



The State University of New York
Student Assembly

Jake Webster

Vice Chair, Military Affairs
State University Plaza, Albany

(315).941.4929

webstejt@sunyit.edu

www.sunysa.org

To: Members of the Executive Committee

From: Jakob T. Webster, Vice Chair of Military Affairs

Date: October 15th 2016

Subject: Gender-Neutral Pronoun Usage in Military Settings

Action Requested:

I recommend that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNY SA) adopt the following resolution to promote the usage and familiarity of gender-neutral pronouns for members of the LGBTQIAA+ community that serve within the United States Armed Forces.

Resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York's (hereafter SUNY) institutions enroll approximately 465,000 students across all sixty-four campuses with over seven thousand degree programs, and aiding nearly 167,000 students within SUNY Transfer Paths; and

Whereas the SUNY administration, faculty, and staff are dedicated to providing a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of student veterans, to promote and further LGBTQIAA+ students as well as other diverse bodies of students; and

Whereas SUNY administrators work to fulfill the educational needs of students across all SUNY campuses, through the continuous improvement of the academic process, as is their primary objective; and

Whereas all SUNY campuses guarantee the sanctity and comfort of all student bodies, regardless of age, sex, orientation, background, disability, or financial need with the assistance of Diversity Officers, Diversity Committees, and various other inputs; and

Whereas students that represent the LGBTQIAA+ community are provided with comfort and inclusion to present themselves as part of their respective student body, in an effort to prevent further judgement and discrimination; and

Whereas students that represent the Veteran Community as well as other respective military roles are provided with comfort and inclusion to present themselves as part of their respective student body, in an effort to prevent further judgement and discrimination; and

Whereas various LGBTQIAA+ students present themselves as non-binary, and request that fellow students, faculty, staff, and other representatives of SUNY refer to them with specific pronouns to the liking of said LGBTQIAA+ students; and

Whereas SUNY administration involve the voices of students who represent themselves as members of the LGBTQIAA+ community, the Veteran Community, and those of both diverse bodies, providing recognition with programs and events dedicated to said bodies; and

Whereas SUNY students that represent the LGBTQIAA+ community within the Veteran community experience discomfort and negligence at the usage of inappropriate pronouns through orders from superiors, titles in reference to their official positions, and common conversation with peers; and

Whereas the discomfort of misuse of pronouns is appropriate to SUNY student veterans of all positions, of all campuses within the SUNY system, and of all branches of military service; and

Whereas the usage of inappropriate pronouns within the Veteran community for LGBTQIAA+ students may have a direct negative impact on the academic performances of said students, resulting in the negligence of a diverse body of students; and

Whereas LGBTQIAA+ student veterans have been subject to previous discrimination recently through the resistance to Form DD-214 changes. DD-214 changes have been refused for those who wish to change their name to that of their preference. The form is primarily used by student veterans to apply for college, take the bar exam, and to apply for jobs. The refusal of change has resulted in potential “jobs, military benefits and opened them up to discrimination every time they present the form and their name doesn’t match their gender presentation.” (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/02/transgender-veterans-ashton-carter_n_6780368.html); and

Whereas the objectives of this resolution shall affect all student Veterans, regardless of whether they consider themselves members of the LGBTQIAA+ community or not; and

Whereas informing Veterans of high military status, informing and establishing programs dedicated to Veterans, and the possibility of including further training to Veterans on

LGBTQIAA+ pronoun usage , are potential outcomes of this resolution that if created will be considered aid to all Veterans; and

Whereas the SUNY system has the potential that if this resolution is passed, that other higher education systems across the United States be active in the support of LGBTQIAA+ student veterans through the actions that come about from this resolution; now, therefore be it

Resolved that SUNY SA recognizes the importance of promoting the diversity of SUNY system students, through the efforts of the SUNY SA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the SUNY SA Military Affairs Committee, with a direct focus on groups such as the LGBTQIAA+ community, the student veteran community, and those who are members of both; and be it further

Resolved that SUNY SA recommends and supports the involvement of SUNY System Administration in encouraging the involvement of campuses to implement the inclusion of the additional information above in accordance with SUNY Policy and individual host campus policy; and be it further

Resolved that SUNY System Administration provide input to the ideas presented above by Student Assembly to promote proper pronoun usage within the SUNY community, and do so with its support of this resolution; and be it finally

Resolved that copies of this resolution be distributed to the SUNY Board of Trustees, Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher, Provost Cartwright, the Executive Committees of the University Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges, Presidents and Chief Academic Officers of State-Operated and Community Colleges, the Deans of the Statutory Colleges at Cornell and Alfred, and SUNY Student Government Presidents.