

Commission for LGBT People
October 7, 2015
19 in attendance

- I. Introductions
- II.
- III. Minutes from August approved
- IV. Gender pronoun discussion with Donna Braquet, Director of the Pride Center, & Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor of Diversity
 - a. From Donna Braquet:
 - i. What was the article? (See attached .pdf for copy from Internet archive.)
 1. It was not a policy mandate of ze and not a ban of he/she.
 2. Instead, it was an educational piece on best practices and a suggestion for a way to inclusive and start conversations about trans* issues.
 3. Comparison to recent event at the University of New Hampshire:
 - a. Bias free guide to microaggressions about race, class, and ability (that “American” may not be the preferred term by South Americans or Central Americas)
 - b. Online for several years
 - c. News headlines: “UNH says American is Offensive, Politically Incorrect”
 - d. UNH decided to pull the guide and it is no longer online.
 - ii. Overview of pronouns:
 1. We use them each day, and they assume person’s gender.
 2. But being misgendered is very hurtful and can be a safety issue.
 3. Trans* people would rather you ask their pronoun and be correctly gendered than be misgendered.
 - iii. Universal design for inclusive practice:
 1. Asking for pronouns should be a part of everyday experience rather than singling out a person or a time to discuss pronouns.
 2. This opens the door and provides space for trans* and non-binary folks to come out.
 3. This is a simple way to be inclusive and sends a message that you are welcoming and will not react hurtfully to the individual’s pronoun.
 - iv. Suggestions for inclusive practice:
 1. Introduce yourself with pronouns and use pronouns with your email signatures.
 2. Start meetings with name and pronouns, use pronouns in the classroom, use pronouns on nametags, and ask for pronouns on forms.
 - v. Did Donna make this up?
 1. No!

2. Other universities do this (top 25 universities, including Harvard), as well as professional associations.
 3. Also, students are coming to UT using they and ze.
 4. Discussion of finding a genderless or gender-neutral pronoun began centuries ago.
- vi. Some common gender neutral pronouns:
 1. They/them/their
 2. Ze/hir/hir
 3. Ey/em/eir
 4. Xe/xem/xyr
 - vii. The removal of the webpage – why?
 1. The directive to remove the page came from the system level, not VC Hall’s office.
 2. Concerns about censorship and sudden revocation of university support.
 - viii. What will happen from here, what should we do?
 1. From VC Hall:
 - a. Chancellor Cheek has spoken about important of diversity and inclusion.
 - b. Local news WATE showed a clip with the Chancellor. In it, he makes a statement about that diversity and inclusion is important.
 - ix. Vol Vision plan may add a sixth priority: Diversity & Inclusion
 1. Why add to Vol Vision? Business and industry is supportive of diversity and inclusion.
 2. UT budgets \$4.7 million to “diversity and inclusion” (overall budget of \$1.6 *billion*) – compare to \$13 million devoted to diversity at Minnesota at ONE office (more system-wide).
 3. Other top 25 universities (Harvard, Michigan, Ohio, Purdue, SUNY) have devoted funding specifically to diversity programming.
 - x. Commissioners ask whether the University will support them if they decide to be inclusive of gender-neutral pronouns.

V. Wrap-Up: Welcome Reception on Sept. 24

- a. Thank you to those of you who came!
- b. What do you want to do, what kind of events do you want to see?
 - i. Follow up with Jennifer at jdobbins@utk.edu with your feedback.

VI. Committee Updates

- a. Equity and Issues (Joel Kramer, Chair)
 - i. Blount County Commission vote on Tuesday, 10/6, at 6:30
 - ii. The County Commission will be considering a measure to ask public officials in the state of Tennessee to “utilize all authority within their power to protect Natural Marriage, from lawless court opinions, AND

THE financial schemes of the enemies of righteousness wherever the source AND defend the Moral Standards of Tennessee.”

- b. Communications Committee (Jordan Smith, Chair)
 - i. Alumni Council looking to issue a statement about pronouns and to promote the Council – possible Homecoming event in the works.
 - c. Membership and Awards (Luke Garton and Jennifer Jabson, Co-Chairs)
 - i. Decision to have two Co-Chairs, given the heavy workload of this Committee in the Spring.
- VII. Pride Week Programs
- a. Graduate Student Research Presentations, Ice Cream Social and Pride Center Rededication, Student Panel with coming out stories, Pride Fest
- VIII. OUTstanding (October 24)
- a. Looking for tabling volunteers and monetary support
- IX. Updates
- a. VolOUT
 - i. Paint the Rock for Pride Week
 - ii. HalloQueen Fall Drag Show, 7-10:30, AMB, Friday, October 30 (co-sponsored by SEAT)
 - b. Safe Zone
 - i. “How to be an active ally” discussion groups on the third Monday of each month in the Mary Greer Room, noon-1 pm
 - ii. Upcoming dates: October 19, November 16, February 15, March 21, April 18
 - c. Mentorship
 - i. New promotional materials are coming.
- X. New Business
- a. Career Center – planning a panel on being out in the workplace and looking for two more panel members at OUTstanding.
 - b. *I Am My Own Wife* – Brian Gligor’s MFA production, deals with transgender issues in Nazi Germany
 - i. Oct. 23, 8 pm; Oct. 24, 8 pm; Oct. 25, 2 pm
 - c. SEAT update: funding request was last week and will likely find out sometime this week, afterwards will be pursuing other options if needed.