

**Resolution from the Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Committee  
Co-Sponsor: Department of Anthropology Diversity and Inclusion Council.**

The University of Tennessee-Knoxville has made significant strides in serving the LGBTQ+ community over the last several years, increasing the University's Campus Pride Index from a 2/5 to a 4/5 over the last year<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, a recent Princeton Review ranked UTK as the unfriendliest campus for the LGBTQ+ community<sup>2</sup>. We acknowledge that the information from this review predates some of the efforts undertaken by the current administration to improve the climate and student experience for this demographic on our campus. However, we must also consider that the Campus Pride Index has identified areas of opportunities for the University to improve the campus climate that have yet to be addressed. These areas of opportunity include access to safe and affordable housing for this constituency, as well as spaces to foster community among all LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty. Another area of opportunity identified by the Campus Pride Index is access to counseling and health resources. The following resolution outlines some of the issues still faced by the LGBTQ+ on the UTK campus and strategies we urge the administration to adopt in order to circumvent negative student experiences and improve the campus experience of all Volunteers.

**Resolution to Support Housing and Counseling Services for the LGBTQ+ Community  
on the UTK Campus**

WHEREAS, the latest Campus Pride Index suggests that the University of Tennessee needs to improve access to safe, affordable housing and counseling service to members of the LGBTQ+ community<sup>3</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, a 2018 resolution from the UT Student Government Association urged University administrators at the time to address the issue of gender inclusive housing, outlining the difficulties this community faces with the housing options offered at the time (reflecting the current situation as well)<sup>4</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, a 2020 reddit review by an incoming, transgender male outlined the limited and/or unfavorable housing options UTK offered to members of his demographic group<sup>5</sup>; and,

WHEREAS, as of January 2022, at least 425 colleges and universities throughout the United States offer gender-inclusive housing options<sup>6</sup>; and,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.campusprideindex.org/campuses/details/197?campus=university-of-tennessee>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wbir.com/article/news/education/ut-most-lgbtqia-unfriendly-university/51-9e1231c8-bb40-40ae-b9b4-0e22c1d609d5>

<sup>3</sup> Example of counseling services for LGBTQ+ students at Ohio State University, <https://lgbtq.osu.edu/health-and-wellness/mental-health>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sga.utk.edu/sen-23-2018-a-bill-to-establish-a-lgbtqia-living-and-learning-community/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.reddit.com/r/UTK/comments/hbpsmm/my\\_experience\\_with\\_ut\\_housing\\_as\\_a\\_trans\\_person/](https://www.reddit.com/r/UTK/comments/hbpsmm/my_experience_with_ut_housing_as_a_trans_person/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/gender-inclusive-housing/>

WHEREAS, the current demand for affordable student housing has initiated an investigation by UT Administration into acquiring more living spaces to accommodate an increasing student population; and,

WHEREAS, access to specialized resources and services offered LGBTQ+ students should be extended to faculty and staff for the purposes of recruitment, retention, and emotionally healthy teachers, mentors, and colleagues that serve a diverse student populace;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the UTK Faculty Student Senate strongly urges the Chancellor and Provost to include the development of affordable and safe housing options for the LGBTQ+ community in their efforts to acquire additional living spaces for students on campus; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTK Faculty Senate urges UT Housing to work with the Commission of LGBTQ+ and students from the UT LGBTQIA+ community to develop a Living and Learning Community that is gender inclusive and offers safe spaces and resources for all LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTK Faculty Senate urges the campus administration to consider counseling services on the UTK campus in a centralized location that may be accessed by faculty, staff, and students; and, where the counseling staff is trained and has experience working with diverse populations, particularly those of the LGBTQ+ community.

November 20, 2018 (what the SGA asked for... four years ago)

<https://sga.utk.edu/sen-23-2018-a-bill-to-establish-a-lgbtqia-living-and-learning-community/>

June 18, 2020 (UT transgender student's experience with housing)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/UTK/comments/hbpsmm/my\\_experience\\_with\\_ut\\_housing\\_as\\_a\\_trans\\_person/](https://www.reddit.com/r/UTK/comments/hbpsmm/my_experience_with_ut_housing_as_a_trans_person/)

April 5, 2022 (what the other UT...UT Austin, is doing)

<https://www.texastribune.org/2022/04/05/ut-austin-gender-inclusive-housing/>

What prompted UT Austin to do what they did...

<https://sites.utexas.edu/queerandtransvoices/2022/02/deep-dive-going-to-the-mattresses-for-gender-inclusive-housing/>