

Cornell LGBTQ+

Faculty & Staff Resource Guide



OFFICE OF
Faculty Development
and Diversity



The Cornell University LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Resource Guide is designed to support Cornell employees in creating an inclusive campus for all students, faculty, and staff.

It offers resources to share with students and to help our LGBTQ+ faculty and staff navigate benefits and human resource policies, as well as information on a variety of campus, local, and national supports and organizations.

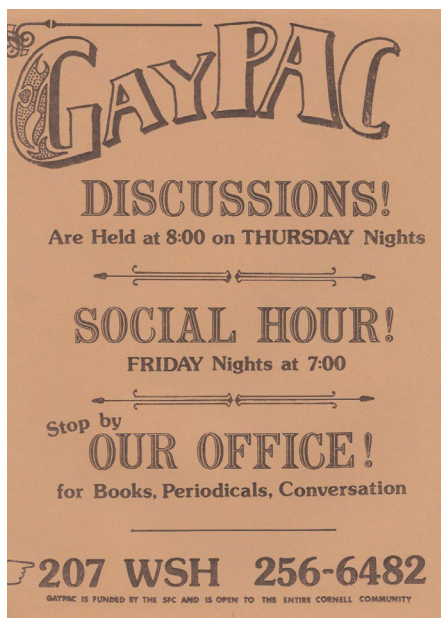
The content in this guide is current as of September, 2025 and is not meant to serve as an all-encompassing list of resources or as recommendations.

We hope this guide plays a role in making the Cornell community a space where our LGBTQ+ members can contribute and thrive.

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1979-1980. Courtesy of Cornell University Library's Human Sexuality Collection.



National March on Washington for LGB Rights. Courtesy of Bear Left on Flickr.



626 Thurston, home of the LGBT Resource Center

A Timeline of LGBTQ+ History at Cornell Since 1968

LGBTQ+ people have always been a part of the Cornell Community, but began to formally organize after 1968.

1968: Cornell forms the Student Homophile League (SHL) - the country's second gay rights organization on a college campus.

1970: Cornell students marched in New York City's Christopher Street Liberation Day March (later renamed Gay Pride).

1972: The Cornell Gay People's Center at Sheldon Court on College Ave. opens with support from the university administration, Cornell's Gay Liberation Front and the Graduate Coordinating Council.

1979: Alumni attending Cornell Reunion establish the Cornell LGBT Alumni group.

1988: Cornell University Library establishes the Human Sexuality Collection documenting historical shifts in U.S. lesbian and gay history, and the politics of pornography.

1992: The Student Assembly endorses two proposals for a living and learning unit for LGBT students, but President Frank H.T. Rhodes opposes. He agrees to study the issue.

1994: The LGBT Resource Office is created to serve students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

1995: A minor in Lesbian, Bisexual & Gay (LGB) Studies is launched in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, expanding the sexuality component of the Women's Studies program.

1998: The LGBT Resource Office name is changed to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center. Its current location is 626 Thurston Ave.

2002: The Women's Studies program is renamed Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies (FGSS).

2009: LGB Studies is retitled LGBT Studies

2019: With support from President Martha Pollack, the Loving House opens in Mews Hall to an inaugural cohort of 30 students. The LGBTQ+ Living Learning Unit houses LGBTQ+ undergraduates.



LGBTQ+ Foundational Information

Understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities supports campus members who strive to build inclusive spaces for their students and colleagues. This section provides information about LGBTQ+ communities, including identity categories, guidance on language use, and a review of resources. The glossary at the end of this guide provides more information and terms. Language, however, is dynamic and constantly evolves to fit a community's needs. This document will be updated as needed and we hope you will revisit it to stay up to date on best practices.

LGBTQ+ Identities

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and a myriad of more communities are not monolithic communities or identities. Each person's experience is unique, and while individuals may not always feel they are part of LGBTQ+ communities, many of the communities named possess a combination of specific histories, cultures, and needs as a group. These broad categories are not exhaustive; they serve as a starting point for understanding sexual, gender, and romantic identities.

Gender Identity and Expression

Gender is a social construct based on norms. Gender identity is one's internal sense of their own gender, while gender expression is how one presents their gender externally. Gender is often categorized as binary, i.e. two distinct and opposite categories of men and women, but it's not so simple. There are people who identify as nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and more.

Sex Assigned at Birth

This is a term observed by medical staff at birth related to biological characteristics, such as gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics, and hormonal balances, most often labeled as male and female. Sometimes the term "intersex" is used to label those whose internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differ from the medical categories of male and female.

Sexual and Romantic Orientation

Sexual and romantic orientation describe what gender(s) a person is attracted to sexually, romantically, or both.

Common Experiences of LGBTQ+ College Students

College can be a time of exploration and discovery for LGBTQ+ students, and may include:

- Sexual and romantic Identity exploration
- Gender identity exploration
- Sexual experimentation
- Transitioning and/or coming out (see terms in glossary at the end.)
- Finding and building community
- Challenges related to family resistance/acceptance
- Increased risk of interpersonal violence

Asking for information

Campus members may worry about what is appropriate to ask LGBTQ+ individuals. It depends largely on your relationship with the person and/or context of the interaction. As a rule, ask for the information necessary for your interactions, not for satisfying your curiosity. Don't assume anything based on partial information. For example, one's pronouns may be important for you to know when speaking with or about colleagues or students. However, asking for or assuming the sexual orientation or status of one's gender affirmation process will not typically be relevant to your interactions.



Tools to Support LGBTQ+ Students

The Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) is a useful campus resources for faculty as they develop inclusive practices in their classroom.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Statements in a Syllabus

Incorporating a statement of inclusiveness for diverse identities into your syllabus acknowledges your support for these identities and sets an example for students enrolled in the course.

Example:

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

It might also be helpful to include your pronouns in your contact information and provide LGBTQ+ specific resources for students, such as those found in this guide.

Sharing Pronouns and Chosen Name

The university provides students the opportunity to change their primary name to a chosen name (more information below). It is good practice to provide students the opportunity to share their pronouns and chosen name, realizing that some students may not be comfortable doing this. CTI recommends making it optional and modeling by sharing your own.

Example of Classroom introduction:

“Please share your name, pronouns- if you wish to share, and a fun fact about yourself. If your name does not match my attendance sheet, please let me know after class or by email.”

Follow this by modeling your own introduction.

Important notes about introductions:

- If a student’s name does not match your attendance sheet, do not ask their primary name in front of the classroom. Allow the student to provide this information after class or via email.
- Make sure you honor a student’s pronouns and chosen name and hold others accountable to do the same.
- In large classes, or where a group introduction might not be possible, consider sending a Google or Qualtrics survey to students to allow them to share this information privately.

Use Gender Inclusive Greetings

Gender inclusive language creates more open and welcoming environments for many people, including women, non-binary people, and trans-identified people, such as:

- “Hi **everyone**”
- “Welcome **students**”
- “How are **y’all** doing today?”
- “Thanks for being here today, **folks**”

(Micro)aggressions Experienced by LGBTQ+ Students

(Micro)aggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults — whether intentional or unintentional --that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages and target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

As a faculty member, you are in a position of power to create classroom norms that counteract such (micro) aggressions and assert they are unacceptable in your classroom.

Common (Micro)aggressions Experienced by LGBTQ+ Students in the Classroom

- Calling on, engaging, and validating one gender while ignoring other students during class.
- Assigning student tasks or roles that reinforce gender stereotypes.
- Anticipating students’ emotional responses based on gender norms or sexual orientation.
- Singling out a student in class because of their identities.
- Expecting students of any particular group to ‘represent’ the perspectives from that group during in-class discussions or debates.
- Using heteronormative metaphors or examples in class.
- Assuming the gender of any student.
- Continuing to misuse pronouns even after a student, transgender or not, indicates their pronouns.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive and Affirming Curriculum

Including positive representation of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events in your curriculum is an essential step to building inclusivity in your classroom.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Benefits all Students by:

- Exposing students to more inclusive and accurate accounts of history.
- Encouraging students to question stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people.
- Promoting acceptance.
- Validating experiences.
- Reinforcing self-worth.
- Providing space for multiple voices.

LGBTQ+ STUDENT RESOURCES

On-Campus Student Resources

[LGBT Resource Center](#)

The LGBT Resource Center is the hub of LGBTQ+ student life and resources at Cornell. The center provides advocacy, outreach, education, support, and community to LGBTQ+ students of all identities, backgrounds, and experiences. Located on North Campus on the third floor in the 626 Thurston Avenue building, the center's physical space includes lounge for socializing and a multi-purpose room for studying or holding meetings. Professional staff are confidential resources and are available for individual support during business hours.

[The Loving House: The LGBTQ+ Living Learning Unit](#)

The purpose of Loving House is to create an environment that protects and supports Cornell University's community of LGBTQ+ undergraduates. A residential space, open to all identities, the Loving House provides an unconditionally accepting community in a supportive and safe environment.

[LGBT Studies](#)

The field of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies is devoted to the investigation of the complexities of sexuality and its importance to the organization of social relations more generally. Primary among its concerns is the study of the lives, politics, and creative work of sexual and gender minorities.

[Cornell Health](#)

Cornell Health staff members deliver affirmative and supportive services for patients and clients of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.

[Cornell Health Gender-Affirming Services](#)

Cornell Health offers medical care, mental health services, and support to students who are transgender, those who are questioning their gender identity, and those considering gender transition (medically or surgically).

[Cornell Name Change Process](#)

Cornell recognizes that many community members use a name other than their official record. Students may designate a chosen first and middle name. The university

registrar will strive to use chosen names on internal documents, in communications and, where appropriate and feasible, in information systems and reporting.

Further information on name, pronouns, and gender marker can be found on the Student and Campus Life [Trans Resources](#) site.

[Gender Inclusive Housing](#)

Gender-inclusive housing is a policy that affords all Cornell undergraduates the option to live on campus with whomever they choose, regardless of biological sex, gender, or gender identity.

[Human Sexuality Collection](#)

The Human Sexuality Collection in the Cornell University Library preserves and makes accessible primary sources documenting historical shifts in the social construction of sexuality; the collection focuses on U.S. lesbian and gay history and the politics of pornography.

[Cornell LGBTQ+ Student Organizations](#)

There are several student-run undergraduate, graduate, and professional student organizations that tackle both political and social issues affecting the lives of LGBTQ+ students and their allies.

[Cornell Restrooms](#)

In keeping with principles of nondiscrimination and inclusion, students, staff, faculty, and visitors are invited to use restrooms and facilities corresponding to their gender identity. This [map](#) shows all-gender restrooms.

[Recreational Restroom & Changing Facilities](#)

This list highlights gender inclusive changing rooms and restrooms across fitness centers.

LGBTQ+ National Resources and Crisis Intervention Hotlines

[The Trevor Project](#)

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning people ages 13-24. (866) 488-7386

[Trans Lifeline](#)

Trans Lifeline is a trans-led organization that connects trans people to the community, support, and resources they need to survive and thrive. (877) 565-8860

LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Resources

Cornell University provides a safe and inclusive work environment for the LGBTQ+ community. This section provides an overview of LGBTQ+ benefits, workplace transition procedures, and other helpful resources for LGBTQ+ faculty and staff at Cornell. The Department of Inclusion & Belonging at Cornell is a source for assistance if you have questions. In addition, your [Human Resource representative](#) or the Benefit Services office at 607.255.3936 can answer questions about benefits.

LGBTQ+ BENEFITS AND POLICIES

Cornell LGBTQ+ Policies

- [Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Statement](#)
- [Bias Reporting](#)
- [Prohibited Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual and Related Misconduct](#)

Relationship and Family Benefits

[Marriage / Domestic Partnership](#)
[Divorce / Separation](#)
[Birth / Adoption / Legal Custody of Child](#)
[Adoption Assistance Program](#)

Endowed Colleges

[Endowed Benefits for Domestic Partnerships FAQ](#)
[Endowed Statement of Domestic Partnership Form](#)

Contract Colleges

[Domestic Partner FAQ – Contract College](#)
[Domestic Partner Begins Benefit Aid](#)
[PS-425 Domestic Partnership Enrollment Application](#)
[PS-425.4 Termination of Domestic Partner \(pdf\)](#)

New Surrogacy Benefits!

Cornell Benefit Services is in the process of finalizing a surrogacy benefit. Contact the [HR Services & Transitions Center](#) for more information.

Gender Affirming Health Benefits

Endowed health plans cover benefits for transgender and gender nonconforming enrollees. Coverage includes therapy and certain medical procedures related to gender identity confirmation procedures. To learn more, refer to the Schedule of Benefits or Addendum in the Summary Plan Description of your health plan: [CPHL](#), [HSA](#), [WCM-PPO](#).

For contract colleges, employees on the Empire plan should reach out to United Health Care. For those with an HMO, contact the provider directly.

NAME, GENDER MARKER, AND PRONOUN DISPLAY

Changing Your Name in Workday:

- Login to [Workday](#)
- Click on the Personal Information icon and then click either Change Legal Name or Preferred Name, as applicable. See [changing personal information](#).
- Important: Remember to click submit when finished.

Changing Legal Name

- Your legal name must match how your name is listed on your Social Security card.
- Once you submit the change, it will route to your local Human Resources representative who will ask for supporting documentation. Cornell faculty and staff must submit a copy of their social security card reflecting their new name to their HR representative. Other forms of identification are not accepted.

Adding or Changing Your Pronouns in Workday

- Log into [Workday](#) and select *personal information*.
- Select your Pronoun and then click Submit.
- By default, your Pronoun is only visible to you. To display your Pronoun publicly within Workday, search for "Change Public Profile Preferences", select "Show to all" and click "Submit". Your Pronoun will then display on your worker profile under your name and be visible to all. *Identifying your pronoun or changing your preference does not impact other data or systems.*

Legal or Preferred Name in Office 365

By default, the Office 365 email and calendar system uses your legal first, middle, and last name as entered in Workday, unless you specify a preferred name. To change the way your name is listed on your Cornell email and calendar, follow the procedures above.

Cornell NetID

Your NetID can be changed only after you have submitted your name change request to Human Resources and they have processed your request. [More information.](#)

Gender Marker Change

An employee must go to their local HR person to change their gender marker. No documentation is necessary.

Campus & Local Resources

[LGBTQ+ Colleague Network Group](#)

The mission of the Cornell University LGBTQ+ Colleague Network Group (CNG) is to raise awareness about workplace issues faced by LGBTQIA employees. The CNG provides networking opportunities and a forum to discuss topics of mutual interest and innovative solutions.

[LGBT+ Families Email List](#)

An interactive e-list which distributes information and resources among Cornell LGBT+ families. To subscribe, contact Work/Life at Human Resources.

[LGBTQIA List serv for Faculty](#)

The Provost's Office of Faculty and Development maintains a LGBTQIA list serv for faculty- please email ofdd@cornell.edu if interested in joining this.

[LGBT Resource Center Newsletter](#)

This newsletter provides Cornell faculty & staff information about upcoming LGBTQ+ events, programs, and educational workshops taking place on and off campus.

[Cornell Restrooms](#)

In keeping with principles of nondiscrimination and inclusion, students, staff, faculty, and visitors are invited to use restrooms and facilities corresponding to their gender identity. This [map](#) shows all-gender restrooms.

[Recreational Restroom & Changing Facilities](#)

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Community Resources

[Ithaca LGBTQIA+ Pride](#)

This Facebook group is for the Ithaca LGBTQIA+ communities.

[Ithaca is Love Facebook Site](#)

Ithaca is Love is intended to be a virtual safe space for LGBTQIA+ community members and their allies living in and around Ithaca. Members are encouraged to post resources, articles, stories, and personal accounts.

[Cortland LGBTQ Center](#)

The Cortland LGBTQ Center seeks to create a visible and empowered community through education, advocacy, resource enhancement, and linkages to essential services for LGBTQ identifying individuals as well as their families and other supportive community members.

[Planned Parenthood of Greater New York](#)

Planned Parenthood health centers provide education, support, and sexual and reproductive health services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersex patients.

[Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\) Ithaca-Cortland](#)

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans persons, their families and friends by providing an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity.

[Ithaca LGBTQ+ Families](#)

A group for LGBTQ+ identified parents and their children to connect socially and support one another in the Ithaca, NY area.

[Ithaca Pride Alliance](#)

The Ithaca Pride Alliance exists to create new, and uplift existing, safe, inclusive, accommodating, educational, and accessible spaces for the LGBTQ+ community in Ithaca and throughout Tompkins County.

[Transpose: Ithaca Queer Singers Alliance](#)

A non-audition community chorus that celebrates queer, trans, and non-binary identities through the joy of singing.

[Southern Tier AIDS Program](#)

A team of dedicated, caring people providing comprehensive HIV/AIDS services in the Southern Tier of New York. They work towards creating a world where HIV transmission is rare and those who are HIV+ lead healthy lives.

[The Advocacy Center](#)

The Advocacy Center provides compassionate and trauma-informed services in Tompkins County, NY for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Online Resources for Continued Learning

[GLAAD](#)

[Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)

[Human Rights Campaign](#)

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

[National LGBTQ Task Force](#)

[PFLAG](#)

Glossary

Agender: Someone who identifies as having no gender.

Aromantic: Individual who does not experience romantic attraction toward individuals of any gender(s).

Asexual: Someone who does not experience sexual attraction toward individuals of any gender. Asexuality is an identity and a sexual orientation, different from celibacy. Celibacy is the choice to refrain from engaging in sexual behaviors and does not comment on one's sexual attraction. An asexual individual may choose to engage in sexual behaviors for various reasons even while not experiencing sexual attraction. Asexuality is not a medical condition; sexual attraction is not necessary for a person to be healthy.

Biphobia: The discrimination against or hatred of bisexuals.

Bisexual: A person attracted to two or more genders. This attraction does not have to be equally split between those genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.

Coming Out: For most people who are LGBTQ+, the process of self-acceptance that continues throughout one's life and the sharing of that information with others.

Deadnaming: Referring to a transgender person (who has changed their name) by the name they were assigned at birth. Deadnaming normally occurs for one of three reasons: 1) Someone accidentally deadnames because they are used to using that name. 2) Someone purposefully deadnames to cause distress or because they object to name changes. 3) Someone purposefully deadnames because of their beliefs.

Gay: Individuals who experience same-sex desire, though not all people who act on this desire identify as such or embrace this identity category (e.g. some men who have sex with other men identify as straight. Gay was the preferred name in the 1960s and 70s – to counter the clinical and pathological associations of “homosexual”).

Gender: A social construction related to how bodies, expressions, identities, experiences, mannerisms, dress, speech etc. are interpreted, categorized and policed by social norms.

Gender Binary: The division of gender into two distinct and opposite categories (man and woman) and the expectation by society that everyone will identify as either one or the other.

Gender Expression: The way one presents/performs their gender externally (ex. androgynous, feminine, masculine etc.)

Gender Identity: One's internal sense of their own gender (ex. woman, man, genderqueer, trans, etc.)

Gender nonconforming: A person who does not conform to gender-based expectations of society. Examples of individuals that identify as gender variant/non-conforming could be: transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, and genderfluid.

Heterosexism: Discrimination or prejudice against LGBTQ+ people based on assumption that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.

Homophobia: Originally used to describe the discrimination against or hatred of homosexuals and homosexuality, it is now often used as a catchall for discrimination and hatred of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Intersex: A person whose combination of chromosomes, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from the medical categories of male and female. Some intersex individuals identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, but not all do.

LGBTQQIA+: A common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual community. The plus is intended to signify inclusion of all other non-cisgender or non-heterosexual identity labels that are included in the LGBTQQIA+ umbrella, but not listed. In this guide we use “LGBTQ+” to describe these communities.

Lesbian: A woman (cis and/or transgender) who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women. Lesbians can identify as gay, queer, and other identity markers.

Misgendering: The act of referring to a person by incorrect pronouns and/or name if a person has changed their name/pronouns.

Nonbinary: An encompassing term to describe gender identities other than woman and man.

Pansexual: A person who is sexually and romantically attracted to all or many gender expressions.

Passing: A person's ability to be viewed as and assumed to be cisgender or straight. This may be seen in a positive light, i.e., a trans person passing as the gender they identify as, or in a negative light, i.e. a gay man passing as straight to avoid discrimination or ridicule.

Queer:

- an umbrella and inclusive term used to encompass LGBTQ+ communities, including sexual orientation, romantic orientation, and genders.
- an identity used in place of more specific denominators to state non-heteronormative status without specific descriptions of sexual activity, preference or gender.
- A hateful slur reclaimed in the 1960s against a backdrop of AIDS activism as a term of defiant pride. Some people remain deeply uncomfortable with its use. Given the word's charged history, caution should be taken when using this term, especially by those outside LGBTQ+ communities.

Questioning: Someone who is questioning their sexual orientation, romantic orientation, or gender identity.

Sex Assigned at Birth: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics, and hormonal balances.

Sexual Orientation: The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes.

Transgender: An individual whose gender identity is different than the one socially expected of them based on sex assigned at birth. This is an umbrella term that can encompass identities such as trans man, trans woman, genderqueer, agender and many more.

Transphobia: The discrimination against or hatred of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

Concluding Remarks

We hope this guide highlights the rich history of the LGBTQ+ community at Cornell, and outlines the opportunities and resources available for an inclusive campus where all students, staff, and faculty can find community and know they belong.

We invite feedback on this guide: feel free to email us at inclusion@cornell.edu.

Sources

ASEE Safe Zone Training Information prepared with support from the National Science Foundation under Grant No. EEC 1539140.

Diversity in the Classroom, UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development, 2014.

GLSEN: Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Resource, 2019.

Created in conjunction with UMaine LGBTQ Services and adapted from University of Georgia.