UofT’s Statement on Diversity and Excellence

Our Commitment
In 2006 the Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence was unanimously endorsed at the highest governing board at the University. The purposes of this statement are to express the University’s values regarding equity and diversity, and relate these to the institution’s unwavering commitment to excellence in the pursuit of our academic mission.

Equity and Human Rights
At the University of Toronto, we strive to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, protecting the human rights of all persons, and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that all students and employees enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the University offers, and to achieve their full potential as members of the University community.

For the complete statement, visit:
www.hrandediversity.utoronto.ca/equity.htm

Why This Matters
For us, your experience in your learning and working environments, whether you are student, staff or faculty, matters.

Resources
Each campus has resources that you can access from Registrars, Equity Offices to Employee Unions. Below is a brief list of options you may wish to access. Employees are encouraged to contact the Office for further resources.

Campus Resources
- Sexual & Gender Diversity Office
  www.sgdo.utoronto.ca
- Community Safety Office
  www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca
- Equity at U of T
  www.hrandediversity.utoronto.ca/equity.htm
- Sexual Harassment Office
  www.utoronto.ca/sho
- Student Life
  http://life.utoronto.ca/get-help.htm
- Centre for Women and Trans People
  http://womenscentre.sa.utoronto.ca/
- LGBTOUT
  http://lgbtout.com
- OUT@UTM
  www.outatutm.com
- SC:OUT
  http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~lgbtq/
- Sexual Education Centre
  http://sec.sa.utoronto.ca
- VicPride!
  http://vicpride.ca/

Community Resources
- Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line
  youthline.ca
- PFLAG Canada (and local chapters)
  pflagcanada.ca
- The 519 Church Street Community Centre
  the519.org
- The Sherbourne Health Centre
  sherbourne.on.ca
- EGALE
  egale.ca
1. Be Patient
Be patient with yourself and understand that your coming out process can be gradual. It’s not necessary to tell everyone at once. Take your time and come out to people as you feel comfortable doing so.

2. Small Steps, Big Changes
It can help to choose a specific trusted person or small group of friends to come out to first. This will start to build your support network as you come out to others.

3. Stay Positive
Treat coming out as an opportunity to share something new and positive with people in your life. It may sometimes feel like a confession, but it doesn’t need to be a depressing conversation.

4. Seek Guidance
Seek out print and online resources and find a mentor or someone to talk to if possible. These steps will help you consider what particular concerns are most important to you, such as safety, spirituality, family, friends and school.

5. Plan it Out
Try not to come out during an argument, or as part of another conversation. Take the time to plan your coming out as a specific conversation about you.

6. Take Care Online
The Internet can be an amazing resource and offer lots of information and links. Being out online can be liberating as well as nerve-wracking. Learning how to protect your privacy will facilitate your coming out on your terms.

7. Be Aware
Be aware that some people take longer to digest information than others. Realize that they may need time to adapt and that you may experience different reactions (both positive and negative) that you didn’t predict. Allow time for questions from others as well as space to process your news as needed. Coming out to others can be frustrating. You may have to explain to others what sexual identity and/or gender identity.

8. Consider Safety
Sometimes being safe means only coming out to one or two close friends if you are still living with family or in a community where you would be concerned about your safety if others were to learn of your coming out. If you are unsure, think and talk about what would make you feel safe enough to start the coming out process.

9. Learn from Others
If possible, ask friends who have already started to come out to tell you about their experiences. This can help you feel more connected to supportive communities and also means you can learn from others in terms of what worked and what didn’t. Remember that everyone’s process will be different in some ways and similar in others.

10. Use Community Resources
Refer parents and friends to resources that can help with understanding the coming out process, such as PFLAG and the Sexual & Gender Diversity Office. You may have had years to think about and come to terms with your identity, but others may be thinking about you from a different perspective for the first time and may need time to adjust.

Why Come Out?
Everyone has their reasons, but some benefits include: a new sense of freedom, having friends and family who know you, and not having to lie to others about your life.

About Us
The Sexual & Gender Diversity Office
www.sgdo.utoronto.ca

The Sexual & Gender Diversity office is an equity office of the University working towards addressing harassment and discrimination based on sexual and gender diversity on behalf of students, staff and faculty. As well, through the provision of resources, education and consultation the Office is a support and a resource to anyone within the learning and working communities at the University.

We work on all three campuses of the university, offering programming in partnership including student groups, Student Life, academic departments to other queer & trans positive organizations.

We’re always happy to hear from you as well! Drop by our space on the 4th floor of Sussex House (21 Sussex Avenue, Suites 416-417), or call us at 416.946.5624 to get in touch. We’re open Monday through Friday from 10-6 for drop-in visitors and we can make an appointment with you if that suits, too!

Check out our web site for updates on current events at U of T and in the larger community.

Become a fan of our Facebook page to keep up to date with current events; feel free to join in discussions we post as well!