

WEBINAR

A decorative graphic consisting of five horizontal stripes in the colors of the rainbow: green, red, blue, purple, and orange. The stripes are centered behind the main title text.

GENDER INCLUSIVE HOUSING

UMASS AMHERST . SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE . ROOMSYNC

@ROOMSYNC

- Supportive Terminology
- Why Offer GIH?
- Arguments Against GIH
- How Common Is GIH?
- Best Practices



- GIH at SIUE
- Goals
- GIH Marketing
- GIH Operations
- Challenges
- Successes
- Trends

GENNY BEEEMYN

DIRECTOR, STONEWALL CENTER, UMASS AMHERST

COORDINATOR, TRANS POLICY CLEARINGHOUSE

GENNY@UMASS.EDU

SUPPORTIVE TERMINOLOGY

TRANSGENDER, TRANS OR TRANS*

1

- An umbrella term for someone whose self-identification or expression challenges traditional notions of “male” and “female” (opposite: cisgender)

2

- Includes transsexual (MTF, FTM), crossdressers (not “transvestites”), drag queens and kings, genderqueer individuals and other gender-diverse identities

3

- Hundreds of different gender identities: use of trans* masculine spectrum, trans* feminine spectrum and gender nonconforming

SUPPORTIVE TERMINOLOGY

GENDERQUEER INDIVIDUALS

①

- An umbrella term for individuals who identify as:

- both male and female

②

- neither male nor female but as a different gender

③

- no gender

- somewhere in between male and female

SUPPORTIVE TERMINOLOGY

GENDER-INCLUSIVE HOUSING (GIH)

①

- Housing in which interested students are assigned to housing regardless of gender, so they can have a roommate of any gender (preferred term to “gender-neutral housing”)

②

③

WHY OFFER GIH?

1.

More and more students are openly identifying as trans*, especially as genderqueer.

2.

Students face discomfort, potential discrimination or violence in gendered residence hall rooms and bathrooms.

3.

Single rooms and LGBTQ-themed housing do not work for all trans* students.

4.

GIH also benefits non-trans* students, such as siblings and individuals who have close friends of a gender different from themselves.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

UNAWARE

“We are not aware of any trans* students and will address the issue when needed.”

CASE-BY-CASE

“We will support trans* students on a case-by-case basis.”

COUPLES

“We do not want to encourage male-female couples to live together.”

ILLEGAL

“It is illegal to do so because of co-habitation laws.”

CONTROVERSY

“It would be controversial and would meet with disapproval from parents.”

HOW COMMON IS GIH?



NUMBERS

Approximately 150 colleges and universities in 29 states and D.C. offer some form of GIH.



TIMING

All since 2003 (Wesleyan University) and most in the last 5 years.



LOCATION

More common in the Northeast, West Coast, and at large public and small liberal arts institutions.

These schools tend to be more receptive and have trans* advocates

BEST PRACTICES

HOUSING OPTIONS

- GIH should be an option for both new and returning students
- This option should be separate from an LGBTQ-theme floor
- Recognize that GIH is not the same as trans* housing
- Offer it in different parts of campus and different types of rooms
- GIH should include gender-inclusive bathrooms/shower rooms

BEST PRACTICES

CREATING SUPPORT

- Hire trans*-identified and trans*-knowledgeable Res Life staff
- Have all professional and student Res Life staff attend trans*-focused ally training
- Identify an individual who is the point person on trans* issues and publicize this contact
- Have an easily accessible section of the housing site that provides contact information for the point person and explains the school's trans* housing policies

BEST PRACTICES

ASKING ABOUT GENDER

Enable trans* students to self-identify on their housing application. Two suggested options.

Gender: _____

or

Gender Identity (choose all that apply):

woman

man

trans or transgender

another identity (please specify): _____

If a more expansive gender question is not possible, include “transgender” as part of a “special needs” question

Follow up with the students who indicate that they are trans* or “another identity”

BEST PRACTICES

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

■ Develop and publicize a trans*-supportive housing policy. This policy should state:

- That college will always recognize and respect the stated gender identity of the student
- Students who inform the college that they are trans* in a timely manner will be housing in keeping with their gender identity/expression
- Although housing concerns are addressed on a case-by-case basis, a trans* student will always be given a comfortable and supportive housing assignment

BEST PRACTICES

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- Create gender-inclusive bathrooms and private showers in all newly constructed residence halls.

- Have a res hall bathroom policy: “individuals should use bathrooms that correspond to their sex or gender identity, whichever is safer and more comfortable, or utilize bathrooms that are designated gender-inclusive.

- If your institution doesn't have “gender identity” in its general nondiscrimination policy, include it in your housing policies

- Encourage Ras to hold trans* awareness programs on their floors and to post trans educational material

MALLORY SIDAROUS

MARKETING SPECIALIST, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

MSIDARO@SIUE.EDU

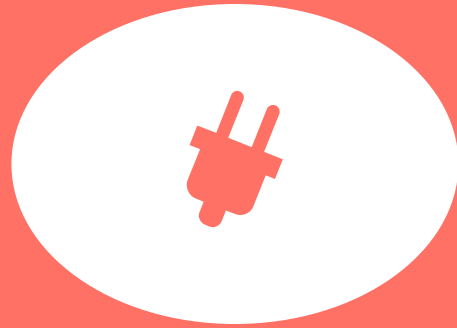
GIH AT SIUE



PROPOSAL

Put together by members of the Residence Life Staff.

Approved by Housing Management Team, including the director.



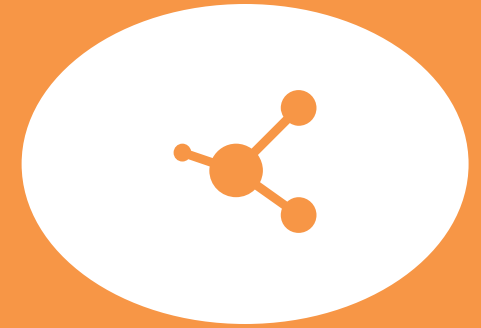
IMPLEMENTATION

Program officially implemented in 2012.



OPTIONS

Housing option available to upper-class students in upper-class housing areas.



BROAD PERSPECTIVE

Not targeted at a particular group of students, rather an opportunity for all (upper-class) students to live in their best fitting environments.

GOALS

1.

Meet student needs for safe, inclusive and supportive on-campus housing options by allowing them greater flexibility in choosing roommates.

2.

For University Housing to remain a progressive organization and competitive in an increasingly challenging environment for on-campus housing operations.

3.

Support SIUE in attracting and retaining students.

4.

Support SIUE's commitment to foster a cohesive and inclusive living-learning environment.

5.

Support housing needs for LGBT students, specifically transgender students.

GIH MARKETING

OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE IN A
CO-ED HOUSING ENVIRONMENT

1

Marketing is part of the housing renewal process for all upperclass residents.

- This year doing some targeted marketing to student groups who may particularly benefit.

2

Gender Neutral Housing Information Session

- Ask questions about the process
- Meet potential roommates
- Find out about available types of space, etc.

3

Session is marketed to all current residents eligible for upperclass housing.

GIH OPERATIONS

CREATING SUPPORT

- Students request GIH as part of the new student/returning student application process.
- No specific apartments or units are set aside for GIH.
- Students are responsible for filling a unit when they sign up for GIH.
- Students work closely with assignment coordinator to fill and manage space.

CHALLENGES

RES LIFE

- Working with residents throughout the year to replace students who leave the unit, etc.

MARKETING

- Does everyone know who needs to know?

OPERATIONS

- Operate at close to full capacity; require students to fill an apartment
- Challenging for students who do not have a group of roommates

HOW WE RESPOND

- Reaching out to student organization for the gender neutral information session
- Implemented RoomSync, gender neutral housing category

SUCCESSSES

- Students looking for this option are taking advantage of the opportunity.
- Provides a good match for students looking for something outside of traditional same-gender housing.
- Reflective of a progressive department and an attitude of caring towards all students.

SUCCESSSES

“I live in gender neutral housing. It has been a great experience and has been a learning experience as well. I felt completely at home and was constantly with friends. I’m so happy we have the opportunity to do gender neutral housing.”

“I enjoy having the option. Living with a bunch of girls tends to get a little tense sometimes, but with a male roommate, he kind of helps even out the estrogen levels!”

“Gender neutral housing was the best on-campus living experience I have had in the three years that I have lived on campus.”

“I love being able to live in gender neutral housing on campus; it alleviated a lot of stress.”

TRENDS

SPRING 2013

TOTAL STUDENTS IN
GIH: 46

TOTAL GIH UNITS:
13

2.4% of total eligible students

SPRING 2014

TOTAL STUDENTS IN
GIH: 41

TOTAL GIH UNITS:
14

2.2% of total eligible students

QUESTIONS?

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

TRACY SHANK
RoomSync

tracy@roomsync.com

GENNY BEEMYN
UMass Amherst

genny@umass.edu

MALLORY SIDAROUS
SIUE

msidaro@siue.edu

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

@ROOMSYNC

NEXT STEPS

GET MORE INFORMATION

RESOURCES

FURTHER READING

SAMPLE GIH PROPOSALS

National Student Genderblind
Campaign
www.genderblind.org

GOOD GIH WEBSITES

University of Chicago

NYU

ROOMSYNC

GENDER-INCLUSIVE MATCHING FEATURE

Read about it on our blog:
<http://www.roomsync.com/blog/new-feature-gender-inclusive-matching>

Request a demo:
www.roomsync.com/demo