

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

**GPSA Resolution 9: In Support of E.A. R8: Institutional
Commitment to All LGBTQ+¹ Members of the Cornell Community**

Sponsored by: out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (oSTEM); Elena Michel, Biological Sciences Voting Member and Co-President of oSTEM; Manisha Munasinghe, Executive Vice President and member of oSTEM; Joseph Anderson, Chair of University Assembly Campus Welfare Committee; Eugene Law, Chair of GPSA Diversity and International Students Committee, Breanne Kisselstein and Nicholas Carre, Co-Chairs of GPSA Student Advocacy Committee on behalf of SAC

Whereas, the Cornell Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center (LGBTRC) was founded in 1994 and was originally run by two full-time staff members² to be “the central hub of LGBTQ life at Cornell” and to specifically support students, faculty, and staff across the LGBTQ+ spectrum³; and

Whereas, the LGBTRC provides a myriad of services to the LGBTQ+ community including but not limited to the LGBTQ Mentorship Program, the First Year Queer Peer, and Lavender Graduation⁴; and

Whereas, the LGBTRC also provides support and guidance for numerous LGBTQ+ student organizations on campus such as Haven: The LGBTQ Student Union, MOSAIC, and Out in STEM (oSTEM); and

Whereas, the LGBTRC supports the functions and inclusion of the LGBT Colleague Network Group for all faculty and staff, which raises awareness about workplace issues faced by LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, provides professional networking opportunities for LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, and supports recruitment and retentions efforts for LGBTQ+ faculty and staff; and

Whereas, the LGBTRC supports the inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues in the academic setting by providing resources for the incorporation of LGBTQ+ issues into the classroom, made available to all faculty members; and

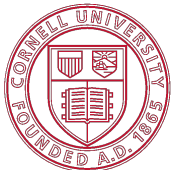
Whereas, the LGBTRC supports a set of general services to all LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, including but not limited to: advocacy, advising, consultation and referrals, and

¹ For the ease of reading, the resolution will use the acronym LGBTQ+ to refer to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and others, unless referring to a specific entity or being

² <http://cornellsun.com/2013/03/10/university-reflects-on-shift-in-lgbt-presence-on-campus/>

³ <http://dos.cornell.edu/lgbt-resource-center>

⁴ <https://dos.cornell.edu/lgbt-resource-center/signature-programs-annual-events>



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community development; and

Whereas, the LGBTRC is instrumental in advising and advocating for Cornell’s LGBTQ+ community, which includes students, faculty, and staff; and

Whereas, in 2017 the Dean of Students Vijay Pendakur issued a directive for the LGBT Resource Center (LGBTRC) to no longer serve staff and faculty due to being understaffed; and

Whereas, on November 30th, 2017, the Employee Assembly conveyed Resolution 8: Furthering the Institutional Commitment to LGBTQ+ Inclusion (EA: R8) to Cornell University President Martha Pollack⁵; and

Whereas, EA: R8 states “Be it therefore resolved, The Assembly urges the Division of Student & Campus Life and the Office of the Dean of Students to rescind the directive for the LGBTRC to no longer serve the ongoing support and educational needs of staff and faculty”; and

Whereas, EA: R8 continues with “Be it further resolved, The Divisions of Human Resources and Student & Campus Life shall identify the resources to fully fund and staff (3) additional full-time, long-term professional staff positions in the LGBTRC”; and

Whereas, on January 2nd, 2018, President Pollack acknowledged EA:R8⁶; and

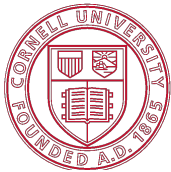
Whereas, President Pollack rejected the EA’s recommendation that the directive for the LGBTRC to no longer serve the needs of staff and faculty be rescinded stating “to provide the appropriate levels of service, separating educational and support services for students from faculty and staff allows Cornell to meet the unique needs of our LGBTQ students, as they pursue their degrees”; and

Whereas, President Pollack also rejected the EA’s recommendation that The Divisions of Human Resources and Student & Campus Life should identify the resources to fully fund and staff (3) additional full-time, long-term professional staff position in the LGBTRC writing “At this time, there will not be any additional long-term professional positions added to the center’s staffing”; and

Whereas, we strongly support all LGBTQ+ members of the Cornell Community, including staff and faculty; and

⁵ <https://assembly.cornell.edu/resolutions/ea-r8-furthering-institutional-commitment-lgbtq-inclusion>

⁶ <https://assembly.cornell.edu/resolution-actions/ea-r8-furthering-institutional-commitment-lgbtq-inclusion-3>



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Whereas, we dismiss the notion that, in order to “provide the appropriate levels of service...[for] our LGBTQ students”, the LGBTRC must no longer support faculty and staff;

Whereas, President Pollack states: “Further, the LGBTRC will continue to serve as resource to the Division of Human Resources as it provides education and support for our LGBT staff and faculty colleagues;” and

Whereas, this statement acknowledges the fact that the Division of Human Resources is not fully equipped to provide support for LGBTQ+ staff and faculty; and

Whereas, this statement contradicts the purpose behind the directive issued to the LGBTRC to stop providing support and education for LGBTQ+ staff and faculty as it indicates they will still be doing so, just with the added burden of passing this support through the Division of Human Resources before it gets to the staff and faculty; and

Whereas, we believe that finding additional resources to increase the number of full-time staff members working at the LGBTRC to support all LGBTQ+ community members, including faculty and staff, would be more effective in supporting the “unique needs of LGBTQ+ students”; and

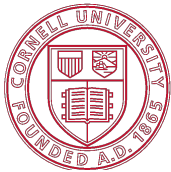
Whereas, all LGBTQ+ Cornell Community members, including faculty and staff, should be served by the LGBTRC as it is the hub of LGBTQ+ life at Cornell; and

Whereas, the LGBTRC was founded to serve LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff, and we reject any attempt to alter its initial founding purpose that would fracture the LGBTQ+ community at Cornell; and

Whereas, sponsors of this resolution met with Vice President for Student and Campus Life Ryan Lombardi, Dean of Students Vijay Pendakur, Director of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity in Human Resources Angela Winfield, Diversity and Inclusion Programs Lead in Human Resources Cornell Woodson, and Interim Director of the LGBTRC Aiden Cropsey on March 16th to clarify changes to the LGBTRC charge; and

Whereas, they clarified that while faculty and staff are still encouraged to utilize the LGBTRC for programming, the Division of Human Resources will be responsible for staff diversity and inclusion training and handling bias incidents; and

Whereas, consultation and engagement with LGBTQ+ community members across constituencies would have allowed early feedback and assistance in disseminating this information effectively;



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116 **Be it therefore resolved,** that the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly requests that a
117 campus-wide communication to be sent out clarifying changes to support services for the
118 LGBTQ+ community so that all faculty and staff can receive clarification; and
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120 **Be it further resolved,** that the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly requests that a
121 University Council on LGBTQ+ Affairs be convened with LGBTQ+ representatives from the
122 undergraduate student, graduate student, professional student, faculty, and staff communities to
123 review Cornell's support infrastructure for the LGBTQ+ community and to advise the
124 administration regarding future changes; and
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126 **Be it finally resolved,** that The Division of Human Resources and The Division of Student &
127 Campus Life, in consultation with students, faculty, and staff, should pursue the strategic
128 planning of the expansion of the LGBTRC.