

Petition for additional gender neutral bathroom near building 35

Dear members of the administration at South Puget Sound Community College,

We, the undersigned, are writing on behalf of our LGBTQ students - particularly our transgender students - to petition for a gender neutral bathroom in the vicinity of building 35.

Currently, there two are single-occupancy gender neutral bathrooms in buildings 22 and 21. Transgender students pursuing an AAS degree, having the majority of their classes in building 35, may be unable to reach the gender neutral bathrooms in the time allotted between classes. Furthermore, transgender students may be entirely unaware of the existence of these bathrooms: they are not mentioned in the 2009 – 2010 Student Handbook; the locations of these bathrooms are not indicated on any college map; the locations of these bathrooms are not available on the college website.

As transgender students, student allies, staff, and faculty members of South Puget Sound Community College, we ask you to realize that this is an issue of significance.

It is significant to us that the **college's non-discrimination policy makes no mention of gender identity**. The ethic expressed in the following statement

"All employees and students must be allowed to work and learn in an environment free from discrimination." (Non-discrimination policy, <http://www.spscc.ctc.edu/getting-to-know-us/policies>)

will not be fully realized until transgender students are provided with an environment that is safe and responsive to their needs. At a most basic level, safe and accessible restroom facilities should be available to all students, not merely to those who fall (visibly) into the categories of "male" and "female". (Ideally, the *classroom environment* as well – beginning with role call – would make no assumptions about our names, identities, pronoun preferences, or orientations.)

It is significant to us that **official and unofficial college documents**, whether for financial aid applications, college enrollment, or informal class surveys, provide simple checkboxes for sex (not gender identity). The ability to self-identify is crucial for students whose legal designation may still correspond to their sex assigned at birth, rather than their lived identity. It seems that the college is willing to assume that we do not exist on this campus: transgender students do not have an official channel whereby to inform the faculty and administration of their presence. It may seem difficult to justify additional gender neutral bathrooms when transgender students seemingly represent such a small fraction of the student body, but please realize this: you cannot see or count us without being *willing* to see us, and giving us a way to be seen.

It is also good to consider that gender neutral bathrooms meet the needs of other student populations, including people with disabilities accompanied by their caregivers, and parents with children.

Transgender students make significant contributions to the campus community. Nonetheless, we are made acutely aware of our "novelty" in classrooms where professors struggle with our gender pronouns, where forms must be filled out with no opportunity to explain our realities, and where we must choose between two spaces – "male" and "female" spaces– and face the repercussions of not being safe or comfortable in either.

We welcome your response, and hope we can assist you in your deliberations on this matter.

