

Vision of the Learning Environment at Grand Rapids Community College

Prepared by the
Learning Environment Team

This vision is the result of the work of the Learning Environment Team at GRCC. It represents the team's vision of the ideal GRCC campus as an enhanced learning environment. The vision was formulated after a great deal of consideration of the many factors that influence the campus community.

The Grand Rapids Community College campus is a warm, vibrant, and safe learning environment. The entire campus honors learning, engagement, professional conversation, reflection, and social interaction.

To achieve this vision, the Learning Environment Team has established the following universal guidelines for an enhanced physical learning environment for the GRCC community.

The enhanced physical learning environment at GRCC must:

- Aspire to provide for the basic needs of the campus community based on universal design.
- Allow for flexibility in use of space to support different learning and teaching styles.
- Provide environments outside classrooms and offices that are conducive to formal and informal interaction.
- Support access to and interaction with the greater community.
- Incorporate appropriate technology.
- Provide physically and psychologically safe spaces in support of learning.

Vision and Guidelines in Action

Information/Communication:

- Maps, signage, and electronic media assist students and visitors in locating buildings, offices, and rooms on campus.
- Information about college services, activities, and resources is readily available to students, staff, and visitors.
- Current technologies are used to communicate important information to the individual student, employee, or community member.
- Staff members are well-informed about college offices and services and respond accurately with warmth and courtesy to questions about the College.

Environment:

- A variety of exterior spaces invite students and staff to gather outside for casual conversation.
- Comfortable, informal learning spaces located on each floor of every campus building encourage studying and informal dialogue.
- Informal learning spaces, adjacent to classrooms, allow small-group pedagogies in classrooms to expand into the space.

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- All internal building environments are quality, high-energy work and study environments that are visually appealing and stimulate thought and self-reflection, encouraging students to focus on personal and academic goals and to respect the needs and rights of others.
- Classrooms are equipped with tables, comfortable chairs, ample whiteboard space, and adequate technology that are appropriate for our population. Furnishings, within the classroom, can easily be moved to accommodate the preferred pedagogy for each class and invite movement for students and faculty.
- Faculty are empowered to create the classroom configuration that best supports the learning outcomes for that particular class.
- All classrooms are equipped with the infrastructure to support instructional technologies. Instructional technologies will be continually evaluated and updated according to the institutional life-cycle replacement plan.
- Lighting in classrooms is sufficiently bright to promote reading and lively interaction. Level of lighting can be conveniently controlled to support various instructional methods.
- The college's heating/ventilation/air-conditioning (HVAC) system is regulated to levels that are safe, healthy, comfortable, and conducive to learning.
- All facilities are well-maintained.
- Faculty department areas offer space for confidential conversations with students, one-on-one learning during office hours, and other individually-focused tutoring.
- A variety of quality food services are available and distributed throughout the campus. Picnic tables and benches are available throughout the campus.
- Restrooms are designed for comfort and cleanliness. All equipment and materials are designed to minimize environmental impact. All restrooms have methods/ways to accommodate backpacks, books, etc.

Individual Needs:

- All campus spaces strive to meet the basic needs of all individuals for a healthy, comfortable, and functional environment.
- The learning environments on campus are readily accessible to all learners and support a variety of learning styles and preferences.
- Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to develop and express their opinions and respect the opinions of others.
- Students can identify and access places on campus where they feel comfortable and safe.
- Faculty are integrally involved in the design of instructional areas.
- Faculty and staff have areas available for informal interaction.
- Unisex and family restrooms, and lactation spaces, are available.