



**WASHINGTON STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**President's Commission for Gender Identity/Expression  
and Sexual Orientation (GIESO)**

**Academic Year 2021-2022 Annual Report**

**Dr. Chris Dickey (they/them), Chair of GIESO**

## Academic Year 2021-2022 Annual Report

The Washington State University (WSU) President's Commission for Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation (GIESO) advises the president and other WSU administrators on matters relating to needs and concerns of the campus communities related to gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. We identify and advocate for policies and services to support the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

GIESO aspires to have membership from all WSU campuses among faculty, staff, graduate/professional students, and undergraduate students. This year we were fortunate to have representation from the Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and Global campuses. GIESO meets as a general assembly via Zoom on the third Wednesday of every month (3:00-4:00 PM). Additionally, subcommittees meet for approximately 1 hour each month to develop and implement new initiatives. The current subcommittees include Visibility/Programming/Recognition, Recruitment/Retention, and Mentorship. Time spent performing work on behalf of GIESO is viewed as service to the institution.

This annual report summarizes GIESO's work during the 2021-2022 academic year. After recentering and focusing on GIESO's mission, members of this organization were able to effectively execute many action items through work with the subcommittees. Thoughtful, dedicated leadership from the subcommittee co-chairs yielded some of this organization's finest work to date. The Commission met with President Kirk Schulz and other WSU leadership in October 2021 and again in May 2022. We have assembled a list of recommendations for WSU leadership to consider as WSU moves into another academic year.

### GIESO Executive Board Members

Dr. Chris Dickey, Chair

Taylor Ellsworth, Co-Chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee (January 2022-present)\*

Jason Abrams, Co-Chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee

Sam Buechler, Co-Chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee (August 2021-January 2022)

Dr. Becky Dueben, Co-Chair of the Visibility/Programming/Recognition Subcommittee and Secretary

Justin Craigmile, Co-Chair of the Visibility/Programming/Recognition Subcommittee

Rocky Lucas, Co-Chair of the Mentoring Subcommittee and Membership Coordinator

Dr. Anthony Nicola, Co-Chair of the Mentoring Subcommittee

Laura Hamilton and Kaitlin Morehouse, HR representatives

\*Taylor Ellsworth will be the GIESO chair for 2022-2023.

**President's Commission on Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation (GIESO)  
Chair's Report  
Dr. Chris Dickey, GIESO Chair, 2021-2022**

We can all agree the previous academic year was challenging, perhaps among the most challenging times of our careers. Coming out of 2020-2021, GIESO needed to recenter and establish goals for the year. As an educator, I firmly believe people want to take part in something that is or will be successful. When I stepped into the role of GIESO chair, I had to determine what that would look like for this organization. After a lot of reflection, I decided GIESO would feel most effective if we agreed on a list of action items. These action items could range from small tasks completed in the short-term to much larger projects to be addressed throughout the academic year. I wanted members to feel empowered to enact change. To me, subcommittees would be the place where the real work of GIESO would be completed. The brilliant leadership skills found in subcommittee co-chairs are what made GIESO such an efficient group. Together, GIESO leadership helped chart an ambitious course for the year that has yielded increased visibility, recognition, and awareness of the WSU LGBTQIA2S+ community. I am incredibly proud of the work we have accomplished. This year will inevitably create even more momentum moving forward as GIESO continues to advocate for WSU's queer community.

Any organization will contain a variety of personalities and work types. The glorious part of GIESO is its ability to be a brain trust. We have staff, faculty, graduate/professional students, and undergraduate students all bringing their perspectives to GIESO's work. Task-oriented worker bees could be paired with visionary, big picture thinkers in subcommittee work. My background as a performing musician informed my leadership style with GIESO. The group is stronger when people lift one another up, support ideas and free thinking, and ultimately work on behalf of the greater good for the WSU queer community.

This year marked the arrival of several new initiatives for our organization, including hiring a student intern to facilitate GIESO's projects. Among our many successes are the creation of a faculty/staff award and a student scholarship. Some of our endeavors required more funding from the President's Office than I originally anticipated. I am grateful for the support GIESO received because without it some of our most important—and visible—goals would not have been achieved.

Subcommittee accomplishments are outlined in subsequent pages along with GIESO's summary of recommendations. I would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt "thank you" to all the fabulous subcommittee co-chairs: Taylor Ellsworth, Jason Abrams, Sam Buechler, Becky Dueben, Justin Craigmile, Rocky Lucas, and Anthony Nicola. Your efforts—many of which represented some truly heavy lifting force—are to be commended, celebrated, and revered. As a music faculty member, I am tempted to ask the Cougar Marching Band to throw a parade in your honor.

As I come to the end of my term as GIESO's chair, I am realizing just how meaningful this role has been to me. I went into wanting to make a difference in the lives of WSU's queer community while trying to flex some administrative muscles. By the end of it I have realized the joy that comes from collaborating with colleagues across this fine institution in the hopes of making the WSU community a more welcoming, inclusive place. Thank you to everyone who has supported me during my time as chair, especially my dear husband Dr. Matthew Jeffries (Director of the Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center on the Pullman campus).

## Early Plans and Action Item Generation

The Visibility, Programming, and Recognition subcommittee (VPR) maintained a busy and productive schedule during the 2021-2022 year. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Becky Dueben (Pullman) and Justin Craigmile (Spokane). Additional subcommittee members include Cheyenne Frazier, June Sanders, Kelsey King, Christine Galbreath, Maya Bitton, Milo Edwards, Sara Spiers, Nathaly Mendoza Posada, Kelly Demand, and Amanda Owen. This subcommittee worked closely with GIESO intern Maddie Wilson.

At the beginning of the academic year, this subcommittee formulated a strategy to enhance the LGBTQ+ community's presence in WSU streams of communication. In October 2021, VPR's initial set of action items focused on the following topics:

- Produce a press release or article at least once a month to increase the visibility of queer individuals on all WSU campuses
  - Topics ranging from award recipients to articles featuring queer history and representation
- Create a resource guide of LGBTQ+ resources across the WSU system
- Work with the Commission on the Status of Women and other committees across the WSU system to combine efforts in creating and distributing awards

The Recruitment and Retention subcommittee focused its efforts on big picture concepts to advocate for students, faculty, and staff alike. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Jason Abrams (Pullman), Sam Beuchler (Vancouver; August 2021-December 2021), and Taylor Ellsworth (Pullman; January 2022-present). Additional subcommittee members included Alejandro Bravo Rodriguez, Courtney Anderson, Lucinda Gonzales, Cyn Zavala, and Chris Dickey.

The Recruitment and Retention subcommittee examined the ways in which GIESO could impact the lives of both queer-identifying individuals across the WSU system while fostering a sense of community. This group's initial set of action items addressed the following:

- Culture, community, and quality of life
  - Bolstering performing and cultural arts
  - Co-hosting a diversity awards banquet
- Support for students
  - Host an LGBTQ+ graduate student meet and greet
  - Establish and/or obtain more funding for LGBTQ+ scholarships
- Support for employees
  - System-wide audit/update of position descriptions for equity-minded language
  - Equity Ambassador/Equity Advisor on every search committee
  - System-wide revamp and relaunch of annual evaluation process and framework for annual merit-based increases

The Mentoring subcommittee was eager to build partnerships with external and internal forces to support LGBTQ+ community members. Rocky Lucas and Anthony Nicola, the co-chairs for this subcommittee, worked with Amy Sharp, Laura Hamilton, Kyle Blount, Kauser Gwaduri, Sarah Fadich, Sasha Carey, Jaime Bowman, and JD Wells. Early in the year, this group devoted time and attention to a few endeavors:

- SPECTRUM training with new WSU mentors/mentees
  - SPECTRUM is an LGBTQ+ organization based in Spokane that provides cultural fluency education to the Inland Northwest.
- Establish a group of queer-identified student ambassadors for each College's ambassador program
- Enable participants who engage in WSU's mentorship program to be able to self-identify as LGBTQ+ community members
- GIESO Guides mentoring program development

### Initial Recommendations from GIESO to WSU Leadership

1. Consistent messaging for LGBTQ+ issues and events
  - a. Pride, LGBTQ+ History Month, etc.
2. Inclusion of pronouns in university messaging
3. Allocate funding for remodeling more restrooms system-wide to be gender-inclusive
4. Feasibility study for a Pullman-based performing arts center
5. An examination of civil service employees and career-track faculty regarding service to WSU

### Response from WSU Leadership

On January 12, 2022, GIESO received a thoughtful, detailed response from the WSU leadership about GIESO's initial recommendations. Some items could be addressed quickly while others remained ongoing. ***The response is included in the next few pages of this report.***

Recommendation 1 plan: GIESO will continue to partner with University Marketing and Communications to identify holidays, cultural events, celebrations, and other days of observance to ensure a more inclusive approach to messaging.

Recommendation 2 plan: Dr. Matthew Jeffries attended a meeting of the President's Cabinet to discuss the value of including pronouns in forms of university communication. Implementing this recommendation remains ongoing.

Recommendation 3 plan: Identifying sustained sources of funding to cover the costs of remodeling restrooms to be gender-inclusive is difficult at this time. Leadership will continue to monitor for available funding to direct toward restroom remodeling.

Recommendation 4 plan: The leadership anticipates have more information about this topic in the coming months. Chancellor Chilton will be launching an arts initiative in the coming months for the Pullman campus, and the issue of performing arts spaces, both on and off campus, will be an integral part of that initiative.

Recommendation 5 plan: This recommendation is not signaling to the leadership that employees feel threatened or harassed. Instead, this recommendation speaks to a long-overdue culture change at the institution. WSU proudly asserts it values diversity, equity, and inclusion. GIESO hopes when employees—regardless of rank and/or job status—wish to engage in this work, they should be encouraged to do so by their supervisor(s). WSU has individuals with tremendous potential who occupy career-track and/or civil service roles, and those individuals should not be presented with barriers to do work for GIESO.



## Responses to recommendations from the President's Commission on Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation

### **Recommendation 1: Provide consistent messaging for LGBTQ+ issues and events (Pride, LGBTQ+ History Month, etc.)**

*We are working with our partners in University Marketing and Communications (UMC) to identify the holidays, cultural events, celebrations, and other days of observance for which WSU will proactively communicate as a system and ensure an inclusive approach to messaging.*

### **Recommendation 2: Include pronouns in university messaging**

*UMC is partnering with colleagues across the university, including members of the LGBTQ+ community to develop an inclusive language guide. We anticipate beginning to roll it out with communicators system-wide this semester.*

*In addition, with the rollout of the evolved brand in September, employees now have the option to include pronouns on their business cards.*

*President Schulz would like to host a training on the use of pronouns at an upcoming President's Cabinet meeting. We would ask GIESO to provide a recommendation for the best individual(s) to engage lead such a training.*

### **Recommendation 3: Allocate funding for remodeling more restrooms system-wide to be gender-inclusive**

*WSU Facilities Services has converted many (though not all) single-stall restrooms on the WSU Pullman campus to gender-inclusive restrooms. System-wide, we will include gender-inclusive restrooms will be in WSU's new construction projects. Also, a project is underway to develop an online Pullman campus map that will identify gender-inclusive bathrooms.*

*Currently, funding that could cover the renovation of existing multi-stall restrooms would have to be pulled from urgent deferred maintenance projects, which is not feasible at this time. WSU is in the process of developing a new budget model to better align resource allocation with the University's strategic goals. Leadership will continue to monitor for available funding to direct toward restroom remodeling.*

*Of note, WSU may run into situations where a bathroom cannot be remodeled without violating plumbing code. This code dictates the fixture (urinal/toilet) count required by the building size. Individual stalls take more space than, for example a urinal, and generally require more space to meet fixture counts.*

### **Recommendation 4: Conduct a feasibility study for a Pullman-based performing arts center**

*We anticipate having more information on this topic in the coming months. Chancellor Chilton will be launching an arts initiative in the coming months for the Pullman Campus, and the issue of performing arts spaces, both on and off campus, will be an integral part of that initiative.*



**Recommendation 5: Conduct an examination/investigation into the treatment of civil service employees and career-track faculty**

*WSU takes reports of harassment and discrimination very seriously. Any individual experiencing discrimination or harassment should report the matter to [Compliance and Civil Rights](#). The Office of Compliance and Civil Rights will monitor all reports and will inform university leadership of any trends in reporting.*

*We would be happy to coordinate with Compliance and Civil Rights and Human Resource Services to present at an upcoming GIESO meeting about the reporting process and resources for employees.*

*For more generalized climate issues for career-track faculty (and all faculty) we will be taking part in a Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey this spring, as part of the state-wide initiative on identifying and addressing implicit bias: <https://coache.gse.harvard.edu>.*

## Developments Throughout the Academic Year

Subcommittees met regularly to monitor progress on their action items. From there they decided if an action item was feasible given time constraints, mental bandwidth, and financial resources. GIESO invited Dr. Lisa Guerrero (currently the Associate Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusive Excellence) to a general assembly meeting on December 15, 2021. As an organization, we saw the benefit of combining forces with her office to examine best practices for moving these diversity, equity, and inclusion projects from their idea phases to completed tasks. Additionally, GIESO discussed the idea of having a joint summit with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This notion was ultimately tabled until the 2022-2023 year because of an unexpected change in CSW leadership. Moving this summit to next year would enable both commissions to better prepare for the event.

The next section of this report summarizes the accomplishments of GIESO's subcommittees. Furthermore, this report reiterates ongoing challenges GIESO faced in accomplishing goals and completing projects.

### Visibility, Programming, and Recognition Accomplishments for 2021-2022

- GIESO faculty/staff award and student scholarship
  - Created an evaluation/selection process
  - Distributed press releases and system-wide emails to generate nominations and applications
  - Designed press releases of the recipients
- Partnered with the Murrow College of Communication to create a student intern position
- Supported student intern (Maddie Wilson) to write and edit stories
  - Included a history of GIESORC
- Supported the selection of the recipient of the 2022 Bayard Rustin Excellence Award
- Worked with the WSU Insider to train subcommittee members in press release and article generation
- Created an LGBTQIA2S+ media watch/playlist for GIESO members during winter break
- Consistently wrote articles highlighting the queer community
- Gender-inclusive language reflected in MyWSU and WSU catalog rules 2, 4, and 25

### Recruitment and Retention Accomplishments for 2021-2022

#### Culture, Community, and Quality of Life

- Recommended bolstering performing and cultural arts system-wide
- Developed plans for co-hosting a diversity awards banquet
- Partnered with VPR subcommittee to launch the LGBTQIA2S+ faculty/staff award
  - Dr. Traci Gillig (Assistant Professor, Murrow College of Communication)

#### Support for Students

- Developed plans to host an LGBTQ+ graduate student meet and greet
  - Recognized GPAWS (Graduate Pride Alliance Washington State) has returned
- Established more funding for LGBTQ+ student scholarship

- Raised awareness to existing LGBTQ+ scholarships available to Pullman and Vancouver students
- Collaborated with VPR subcommittee to launch the LGBTQIA2S+ student scholarship
  - Alisa Volz (Pullman campus)

#### Support for Employees

- Recommended Equity Ambassador/Equity Advisor on every search committee
  - Ongoing meetings with Dr. Lisa Guerrero to resurrect and refine proposal from the Five Working Groups
- Recommended a system-wide audit/update of position descriptions for equity-minded language
  - Connected this effort to Equity Ambassador/ Equity Advisor initiative for rolling updates
  - Partnered with HRS to identify issues and streamline processes for revisions to position descriptions
- Recommended a system-wide revamp and relaunch of annual evaluation process and framework for merit-based increases
  - Need for training appointing authorities on issues of salary equity

#### **Mentoring Subcommittee Accomplishments for 2021-2022**

- Established a working relationship with Spectrum in Spokane
- Continued engagement with the WSU staff mentoring program
- Identified WSU's stance on non-discrimination policies while recognizing the value of creating a mentoring program for LGBTQ+ individuals

#### **Challenges GIESO Faced During the 2021-2022 Year**

Work and time spent on behalf of GIESO is service to Washington State University. This commission has staff, faculty, and students from across the WSU system working to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community while advising WSU's leadership about the needs of this community. At the end of the year, GIESO is thrilled to look back on all its successes. As a group, we agree on the following obstacles and/or challenges each subcommittee faced in its work:

- Timely communication from offices:
  - President's office
  - Daily Evergreen
  - WSU Insider
- Time commitments required to complete task
  - Having a student intern helped significantly
- Delineating duties to prevent duplication among the subcommittees

### May 2022 Requests and Considerations for WSU Leadership

- Pride email sent out on Wednesday, June 1
- Create GIESO logo (in development with University MarComm)
- Form a scholarships and awards subcommittee
- Address lack of arts and culture
  - Can proceeds from selling Cultural Houses be placed into an endowment to support programming and scholars/artists in residence?
- Joint summit between GIESO and CSW
- Continued support for staff members to engage with this work
- Invest in mental health resources connected to the LGBTQ+ community?
  - Contract with tele-health providers to further increase pool of qualified candidates?
- Consider response to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation?
  - Over 240 anti-LGBTQ+ bills filed as of March 2022 (41 filed in 2018)
  - Most target trans and non-binary youth
  - Connections between WSU and UI legal resources to add LGBTQ+ resources for students and employees?

### 2022-2023 GIESO Budget Request

- Paid intern from Murrow College of Communications: 180 hours each semester
  - \$5,400 stipend (fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters)
- Budgets for each subcommittee: VPR, R&R, Mentoring, and Awards/Scholarships
  - \$1,000 each (\$4,000 total)
- Funds for systemwide emails throughout the year (not through WSU Insider)
  - \$1,200 total
- Student scholarship
  - \$1,000 total
- Faculty/staff award
  - \$1,600 total (grossed up to reflect take-home of \$1,000)

\$13,200 total request