

A resolution calling upon Wayne State University to support LGBTQ+ Student and Academic Life in its mission to promote Diversity and Inclusion.

Presented on the 5th of December 2019

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WHEREAS, It is the core mission of Wayne State University to prepare a diverse student body to thrive;¹ **AND**

WHEREAS, Implicit in this mission statement is the recognition that our diverse student body has diverse needs to ensure our student success, and that the University will strive to meet these needs in order to prepare all students to thrive in an equitable manner; **AND**

WHEREAS, It is a core value of this University to promote diversity and inclusion, with the recognition that embracing the identity of a welcoming campus to all makes us a stronger community;² **AND**

WHEREAS, Students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ student population face specific challenges in institutions of higher education, and need dedicated resources to ensure their student success;³ **AND**

WHEREAS, As noted in the 2018 Wayne State University Climate Study Report, students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ student population on the whole have a more negative assessment of WSU's climate and their place on campus;⁴ **AND**

WHEREAS, As memorialized in the annual Rainbow Graduation Awards ceremony, several WSU students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ student population have taken their lives, due in-part to the unwelcoming climate they face in our community;⁵ **AND**

¹ WSU Strategic Plan strategicplan.wayne.edu/.

² Ibid.

³ LGBTQ Students on Campus: Issues and Opportunities for Higher Education Leaders, *Higher Education Today*. <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2017/04/10/lgbtq-students-higher-education/>.

⁴ 2018 Wayne State University Climate Study Report.

⁵ Surprise gift to LaGatella Scholarship supports LGBT community <https://giving.wayne.edu/story/surprise-gift-to-lagatella-scholarship-supports-lgbt-community-32512>; Coming Out Week holds LGBTQ faculty discussion, student award ceremony https://www.thesouthend.wayne.edu/news/article_b806c488-75f1-11e5-b2a9-7fa089e72541.html.

WHEREAS, In recognition of the need for more targeted support, the Student Senate passed a resolution advocating for the establishment of an LGBTQ+ Resource Center during the 2014-2015 term;⁶ **AND**

WHEREAS, Since this resolution was passed, the University has created the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement (OMSE), a premier office that has made great progress in the effort to meet our mission to promote diversity and inclusion; **AND**

WHEREAS, Despite the creation of OMSE, there is still no dedicated staff, budget, or space in any single office to support initiatives and efforts for addressing the specific needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ students at Wayne State University; **AND**

WHEREAS, The vast majority of all Michigan Public Universities, as well as the vast majority of our University-approved peer institutions have established offices and centers with dedicated staff, budgets, and space to address the specific needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ students at their institutions;⁷ **AND**

WHEREAS, Current resources, programming, and initiatives designed to support LGBTQ+ student life are helpful but inadequate and unsustainable in the long-term without such institutional support; **AND**

WHEREAS, Alongside their need for student success resources and student life support, LGBTQ+ students at Wayne State University also lack opportunities to academically engage in the field of Queer Studies, thereby promoting an environment of academic exclusion; **AND**

WHEREAS, The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program at Wayne State University lacks any full-time faculty, any courses dedicated to Queer Studies, and any program at any level for students to specialize in the field of Queer Studies; **AND**

WHEREAS, As evidenced by the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program's most recent evaluation and student data, there has been a sustained growth in interest from students to take courses and adopt programs of study in this field, but due to resource constraints, there is still unmet student demand for such academic support;⁸ **AND**

⁶ *A Resolution Encouraging Wayne State University to Establish Permanent, Centrally-Located LGBTQA Resource Centers.*

⁷ Peer Institutions Research Spreadsheet,

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1a8HPz19qPrEHDbpt03wujja5ZHNmVTONm_lXIQg2AefY/edit?usp=sharing.

⁸ Eichner and Sinnott, "Evaluation Report for the Department of Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies," 2016.

WHEREAS, The majority of all Michigan Public Universities, as well as the majority of our University-approved peer institutions have full-time faculty dedicated to the field of Queer Studies, dedicated courses in the field of Queer Studies, and programs at different levels of study in the field of Queer Studies at their institutions;⁹ **AND**

WHEREAS, Despite the severe budget constraints that this University faces, the University has also shown an ability to add new faculty lines where they align with University priorities;¹⁰ **AND**

WHEREAS, With increasing interest from donors in supporting initiatives to make this campus more welcoming of LGBTQ+ students, it may be possible for this University to solicit support from donors to meet these needs;¹¹ **AND**

WHEREAS, Wayne State University should be a leader, not an outlier, in the effort to promote diversity and inclusion through student life and in academic study; **AND**

WHEREAS, The lack of resources made available for LGBTQ+ students to satisfy their student life and academic needs causes us to fall short of our mission to promote diversity and inclusion and our commitment to promote student success; **AND**

WHEREAS, Wayne State University student organizations, faculty/staff affinity groups, academic units, and University personnel including the Joining Intersectionality, Gender, Sexuality, and Allies at Wayne (JIGSAW) student organization; the Queer Trans* People of Color (QTPOC) student organization; the Graduate Queer Alliance (GQAWSU) student organization; the Gender Queer and Transgender Alliance (GQ) student organization; QWSU: The Queer Faculty/Staff Organization of Wayne State; QWSU-A: The Queer Advisor Organization of Wayne State, a standing committee of QWSU; the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSW) Program Advisory Board; John Corvino, Dean of the Irvin D. Reid Honors College; Jon Cawthorne, Dean of the Wayne State University Library System and the School of Information Sciences; and the Academic Advising Council all endorse this resolution; **AND**

WHEREAS, it is the core mission of the Wayne State University Student Senate to support initiatives that promote student success and push our University to foster a climate and culture

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ American Economic Association Job Listing for Wayne State University Big Data hiring initiative, https://www.aeaweb.org/joe/listing.php?JOE_ID=111461998; "Strengthening the AI, Big Data and Analytics Ecosystem @ WSU" email from the Office of the Provost sent to all students on Oct. 23rd, 2019.

¹¹ Surprise gift to LaGatella Scholarship supports LGBT community, <https://giving.wayne.edu/story/surprise-gift-to-lagatella-scholarship-supports-lgbt-community-32512>.

that is welcoming to all students, and which provides for the diverse needs of our diverse student population.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate calls upon the University Administration to appropriate funds for the establishment of an office for LGBTQ+ student life, to be organized in any efficient fashion within the current structure of our administrative offices, with at least one full-time staff director, a dedicated budget for student life programming, a dedicated space for the office in the campus core, a dedicated web presence, and a budget for student workers to help coordinate the efforts of the office, in-line with the practices of the majority of the Michigan Public Universities and our University-approved peer institutions; **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate calls upon the University Administration to appropriate funds for the hiring of at least one full-time faculty member dedicated to the field of Queer Studies to join the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program in order to develop and teach courses dedicated to the field of Queer Studies which can count toward both the University General Education Program requirements and at least one credential-offering program of study in the Queer Studies, in-line with the practices of the majority of the Michigan Public Universities and our University-approved peer institutions; **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate calls upon the University Administration to include student representation and participation in the efforts to meet these deliverables; **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate calls upon the University Administration to take all other actions deemed necessary to meet our mission of preparing a diverse student body to thrive, while paying particular attention to the unmet needs of our LGBTQ+ student population; **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate will continue to use its voice and budget to drive initiatives that support our mission of preparing a diverse student body to thrive, while paying particular attention to the unmet needs of our LGBTQ+ student population.

AND FINALLY BE IT ORDERED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate will circulate this resolution to all relevant outlets, including the University President, the University Provost, the members of the Board of Governors, the President of the Wayne State University Academic Senate, and *The South End* student newspaper.

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Stuart Baum
President

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Mazen Zamzam
Vice President