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Gender Inclusive Housing: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Gender Inclusive Housing?

Gender Inclusive Housing (GIH) focuses on creating an inclusive environment where students can live in the same room with any student - regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

Why are we doing this? Why now?

A growing trend for colleges and universities is a shift toward Gender Inclusive Housing, understanding that traditional, same-sex room assignments are not ideal or appropriate for all students. The Residence Life Office has chosen to offer Gender Inclusive Housing because we value inclusive, welcoming environments for all of our students.

In partnership with Edgewood Commons, Frostburg State University has already incorporated Mixed Gender Apartments since 2007. Edgewood Commons will now also offer Gender Inclusive Housing alongside a few select locations within the traditional residence halls.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, we also facilitated several focus groups to gather information on the opinions of staff and students regarding Gender Inclusive Housing. Overwhelmingly, there was a positive response to this possibility, acknowledging that ongoing education and discussion would be necessary for the Frostburg community to embrace this new initiative.

What are the differences between co-ed and Gender Inclusive Housing?

The term *co-ed* assumes that there are only two genders, male and female. Most colleges and universities have now realized that this binary is not only imaginary, but problematic for healthy expressions of gender identity. It also does not allow for an acceptance of our trans* and gender variant populations, those who have been ridiculed and ostracized by the broader society and who need a safe space within our campus communities.

How will this compare to Special Interest Housing (e.g. Honors Housing, bWell, STEM, or ECHOstars)?

Gender Inclusive Housing is a housing option rather than a Special Interest Housing community. While intentional programming may permeate Gender Inclusive Housing communities, the primary purpose is to provide a space for people of all genders to live comfortably and without judgment.

Special Interest Housing requires either academic or interdepartmental partnerships to guide learning and engagement within the residence halls. Whether connecting Honors College to Honors Housing or the Civic Engagement Office to ECHOstars, Special Interest Housing is purposed toward co-curricular programming and learning for resident students.

Who is eligible for Gender Inclusive Housing?

Gender Inclusive Housing is open to all students. As with all on-campus students, a Housing Application is required to retain on-campus housing. Students will also be required to sign a Community Agreement; noting their compliance to community standards.

What if a student does not want to live within Gender Inclusive Housing?

Since Gender Inclusive Housing requires a student to sign a Community Agreement, only those who are committed to this option would be eligible. The majority of housing at Frostburg State University will remain same-sex housing.

What buildings will have Gender Inclusive Housing?

Students who indicate an interest in Gender Inclusive Housing will be assigned within Frederick and Westminster Hall clusters. Should there be an overwhelming request for Gender Inclusive Housing, additional space will be made available in alternate locations. Additionally, Edgewood Commons will continue to provide Gender Inclusive Apartments.

What will happen to the remaining roommate(s)/quadmate(s) when a vacancy occurs?

If a vacancy occurs, the remaining student(s) will be contacted by the Residence Life Office to find a new roommate who would be committed to Gender Inclusive Housing. Should an individual student committed to Gender Inclusive Housing request a new assignment, they may be placed with a vacant space within Gender Inclusive Housing, the same as our regular housing process assignments for vacancies.

Will you prevent people who are romantically involved from living together?

Gender Inclusive Housing is not intended for romantic couples. However, we respect the privacy of our students and will not intrude on their relationships unless they violate University policy.

Will restrooms be Gender Inclusive as well?

In conjunction with the Facilities Department, the Residence Life Office will be reviewing all restrooms in our residence halls for the possibility of providing a Gender Inclusive option, one per hall. Initially, we will seek single stall or single shower facilities. If a single stall option is not available, we will advocate for the smallest restroom on a given floor or building. This will also provide guests or visitors a restroom facility without entering a gender-specific restroom that doesn't align with their gender identity.

Where can I go to review more information?

Residence Life Office main page: <http://www.frostburg.edu/housing>

Safe Zones at Frostburg State: <http://www.frostburg.edu/gbv/fsu-safe-zone/>

President's Advisory Council Against Gender-Based Violence: <http://www.frostburg.edu/gbv/>

NASPA GLBT Knowledge Community: <https://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/kcs/gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-transgender>

Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals: <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/>

Campus PRIDE: http://www.campuspride.org/?gclid=CO_xv7GJ4MQCFajm7AodokcAXQ

The National Student Genderblind campaign: www.genderblind.org/resources

**For Additional Questions pertaining to Gender Inclusive Housing, please contact:
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