hope you will join us in reaffirming Grand Valley's commitment to our foundational values of *Inclusiveness* and *Community* as we seek to be a model for equity and inclusion.

Very respectfully,

Thomas J. Haas
President

Jesse M. Bernal
Vice President
Division of Inclusion & Equity