



<b>Resolution Number:</b>	<b>F-20-01</b>	<b>Sponsored By:</b>	Chair Nicholas Raak, Chair Cameron Zbikowski & The Mental Health Awareness Subcommittee
<b>Introduced On:</b>	<b>5 November, 2020</b>		
<b>Voted On:</b>	<b>5 November, 2020</b>		
<b>Result:</b>	<b>Passed</b>		
<b>Vote Count:</b>	<b>31-1-3</b>		

**A RESOLUTION TO:** Support Alternative Methods to Compensate for the Mental Health Effects of Eliminating Spring Break for the Winter 2021 Semester

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**Recognizing**, the Mission Statement of the Grand Valley State University Student Senate states that the Student Senate “will cultivate a student body that is engaged, healthy, and empowered”<sup>1</sup>; and

**Recognizing**, Grand Valley State University eliminated Spring Break from the Academic Calendar for the Winter 2021 semester to create a continuous 14 week semester<sup>2</sup>; and

**Whereas**, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate accepts the justification for the elimination of Spring Break; and

**Recognizing**, a petition organized by a member of the student body in support of a mental health break has gathered more than 4,100 signatures, roughly 15% of the student body<sup>3</sup>; and

**Recognizing**, that, in the winter of 2012, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate passed W-12-07 in support of creating a two day Fall Break with the rationale that the majority of students and faculty “believe that a two day Fall Break after midterm examinations would help to ease stress/anxiety levels”<sup>4</sup>; and

**Recognizing**, that, in the winter of 2017, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate passed W-17-02 in support of creating a two day Fall Break following Midterm exams and prior to the Withdraw date using the previously mentioned rationale<sup>5</sup>; and

**Recognizing**, Grand Valley State University recognized the importance of mental health and implemented a Fall Break on the Academic Calendar, but canceled Fall Break for the Fall 2020 semester due to concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>6</sup>; and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/student senate/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/academics-6.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/grand-valley-state-university-administration-give-us-a-spring-break-for-winter-2021?redirect=false&fbclid=IwAR3F7H7i3BhvjuWnunibxx0mpoWiWcKNqvFlr-SH0wLQZSKtM-Nr9GxZjDo>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/f-12-07\\_fall\\_break\\_resolution.pdf](https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/f-12-07_fall_break_resolution.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/w-17-02.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/academics-6.htm>

**Recognizing**, that Nicholas Debernardi, Ph.D., Coordinator of Career Assessment & Programming at the University Counseling Center, stated that “the challenges facing the student body are very unique and feelings of isolation can be very common”<sup>7</sup>; and

**Whereas**, feelings of isolation would only be worsened by removing the ability to alleviate stress and anxiety during Spring Break; and

**Recognizing**, Grand Valley State University’s peer institutions are including multiple days off during the Winter semester to compensate for the lack of one continuous recess, which allow mental breaks for students, staff, and faculty<sup>8</sup>; and

**Recognizing**, that Amber Roberts, Ph.D., ABPP, Director of the University Counseling Center, stated that an optimal time to provide mental health days would be in March, corresponding with a routine rise in on-campus counseling appointments; and

**Recognizing**, many other institutions offer a “dead week” wherein hard deadlines for papers, assignments, quizzes, etc. are not allowed during the week prior to examinations<sup>9</sup>; and

**Whereas**, a “dead week” can be implemented without altering the Academic Calendar by keeping synchronous or asynchronous lecture while avoiding hard deadlines; and

**Recognizing**, these methods can be enacted without increasing the risk of a COVID-19 case spike which could result in another Staying in Place or Staying Safe order, further harming the mental health of students, staff, and faculty; and

**Whereas**, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate believes that mental health and student well-being are the keystones for academic success;

**Therefore, Let It Be Resolved**, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, recommends that Grand Valley State University seek an alternative solution to the elimination of Spring Break to ease the stress caused by 14 weeks of continuous education and that this be acted on by the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

**Furthermore, Let It Be Resolved**, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate recommends the creation of a University Task Force consisting of faculty, staff, students, and administration (including Enrollment Development and the Office of the Provost) in order to identify a creative solution to the unique problems addressed by this resolution.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://lanthorn.com/77821/news/online-workshops-seek-to-help-students-be-proactive-with-mental-health/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://president.msu.edu/communications/messages-statements/2020\\_community\\_letters/2020-10-22-spring-semester-announcement.html](https://president.msu.edu/communications/messages-statements/2020_community_letters/2020-10-22-spring-semester-announcement.html)

<https://www.cmich.edu/news/article/pages/Spring-semester-2021-schedule.aspx>

<https://wayne.edu/mental-health-day>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/dead-week>