

FISCAL YEAR 2028

CAPITAL OUTLAY MAJOR PROJECT REQUEST

Institution Name:	Grand Valley State University
Capital Outlay Code:	
Request Code:	
Project Title:	Kirkhof Center Renovation/Addition
Project Focus:	Student Life
Type of Project:	Renovation and Addition
Approximate Square Footage:	148,000 sf
Institutional Share Amount:	\$15,000,000
State Share Amount	\$45,000,000
Total Estimated Cost:	\$60,000,000
Estimated Duration of Project:	Two Years
Is the Five-Year Plan posted on the department's public internet site?	Yes
Is the requested project included in the Five-Year Capital outlay Plan?	Yes
Is the requested project the top priority in the Five- Year Capital Outlay Plan (major project only)	Yes

Project Purpose

A new student union should be viewed as far more than a gathering place for students. It is a critical piece of university infrastructure that brings together student services, dining, conferencing, social and cultural programming, student organizations, and informal learning in one highly accessible campus destination.

For Grand Valley State University, a modern student union represents an investment not only in our institution, but in the students who will become Michigan's future workforce, professionals, educators, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. It is a strategic investment in student success, development, efficient campus operations, and long-term stewardship of university assets.

It creates opportunities for students to interact across academic disciplines, backgrounds, and areas of interest. Student organizations, conferences, cultural programs, leadership development, community engagement, and informal collaboration can all occur in one highly visible and accessible location.

Scope of the Project

Today's university students increasingly expect spaces that support the entire student experience, not simply classrooms and laboratories. The newly renovated student union would create a central environment where students can eat, study, collaborate, participate in student organizations, attend programs, meet with university services, and build relationships.

The proposed facility would consolidate:

- Multiple food-service options and dining areas
- Flexible conference and meeting facilities
- Student organization and gathering spaces
- Social and informal learning environments
- Offices and program space for the Dean of Students, Social Justice, Student Life, and other student-support functions
- Event and programming space
- Flexible spaces that can adapt to changing student needs

This combination creates a building that is active throughout the day and evening rather than serving a single academic or administrative purpose.

Program Focus of Occupants

There are three areas of focus for the Student Union:

1. Belong, Engage & Succeed

A new student union gives students a place to belong by creating a recognizable heart of campus where students can meet, relax, study & connect. Accessible spaces and inclusive programming can make students from diverse backgrounds feel represented and welcome.

Informal gathering places provide opportunities to engage with their university community outside the classroom. Lounges, game areas, student organization spaces and event areas support friendships and community. Unions offer space for students to take a break, socialize, or recharge between classes.

A well-designed student union can become a physical representation of Grand Valley's culture and values creating an environment that will help students succeed.

2. Consolidation of Functions.

Over time, universities often accumulate small dining locations, meeting rooms, offices, student-service spaces and gathering areas throughout campus. These decentralized spaces can be expensive to operate because each location requires some combination of utilities, custodial services, maintenance, technology, staffing, furniture, and building-system infrastructure.

A properly programmed student union can consolidate many of these functions into a single, purpose-built facility.

3. Energy Efficiency

A newly renovated facility can be designed with current energy standards, efficient mechanical systems, lighting controls and building automation. The state would be investing in a facility with substantially greater operational efficiency than many older campus buildings, including the current Kirkhof Center.

How does the project support Michigan's talent enhancement, job creation and economic growth initiatives on a local, regional and/or statewide basis?

There are five main ways a renovated student union can support Michigan's economic priorities:

1. Strengthen Michigan's Talent Pipeline.

- Creates a central environment where students develop leadership, communication, collaboration, and professional skills outside the classroom.
- Provides space for career programming, employer engagement, internships, networking, and professional development.
- Helps students build the interpersonal and leadership skills Michigan employers consistently need.
- Supports student retention and persistence by creating a stronger sense of belonging and connection to the university.

2. Connect Michigan Employers Directly with Students

- Flexible conference and event spaces can accommodate employer recruiting events, career fairs, interviews, networking events, and industry presentations.
- Provides a professional setting where Michigan businesses can engage directly with GVSU's talent.
- Creates opportunities for employers to establish relationships with students earlier in their academic careers.

3. Support Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

- The union could provide flexible collaboration and meeting spaces for student entrepreneurs, innovators, and startup teams.
- Business competitions, pitch events, mentoring, workshops, and networking could bring students together with Michigan entrepreneurs and business leaders.

- Student ventures that develop through these activities can contribute to future business formation and employment.

4. Build Stronger University Development Programs

The union could serve as a gathering place for organizations beyond the university, including businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, professional associations, and community organizations.

This would create opportunities for:

- Regional workforce-development programs
- Professional conferences
- Community forums
- Employer partnerships
- Nonprofit collaboration
- Leadership development
- Industry-focused events

5. Develop & Retain Graduates in Michigan to Create Michigan's Next Leaders.

This creates a pipeline of graduates with experience in:

- Leadership
- Team management
- Event planning
- Public speaking
- Conflict resolution
- Community engagement
- Organizational management
- Entrepreneurship

How does the project enhance the core academic, development of critical skill degrees, and/or research mission of the institution?

A student union extends learning beyond the classroom by providing informal spaces for students to study, collaborate and meet with faculty and peers. It gives students spaces to continue academic work between classes rather than leaving campus.

A modern student union can be a significant environment for developing skills that are difficult to teach through traditional classroom instruction. Skills such as communication, leadership, conflict resolution, cultural competency, and public speaking complement

GVSU's academic programs and help students translate disciplinary knowledge into workplace capabilities.

A centrally located facility brings students from different majors together. This creates opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration that can lead to cross-disciplinary projects, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The Student Union would further strengthen GVSU's research mission by providing accessible spaces for undergraduate research presentations, scholarly events, faculty engagement, guest speakers, conferences, and interdisciplinary collaboration. These opportunities allow students to not only participate in research but also develop the ability to communicate research findings to academic, professional and community audiences.

Describe how the project will address, incorporate, or enhance the efforts, policies, or goals to grow and expand opportunities for enrollment for the academic programs within the scope of the project or as a component of your institution and campus at large?

The proposed renovation and addition to the Kirkhof Center will support Grand Valley State University's enrollment growth and expansion goals by enhancing the campus environment, strengthening student engagement, and creating opportunities to connect prospective and current students with the university's academic programs and support services.

The project will also advance university goals related to student retention, belonging, and degree completion. By bringing together dining, social gathering areas, conferencing, and student support resources including social justice departments, the facility will foster meaningful connections among students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. These connections can strengthen students' sense of belonging, encourage engagement with campus resources, and contribute to a more supportive environment in which students can persist toward graduation.

Is the requested project focused on a single, stand-alone facility?

The renovation and addition to the existing Kirkhof Center will function largely as a stand-alone facility, while maintaining a physical connection to the Mary Idema Pew Library through an existing underground connector. This connection provides a critical and convenient climate-controlled link between the Student Union and the University's main campus library, strengthening connectivity between two important student-centered destinations and supporting year-round movement across campus.

How does the project support investment in or adaptive re-purposing of existing facilities and infrastructure?

A new student union would provide a more efficient use of university resources. Consolidating functions can reduce the number of buildings requiring extended operating hours, custodial services, HVAC operations, security coverage, and routine maintenance. Food service, event support, conference operations, student programming, and facility management can be organized around a central operational model rather than maintaining separate support structures in multiple locations.

A new student union can be designed with current energy standards, efficient mechanical systems, lighting controls and building automation. The state would be investing in a facility with substantially greater operational efficiency than many older campus buildings.

A purpose-built facility can replace or reduce dependence on aging spaces that require increasing levels of capital renewal and maintenance. This extends the useful life of existing campus assets by allowing the university to repurpose obsolete space rather than continuing to invest in facilities that no longer meet contemporary needs.

Does the project address or mitigate any current health/safety deficiencies relative to existing facilities?

The existing facility is designed and built to standards which do not meet those currently in place. The scope of work identified will bring the facility in line with current standards while also addressing maintenance aspects related to cleanliness, both of which will contribute to a significant improvement to occupant health and safety.

Current mechanical systems will be replaced to improve occupant health through improvements to indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and fresh air intake. This improvement will also result in reduced operational costs because of improved energy efficiencies, lowering overall operational costs while providing more resources for janitorial services.

The renovation will also increase natural daylight into the facility through new exterior glazing. In response, electrical systems will be improved to address light levels while implementing systems that respond to daylight conditions through new fixtures and lighting controls creating an overall improved learning environment.

New finishes will be integrated throughout the building to replace those that are difficult to clean, including rough face brick and small format tiles. The design will also implement best practices in cleaning, focusing on simplicity and durability. These changes will result in decreased janitorial costs per square foot as well as a healthier environment.

The renovation will also bring the building up to current Michigan Bureau of Fire Services standards including fire suppression and alarm systems.

How does the institution measure utilization of its existing facilities, and how does it compare relative to established benchmarks for educational facilities? How does the project help to improve the utilization of existing space and infrastructure, or conversely, how does current utilization support the need of additional space and infrastructure?

Utilization: GVSU has a detailed report of its facility utilization within the Capital Outlay 5 Year Master Plan submittal.

Benchmarking: A benchmarking study was completed of GVSU-identified peers, both in-state and out-of-state, to understand how GVSU compares in space/student or NASF/headcount. Peer benchmarking shows that GVSU is undersized compared to many of its peer institutions.

Michigan public institutions were evaluated regarding total NASF/headcount. This study offers a vast range of differences regarding student enrollment, demographics, and academic programs. To create a more equitable peer comparison, GVSU removed public institutions from peer comparison that had student enrolment of less than 9,000 students or larger than 30,000 students or were categorized as Carnegie High Research-Intensive institutions. The universities that were removed from the peer comparison include the University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan Technological University, Northern Michigan University, and Lake Superior State University.

The remaining eight in-state, public, four-year universities selected by GVSU for benchmarking were:

Central Michigan University
Eastern Michigan University
Ferris State University
Saginaw Valley State University
Oakland University
University of Michigan – Dearborn
Wayne State University
Western Michigan University

This project is an opportunity to create a highly utilized piece of university infrastructure that advances student success, supports Michigan's future workforce, strengthens campus life and improves the efficiency of university operations.

The project would provide a modern, flexible facility designed around how students live, learn, collaborate and engage with their institution.

How does the institution intend to integrate sustainable principles to enhance the efficiency and operations of the facility?

Implementing LEED® sustainable design principles improves the environment for human beings to work and learn. Occupant wellbeing, environmental performance, and economic returns are achieved using established and innovative practices, standards and technologies that are incorporated in the design, construction, and operations of the building. GVSU strives to achieve a balance between creating environmentally responsible buildings that concentrate on sustainable sites, energy performance, material and resources and indoor environmental quality, while being fiscally responsible stewards of public funds.

The Student Union is strategically located at the heart of Grand Valley State University's main Valley Campus in Allendale, Michigan. This central location and strong connection to the University's pedestrian, bicycle, parking, and transit networks make the Student Union an accessible and highly connected destination for the entire GVSU community.

The facility is also located near multiple student, faculty and staff parking areas, providing convenient access for those arriving by vehicle.

The Student Union is directly adjacent to the campus's primary bus station, which provides free transportation throughout the Valley Campus and to nearby student housing and apartment communities. The transit system also provides a direct connection to GVSU's City Campus in downtown Grand Rapids, further extending the accessibility and reach of the facility.

Are match resources currently available for the project? If yes, what is the source of the matching resources? If no, identify the intended source and estimated timeline for securing said resources.

The land and existing facility are fully owned by Grand Valley State University. Yes, matching resources will source from a combination of university reserves, debt issuance, and/or university donor funds. If bank or market financing is determined to be required for this project, funds can be obtained in 6 months.

If authorized for construction, the state typically provides a maximum of 75% of the total cost for university projects and 50% of the total cost for community college projects. Does the institution intend to commit additional resources that would reduce the state share from the amounts indicated? If so, by what amount.

At this time, GVSU is requesting the State to fund \$45 million (75%) of the project cost, with GVSU funding the remaining \$15 million.

Will the completed project increase operating costs to the institution? If yes, please provide an estimated cost (annually, and over a five-year period) and indicate whether the institution has identified available funds to support the additional cost.

The new facility is expected to reduce long-term operating costs through the incorporation of modern, energy-efficient building systems and technologies. High-efficiency HVAC systems, advanced lighting controls and daylight harvesting will reduce energy consumption while maintaining a comfortable and productive environment for students, faculty, and staff.

The building envelope will also be designed and constructed to meet or exceed current energy-efficiency standards, providing significantly improved insulation, air tightness and overall thermal performance compared with the existing facility. These improvements will reduce heating and cooling demands and contribute to lower utility and maintenance costs over the life of the building.

Together, these improvements will create a more sustainable and cost-effective facility, reducing the University's long-term operating expenses while providing a higher-quality environment for students and the campus community.

What impact, if any, will the project have on tuition costs?

There will be no impact on tuition costs.

If this project is not authorized, what are the impacts to the institution and its students?

If the Student Union project is not authorized, Grand Valley State University would face continued challenges associated with an aging facility that no longer adequately reflects the needs and expectations of today's students. The existing facility would require continued investment to maintain aging building systems and address ongoing

maintenance needs, while providing limited opportunities to modernize student services, gathering spaces, food service, collaboration areas and other student-focused functions.

The condition of the Student Union also has a direct impact on the University's ability to create a strong first impression for prospective students and their families. The Student Union is one of the most visible and frequently used facilities on campus and can be an important part of a prospective student's campus visit. An aging facility can create a perception that the University's physical environment has not kept pace with the quality, innovation and student experience offered by its academic programs. In an increasingly competitive higher education environment, the condition of highly visible student facilities can influence how prospective students perceive the overall campus experience.

What alternatives to this project were considered? Why is the requested project preferable to those alternatives?

The Student Union has been a longstanding strategic priority for Grand Valley State University. While the University's five-year capital plan appropriately considers a range of critical projects and competing institutional needs, numerous studies and examples across higher education have demonstrated the important role a modern student union plays in supporting student engagement, belonging, academic success and the overall campus experience.

For Grand Valley, investment in a new Student Union represents more than an investment in a single facility. It is an investment in the infrastructure that supports students beyond the classroom, strengthens the University's academic and workforce-development mission, enhances recruitment and retention experience, and provides a central gathering place for the campus community. Given the age and limitations of the existing facility, addressing this longstanding priority has become increasingly important to the University's future.