

**ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SIXTY-FIRST SESSION**



BILL NO. 61-108

INTRODUCED BY: Casper (NAISO)

SECONDED BY: Doss (CSS)

CONTRIBUTORS: Zakaria (APASO), Rodriguez (RCAH)

**A BILL TO: Advocate to Implement a Native Student Living-Learning
Community for Native Students at Michigan State University**

THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACT:

WHEREAS, Native American students face a persistent, systemic disadvantage in enrollment and retention in higher education institutions. According to the Postsecondary National Policy Institute, only 17% of Native American youth continue to higher education after obtaining a high school degree compared to 60% of the U.S.¹ population; and,

WHEREAS, For college-enrolled Natives, disparities continue as they are less likely to graduate in comparison to the general student population. The National Center for Education Statistics documents the 6 year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students as follows: 74% for Asian students, 64% for White students, 60% for multiracial identified students, 54% for Hispanic students, 51% for Pacific Islander students, 40% for Black students, and 39% for American² Indian/Alaska Native students; and,

WHEREAS, The cultural isolation felt at specifically land-grant institutions may be intensified for Native students by the colonial legacy of violence they leave behind. When Michigan State University was founded in 1855, there were still Indigenous peoples living on campus near the river. Through the Morrill-land grant acts, over 10.8 million acres of land were forcefully taken, entire communities dispossessed³, to make room for these higher education institutions. It is a lot to grapple with the

¹ Postsecondary National Policy Institute, "Native American Students in Higher Education: Factsheet," October 2019, https://pnpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019_NativeAmericanFactsheet_Updated_FINAL.pdf

² National Center for Education Statistics, "Indicator 6: Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Public School Students," NCES, February 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_red.asp

³ <https://www.californialawreview.org/online/entitled-to-our-land>

history of these institutions, and actively go to school on that same land; and,

WHEREAS, Research points to two major obstacles that diminish Native student completion rates and need to be addressed. There is no question that financial barriers are often insuperable; and,

WHEREAS, Natives also encounter cultural and social isolation at higher education institutions which implicitly valorize Euro-American values of individualism while devaluing⁴ Indigenous cultural principles that emphasize community care. Although we know the importance and efficacy of cultural support programs and centers to support Native students, university board representatives, university presidents, and legislators almost invariably underestimate the importance of the community, cultural, and familial factors that are crucial to retention⁵; and,

WHEREAS, One way Michigan State University can, as an institution, be a leader in improving Native retention rates is by establishing a floor reserved for American Indian/Alaska Native students, in which Native identifying students can opt-in on their MSU housing form; and,

WHEREAS, This proposal has legitimacy given the success of The Transgender Residential Experience (T-REx), a dedicated living space designed for trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse students⁶ to uplifting and affirming transgender-identifying students; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That the Associated Students of Michigan State University shall take the following actions such as advocating for Michigan State University to establish a Native Student living-learning community; and let it be further,

RESOLVED, The Associated Students of Michigan State University shall hold MSU accountable to supporting the cultural and spiritual needs of Native students.

⁴ Jillian Fish and Moin Syed, "Native Americans in Higher Education: An Ecological Systems Perspective," *Journal of College Student Development* 59, no. 4, July 19, 2018, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/699388/pdf>

⁵ Raphael M. Guillory and Mimi Wolverton, "It's about Family: Native American Student Persistence in Higher Education," *The Journal of Higher Education* 79, no. 1 (January 2008): 58–87,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00221546.2008.11772086>

⁶ <https://gscc.msu.edu/trans-msu/T-REx.html>

INTRODUCED ON 03.27.2025

REFERRED TO Academic COMMITTEE ON 03.20.2025

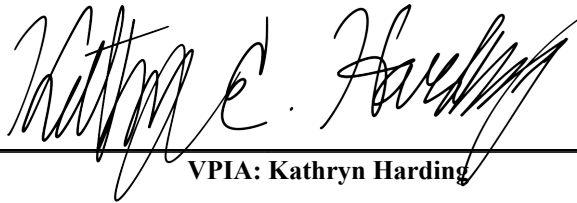
SPECIAL ACTION TAKEN _____ DATE _____

COMMITTEE ACTION	<u>X</u>		Voice Majority	<u>03.20.2025</u>
	PASSED	FAILED	VOTE	DATE

FINAL ACTION TAKEN	<u>X</u>		Voice Majority	<u>03.27.2025</u>
	PASSED	FAILED	VOTE	DATE



PRESIDENT: Connor Le



VPIA: Kathryn Harding