



Commissioner Allison Miedema

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West Olive, MI 49460

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Dr. Philomena V. Mantella
Office of the President
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April 7, 2025

Allison Miedema
District 11 County Commissioner
County of Ottawa
12220 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460

Dear Dr. Mantella,

I am writing out of concern as an alumni, citizen, parent of an up and coming college-age student, veteran teacher and elected official of Ottawa County to implore that Grand Valley State University make immediate changes to programs and policies as it relates to Executive Order 14151 of January 20, 2025 and Executive Order 14201 of February 5, 2025 to protect the safety and civil rights of all of its students, faculty, staff and visitors and to not cause an unnecessary economic loss to our community as a result of not following our President's Executive Orders.

My Promise

In 2023, as part of my promise to the voters of Ottawa County, I voted to abolish Ottawa County's DEI Department and voted in favor of a resolution that shared in part these words:

"America is an exceptional nation made up of a diverse and beautiful people. Diversity and inclusion, as traditionally defined, are beautiful words and bring value and richness to our relationships, homes, and communities. I value all people regardless of their ethnicity, sexuality, religion, gender and age, born or unborn, and I agree with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream that children "will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." I agree with his desire to "let freedom ring" in every city and state across our nation, and with the historical significance of these words to the American people's struggle for freedom and equality.

I believe in the American value of equality, which provides equal opportunity to all and rewards personal effort. Equality is a human right outlined in the Declaration of Independence, which guarantees our unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I believe in teaching America's true history, including difficult subjects, and agree with 1776 Unites, which affirms, "It is essential that children learn they are agents of their own uplift, knowing their possibilities, responsibilities, and what it means to be an American."

Race Equity teachings seek to replace the American value of equality with the socialist value of equity. Equity promises equal outcomes and is not a human right. Equity ignores the impact of personal effort while dismantling the foundations of our society which made our nation exceptional. Equity jeopardizes liberty and the Race Equity teachings promote a worldview which divides people

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according to perceived forms of oppression, and are a Marxist tool aimed at reducing personal agency, deconstructing American institutions, and promoting socialism and/or communism.

I love the people and children of our county. I oppose teachings that divide, and that teach people to hate America and doubt the goodness of her people. I oppose the promotion of Race Equity teachings through government policy, employee training, and government schools.” (entire resolution can be read here: [Resolution to Establish “Where Freedom Rings” as New County Vision Statement | Ottawa County, MI](#)).

Observations

I have been waiting and watching to see if GVSU would follow Executive Order 14151 and make a public statement. As an alumni, I receive the *Grand Valley Magazine*. In the Spring 2025 edition that I received on April 3, 2025, it appears that instead of following We the People’s charge across our country of ending the DEI agenda, GVSU has moved full steam ahead in continuing to fund new leaders as part of the *People, Equity, and Culture Division*. Quoting from the article on page 16, “The New People, Equity and Culture Division was designed to advance human resources efforts and inclusion and equity initiatives to support faculty, staff, and students...”

Also, from the 39th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration event this year, you personally spoke about institutions that affect generations of lives and how we must steward them for the next generations to take over. You mentioned as the university’s president that the current climate is full of challenge and uncertainty and that the narrative that surrounds DEI seems to directly collide with the King legacy and all he fought for, and that whatever language we use, that we must defend the rights of equality. You mentioned that to be clear on our vision – equity and inclusion are enablers to success and education, not advantages, and to find a way through to deliver on our mission. Dr. Mantella – language is vitally important. Within your own speech, you seemed to interchange and confuse equality and equity. (Speech can be found here beginning at minute 33 <https://vimeo.com/event/4704767>).

Request to Abolish DEI

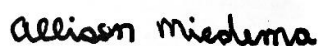
I urge you to listen to the voices of the voters in Ottawa County, in our state, and across our nation – those voices have overwhelmingly mandated the end of the divisive DEI agenda, and those voices were listened to in part by Executive Order 14151. I respectfully request that you take all necessary steps to shut down GVSU’s DEI bureaucracy, including the *Division of People, Equity, and Culture* and the *Inclusion and Equity Institute*. Please discontinue segregated graduation ceremonies, any use of diversity statements in hiring, training, professional development, DEI in strategic planning, and staff positions historically used to promote DEI. For transparency, please issue a statement regarding GVSU’s commitment to colorblind equality and full compliance with federal law and guidance.

Request to Protect Women’s Sports

Additionally, please take all necessary steps to uphold Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which requires institutions receiving Federal funds to ensure equal opportunity for women to participate in sports. Institutions must recognize biological reality and the differences between men and women to comply with federal law and guidance.

As an Ottawa County citizen, parent, alumni, veteran teacher and elected official, I care deeply for the students, staff and faculty at GVSU and encourage you to create an environment where dollars are spent on strengthening academic and career outcomes, a university that welcomes the hiring of staff based on merit and excellence, and away from a one-sided politically and culturally charged atmosphere rooted in Marxist ideology. I welcome further conversation with you on these issues.

Sincerely,



Allison Miedema
Ottawa County Commissioner
District 11