Georgia College and State University

Student Government Association

2015-2016 Session

S.R. 1516.05

Senator Gwaltney

Senator McNeal

Senator Ben-Hashal

A RESOLUTION

To recommend to include the language “Gender Identity and Gender Expression” in Georgia College and State University’s Academic Non-Discrimination Policy.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

SECTION I

The following definitions are provided as items of reference within the confines of this legislation:

“Discrimination” shall be defined as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things; and,

“Non-discrimination policies” shall be defined as prohibitive mechanisms banning discrimination in the workplace, schools, organizations, etc.; and,

“Gender identity” shall be defined as sociological and psychological sense of self in relation to gender, and is determined at the prerogative of the individual, which may or may not align internally with the outwardly expressed biological sex of the person--ie. gender identity is the internal conceptualization of gender; and,

“Gender expression” shall be defined as the communication of a person’s gender, which is the primary source and target of gender discrimination--ie. gender expression is the external manifestation of gender identity; and,

“Gender non-conforming” refers to persons who do not adhere to societal structures regarding dress, personal characteristics, general behavior, etc. based on the assumed assignments of biological sex in conjunction with the gender of that person.

SECTION II

The following facts are submitted as justification for the amendment:

1. WHEREAS, the language in Georgia College’s academic non-discrimination policy does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.
2. WHEREAS,the current non-discrimination policy prohibits discrimination on the grounds of: race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, natural origin, age, disability, or veteran status; in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Higher Education Act of 1972, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but does not expressly prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and expression.
3. WHEREAS, gender non-conforming students often face prejudice and hostile situations in their day-to-day lives, many times based upon their gender expression, rather than their identities.
4. WHEREAS, collegiate non-discrimination policies are meant to protect every student by ensuring equal treatment in the eyes of the institution.
5. WHEREAS, the exclusion of gender identity and expression in Georgia College’s non-discrimination policy does not secure a safe and welcoming environment to prospective and current GNC students, and has the propensity to damage the entire campus’ educational experience.
6. WHEREAS, one of Georgia College’s core principles states that the institution “aims to produce graduates who [have] respect for human diversity and individuality; a sense of civic and global responsibility; sound ethical principles; effective writing, speaking, and quantitative skills; and a healthy lifestyle.”
7. WHEREAS, Georgia College strives to be a welcoming campus community and to ensure the general safety and well-being of students. Including the phrase “gender identity and gender expression” in the Non-Discrimination policy would affirm Georgia College’s acceptance, support, and equal treatment of gender non-conforming students.
8. WHEREAS, including this language in the non-discrimination policy would create a campus environment more conducive to learning both inside and outside of the classroom for GNC students.
9. WHEREAS, according to Campus Pride’s canvassing of U.S. colleges and universities, nearly 1000 colleges and universities in the United States currently have non-discrimination policies which protect the rights of gender non-conforming students, including eight peer institutions in Georgia.
10. WHEREAS, SGA has supported LGBTQ-related legislation in previous sessions, including the support of hiring of a full-time LGBT coordinator and the establishment of mandatory Safe Space Training for all of its members.
11. WHEREAS, updating the non-discrimination policy would align Georgia College’s academic priorities with President Dorman’s Diversity Action Plan.
12. WHEREAS, including the phrase “gender identity and gender expression” will further progress and promote Georgia College’s designation as a public liberal arts university,

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Student Government Association recommends updating Georgia College’s non-discrimination policy to include the language “gender identity and expression.”