

Re: 6.4 Vilma Rossi and Michelle Poirier, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, respecting the proposed Trans and Gender Non-Conformity Protocol

INTRO

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression.

My name is Michelle Poirier and I am here on behalf of McMaster University's Equity and Inclusion Office. Our Office is available to all staff, students and faculty members who have concerns related to discrimination, harassment and sexual violence. Our Office also provides training and works on a range of equity-related projects including a Trans Inclusion Project. This project is being implemented with members of transgender and gender non-binary communities on campus.

I begin by acknowledging that Hamilton is on lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Agreement, and the traditional territory and waters of diverse First Nations, including those nations' people who identify as Two Spirit.

LAW

I also want to recognize the uncompensated work that is being done by transgender and gender non-binary activists in our community, many of them who are in the room today. I want to thank everyone who has been compelled to share their personal stories in the hope of preventing discrimination, harassment and violence by those who would target them because of their gender identity or gender expression. Harassment and discrimination against transgender and gender non-binary members of our community is a violation of their legally protected human rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Human rights are not up for debate. People who are transgender and gender non-binary have legal rights to the guidelines that are proposed in the protocol. They have a legal right not to be harassed. They have a legal right to participate fully in the life of the community and to access services provided by the City of Hamilton without discrimination.

EVIDENCE

The Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression is supported by current research. Leading internationally-renowned scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences have clearly established that gender identity and gender expression are complex phenomenon insufficiently explained or understood through conventional gender binaries that attempt to neatly separate gender difference into two discrete categories. More importantly, the inaccuracy of dividing people into two discrete categories is evidenced by the people here today. We do not and we will not fit into narrow gender binaries. By supporting the Protocol, you can feel confident that you are supporting an evidence-based approach to advancing and protecting the human rights of all Hamiltonians.

MYTHS

Opponents to the protocol will spread misinformation suggesting that transgender and gender non-binary people are a threat to women in public washrooms and change rooms. There is absolutely no evidence to support this claim. There is not a single account of a transgender or gender non-binary person harming a woman in a public washroom. There are, however, volumes of accounts of violence enacted against transgender and gender non-binary people for simply using the washroom of their choice. The real concern is transphobia, especially transmisogyny, that is enacted by cis-gender people.

REALITY

The reality is that we are here today to debate and discuss a protocol that simply advances the most fundamental rights to which we are all entitled – the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Trans rights are human rights. Human rights are not up for debate. I urge you to decide in favour of the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression.

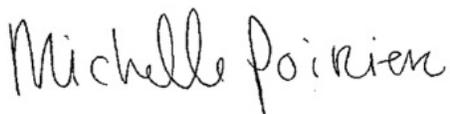
Thank you.



Vilma Rossi

Senior Program Manager

McMaster University, Equity and Inclusion Office



Michelle Poirier

Complaint Resolution and Equity Specialist

Attachments

Letters of support from:

1. Dr. Amber Dean, Acting Director, McMaster's Graduate Program in Gender Studies & Feminist Research
2. Dr. Ameil Joseph, Chair, McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community



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March 3, 2017

Chair & Members
Audit Finance & Administration Committee
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Re: Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons (HUR17002)

Dear Chair and Members of the Audit Finance and Administration Committee,

The Gender Studies and Feminist Research Graduate Program at McMaster University urges you to **vote in support** of the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression when it comes before you on March 6, 2017.

The Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression is supported by current research. Leading internationally-renowned scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences have clearly established that gender identity and gender expression are complex phenomenon insufficiently explained or understood through conventional gender binaries that attempt to neatly separate gender difference into two discrete categories. By supporting the Protocol, you can feel confident that you are supporting an evidence-based approach to advancing and protecting the human rights of all Hamiltonians.

Our program frequently attracts top-notch graduate students who identify as Trans* or gender-non-conforming, and the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression will most certainly help make the City of Hamilton an attractive, inclusive, respectful place for them to live, study and work. As a program, we have witnessed first-hand the harms suffered by our Trans* and gender-non-conforming students and colleagues as a result of ignorance about gender identity and gender expression, which fosters discrimination, harassment, human rights violations, and violence. By supporting the Protocol today, you will be challenging this widespread ignorance about gender identity and expression, and helping to create a city in which people who identify as Trans* and gender-non-conforming can live with dignity and respect for their human rights.

For all of these reasons, the Graduate Program in Gender Studies & Feminist Research at McMaster University urges you to **vote in support of the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression**. We also applaud the courage and integrity of those who have developed the Protocol and of our students, colleagues and community partners who will appear before you as delegates supporting the Protocol on March 6th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A Dean".

Dr. Amber Dean
Associate Professor
Acting Director, Gender Studies & Feminist Research
On behalf of the Gender Studies & Feminist Research Executive Committee
gsfrdir@mcmaster.ca

March 5, 2017

Audit, Finance & Administration Committee
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Re: (HUR17002) Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons

Dear Chair and Members of the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee,

The McMaster University's President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC) supports the City of Hamilton's Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons (HUR17002) and calls for the Chair and members of the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee to vote in favour of this important Protocol.

A major part of the mandate of PACBIC is to: Identify and anticipate issues affecting equity-seeking communities (including but not limited to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, members of racialized communities, newcomers and refugees, members of diverse faith communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ-identified individuals, and women) both within the University and relevant to those seeking access to the University, and advise the President on such issues.

Within this mandate, we believe it is of the utmost importance to support the advancement of policy, practice and law that affirms the freedoms of equity seeking groups. The Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Persons (HUR17002) is both necessary and important for building an inclusive community at McMaster University, and within the greater City of Hamilton. We believe your support for this Protocol on March 6th, 2017 will provide a leading example that will help in the prevention of discrimination, harassment and violations of human rights for transgender and gender non-conforming persons.

Sincerely,



Dr. Ameil J. Joseph
Assistant Professor,
School of Social Work
Chair: McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community