



March 13, 2023

President Kim Schatzel
Grawemeyer Hall, Suite 102
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40292

Dear President Schatzel,

As your chief policy advisory group for gender equity, the Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) is concerned for the trans community at the University of Louisville (UofL) due to recent state legislation and events across our campus. The state of Kentucky is considering or has passed several anti-trans legislations, including Senate Bill 150 that gives parents the right to approve human sexuality education and to be informed if their children use physical or mental health services, House Bill 470 that targets gender-affirming care for any Kentuckian under 18 years of age, House Bill 173 that requires the forced outing of trans students and restricts their ability to use the bathroom, and House Bill 177 that censors the curriculum and allows parents to object to school content. These bills will negatively impact all future trans students who come to UofL, causing some to reconsider their enrollment altogether. In January, a student was harassed by members of the Pi Kappa Alpha (PIKE) fraternity because of their identity as a trans woman. In February, several instances of chalk art with statements in support of trans students were erased by campus employees. The UofL Trans Rights Alliance (ULTRA) created an Instagram account (@uofltrightsalliance) that has documented several incidents of discrimination faced by trans students at the university: bullying from fellow students, instances of faculty using students' former names or the incorrect pronouns in class, the lack of gender-neutral restrooms that make using the bathroom a safer experience on campus, and housing assignments that did not account for the students' gender identity. The university's response to trans students' experiences sends indicative messages to trans faculty and staff as well, whose recruitment and retention is also a university concern.

COSW's mission is to positively influence the lives of women/femmes/non-binary employees in their faculty and staff roles at UofL, and this extends to all forms of gender identity and expression as well as to our students. We believe that trans rights are human rights, and no UofL student should be discriminated against based on their race, gender identity, or sexuality. All students deserve equal protection and civil treatment on campus, so they can live, learn, and thrive in a safe environment. We appreciate your sentiment at our general body meeting in which you asked, "What *don't* I know? What do I need to learn more about?" In response to that question, we would like to offer some specific recommendations from the below signed. We recommend that:

1. University Housing and the Resident Experience be audited and appropriate changes be made to remove bias and harmful impact on trans students and staff, with particular attention to
 - a. residence life policies and guidelines generally;
 - b. residence hall assignments, services and amenities for both traditional binary housing (male/female) and gender-inclusive housing;
 - c. staff training and performance.
2. Current training offered in support of trans members of our community be audited and adjusted to remove bias and harmful impact for those members of our community and additional training be developed in conjunction with trans community members for students, faculty, and staff.

3. UofL Police Department (ULPD) current training and procedures, especially those related to handling incidents involving nonviolent students, faculty, and staff, be audited and adjusted to remove bias and harmful impact.
4. University administration work closely with ULTRA, the Student Government Association, the LGBT Center, and other stakeholders to review existing policies and/or create additional policies that make UofL a safe and more inclusive environment for our trans students.
5. The President and Provost state clearly to the entire UofL community that trans students are an important and valuable part of our community and to abide by our Cardinal Principles, the university will actively demonstrate its commitment to being a Community of Care, showing Respect, and valuing Diversity and Inclusion.
6. Continual campus updates be delivered on the progress toward developing action steps, including sharing the status of reviewing policies that impact the trans community and which bodies have conversed on the matter. These updates would foster transparency and show movement toward the university's plan of action and further, any plans that could be communicated by the end of spring semester 2023 would promote trust in university administration amongst the UofL community.

COSW is not alone in our concern. The LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Association, Black Faculty and Staff Association Executive Committee, and CODRE add their representative voices to these concerns and recommendations. We would be happy to engage in further conversation to support these efforts.

Respectfully,

Commission on the Status of Women (COSW)
LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Association
Black Faculty and Staff Association Executive Committee
Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity (CODRE)