

# ***Suggested Best Practices for Supporting Trans\* Students***

**Developed by the Consortium's Trans\* Policy Working Group  
Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals**

These best practices were drafted by the Consortium's Trans\* Policy Working Group, in consultation with various relevant national student affairs associations, to assist colleges and universities in providing services and support to trans\* students. While schools will vary in their ability to implement all of these recommendations and in the resources that they can offer, these practices are what institutions should strive for in addressing the needs of trans\* students—that is, students whose self-identification or expression challenges traditional notions of “male” and “female.” Under this umbrella term are female-to-male (FTM) and male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals, crossdressers, drag queens and kings, genderqueer individuals, and people with many other nonbinary gender identities.

Join the members of the Consortium in the discussion! For more information about these guidelines, please contact us at [info@lgbtcampus.org](mailto:info@lgbtcampus.org)

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## ***Table of Contents***

Table of Contents.....	2
Recommendations Related to Campus Records and Documents.....	3
Recommendations Related to Campus Housing .....	5
Recommendations Related to Recreational Sports and Locker Rooms .....	7
Recommendations Related to Campus Facilities .....	8
Recommendations Related to Fraternities and Sororities.....	10
Recommendations Related to Dean of Students/Campus Conduct Offices .....	11
Recommendations Related to Campus Health Centers .....	12
Recommendations Related to Campus Counseling Centers.....	14
A Brief Overview of the Consortium’s Trans* Policy Working Group.....	15

## ***Recommendations Related to Campus Records and Documents***

- Have all Admissions and Registrar’s Office staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Change software to enable students to use a name other than their legal first name on campus records, including course and grade rosters, directory listings, unofficial transcripts, advisor lists, and other documents.
- Where not prevented by state law, allow students to use a name other than their legal first name on campus ID cards and diplomas.
- Enable students to change the gender marker on their campus records upon their request (i.e., without a letter from a therapist or doctor and without the need to change other documents).
- Change software to enable students to indicate the pronouns they use for themselves that would appear on course and grade rosters and advisor lists. Suggested options: she, he, ze, and they.
- University of Vermont options: not marked (nothing listed), she, ze, he, and “prefer name only.”
- Have an easily accessible web page that details the policies and procedures related to changing names and gender markers and indicating pronouns on campus records.
- Enable students to self-identify their gender on forms. Suggested wording:
  - ▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
  - ▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
    - \_\_\_ woman
    - \_\_\_ man
    - \_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Ideally, institutions should only ask about gender identity. But recognizing, for example, that many women’s colleges currently limit enrollment to women whose

documents identify them as such, it may still be necessary to ask “sex” on admissions forms. In such cases, both “sex” (“female” and “male”) and “gender identity” should be asked.

- Critically examine if asking gender on a document is really needed. For example, is gender identity relevant to a student’s participation in a career center event?

## ***Recommendations Related to Campus Housing***

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable Residential Life staff members.
- Have all Residential Life staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Have an easily accessible web page as part of the housing site that explains the school's housing policies related to gender identity and that provides the contact information for a housing official who can be the point person for these policies.
- Enable all students to self-identify their gender on their housing application.  
Suggested wording:

▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_

or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:

▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)

\_\_\_ woman

\_\_\_ man

\_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

- If this more expansive gender identity question is not possible on the housing application, then include an additional question that allows students space to indicate their need for trans\*-inclusive housing alongside any other specific housing needs.
- Develop and publicize a trans\*-supportive housing policy. This policy should state:
  - That the college will always recognize and respect the stated gender identity of the student.
  - Students who inform the college that they are trans\* in a timely manner will be housed in keeping with their gender identity/expression.
  - Every attempt will be made to give trans\* students safe and comfortable housing assignments.

- Establish a gender-inclusive housing (GIH) option that:
  - is available for both new and returning students.
  - is separate from an LGBTQ-theme floor.
  - is open to all students, not just to trans\* students.
  - is offered in different parts of campus and, if possible, in different types of housing (doubles, suites, apartments).
  - includes gender-inclusive bathrooms/showers.
  
- Create gender-inclusive bathrooms (e.g., single-user, lockable rest rooms that are labeled as “all gender bathrooms” or simply as “bathrooms”) and private showers in all renovated and newly constructed residence halls.
  
- Have a campus housing bathroom policy that states that “individuals should use bathrooms that correspond to their sex or gender identity, depending on which option they feel is safer, or utilize bathrooms that are designated gender-neutral/gender-inclusive.”
  
- If your institution does not have “gender identity” in its general nondiscrimination policy, include it in your housing policies.
  
- Have a policy that addresses acts of harassment and discrimination (including anti-trans\* acts) that occur in campus housing in accordance with campus judicial policies.
  
- Encourage RAs to hold trans\* awareness programs on their floors and to post trans\* educational material.

## ***Recommendations Related to Recreational Sports and Locker Rooms***

- Have all recreational sports staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Develop a policy for trans\* students to compete in intramurals.
  - ▶ UMass Amherst policy: “When an activity makes a gender designation, an individual who has transitioned to a different gender can participate in the division of the individual’s current gender. If an individual is in the process of transitioning to a different gender, participation in a particular gender designated activity will be handled on a case-by-case basis.”
- Offer lockable, single user changing and shower rooms that are readily available to trans\* students in campus recreational centers and athletic facilities.
- Create greater privacy in men’s and women’s locker rooms by constructing private shower and changing cubicles when athletic facilities are built or renovated.

## ***Recommendations Related to Campus Facilities***

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable campus facilities staff members.
- Have all campus facilities staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Have a policy requiring at least one gender-inclusive restroom (e.g., a single-user, lockable rest room that is labeled “all gender bathroom” or simply “bathroom”) in all newly constructed or significantly renovated buildings, including residence halls.
- Where allowed by legal codes, change single-stall men’s and women’s rest rooms into gender-inclusive facilities in all campus buildings.
- Aim to have gender-inclusive restrooms in at least half of the administrative and academic buildings on campus.
- For gender-inclusive bathrooms, use a sign that avoids the male and female stick figures.
  - ▶ Suggested signage (from Macalester College):



- Have an online list/map of campus gender-inclusive restrooms.
- Have an inclusive, written campus bathroom policy (see suggested wording in the Housing section).



- Have an easily accessible web page as part of the campus facilities site that explains the school's facilities policies related to gender identity and that provides the contact information for a campus facilities official who can be the point person for these policies.
- Create private changing facilities and single-person showers when residence halls and recreation centers are constructed or renovated.

## ***Recommendations Related to Fraternities and Sororities***

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable Office of Fraternities and Sororities staff members.
- Have all Office of Fraternities and Sororities staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Enable all students to self-identify their gender on fraternity and sorority recruitment applications. Suggested wording:
  - ▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
    - ▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
      - \_\_\_ woman
      - \_\_\_ man
      - \_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
      - \_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Develop and publicize a trans\*-supportive fraternity and sorority policy. This policy should state that the college will always recognize and respect the stated gender identity of the student.
- If your institution does not have “gender identity” in its general nondiscrimination policy, include it in your fraternity and sorority policies.
- Have a policy that addresses acts of harassment and discrimination (including anti-trans\* acts) that occur in fraternities and sororities and during fraternity and sorority recruitment.
- Encourage fraternity and sorority chapters to hold trans\* awareness programs with their membership and to post trans\* educational material.

## **Recommendations Related to Dean of Students/Campus Conduct Offices**

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable Dean of Students/Conduct Office staff members.
- Have all Dean of Students/Conduct Office staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Have an easily accessible web page as part of the Dean of Students/Conduct Office or Student Life site that explains the school's policies related to gender identity and that provides the contact information for an official who can be the point person on these policies.
- Enable trans\* students to self-identify their gender on forms and applications. Suggested wording:
  - ▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
  - ▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
    - \_\_\_ woman
    - \_\_\_ man
    - \_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Develop and publicize a trans\*-supportive policy. This policy should state that the college will always recognize and respect the stated gender identity of the student.
- If your institution does not have “gender identity” in its general nondiscrimination policy, include it in your Dean of Students/Conduct Office or Student Life policies.
- Have a policy that addresses acts of harassment and discrimination (including anti-trans\* acts) that occur on campus in accordance with campus judicial policies.
- Encourage Student Life staff to hold trans\* awareness programs and to post trans\* educational material.

## ***Recommendations Related to Campus Health Centers***

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable Health Center staff members. Allow staff with sub-specialties in trans\* health care to be identified so that a student may request these providers.
- Have all Health Center staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Enable all students to self-identify their gender on the Health Center’s intake form. Suggested wording:
  - ▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
  - ▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
    - \_\_\_ woman
    - \_\_\_ man
    - \_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Enable students to indicate the name they use, and not just their legal name, on the Health Center’s intake form and use this chosen name when calling students in for appointments.
- Have prescriptions and lab orders written in such a way that the name a student uses is called out at the pharmacy and lab.
- Cover hormones and gender-affirming surgeries for students who are transitioning under student health insurance.
- Train physicians so that they can initiate hormone treatment, write prescriptions for hormones, and monitor hormone levels for transitioning students.
- Hold a regular trans\* health clinic to provide trans\*-specific health care services.
- Have gender-inclusive bathrooms (e.g., single-user, lockable rest rooms that are labeled as “all gender bathrooms” or simply as “bathrooms”) available in all areas of the Health Center.

- Include clear, complete information about accessing trans\*-related health care services on websites and in health center literature.
- Appoint a patient advocate or have a visible procedure for trans\* students (as well as other students) to report concerns and instances of poor treatment.

## ***Recommendations Related to Campus Counseling Centers***

- Create a fair equitable process for hiring, training, and maintaining trans\*-identified and trans\*-knowledgeable Counseling Center staff members.
- Have all Counseling Center staff, including student staff members, attend a trans\*-focused ally training. (If such a training is not provided on your campus, work with trans\* advocates to develop one).
- Enable trans\* students to self-identify their gender on the Counseling Center's intake form. Suggested wording:
  - ▶ Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
  - ▶ Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
    - \_\_\_ woman
    - \_\_\_ man
    - \_\_\_ trans\* or transgender (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_ another identity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Enable students to indicate the name they use, and not just their legal name, on the Counseling Center's intake form and use this chosen name when calling student in for appointments.
- Develop and publicize a list of area therapists who can provide trans\*-supportive gender therapy for students who are transitioning or who are struggling with their gender identity.
- Cover the requisite therapy for students who are transitioning under student health insurance.
- Have at least one Counseling Center therapist who has the training and experience to be able to write letters for transitioning students to access hormones.
- Offer a support group for trans\* and gender-nonconforming students.
- Have a gender-inclusive bathroom (e.g., a single-user, lockable rest room that is labeled "all gender bathroom" or simply "bathroom") available in the Counseling Center.
- Appoint a client advocate or have a visible procedure for trans\* students (as well as other students) to report concerns and instances of poor treatment.

## **A Brief Overview of the Consortium's Trans\* Policy Working Group**

In February 2014, the Consortium Co-Chairs, Demere Woolway and Warren Scherer, charged Dr. Genny Beemyn as Chair of a working group to devise trans\* policies and practices, which the Consortium would recommend relevant national associations adopt. The working group built on the Consortium's work with AACRAO (the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers), areas to be addressed were to include housing, locker rooms, restrooms, healthcare, admissions, and counseling centers.

The Co-Chairs put a call out to the Consortium membership for individuals interested in serving on the working group with Dr. Beemyn. Twenty members expressed interest in contributing and seven were appointed to the important work of crafting trans\* policy and practice recommendations.

The eight working group members were:

A.J. Jones	University of Louisville
Dr. Christopher (Henry) Hinesley	Rochester Institute of Technology
Dr. Chicora Martin	University of Oregon
Dr. D.A. Dirks	Mount Royal University
Dr. Debbie Bazarisky	Princeton University
Gabe Javier	University of Wisconsin
Dr. Genny Beemyn; Chair	University of Massachusetts – Amherst
Lea Robinson	Columbia University

Upon completion of their work, the Task Force submitted a draft of the Recommendations to the Consortium Executive Board for review and endorsement. The Board voted to endorse the ***Suggested Best Practices for Supporting Trans\* Students*** at the May 2014 Board Meeting.