

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1252

TITLE: Resolution Requesting the Creation of a LGBTQ+ Institute

AUTHOR: Senator Julia Seifer

SPONSORS: Pride Student Union President Jonathan C. Stephens, Majority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Deputy Majority Party Leader Chalisa Budhai, Senator Laurie Wang, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Senator Monish Vijayaraghavan, Senator Matthew Reich, Senator Monish Vijayaraghavan, Senator Aaron Amster, Senator Evan E. Rafanan, Senator Jordan LoSardo, Senator Samantha Kinggard, Senator John Lin, Senator Saketh Damera

WHEREAS, the University of Florida is an institution that strives for diversity and takes active efforts to achieve it. For example, the formation of the Institute of Hispanic and Latinx Culture (La Casita), the Institute of Black Culture, and The Center for Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement in the Reitz Union; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ students are an essential part of the University of Florida campus and are deserving of an institute to support the community; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals, like all other students, faculty, and staff, deserve to feel safe, supported, and represented within the university community [1]; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ students face unique challenges related to identity, mental health, and discrimination, and an LGBTQ+ Institute can provide specialized support and resources to address these challenges [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the establishment of an LGBTQ+ Institute at the University of Florida aligns with the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and sends a strong message of acceptance and support to LGBTQ+ individuals within and beyond the campus [3]; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ Institutes at other universities have proven to be valuable resources, providing academic research, educational programs, and community outreach that contribute to a more inclusive and understanding society [4]; and,

WHEREAS, an LGBTQ+ Institute can foster interdisciplinary research collaborations among faculty members and students, enriching the academic environment and advancing knowledge on LGBTQ+ issues [5]; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals contribute significantly to society, and the establishment of an LGBTQ+ Institute will recognize and celebrate their achievements and contributions [6]; and,

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ awareness and support have been shown to positively impact mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being for LGBTQ+ students [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the LGBTQ+ community continues to face challenges and discrimination, and an LGBTQ+ Institute can play a vital role in advocacy efforts and promoting social justice [8]; and,

WHEREAS, the month of June is celebrated as Pride Month, an important time to commemorate the LGBTQ+ community's history, achievements, and ongoing struggles, making it an opportune time to initiate the creation of the LGBTQ+ Institute [9].

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of establishing an LGBTQ+ Institute at the University of Florida to provide specialized support, resources, and academic research for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, staff, and the broader community.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges the university administration to actively support and allocate resources for the establishment of an LGBTQ+ Institute that will foster an inclusive environment and address the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages collaboration between faculty members, departments, and student organizations to shape the vision and objectives of the LGBTQ+ Institute, ensuring it represents the interests and concerns of the LGBTQ+ community at the university.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls on the university to work in consultation with existing LGBTQ+ organizations and advocates to design an LGBTQ+ Institute that best serves the needs of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff, and contributes to the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, Interim Provost J. Scott Angle, Chief Diversity Officer Marsha McGriff, LGBTQ+ Affairs Programming Director Jamir Wright, the Presidential LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee, the Office for Accessibility and Gender Identity, Director of LGBTQ+ Cabinet Affairs Riley Towbin, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Stephens, LGBTQ+ Honors Affinity Group Advisor TehQuin D. Forbes, and former Senator Bronson Allemand.

- [1] <https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/about/history/>
- [2] <https://www.campusprideindex.org/>
- [3] <https://www.ufl.edu/about/diversity/>
- [4] <https://campusinvolvement.umich.edu/article/spectrum-center>
- [5] <https://lgbtq.ph.ucla.edu/>
- [6] <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/lgbtq-activism-and-contributions/>
- [7] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9105225/>
- [8] <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-and-barriers-to-well-being-the-state-of-the-lgbtqi-community-in-2022/>
- [9] <https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/>