



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

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

Academic Year 2022-2023 Annual Report

Taylor Ellsworth (she/her), Chair of GIESO

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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 the needs and concerns of the campus community 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, undergraduate students, and community members. This year we had representation from the Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and Global campuses and surpassed membership numbers from the previous 3 years. 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 Communications (previously Visibility/Programming/Recognition), Recruitment/Retention, Mentorship, and Awards and Scholarships. Time spent performing work on behalf of GIESO is viewed as service to the institution.

This annual report summarizes GIESO's work during the 2022-2023 academic year. The Commission met with President Kirk Schulz and other WSU leadership in October 2022 and again in April 2023. GIESO met with WSU Chancellors in May 2023, the first meeting of its kind. We have assembled a list of recommendations for WSU leadership to consider as WSU moves into another academic year.

GIESO Executive Board Members

Taylor Ellsworth, Chair

Dr. Jaime Bowman, Secretary

Dondre Hess, Co-Chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee (Fall 22 – February 23)

Amanda Owen, Co-Chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee (Spring 23)

Courtney Anderson, Co-chair of Recruitment/Retention Subcommittee (Fall 22)

Dr. Becky Dueben, Co-Chair of the Communications Subcommittee

Justin Craigmile, Co-Chair of the Communications Subcommittee

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

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

Dr. Rae Olsson, Co-Chair of the Awards and Scholarship Subcommittee (Spring 23)

Ash Debuse, Co-chair of the Awards and Scholarships Subcommittee and Intern

Kauser Gwaduri, Co-chair of the Awards and Scholarships Subcommittee (April/May 23)

Kaitlin Morehouse, HR representative

Sam Buechler, GPSA Representative

Dr. Matthew Jeffries, Ex-officio

Amy Sharp, Ex-officio

President's Commission on Gender Identity/Expression and Sexual Orientation (GIESO)
Chair's Report
Taylor Ellsworth, GIESO Chair, 2022-2023

Structure, sustainability, and evolution were the GIESO's major themes this year.

Structure. It takes a large amount of energy to run the logistics of any organization – recruiting members, voting, electing leadership, understanding GIESO's role, etc. GIESO members are tasked with balancing their fulltime job and academic responsibilities with GIESO duties. Given the university's ongoing short staffing following the pandemic, this has proved challenging. There was a need for clear documentation of procedures, both formal and informal, to support GIESO leadership and members. I am proud to leave my term as chair knowing that we have increased the structural components of GIESO. I am hopeful this will ease leadership transitions and onboarding of new members in future years. The energy previously used to stabilize the organization can now be used to move the needle forward on policy and projects for the LGBTQ+ community.

Sustainability. Turnover of members and subsequent loss of commission knowledge has been a challenge in maintaining the work of GIESO from year to year. As chair, my main goal was to sustain ongoing projects and build systems to ensure long term continuation. Following the lead of prior GIESO Chair, Dr. Chris Dickey, GIESO began the 2022-2023 year by agreeing upon a list of action items. Last year marked the birth of some important projects and initiatives; for example, the staff/faculty award, student scholarship, and hiring of a GIESO intern. This year, GIESO's action list included plans to resurrect older GIESO initiatives and continue upon last year's momentum.

Evolution. Spring 2023 was marked by record setting numbers of anti-LGBTQ legislation proposals across the county and in WA state. The impact of these harmful bills was felt both by GIESO members and the wider LGBTQ community. GIESO responded by creating a system to track LGBTQ-related proposals in WA, OR and ID and sharing updates with WSU leadership each semester. GIESO recognizes the LGBTQ Coug community's need for connection during this time and has hosted monthly, in-person social events. GIESO has evolved to continue to meet the needs of the greater LGBTQ community.

This year came with frequent overturn in co-chair positions, and I would like to extend gratitude to the GIESO subcommittee chairs, all of whom stepped up to the plate when needed. Thank you to Dondre Hess, Amanda Owen, Courtney Anderson, Dr. Becky Dueben, Justin Craigmile, Rocky Lucas, Dr. Anthony Nicola, Dr. Rae Olsson, Ash Debus, Kauser Gwaduri. I would like to take an extra moment to thank this year's intern, Ash Debus, who led the effort on tracking LGBTQ-related legislation.

The following pages will outline specific structural improvements, subcommittee accomplishments, and GIESO recommendations to WSU leadership.

GIESO Accomplishments 2022-2023

The development of the LGBTQ Legislation watchlist was one of GIESO's newest endeavors. Intern Ash Debus tracked proposals and movement of bills monthly. This tracking allowed members to stay up to date on current concerns that may be impacting the LGBTQ community at large. Debus shared updates on local legislation with WSU leadership once a semester. According to leadership, WSU and has close relations with law makers and can advocate on behalf of the Cougar community. GIESO's hope is that by sharing these laws, WSU can not only stop the passage of harmful laws but advocate for increasing legal protection of the LGBTQ community in Washington state.

In Spring 2023, GIESO voted to financially support the UREC/SEB Drag Event. This contribution allowed both UREC members and nonmembers to attend the event for free and facilitated the online streaming of the drag workshop. The event organizers had to turn people away at the door because of the event's success. This event only further highlighted the community's desire for connection and community building spaces – two things GIESO aims to focus on next year.

Structural Improvements

Typically, GIESO meets only August-May, following the 9-month contracts of many members. Fall semester of GIESO is frequently spent trying to simply get the ball rolling. This year, a volunteer group of GIESO members and leadership met in June and July to plan for the Fall 23 semester. This enabled the commission to dive directly into the work of developing action items and starting projects.

GIESO received record setting applications from prospective members and was able to fill the 40-person roster by the end of Spring 23. This influx of interest enables GIESO to be more selective in applicants. To assist in future review of GIESO applicants, a "Membership Criteria Guide" was developed and used to update the existing GIESO application. The hope is that prospective members will better understand the commitments of GIESO and GIESO will have a more active, involved membership.

Since GIESO only meets once a month, it is important to get members onboarded and participating as quickly as possible. As Chair, I created and recorded a New Member Orientation video that can be used to welcome new members to the commission, orient them to GIESO's history, and understand communication pathways. This was successful in onboarding 15 new members in Spring 23.

A similar structure was needed for the onboarding and transition of leadership from year to year. Each 2022-2023 leader developed a position guide for future leaders that includes general tasks, timelines, and important contacts. A GIESO-specific email account was created for next year's leadership to use to communicate with campus partners and leadership. The email will provide more stability in partnerships with other campuses and leadership without needed to switch contacts every year.

The increase of anti-LGBTQ legislation signifies a greater cultural acceptance of anti-LGBTQ ideals. GIESO created "Community Commitments" that all members must abide by. Our hope is that these can be used to maintain a safe, and productive space, free from folks who may apply only to disrupt the important work. These commitments give GIESO ground to enforce accountability measures, like removing a disruptive member.

Communications (previously Visibility/Programming/Recognition)

Becky Dueben and Justin Craigmile co-chaired the Communications subcommittee. In August 2023, the commission approved the name change from Visibility, Programming and Recognition to Communications; the new name more accurately represents the committee's current work. This year, the committee accomplished the following:

- Continued copy creation for the WSU Insider and The Evergreen articles
- Developed LGBTQIA+ significant date calendar
- Created and distributed to leadership and WSU Marketing and Communications a calendar of significant LGBTQIA+ dates for future communication schedules
- Hosted training for the committee on how to write press releases/news articles
- Served as central point for dissemination of GIESO informational and recruitment email

The Communications committee continues to evolve with the changing nature of GIESO's work. Plans for next year include creating a communication plan, monitoring timely communications from leadership and WSU regarding LGBTQ matters and honing the press release process.

Awards and Scholarships

Ash Debus and Rae Olsson co-chaired the Awards and Scholarships subcommittee. Debus stepped down in April 2023 and Kauser Gwaduri stepped into the co-chair position. 2022-2023 was the first year of the Awards and Scholarships committee; it was created out of a need for the student scholarship and staff/faculty award tasks to be sustained moving forward. This year, the committee accomplished the following:

- Developed a calendar of annual award and scholarship deadlines
- Updated award/scholarship application forms and procedures
- Advertised scholarships and awards
- Received record setting applications for award and scholarship (59 scholarship applications and 19 nominations of 11 nominees)
- Created review rubric with bias reduction criteria

Olsson and Gwaduri plan to co-chair the committee again next year. Their goals include increasing LGBTQ+ contributions through creation of a nomination template and increasing the total number of scholarships to three, given the increased interest from applicants.

Recruitment and Retention

Dondre Hess, and Courtney Anderson co-chaired the Recruitment and Retention Committee. Anderson stepped down in January 2023 and Hess stepped down in March 2023. This year, the committee accomplished the following:

- Hosted a LGBTQ+ Fall Celebration Event November 16th, 2022 in the ESFCC
- Collaborated with library on an event to showcase banned books with LGBTQ+ relevance
- Collaborated with Native American Programs to attend MMIW Awareness event

Looking forward, the committee plans to develop a recruitment and retention guide for LGBTQ staff/faculty/students and increase Trans* recruitment in response to anti-LGBTQ legislation nationwide.

Mentorship

Rocky Lucas and Amanda Owen co-chaired the Mentorship subcommittee. This committee gave new life to the GIESO Guides project, initially developed pre-COVID, to help build community among WSU LGBTQ folks. This year, the committee accomplished the following:

- Requested inclusion of open-ended question in system-wide staff mentoring application
- Secured partnership with HRS to assist in building 2023 mentoring survey
- Partnered with Pullman LGBTQ+ Center to identify and fill training/service gaps
- Resurrected GIESO Guides program to provide support and mentorship to staff and faculty
- Established monthly Pullman gatherings for GIESO Guides

- Recruited over 30 Guides and implemented LGBTQ+ Ally Training requirement for GIESO Guides

The Mentorship committee is in the process of developing a GIESO Guides website, expanding GIESO Guides system-wide and including promotion of the group at new employee orientation. Increasing the quality and number of events is important in serving the need for connection that is felt within the LGBTQ Coug community. As you will see below, GIESO is requesting additional funds to support in-person events, such as a Fall reception and Spring celebration.

Spring 2023 Recommendations from GIESO to WSU President and Chancellor

1. Disseminate communication reaffirming support of Trans* students and employees
2. Provide support for LGBTQ students in transferring to WSU to escape anti-LGBTQ legislation in other states/universities
 - a. Distribute welcome letter from President and Chancellors to trans* students
 - b. Develop an emergency relocation fund
 - c. Collaborate with HRL to offer emergency housing for relocations and/or develop transitional trans* housing in community
 - d. Explore possibility of in-state tuition agreements for trans* refugees
 - e. Extend scholarship deadlines for Fall 23 for transfer students
3. Advocate for legislation to secure protections for LGBTQ students and state employees in WA state
4. Ensure WSU students have access to HRT and other gender-affirming care through student health centers system-wide
 - a. Vancouver Student Wellness currently does not provide prescriptions for HRT. Provide financial support in forming affiliate agreements with local providers or expanding on-campus services.
 - b. Provide financial support to CHS so they can continue to adapt to meet student needs.
5. Ensure WSU employee healthcare covers gender-affirming care
6. Implement a recurring LGBTQ "living room" chat and gathering for LGBTQ+ folks, hosted by the President and Chancellors, alternating campus locations

Response from WSU President and Chancellor Chilton

1. Disseminate communication reaffirming support of Trans* students and employees
 - a. *President Schulz and Marketing/Communications will reach out to GIESO in August 2023 with a draft communication to send to incoming students. Doing so before the end of the Spring semester or during summer would not be effective due to graduation and students and faculty who are out of town.*
2. Provide support for LGBTQ students in transferring to WSU to escape anti-LGBTQ legislation in other states/universities.
 - a. *Chancellor Chilton will reach out regarding housing opportunities for late transfers.*
 - b. *Chancellor Chilton spoke with Saichi Oba in enrollment management to discuss financial aid and scholarship deadlines for transfers. Oba told Chilton, "That while it is a priority deadline, they always will work with students to identify sources of financial support, and that he would welcome your referring students directly to him (copied here). He can then also connect the prospective student to housing options as well." GIESO recommended more information about this be made clear on the website and Chilton mentioned WSU's award from Campus Pride be used in marketing/communications.*
 - c. *Leadership did not comment on the other suggestions.*
3. Advocate for legislation to secure protections for LGBTQ students and state employees in WA state
 - a. *President Schulz notes that WA is probably safe right now, but we need to continue to advocate. He mentioned concerns about border communities with Idaho, one of the most challenging places. He acknowledged that many Pullman Cougs live in Moscow. WSU has a goal of working with that WA legislature on codifying protections and finding ways to provide sanctuary.*
 - b. *President Schulz will have conversations with WA state legislators regarding laws to protect rights and expects a positive bill to be based. After discussions this summer, President Schulz will provide additional directives and suggestions for GIESO about how GIESO may be able to assist.*
 - c. *Chancellor Chilton notes that WUS has a strong external affairs team, and our work has helped them.*
 - d. *President Schulz supports the idea of GIESO having an "Advocacy" subcommittee*
4. Ensure WSU students have access to HRT and other gender-affirming care through student health centers system-wide
 - a. *Chancellor Chilton suggested that GIESO reach out to Chancellors of each campus to discuss*

health needs.

5. Ensure WSU employee healthcare covers gender-affirming care
 - a. *No response.*
6. Implement a recurring LGBTQ “living room” chat and gathering for LGBTQ+ folks, hosted by the President and Chancellors, alternating campus locations.
 - a. *Leadership was amenable to the idea. There was no discussion of if this would occur in the future.*
 - b. *Chancellor Chilton suggested each campus’ Chancellor’s office may be able to assist with locations and caterers if GIESO wanted to plan system-wide events. Chancellor Chilton will be sending GIESO an event planning template.*

Spring 2023 Recommendations from GIESO to WSU System-wide Chancellors

1. Support GIESO in
 - a. Recruiting GIESO members on your campus – promotion of GIESO in communications to the campus community, support employees in using work time for GIESO membership (see President's letter of support)
 - b. Hosting campus events – contact person on your campus, spaces for events
2. Disseminate communication reaffirming support of LGBTQ+ staff/faculty (particularly supporting trans staff/faculty/students) and promote ally training
3. Disseminate welcome letter to LGBTQ+ students in Fall with resources for support
4. Develop LGBTQ+ resource list for your community
5. Advocate for provision of gender affirming care
 - a. For example, create agreements with local medical providers to accept WSU referrals, develop a list of resources/providers in the community, professional development for WSU medical providers

Response from WSU System-wide Chancellors

1. Support GIESO in recruiting members and hosting events.
 - a. *Overall, the Chancellors were excited about the possibility of GIESO hosting events and happy to provide support. Some of the Chancellors suggested that a GIESO representative visit each campus.*
2. Disseminate communication reaffirming support of LGBTQ+ staff/faculty (particularly supporting trans staff/faculty/students) and promote ally training
 - a. *Margaret Holt (Spokane) and Haily James (Pullman) will reach out to GIEOS leadership with a response to this item. GIESO is encouraged to follow up in the Fall about these requests.*
3. Disseminate welcome letter to LGBTQ+ students in Fall with resources for support
 - a. *Margaret Holt (Spokane) and Haily James (Pullman) will reach out to GIEOS leadership with a response to this item. GIESO is encouraged to follow up in the Fall about these requests.*
4. Develop LGBTQ+ resource list for your community
 - a. *Margaret Holt (Spokane) and Haily James (Pullman) will reach out to GIEOS leadership with a response to this item. GIESO is encouraged to follow up in the Fall about these requests.*
5. Advocate for provision of gender affirming care
 - a. For example, create agreements with local medical providers to accept WSU referrals, develop a list of resources/providers in the community, professional development for WSU medical providers
 - b. *No response.*

Challenges GIESO Faced During the 2022-2023 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:

- Receiving support and communications
 - GIESO experienced continued challenges receiving timely updates on WSU website development and receiving full responsiveness from WSU leadership
- Optimizing GIESO's role
 - GIESO desires to make necessary modifications to ensure it continues to best serve WSU leadership and the LGBTQ community
- Achieving System-wide Engagement
 - GIESO was challenged to achieve full participation at non-Pullman campuses, and will target recruitment for Fall 23 to non-Pullman campuses to increase engagement

2023-2024 GIESO Budget Request

Item	Requested amount (\$)
Paid Intern from Murrow College of Communications (180 hours/semester)	5,400
Communications Subcommittee	1,000
Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee	1,000
Mentoring Subcommittee	1,000
Awards and Scholarships Subcommittee	1,000
Student Scholarship (3 recipients at \$1000 each)	3,000
Faculty/Staff Award (1 recipient, grossed up to reflect take-home of \$1000)	1,600
GIESO Events	3,200
Total	\$16,000