



Resolution Number:	W-19-05	Sponsored By:	Senator Eric-John Szczepaniak President Rachel Jenkin
Introduced On:	28 March 2019		
Voted On:	28 March 2019		
Result:	Passed		
Vote Count:	33-2-1		

A RESOLUTION TO: Call for the Grand Valley State University Board of Trustees to subscribe to the principles of the Open Meetings Act including the addition of public comment and meeting in closed session only when empowered by the Open Meetings Act of 1976.

Recognizing, the Values Statement of the Board of Trustees reads in part, “Grand Valley State University values honesty, fairness, and openness in its actions, transactions, and communications”¹,

Recognizing, the ability for all members of the public to address a governing board is essential to government accountability and instills a sense of collective agency in democratic institutions,

Whereas, Grand Valley State University aims to empower their students; however current board meetings do not allow for real-time commenting from the public, making it extremely difficult to practice accountability and equity,

Recognizing, Article VIII of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 establishes the requirements on the functioning of the Board of Trustees in stating “Formal sessions of governing boards of such institutions shall be open to the public”² but does not require universities to subscribe to the Open Meetings Act that governs all other public bodies in the state³,

Recognizing, Michigan peer institutions such as Central Michigan University⁴, Northern Michigan University⁵, Western Michigan University⁶, University of Michigan⁷, Michigan Technological Institution⁸, Ferris State University⁹, and Lake Superior State University¹⁰, have adopted pro-democracy policies in addition to constitutional requirements in order to facilitate a more open decision-making process,

Whereas, by entertaining a public comment at each of their board meetings, the previously stated institutions and their respective elected and appointed board members have created a more open environment in which they conduct business,

¹ <https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/policy.htm?policyId=4A6B4946-964C-4E87-1E31AC7FCA7936BD&search=>

² <https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/policy.htm?policyId=4A005F9F-04C0-E859-20B2D04FCC8C107E&search=>

³ https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ag/OMA_handbook_287134_7.pdf

⁴ <https://www.cmich.edu/bot/Pages/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.nmu.edu/boardoftrustees/meeting-notices>

⁶ <https://wmich.edu/trustees/procedures/comment>

⁷ <http://regents.umich.edu/meetings/minutes/minutes18.html>

⁸ <https://www.mtu.edu/bot/meetings/minutes/>

⁹ <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/Trustees/minutes.htm>

¹⁰ <https://www.lssu.edu/board-of-trustees/#toggle-id-7>

Recognizing, that the few institutions that do not have a public comment do have a tab on their website detailing how a person can speak at the meeting by filling out a request form: Michigan State University¹¹, Oakland University¹², and Eastern Michigan University¹³,

Recognizing, alongside Wayne State University and Saginaw Valley State University, Grand Valley State University is in the minority of Michigan public institutions that do not offer real-time public comment nor easily accessible forms to request to comment at their Board meetings,

Recognizing, the lack of full disclosure regarding subcommittees prior to the broadcasted Board of Trustees regular meetings does not encourage transparency, open communication, or democracy,

Whereas, This resolution is the first step to creating a more transparent university, encourage democracy in its simplest form, and further develop a dialogue between the Board of Trustees and Student Senate to improve accountability within Grand Valley State University,

Let It Be Resolved, that the Grand Valley State University Student Senate supports and encourages the adoption of the tenants of the Open Meetings Act of 1976 by the Grand Valley State University Board of Trustees.

¹¹ <http://trustees.msu.edu/meetings/public-participation.html>

¹² <https://oakland.edu/bot/archived-agendas/2019/february-7>

¹³ <https://www.emich.edu/regents/board-documents/2019/02-07-2019.php>