

Being an LGBTQ+ Ally: FACULTY & STAFF

Outreach prior to class.

Consider sending a welcome email to your class, and in it ask about students' names and pronouns. This benefits both transgender students and also students who may use a middle name or a nickname that is not easily correlated to their legal name. For example, you could include a sentence asking, "If you use a name different than the roster may list, please let me know!"

Include your pronouns on your syllabi and/or in your email signature.

An easy and subtle way to show that you are an ally is to include your own pronouns underneath or next to your name on your syllabi and/or in your email signature. If you want to provide context for your pronouns and why you have included them in your email signature, WSU's Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center (GIESORC) has a webpage (<https://thecenter.wsu.edu/education/pronouns/>) devoted to explaining them.

Examine your syllabi.

Depending on your area, examine your syllabi to see whose perspectives are missing. For example, if you teach a U.S. history course, do you include major LGBTQ+ events (e.g., Stonewall Riots)? If not, how could you include those events so that all students see themselves in the curriculum?

Listen for and honor the student's language and self-identification.

Remember that a student's perception, including the language they use to self-identify, is impacted by different cultures and their own developmental journey. Never assume that a person who does not fit into your understanding of a man or woman is a transgender person. Always allow students to self-identify. Also, realize that a student's understanding of their identity may change over time.

Continue to educate yourself.

Continual change is the only thing that stays the same in the LGBTQ+ community. To help with this continual change, GIESORC offers educational opportunities throughout the year to help faculty and staff who want to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community.

Apologize.

Mistakes are bound to happen – apologize when they do and move on! Nobody is perfect and students tend to be forgiving if they see you are trying to do the best you can.

Check your assumptions.

When a student comes to you, what assumptions are you making about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation? How could these assumptions affect your interaction?

Use thoughtful, inclusive language.

Use gender-inclusive terminology when talking to students until a student discloses a label, pronoun, etc. for others involved. For example, using "partner" instead of "boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife" or "hello everyone" instead of "hey guys/ladies."

Ask for help!

If you need help or are at a loss on how to help a student, GIESORC is happy to help.

Contact Information:

Matthew Jeffries, Ph.D., GIESORC Director
matthew.jeffries@wsu.edu
509-335-8841
thecenter.wsu.edu

Adapted from "Being an Ally: Staff & Faculty" from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Division of
Student Affairs
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY