



Associated Students of Whitworth University

As the Associated Students of Whitworth University, we commit to being a supportive resource and an honest representation of our diverse student body to the Whitworth community. Each day, we strive to create an inclusive environment, provide a variety of opportunities, and practice servant leadership.

RESOLUTION 2014-2015.01

March 18, 2015

PASSED 13-1-1

WHEREAS the subject of sexual orientation has been a topic of conversation on campus for decades, and has elicited both contentious and welcoming conversations;

WHEREAS on page twenty of the Employee Handbook for Faculty & Staff, “sexual orientation” is not listed as a protected class under the section entitled *Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*¹

WHEREAS the survey conducted in 2013-2014 by Halualani & Associates revealed that three percent of surveyed faculty and staff identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual;

WHEREAS the Associated Students of Whitworth University conducted a survey through SurveyMonkey which resulted in 70.1 percent of the 468 students surveyed reporting that they would be willing to sign a petition in support of adding “sexual orientation” to the list of protected identities for faculty and staff;

WHEREAS the Associated Students of Whitworth University hosted an event during which Dr. Carol Simon informed students of the language in the aforementioned policy, Dr. Forrest Baird outlined five types of arguments for and against the policy addressing homosexuality, followed by related discussions held in three PrimeTime locations;

WHEREAS the Associated Students of Whitworth University hosted another event during which the campus was invited to listen to a letter by an anonymous gay faculty

¹ “Discrimination, or harassment on any of the bases covered by state or federal anti-discrimination statutes, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age or any other applicable statutorily protected status are unlawful and a violation of Whitworth University policy”

member being read, an ex-staff member who is gay share about his experience, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual students explain why a policy change would be meaningful to them;

WHEREAS in an attempt to represent various perspectives, inform students, and encourage conversation, the Associated Students of Whitworth University and the Office of the President hosted David Gushee and Julie Rodgers in an effort to acknowledge both theologically progressive and traditional views;

WHEREAS after the aforementioned events, the Associated Students of Whitworth University conducted a voluntary survey which resulted in 72.5 percent of the 559 students surveyed reporting that they are in support of adding “sexual orientation” to the list of protected identities;

WHEREAS a methodologically sound² random sample was taken of every dorm community to inform the voting members of the Associated Students of Whitworth University of their respective constituencies’ stance,³ resulting in a 95 percent confidence interval that the true proportion of the on-campus community who agree with the statement, “sexual orientation should be added to the list of protected identities” is between 66.79 percent and 79.32 percent;

WHEREAS a change in the policy has the potential to affect the current and future university donor base as well as alumni seeking employment or financially investing in the university;

WHEREAS the addition of “sexual orientation” will benefit prospective faculty, staff, and students by creating a more inclusive environment in order not to occlude top talent;

WHEREAS the population of lesbian, gay, and bisexual faculty and staff on campus are unable to safely identify themselves as such for fear of discrimination, harassment, and employment termination;

WHEREAS it has been shown⁴ that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students benefit from having an on-campus mentor relationship with faculty and staff who have had similar life experiences, which this policy change would promote;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the administration add “sexual orientation” to the list of protected classes on page twenty of the Employee Handbook for Faculty & Staff under the section entitled *Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*.

² Determined by Dr. Martha Gady, an objective observer who was unaware of the question being asked and was consulted before and after the survey

³ Voting members are not mandated to vote parallel to their constituencies

⁴ http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2486&context=open_access_etds