

ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: Facilities Council, Facilities Management and Planning

FROM: Diversity Council

DATE: June 9, 2017

RE: Guidance and advice regarding gender neutral restrooms on campus

As a governing body of Lane Community College, and as the body charged with advising the college community on matters of diversity, access, equity and inclusion, the Diversity Council hereby presents the following advisory statement regarding the access and use of so-called gender neutral restrooms on the Lane Community College campus.

In recognition of the students, employees, and community members who do not feel comfortable or safe using gendered restrooms, the college has designated a number of gender neutral restrooms on the main college campus and at campus centers. The gender neutral restrooms are designed to create greater access and comfort to any person who may elect to use them, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. To best serve the campus community, Diversity Council recommends that all restrooms designated as gender neutral be clearly marked on any campus maps that designate restroom locations, and that all gender neutral restrooms be made available to any person on campus who may choose to use them for any reason, including students, employees, and community members. Maps with the locations of gender neutral restrooms should be posted near gendered restrooms to ensure that information is readily available to visitors as well as campus employees and students. Complete and easy-to-locate maps also ensure that employees can quickly provide guidance or assistance to individuals seeking a gender neutral restroom.

In addition to the above guidance, Diversity Council urges Facilities Management and Planning to consider a change from “gender neutral” to “open access” or “all-inclusive” for signage and reference purposes. While “gender neutral” is a commonly used term for non-gender specific restrooms, we believe that “open access” and “all-inclusive” are more inclusive and welcoming terms, since they imply acceptance, rather than suppression or avoidance of gender identity or expression. Additionally, the rooms can provide a wide variety of accommodations to members of our community who may need them. For example, the rooms can be utilized by those who may change clothing throughout the day for religious reasons, those who are uncomfortable or fearful sharing communal restroom spaces, individuals with opposite-gender caregivers, parents with small children, or any person who needs a restroom with additional space or privacy. We believe that a more inclusive approach aligns with the concept of universal design and access, which has been identified as a priority in Facilities Management and Planning efforts.

Finally, Diversity Council acknowledges that shifting social norms and terminology can pose a challenge to facilities management and operations, especially where signage and policy or procedure language is concerned. We would like to extend an invitation to consult or request assistance in this area at whatever level it would be most useful to the college community. Please feel free to contact the council for guidance or advice at any point in this or other planning processes.

Signed on behalf of Diversity Council:

/s/ 06/09/17

Sarah Lushia, Chair

/s/ 06/09/17

Greg Evans, Vice Chair