

Recommendations Regarding the Inclusion and Experiences of Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Students at SUNY Cortland

Respectfully Submitted to President Erik Bitterbaum via Faculty Senate on  
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By the Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Transgender/GNC Students

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This document contains recommendations in three areas the committee deemed crucial to making SUNY Cortland a more inclusive place for transgender and gender non-conforming students (to be referred to as trans/GNC going forward).

1. Facilities: these recommendations are focused on dedicated gathering spaces, living spaces, and availability of gender-neutral spaces
2. Pronouns and names: these recommendations are focused on eliminating the anxiety and harm associated with misgendering via incorrect pronouns or names
3. Athletics and recreational/intramural sports: these recommendations are focused on ensuring inclusive and safe participation in intercollegiate and recreational/intramural sports

Each section contains recommendations, rationales, and recommended next steps for implementation. Appendix A includes a list of campus offices/departments and positions that are named in the Next Steps sections. We welcome further consultation with these entities about the recommendations. Please contact the committee chair, Kristine Newhall ([kristine.newhall@cortland.edu](mailto:kristine.newhall@cortland.edu)) to arrange a meeting.

Regardless of targeted area, these recommendations are based on a philosophy of inclusion that manifests in reduced harm for trans/GNC students.

We are in the midst of a period of concerted backlash against trans/GNC people in the United States. There are currently over one hundred pieces of anti-trans legislation passed or pending in state legislatures targeting access to medical care, sports, and gendered spaces in addition to recently proposed federal legislation. While New York may be, for now, a safer space for trans/GNC people, the anti-trans discourse most certainly affects our students. This backlash co-exists with broader anti-LGBT actions such as Florida's Don't Say Gay bill and the white supremacist initiatives to ban the teaching of race-related content. In short, our trans/GNC students, especially those with a minoritized racial identity, are being exposed to virulent rhetoric that targets their legitimacy and worth and thus affects their emotional well-being.

The spirit of these recommendations is based on the above. Cumulatively, they help this institution achieve the goal—which this committee sees as a moral imperative--of limiting the harm that trans/GNC students can experience on a daily basis and reduce anxiety over harmful encounters (from microaggressions to physical violence) by implementing policies and procedures that will respect students' identities and personal agency.

## Facilities

### **Recommendation**

Add single user/gender neutral bathrooms in future renovations and optimize project and/or capital funding in adjacent areas to include bathroom renovations when possible.

### **Justification**

[Violence within bathrooms](#) which includes [questioning of trans/GNC people's identities](#) is a common enough occurrence that [they will avoid using sex-segregated bathrooms](#). In addition to the anxiety around safe, unquestioned bathroom usage, avoidance of bathrooms can have health consequences such as urinary tract infections.

### **Next steps**

Insert language in facilities design standards directing consultants to include single user/ gender neutral bathrooms where possible. For major renovations, one single user/gender neutral bathroom that is also ADA compliant should be created on each floor of a building.

### **Recommendation**

Members of the LGBTQ+ community—including trans/GNC students--should have a voice in master planning in order to convey their space needs, such as a dedicated center and/or safe gathering place.

### **Justification**

First, including input from trans/GNC students contributes to a feeling of inclusion and validation. Second, according to the [Campus Pride Index](#), other New York schools have created dedicated LGBTQ+ centers. These spaces both demonstrate institutional support for this group and create safe places for students to gather in formal and informal ways.

### **Next steps**

First, a representative from Facilities, Juanita Larabee, will submit a request to FMP steering committee and Corey Union steering committee to give an opportunity to be interviewed by the FMP and Corey Union programming consultants to voice facility needs. Second, funding sources for a dedicated center should be identified by some or all of the following offices: Alumni Affairs, the President's Office, and the Division of Student Affairs.

## **Pronouns and Names**

### **Recommendation**

Create “toolbox training” for all SUNY Cortland employees around topics related to pronouns, names, and gender identity more broadly. Recommended training topics include: pronouns, inclusive language about the body, chosen names, legal protections (Title IX, Title VII, GENDA), and Queer 101. These trainings should be a part of employee onboarding.

### **Justification**

Short (15-20 minute) training courses allow valuable information to be presented to all employees in an easily digestible format. Pedagogy research shows that short presentations keep engagement high. Requiring these trainings for all new hires, and recommending it for all others, falls in line with Cortland's commitment to inclusive excellence. Teaching faculty and staff how to use inclusive language and respect others' identities will improve people's feelings of inclusion and help increase campus retention. SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression) has already created and begun to implement a 20-minute Respecting Pronouns training. Over 250 individuals have been trained across 20 departments and offices with valuable feedback and successful implementation.

### **Next steps**

Creation of trainings. Erin Morris and Cyrenius Fitzjohn are willing to serve as point people for these trainings. We recommend hosting them through BizLibrary and integrating them into employee onboarding. Next steps also include looking at options for completion certificates (i.e., micro credentialing) and determining who should lead the training for each individual topic. These are issues SOGIE, PCIE, and the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office should consult on.

### **Recommendation**

Create “toolbox trainings” for all SUNY Cortland students around topics related to pronouns, names, and gender identity more broadly. Recommended topics include: preferred versus assigned names in the system, how chosen names impact their experiences system wide (financial aid, letters home etc.), pronouns in the university system, life after college, and Queer 101.

### **Justification**

Short (15-20 minute) training courses will allow valuable information to be presented to students in an easily digestible format. Pedagogy research shows that short presentations keep engagement high. Ensuring our students have access to information about how to navigate Cortland as a transgender or non-binary student along with teaching all students how to respect their queer peers, falls in line with Cortland's commitment to inclusive excellence. Teaching our

students how to use inclusive language and respect others' identities will only improve people's feelings of inclusion and help increase campus retention.

#### Next steps

Next step is to discuss with the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs how these trainings could be best implemented for students including, where videos can be housed, and how to integrate some topics into in-person student events such as orientation. After that, the next steps include deciding who should lead the training for each individual topic and creating the videos. Erin Morris and Cyrenius Fitzjohn are willing to serve as point people for these training courses.

#### **Recommendation**

Create and display documents and items to help educate the campus community on topics of pronouns and names. This campaign might include bathroom posters, and bulletin boards in residence halls and other communal spaces (i.e., Student Life Center, dining halls, Corey Union).

#### Justification

Having information consistently around campus, in high traffic areas, will ensure that everyone is educated about these topics, even if they choose not to complete the video trainings. SOGIE implemented a bathroom poster campaign with information about the personal and legal right to use bathrooms that align with one's gender identity. Campaigns such as this help educate the community about different endeavors that are in line with SUNY Cortland's mission of inclusive excellence. By putting information across campus, the topics become normalized and improve inclusion efforts.

#### Next steps

Next steps include deciding what information belongs on posters, where those posters are best placed and creating the graphics. After that, we can work with facilities to place the posters around campus. This work should be a collaborative effort with Student Affairs/Residence Life and Housing, Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, and the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office.

#### **Recommendation**

The Admissions Office should develop a practice where accepted students are sent a letter upon deposit regarding preferred and chosen names. This would be an automated letter sent through the software system, Slate, and provide information and directions about names changes.

#### Justification

Research completed by committee members who interviewed professional staff shows that students are reporting their chosen name and pronouns to the institution an average of three times because of the disconnected systems: on the application for admission, the questionnaire for residence life and housing, and at orientation for the proper name tag. The recommended change in practice would provide all students with the same information (which also serves as a form of education) and allow them to submit the form if they choose. Submitted forms would result in

updates in Banner eliminating the need to repeatedly disclose. This reduces fear, anxiety, and microaggressions during the enrollment process.

#### Next steps

The Admissions Office should research ways to create automated letters through Slate and discuss what other information they may want to provide to students with this communication. It is suggested that this be an effort among Admissions, the Title IX Office, Faculty Senate, and the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office.

### **Athletics**

#### **Recommendation**

Create a committee (standing or ad hoc depending on identified needs) to address trans/GNC participation in intercollegiate athletics. This group should be responsible for creating and adding a trans/GNC inclusion policy to the Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual as well as the Cortland Student-Athlete Handbook.

#### Rationale

Given the current climate of anti-trans initiatives at all levels of sports and the [NCAA's abdication of responsibility](#) for providing guidance (deferring to sport governing bodies), there are likely to be many changes coming. The institution needs to address what happens when a governing body's policies conflict with the university's non-discrimination policy. This information needs to be public facing and easily accessible to current and prospective students.

#### Next Steps

Establish a committee that includes representatives from athletics, the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office and/or Title IX Office, faculty, and student athletes. This committee should issue a report to the VP of Student Affairs and should be chaired by a person outside of athletics.

#### **Recommendation**

Add anti-homophobic and transphobic policies to teams' codes of conduct as well as the fan code of conduct.

#### Rationale

Though the institution has antidiscrimination codes, it is important for these specific stakeholders in athletics (teams and fans) to be made aware of the no-tolerance policy for discriminatory behavior aimed at or disparaging of LGBTQ+ persons given sport's historical and ongoing practices of homophobic, misogynistic, and anti-trans attitudes.

#### Next steps

Charge persons within athletics with creating these codes to be approved by the VP of Student Affairs. Codes should include repercussions for discriminatory behaviors including using Student Conduct process to address students who violate these policies.

## **Recommendation**

Sports medicine staff should create and add an inclusive trans/GNC policy to their policies and procedures.

### Rationale

As medical care professionals, the sports medicine staff should provide equitable patient-centered care for all student athletes. Written policies and procedures will establish the mechanism through which the sports medicine staff can provide inclusive care and be held accountable for their actions.

### Next steps

Charge persons within the athletic training department to create inclusive policies to be added to the policy and procedure manual for the Athletics Director to approve and distribute to relevant stakeholders (i.e., team physicians, student trainers, etc.). These policies should be inclusive of the NCAA policies, NATA Code of Ethics, and institutional anti-discrimination policies.

## **Athletics and Recreational Facilities**

## **Recommendation**

Add permanent single-user, ADA compliant, gender-neutral bathrooms that are available to the public to the stadium athletic complex.

### Rationale

These would provide a safe, private facility for transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people, families with children, and people with disabilities who may need assistance. Single-stall restrooms also more easily meet the accessibility regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Next steps

Athletics should work with facilities to implement.

## **Recommendation**

Improve privacy in stadium athletic complex locker rooms (shower stalls with doors, increased privacy in bathroom stalls, and private changing areas).

### Rationale

There is a greater expectation for comfort via privacy in locker rooms. In 2017, *Athletic Business* [reported on](#) the trend of making locker room spaces more inclusive and comfortable. Like in the above recommendation, this benefits transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people as well as people with histories of trauma around abuse and assault. This would also minimize privacy violations that occur through the use of camera phones.

### Next steps

Athletics should work with facilities to implement.

### **Recommendation**

Improve privacy in Park Center general use locker rooms (shower stalls with doors, increased privacy in bathroom stalls, and private changing areas)

### Rationale

There is a greater expectation for comfort via privacy in locker rooms. In 2017, *Athletic Business* [reported on](#) the trend of making locker room spaces more inclusive. Like in the above recommendation, this benefits transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people as well as people with histories of trauma around abuse and assault. This would also minimize privacy violations that occur through the use of camera phones.

### Next steps

Athletics should work with facilities to implement short- and long-term plans to increase privacy in current facilities and future renovations.

### **Recommendation**

Add permanent single-user, ADA compliant, gender-neutral bathrooms to the baseball/Lusk Field house athletic complex.

### Rationale

These would provide a safe, private facility for transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people, families with children, and people with disabilities who may need assistance. Single-stall restrooms also more easily meet the accessibility regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Next steps

Athletics should work with facilities to implement.

## **Club and Intramural Sports**

### **Recommendation**

Post National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association's [\(NIRSA\) anti-discrimination and inclusion statement\(s\)](#) on Cortland's Recreational Sports website.

### Rationale

Cortland is a member of NIRSA and thus follows the policies of this sports governance organization. While the existence of anti-discrimination policies is important, they need to be more accessible, i.e., public facing. Posting this information on the Intramurals home page informs all students of the expectations for participation.

### Next steps



Recreational Sports staff should post the policy on the website. Consider adding a link to the policy in email communications that advertise intramurals.

### **Recommendation**

Create an ad-hoc committee to examine the gender policies of club sports governing bodies (i.e., USA Rugby, USA Baseball, etc.) to determine compatibility with university non-discrimination policies.

### Rationale

As with intercollegiate sports, there is considerable confusion over participation because sports governing bodies have created different policies regarding eligibility. Every club sport needs to have a clear and public-facing eligibility policy which states how conflicts with the university's anti-discrimination policy will be resolved in the face of a discriminatory policy by a sports governing body.

### Next steps

Establish a committee that includes representatives from Recreational Sports, the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office and/or Title IX Office, faculty, and students in club sports. This committee should issue a report to the VP of Student Affairs detailing how they will ensure inclusion.

**Appendix A: Campus Offices, Departments, Organization, Positions Necessary for Implementation of Recommendations**

Human Resources Office

Admissions Office

Division of Student Affairs

VP of Student Affairs

Assistant VP of Student Affairs

Recreational Sports

Director of Recreational Sports

Assistant Director of Recreational Sports for Facilities and Aquatics

Assistant Director of Recreational Sports for Intramural and Club Sports

Residence Life and Housing Office

Multicultural Life and Diversity Office

Athletics Department

Director of Athletics

Head Athletic Trainer

Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office

Title IX Office

Facilities Management

President's Council on Inclusive Excellence

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Committee