



Bill Number:	W-25-03	Sponsored By:	President Quinten Proctor
Introduced On:	March 13th, 2025		Chair Nancy Boyd
Voted On:	March 20th, 2025		Former Senator Selina Martell
Result:	PASSED		
Vote Count:	33-0-0		

A BILL TO: Create educational materials for GVSU faculty and staff for reference in regard to communication challenges and neurodiversity.

Recognizing, an estimated 5-10% of Americans have a communication disorder¹; and

Recognizing, communication disorders and other communication challenges include but are not limited to Developmental Language Disorder, speech sound disorders, voice disorders, hearing impairment or deafness, apraxia of speech, and more²; and

Whereas, communication challenges can negatively impact students' academic performance and socioemotional development in comparison to other students³; and

Recognizing, neurodiversity is the idea that there are natural differences in the way individuals' brains work, and this refers to many different neurological conditions, including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, autism, ADHD, and more⁴; and

Recognizing, about 19% of Americans identify as neurodivergent⁵; and

¹ [Mayo Clinic Health System, 2022](#)

² [Courtney Karasinski, PhD and Student Senate President Quinten Proctor Teach-In 2024, slide 4](#)

³ [National Library of Medicine, 2023](#)

⁴ [Harvard Medical School, 2021](#)

⁵ [YouGov, 2024](#)

Whereas, neurodiversity can also have an impact on students' abilities to learn and socialize with others⁶; and

Recognizing, Grand Valley State University's Reach Higher 2025 plan cites a commitment to "expanded flexibility for students to learn when, how, and where they learn best, coupled with appropriate support for faculty and staff to be able to adapt to changes while continuing to provide quality educational opportunities"⁷; and

Whereas, creating educational materials for faculty and staff on communication challenges and neurodiversity would enhance success in the classroom and create a more inclusive learning environment for all students; and

Recognizing, in the absence of self-disclosed communication barriers or neurological conditions from students, many challenges go undetected by faculty⁸; and

Recognizing, subjects that depend heavily on verbal or written communication can create additional barriers for students who have speech and language challenges⁹; and

Recognizing, neurodivergent students in addition to those with communication disorders or different patterns of speech may withdraw from or be rejected from social situations; therefore, impacting confidence and self-image⁹; and

Recognizing, the existence of communication disorders in a classroom can impact classmates' understanding of each other, which can provide barriers to participation in group discussions⁹; and

Whereas, the impacts of neurodiversity or having a communication disorder can negatively affect students' educational experiences in the classroom; and

Recognizing, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that helps educators create classroom environments that support and accommodate all students¹⁰; and

Whereas, principles from the UDL can help create a more inclusive academic environment by reducing or eliminating learning obstacles for all students¹⁰; and

⁶ [ReachOut, 2024](#)

⁷ <https://www.gvsu.edu/reachhigher/commitments-33.htm#commitment1>

⁸ [Courtney Karasinski, PhD and Student Senate President Quinten Proctor Teach-In 2024, slide 8](#)

⁹ [Teaching Students with Communication Disorders: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher, Pg. 14-15](#)

¹⁰ [Cornell University](#)

Whereas, the implementation of additional educational materials would provide faculty with the necessary resources to help neurodivergent students and students with invisible communication challenges better succeed in their education at GVSU; and

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved, that the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, recommends the creation of a handout of educational materials which will be available to faculty and staff; and

Furthermore, Let it Be Resolved, that the Student Senate encourages faculty to use these educational materials and to draw from principles in the Universal Design for Learning to help create learning environments in their classrooms that are more accessible, inclusive, and accommodating for all students, including those with communication challenges or neurological conditions.