



Cornell University
Student Assembly

Gender Inclusive Housing Policy Draft
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DRAFT

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Gender-Inclusive Housing Policy Draft

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Objective	3
Definition	3
Policy Outline	4
Frequently Asked Questions	5
Sample Form	7
Implementation Plan	8

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OBJECTIVE

The objective is to create a sustainable plan for the implementation of an elective gender-inclusive housing option for students who do not identify within the gender-binary system. Additionally, we want to provide a housing option that allows students who are genuinely interested in learning more about other genders through an educational living and learning experience. The aim of gender inclusive housing is to provide a safe living option for gender non-conforming, gender-queer, and transgender students as well as to begin to break down the traditional binary in the man-woman gender divide by allowing students the option to live in the comforts of on-campus housing while exploring the cultural constructions of gender identity. This further aligns the University with its anti-discrimination policy as well as its commitment to diversity in all realms. It also serves to align Cornell with the policies of its peer institutions, who have already adopted successful gender-inclusive housing plans.

DEFINITION

Gender-inclusive housing, put simply, is an option that allows students to live with whomever they choose, regardless of biological sex, gender, or gender identity. The aim of gender inclusive housing is to provide a safe living option for underrepresented minority gender non-conforming, gender queer, and transgender students. In addition, it serves to break down the traditional binary in the man-woman gender divide by allowing students the option to live in the comforts of on-campus housing while exploring the cultural constructions of gender identity.

POLICY OUTLINE

This section will provide a description of the basic guiding principles of the gender-inclusive housing policy. It will be followed by a series of frequently asked questions as well as a plan for implementation.

The following principles apply:

- This plan will apply to all rooms, suites, and apartments on campus.
- Students will be able to request a roommate or suitemate, regardless of sex, gender, or gender identification.
- Students will not be automatically placed in gender-inclusive rooms/suites. They must elect to be assigned to one of these rooms.
- There is no limit to the number of gender-inclusive spaces available on-campus.
- The University does not condone the use of this program for romantic couples.
- The University further encourages students to discuss this program with their parents/guardians. All students who have reached the legal age of majority (18) are able to sign their housing contracts.
- The same housing contract applies for the duration of the academic year.
- Once a room or suite is designated as gender-inclusive, it will remain gender-inclusive for the duration of the academic year.
- In the event of a vacancy, the housing office will fill the vacancy first with individuals who consent to living in a gender-inclusive space and then using the normal housing process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why is this option being offered?

This program provides an option for students who do not conform to the gender-binary system to find a comfortable living space on campus. It also provides an opportunity for LGBTQ allies to room with their friends that may be of the opposite sex. Additionally, this aligns the University with its non-discrimination policy.

2. Is this a permanent policy change?

The program will be tried with upperclassmen for two academic years and then formally reviewed. Pending a formal review, the University can opt to make permanent changes to its policy and then expand the option to first-year students for the 2015-2016 academic year.

3. Who is eligible to apply for this housing option?

During the first phase of this program, all upperclassmen, excluding transfers are permitted to take advantage of this program. Transfers will be permitted to try the program during the 2014-2015 academic year. First-year students can opt into the program under special circumstances, pending consultation with the housing office.

4. How many gender-inclusive spaces are available?

There is no limit to the number of gender-inclusive spaces that will be offered across the campus. The availability depends on the number of people that elect to participate in the program.

5. Can a student be randomly assigned to a gender-inclusive room/suite?

No. Any student who wishes to take advantage of this policy must enter into a mutual agreement with the other party. Put simply, all students must agree to be in a gender-inclusive space.

6. What happens if a conflict arises and the student wants to move?

Under the University's current housing policy, any student is permitted to break their housing contract and apply for a room change. Room changes, however, are granted based on availability of rooms. Students are also subject to certain fees.

7. What if the parent/guardian does not consent?

Students are encouraged to discuss this option with their parents. However, any student of legal age (18) is allowed to sign an agreement to participate in this program.

8. Can couples live together?

The University does not encourage romantic couples of any sexual orientation to live together; however, couples are not excluded from opting into this program. Students will not be required to disclose their reason for requesting a particular roommate, with the exception of first-year students who are opting into the program under special circumstances.

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SAMPLE ROOMMATE/SUITEMATE MATCHING FORM

This was taken from Ohio University Housing Application.

You prefer that your room/suitemate(s) gender identity is:

Man Woman No Preference Other: _____

You prefer that your room/suitemate(s) biological sex is:

Female Intersex Male No Preference

How would you describe your ideal room/suitemate: _____

What is your biological sex:

Female Intersex Male

What is your gender identity:

Man Woman Other: _____

Do you have a third-person pronoun you prefer to be addressed by? (e.g., she, he, ze, hir): _____

Please provide anything else you wish to share about your gender identity, gender expression, or biological sex to help us in the housing assignment process: _____



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section will outline the proposed timeline for the implementation of this program beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year, allowing for a period of evaluation, and then expansion to all first-year students in the 2015-2016 academic year.

2013-2014 Academic Year

During this year, all upperclassmen will be able to take advantage of this program. Gender-inclusive rooms and suites will be offered on West Campus, the program houses, the Collegetown residences (Schuyler House, Cascadilla, & Sheldon Court), and the co-ops. This option will not be limited to students taking advantage of the continued occupancy option. This means that rising sophomores entering West Campus or program houses for the first time will be permitted to select the gender-inclusive housing option.

Additionally, any first-year students with specific needs may be eligible to live in a gender-inclusive space upon consultation with the housing office as a follow-up to special requests on the Housing Application.

2014-2015 Academic Year

This academic year will see the expansion of the gender-inclusive housing option to all residence halls on campus beginning in the fall. During the spring semester, incoming transfer students will be allowed to opt into the program by electing to live in a gender-inclusive room/suite with a vacancy, or by electing to live in a gender-inclusive space assigned at random. Both parties must consent to living in a gender-inclusive space.

This program will be reviewed and evaluated during the last 2 months of the academic year. This allows for a review of how many students took advantage of the program, any difficulties that were encountered, and how random assignment (in the case of the spring transfer students) worked.

2015-2016 Academic Year

Upon favorable review of the program, the program shall be fully expanded for to all first-year students entering in the fall of 2015. Housing materials (both printed and digital) must be distributed to these students during the summer before the housing lottery occurs. Only students of legal age can consent to living in a gender-inclusive space. For minors, the parent or guardian must consent to the living arrangement before a student can be placed in a gender-inclusive space.

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