

LAUC in Support of Gender Inclusion– a Bathroom for All

The celebration of the Librarians Association of the University of California's 50th anniversary is an occasion to apply and re-affirm all LAUC diversity committees' support of campus populations. Among these populations are gender neutral, non-conforming and transgender students, staff and faculty who face a host of daily challenges, including access to safe and accessible restroom spaces. Progress has been made across the UC system, but there is more that can be done. Our inclusive values can send a clear message beyond our individual campus borders that governments and individuals who seek to marginalize people are on the wrong side of history.

On May 30th, 2014, the University of California Task Force and Implementation Team on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Climate and Inclusion provided UC President Janet Napolitano with a list of eight recommendations designed to create more welcoming and inclusive environments for LGBTQIA students, staff and faculty across the UC system. Among the task force's recommendations was a call for a systemwide gender-inclusive restroom policy. In June 2015 President Napolitano issued the *University of California Guidelines for Providing Gender Inclusive Facilities*. The guidelines took effect July 1st of that year. They are one important component of a broader effort to empower and improve the lives of LGBTQIA community members across campuses, while enhancing UC's position as a world leader in inclusiveness.

All UC campuses now offer a growing number of gender-inclusive restroom facilities. At UC Berkeley campus in Evans Hall, the men's and women's restrooms on the first floor were converted into a multi-stall, gender-inclusive option in the fall of 2016. Evans Hall joined over forty other buildings offering all gender options across the campus. At UC Davis 120 single stall gender specific restrooms had those designations replaced with gender neutral designations in early 2016. Recently, at the urging of the LAUC-R Diversity Committee at UC Riverside, the library converted a single-stall women's restroom into a gender inclusive space. That washroom joins a growing list of inclusive restroom spaces across the UCR campus. LAUC-R continues to advocate for additional safe and inclusive restroom facilities for the campus community. Meanwhile UCLA has one of the largest number of all-gender restrooms in the country and was ranked the 6th most LGBTQIA friendly campus in the nation. Access to safe and welcoming restroom accommodations is an important cornerstone of support for transgender and gender non-conforming populations who continue to struggle with social prejudices and harassment simply for living as who they are.

Across the country, a number of state legislatures are considering, and in some cases passing, so-called "bathroom bills" designed to arbitrarily force transgender and gender non-conforming people to use sex-segregated facilities unaligned with their true gender. The Trump administration withdrew former President Obama's important Title IX guidance, originally passed to protect transgender students in schools and colleges. Nationwide, the rise in hate crimes during the first two months of 2017 when seven transgender women were murdered reflect a disturbing trend. Our UC must stand together in solidarity and be an advocate for historically marginalized communities. LAUC and the LAUC-R diversity committees are allies to all our campus populations. Acting as vocal proponents for increased numbers of welcoming restroom facilities can be an important component of that advocacy. Construction of and

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conversion to gender-inclusive restroom facilities is one essential way our campuses are working together to change perceptions and move forward on the right side of history.

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