

Dear University Community,

With current national discussions around issues of access, rights, and the safety of transgender and gender non-conforming communities, it is an appropriate time to update our campuses about the University's priorities and commitments. The state of Minnesota and our University have a long history of advocating for LGBTQ rights. In 1993, Minnesota became the first state to include gender identity protections. Similarly, the University of Minnesota is home to the first LGBTQ program office to include "T" in its title. We are proud to carry this legacy forward.

We must ensure that everyone feels safe, welcome, and valued on our campuses. This cannot be realized with words alone; our statements must be followed by action. Our draft administrative policy entitled *Equity and Access: Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Names and Pronouns*, and the intensive process to engage and receive feedback during its development, demonstrates this commitment.

The draft policy is a response to students, staff, and faculty asking for guidance on how to create an inclusive environment for transgender and gender non-conforming communities. While the University's anti-discrimination policies prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and expression, we need more clarity about how to navigate this complex and fast-changing area of human rights. The draft policy and the discussions we are having about its implementation with student, faculty, and staff governance groups provides a highly visible, accessible, and centralized resource.

Consultation with students, staff, and faculty across the University system began in 2017 and will continue this fall. We expect the policy to be presented to the University Senate in Spring 2019, and implemented in Fall 2019. This process fosters broad collaboration to develop the best and most comprehensive policy that considers everyone's rights and needs. Strong support for the draft policy has been expressed throughout the consultation process, and we are proud of the University's commitment to achieving inclusive excellence.

We are not alone in our work. Institutions and organizations across the country are formally declaring support for transgender and gender non-conforming communities. We will continue to lead by example through our words and our actions. Now is the time for us to show how we come together, even with our many differences, to lift up and protect the rights of all members of our University community.

Sincerely,



Michael Goh  
Professor and Vice President for Equity and Diversity