

Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services All-Gender Restrooms Questionnaire Report



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**Authored by: Kevin K. Tomita, Ph.D.
QLC-Task Force on All-Gender Restrooms**



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Purpose and Background

This report was created to examine the perspectives of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services (QLC) faculty and staff regarding the creation of an all-gender restroom in the building. Initially, the issue of restricted access to inclusive facilities in the QLC were raised by staff at the Counseling and Student Development Center (CSDC). The administration took these concerns into serious consideration and formed the QLC-Task Force on All-Gender Restrooms to address the facility deficits, in accordance with EP 1.205* and the ASUH and GSO Resolutions in Support of Gender-Neutral Restrooms. This report and the survey results herewithin were conducted to understand and incorporate the multitude of perspectives from QLC building occupants in consideration of all-gender restrooms. Additionally, this report aimed to address any concerns that building occupants may have shared in the survey.

***Executive Policy 1.205**

Policy and Guidelines on Inclusive Facilities

In furtherance of the University of Hawai'i's (the "University") commitment to providing a learning and working environment that is safe, accessible, and respectful of all individuals, the University is dedicated to ensuring that restrooms and other facilities support a campus community of diverse students, faculty, staff, and visitors inclusive of their gender identity and/or gender expression. This policy addresses new construction and existing restrooms, showers, locker rooms, changing facilities, and wellness/lactation rooms.

Additionally, in keeping with the University's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression, all employees, students, and visitors have the right to use the facilities that correspond with their gender identity and to be free from harassment and discrimination. The University's policies on nondiscrimination (EP 1.202) and/or sex discrimination and gender-based violence (EP 1.204) should be consulted in any circumstances where discrimination and/or harassment is alleged.

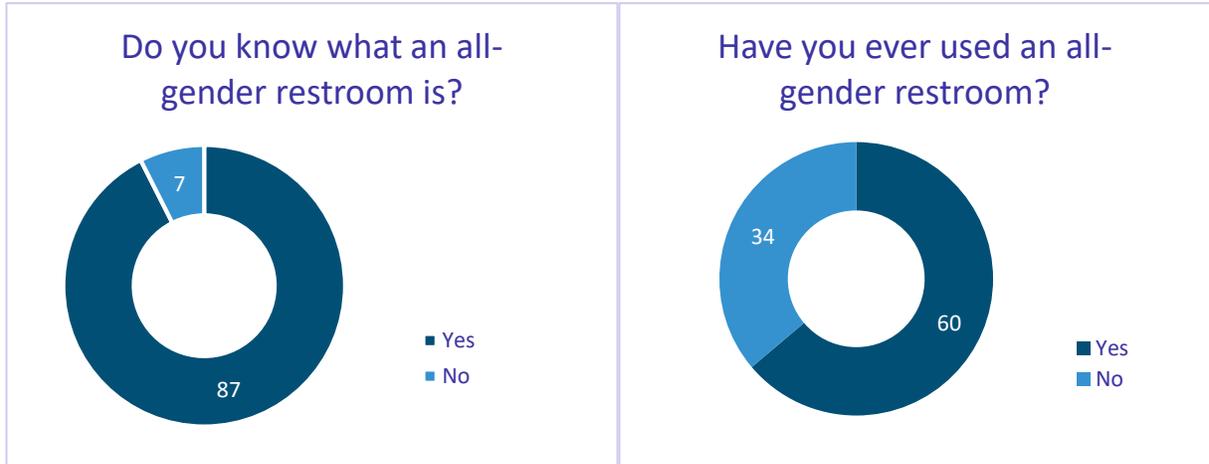
Method

- This questionnaire consisted of seven questions, two of which were open response.
- Data were collected using SurveyMonkey.
- The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Students sent an email with the link to the questionnaire and a resource website to the QLC building community, giving building occupants a two-week period of time to complete the survey.
- A reminder email was sent out two days before data collection closed.
- At the conclusion of data collection, 95 building occupants completed at least a portion of the questionnaire.
- One primary theme was chosen for each response reported for open ended questions.



What is an all-gender restroom?

The majority of QLC building occupants who responded to the survey reported that they knew what an all-gender restroom was (93%) and that they have utilized an all-gender restroom facility in the past (64%).



One limitation to this question was in the variety of purposes that an all-gender restroom may serve. A respondent may not have been aware of the many functions of an all-gender restroom. All-gender restrooms are restrooms which are inclusive of any gender identity, meaning that a person identifying as any gender may utilize the facilities. Many individuals may be familiar with all-gender restrooms as family restrooms. However, beyond family usage, all-gender restrooms provide a space for transgender, gender nonconforming, and people identifying with any gender to use a restroom.



Opinions Regarding All-Gender Restroom Placement

The majority of QLC building occupants were supportive of creating an all-gender restroom in the QLC (85%). Additionally, over half of the respondents indicated that they were comfortable or very comfortable utilizing an all-gender restroom.

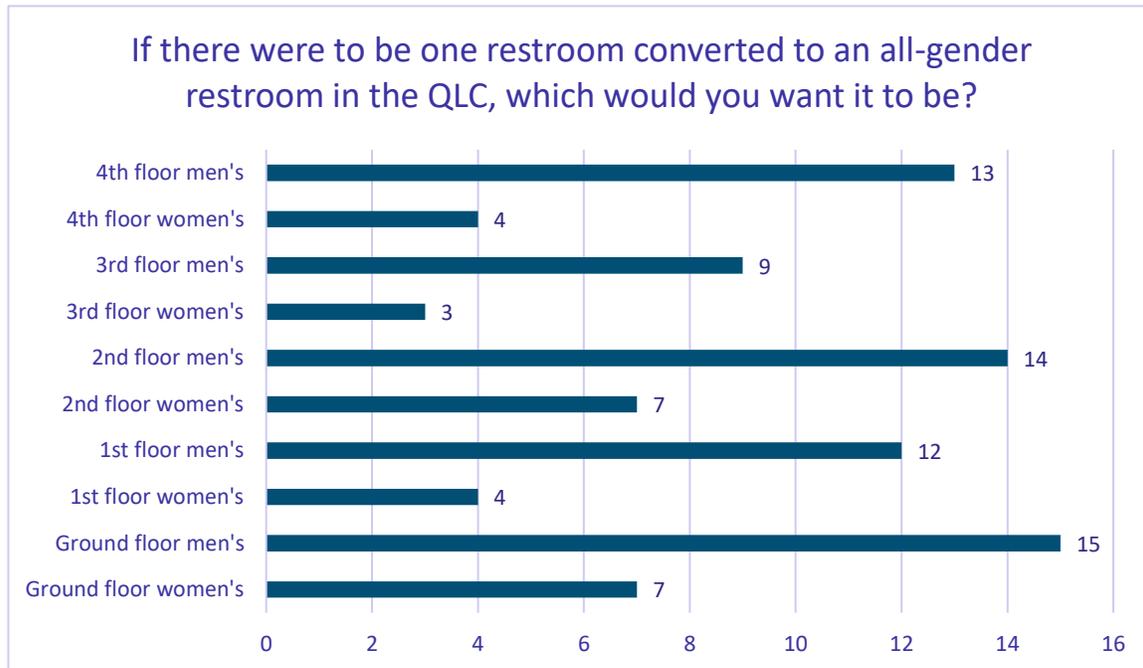


Seventy-one respondents answered an open-ended question inquiring about their support or lack of support for the creation of an all-gender restroom in the QLC. Thirteen themes emerged from the responses:

- All-gender restrooms would enable access to inclusive facilities in the QLC. (30%)
- All students, faculty, and staff should have access to a restroom that they feel safe and comfortable using. (21%)
- All-gender restrooms would be acceptable only if they were single stall. (10%)
- General support for all-gender restrooms. (10%)
- The creation of an all-gender restroom would support social equity, LGBTQ rights, and eliminating discrimination. (7%)
- Discomfort with all-gender restrooms. (5%)
- Privacy and safety concerns. (5%)
- All-gender restrooms are in alignment with the University's mission and policies. (4%)
- The creation of an all-gender restroom would meet an important need for a campus rich with diversity. (4%)
- Concern about cleanliness and overall functioning of QLC restrooms in general. (3%)
- All-gender restrooms would benefit families. (1%)
- Concerns with the limited amount of restrooms in the QLC. (1%)
- Concerns about changing only one, instead of two, gendered restrooms. (1%)

Perceptions of Ideal All-Gender Restrooms in the QLC

The majority of respondents believed that a men's restroom was the ideal space to convert into an all-gender restroom. Of the restrooms in the QLC, the third and fourth floor men's restrooms were the most preferred.



Additional responses regarding all-gender restroom placement are listed below:

- Fourth floor since it has the largest conference room.
- A family restroom with a changing station should be considered.
- It shouldn't be hidden away on the fourth floor.
- Place on the same floor as LGBT office.
- Change a women's restroom to minimize structural changes.
- Not first floor as it gets dirty quickly.
- Not first floor because it has more outside guests. Desire to minimize exposure to those who are uncomfortable.
- Ground floor for ease of locating and visibility.
- Men's restroom due to women's restroom lines.
- A floor that is not heavily used.
- Is it possible to create a single stall all-gender restroom?

Additional Comments

Forty-five respondents reported additional comments. Nine responses were omitted as “none” or “N/A” were the response. Ten themes emerged from the remaining responses:

- Comments regarding the placement of the all-gender restroom. (33%)
- Positive affirmation for potentially creating an all-gender restroom in the QLC. (16%)
- Concerns regarding harassment and violence if all-gender restrooms are created. (9%)
- Against the creation of an all-gender restroom if any restroom in the QLC is changed. (7%)
- Support for pushing ahead to create all-gender restrooms despite contradictory opinions. (7%)
- Suggestion to ensure the proper functioning of the all-gender restroom facilities. (2%)
- An all-gender restroom would set a positive example to the UH community. (2%)
- All restrooms should be all-gender in the QLC. (2%)
- Desire to inform entire campus community. (2%)
- Concern about all-gender restrooms taking from responsibilities (i.e. having to travel to a different floor). (2%)



Questions and Concerns

MYTH: All-gender restrooms will create spaces for people to get assaulted, harassed, or discriminated against. “[All-gender restrooms] could end in women being raped by men who pretend they have a vagina and yet they are enjoying their penis!” “How will you keep the creepers out?”

- A recent peer-reviewed research study indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in safety or privacy violations in public restrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms when comparing states with Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations (GINLPA) and states without GINLPA (Hasenbush, A., Flores, A. R., & Herman, J. L. 2018).
- A separate study found that 12% of their transgender participants reported that they had been harassed or assaulted (physically or sexually) in a restroom in the last year (James & Herman, 2017).

Discomfort

- No person should be forced to use a specific restroom and all people should have access to a restroom. No one will be forced to utilize the all-gender restroom. We hope to decrease, if not eliminate, the discomfort that transgender and gender nonconforming people have with using a gendered restroom by providing at least one all-gender restroom in the QLC. This will not impact all QLC restrooms.

“Seems unfair to those who identify with one gender to have to give up their privacy”

“Sometimes I have female concerns and prefer to be in a female designated restroom” “I should have the right to use a bathroom for my specific gender... I do not feel [an all-gender restroom] should replace one of the current male or female ones. Unfair to another class of people.”

- Privacy is something we would all like to maintain while doing our business. With the creation of an all-gender restroom, no one would be asked to relinquish their privacy in the restroom. Currently, all restrooms in the building are gendered. Changing one of the eight gendered multi-stall restrooms still allows for gendered restroom use in the QLC. Additionally, the doors for the stalls in the all-gender restroom would not be removed, allowing for continued privacy.

Why Create an All-Gender Restroom?

The bathroom debate was revisited on a national scale in 2016, when North Carolina passed the first “bathroom bill” which mandated that people use the restroom that corresponded with the sex on their birth certificate. This bill was created in response to a City Ordinance in Charlotte which prohibited the discrimination of LGBTQ individuals and allowed people to use restrooms that corresponded to their gender identity or biological sex. The debate echoed throughout many U.S. states. Many argued that these laws were discriminatory, while others argued that the laws protected the welfare of the public.

Since then, research studies have examined the impact of creating all-gender restrooms on transgender and gender nonconforming individuals as well as the general public. One media outlet reported that there were no issues regarding restroom violence in 17 school districts, in multiple states, that passed protection for transgender students to use the restroom that corresponded with their gender identity (Media Matters, 2015). Additionally, there was no reported elevation in bathroom related crimes in states with GINLPAs. In contrast, transgender and gender nonconforming people have been found to report serious safety and health related concerns due to lack of access to restrooms. In one study, 12% of transgender participants were verbally harassed, 1% were physically attacked, and 1% were sexually assaulted when accessing a restroom in the past year (James & Herman, 2017). Roughly 60% of the study’s transgender participants avoided the use of a public restroom in the past year because “they were afraid of confrontations or other problems they might experience.” Additionally, 32% of the study’s transgender participants limited their food and beverage intake to avoid using a restroom in the past year and 8% reported having a urinary tract infection (UTI) or kidney-related concern in the past year due to avoidance of public restrooms.

Decision and Timeline

The QLC Taskforce on All-Gender Restrooms chose the third floor men's restroom to be converted into an all-gender restroom. This will be the only multi-stall restroom affected during this time in the QLC. The task force will be creating educational materials to present outside of the 3rd floor men's room beginning on the first day of Summer term 2019 to inform building occupants and students of the changes to come. Additionally, one or more information sessions will take place during the Summer of 2019 to present findings from this report and to provide QLC community members the opportunity to engage in discussion about the upcoming changes. The 3rd floor all-gender restroom will be completed and fully operational by the first day of the Fall semester in 2019.

References

Hasenbush, A., Flores, A. R., & Herman, J. L. (2018). Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations: a Review of Evidence Regarding Safety and Privacy in Public Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Rooms. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1-14.

James, S. E., & Herman, J. (2017). The Report of the 2015 US Transgender Survey: Executive Summary. National Center for Transgender Equality.

Media Matters. "17 School Districts Debunk Right-Wing Lies About Protections For Transgender Students." June 3, 2015. <https://mediamatters.org/research/2015/06/03/17-school-districts-debunkright-wing-lies-abou/203867>