



THRIVING On Campus

Campus Policies, Facilities, & Services

Thriving On Campus is an Ontario-wide campus climate study for 2SLGBTQ+ university students. The project explored students' experiences, perceptions, wellbeing, and academic success. Nearly 3900 2SLGBTQ+ students participated in an online survey and 50 students participated in follow-up interviews. Surveys were administered in Winter 2019 and interviews took place from Fall 2019 to Summer 2020. For more information about the study and those who participated, please see "Study Overview and Participants' Demographics."

This report presents:

- Findings from a scan of 2SLGBTQ+ policies, facilities, and resources available on campuses throughout the province.
- Findings about students' awareness of the availability of gender-inclusive bathrooms, changerooms, and housing as well as their views about these facilities.
- Findings about students' awareness of their institution's name and gender change policies and their perceptions of these policies.
- Findings about students' use of campus-based services, such as health and wellness services, and their perceptions of the services they received.
- Recommendations for campuses to consider as they work to foster the belonging, wellbeing, and academic success of 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Please note: Because it is not possible to randomly sample 2SLGBTQ+ university students in Ontario, we cannot know with certainty if our findings represent the population of 2SLGBTQ+ students at Ontario universities. However, given the size and diversity of our survey and interview samples, our findings offer important insights to support policies and programs that are responsive to the needs, strengths, and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ students.

For some findings reported below, we report the number of respondents to the particular survey question because of missing data due to some students not answering the question.

2SLGBTQ+ Facilities, Resources & Policies

Administrators at each university reported on the availability of 2SLGBTQ+ facilities, resources and services, as well as respective policies on their campuses. Unless noted, information was reported for a total of 31 campuses.

Facilities

- 28 campuses had gender-inclusive washrooms and 17 had gender-inclusive changerooms ¹
- 13 campuses offered gender-inclusive housing ²
- 21 campuses had a dedicated gathering space for 2SLGBTQ+ students

Resources & Services

- 28 campuses offered student clubs/ groups or programs specifically for 2SLGBTQ+ students
- 14 campuses offered 2SLGBTQ+ health services (e.g., hormone treatments, referrals to gender affirming surgery, 2SLGBTQ+ specific sexual information)
- 18 campuses offered 2SLGBTQ+ counselling (e.g., sexual health, gender transition)
- 5 campuses had wellness staff specializing in 2SLGBTQ+ care ³

- 13 campuses had at least one student services staff position dedicated to 2SLGBTQ+ programming
- 8 campuses had a standing 2SLGBTQ+ position on their student union/ association board
- 11 campuses offered 2SLGBTQ+ awareness events and programming (e.g., ally training, speaker panels) ⁴

Policies

- 13 campuses enumerated sexual orientation in their student code of non-academic conduct, 5 enumerated gender identity, and 5 enumerated gender expression ⁵
- 15 campuses had a name change policy or practice
- 24 campuses specifically addressed 2SLGBTQ+ discrimination in their sexual harassment/assault training

Gender Inclusive Washrooms & Changerooms

Gender-inclusive washrooms and changerooms are especially relevant to trans students. The findings below represent our trans participants' perceptions.

Availability on Campus

- 65% of 1002 trans students said gender-inclusive washrooms are available
- 15% of 899 trans students said gender-inclusive changerooms are available

Gender-Inclusive Washrooms

Among those who said that gender-inclusive washrooms were available on their campuses:

- 24% of 582 reported that a sufficient number were available
- 37% of 644 reported that they were conveniently located
- 24% of 583 reported that their university does “a good job” of informing students about their availability
- 34% of 593 reported their university does “a good job” of publicizing where to find these washrooms through signage

“We have gender-neutral washrooms on our main campus, but not a lot and they’re very spread out. And when you’re [at] the library, it’s very far.”

—Trans man spectrum, bisexual, white, undergraduate student

“If you’re going to the gym, you’re expected to go into the male or female changerooms. So, that’s definitely a space that caused me a lot of anxiety and my identity felt in hyper focus in that space.”

— Trans woman spectrum, pansexual, white, graduate student

Gender-Inclusive Changerooms

Among those who said that gender-inclusive changerooms were available on their campuses:

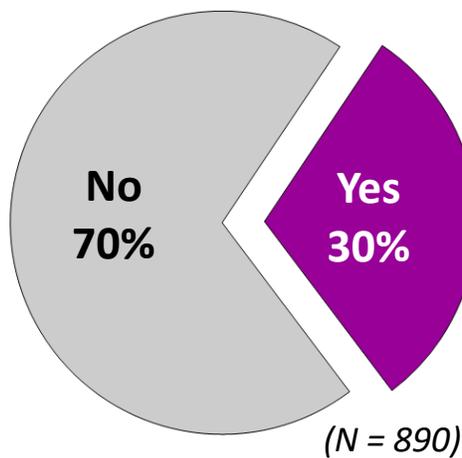
- 42% of 96 reported that a sufficient number were available
- 68% of 93 said that they were easily accessible
- 31% of 98 said their university does “a good job” of informing students about their availability
- 46% of 97 reported their university does “a good job” of publicizing where to find these changerooms through signage

Gender-Inclusive Housing

All respondents were asked about the availability of gender-inclusive housing on their campus. Those students who indicated that gender-inclusive housing was available were asked follow-up questions about their perceptions of these facilities.

What Did Trans Students Report?

Is Gender-Inclusive Housing Available on Your Campus?

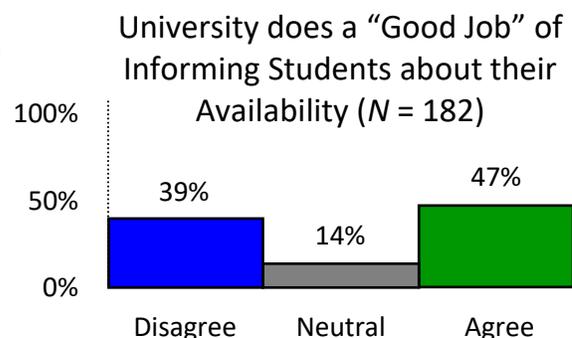
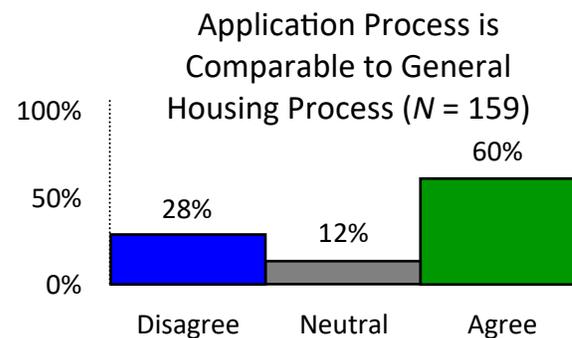
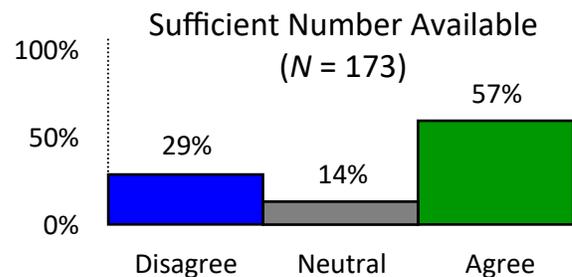


76 trans students reported living or having lived in gender-inclusive housing:

- 91% agreed the staff were welcoming and respectful
- 76% agreed the other students were welcoming and respectful
- 76% agreed the staff were supportive

127 cisgender students reported living in gender-inclusive housing:

- 91% agreed the staff were welcoming and respectful
- 85% agreed the other students were welcoming and respectful
- 86% agreed the staff were supportive



"... it was a great residence experience; I was placed with another trans person."

—Trans, agender, bisexual, white, disabled, undergraduate student

Name & Gender Change Policies

For various reasons students may want to change their names and gender marker on *official* academic records (e.g., transcripts) and *campus* records (e.g., student ID). For some trans students, it may be important to do so to reflect the name they use and their gender identity.

Official Academic Records

- 32% of 874 trans students said name changes were possible⁶
- 30% of 846 trans students said gender marker changes were possible

Campus Records

- 28% of 1057 trans students said name changes were possible
- 36% of 855 trans students said gender marker changes were possible

Trans Students' Experiences of Changing their Names and/or Gender Markers

Survey Question		Official Academic Records	Campus Records
Name change process - information was <i>easily accessible</i>	# trans students	(N = 37)	(N = 102)
	% agreed	46%	48%
Name change process was <i>user friendly</i>	# trans students	(N = 39)	(N = 103)
	% agreed	67%	65%
Gender marker change process - information was <i>easily accessible</i>	# trans students	(N = 18)	(N = 37)
	% agreed	44%	41%
Gender marker change process was <i>user friendly</i>	# trans students	(N = 20)	(N = 37)
	% agreed	50%	62%

Cisgender Students' Experiences

- 33 cisgender students changed their name on official academic records and 22 of them reported that the process was user friendly
- 70 cisgender students changed their name on campus records and 51 of them reported that the process was user friendly

2SLGBTQ+ Student Centres/Groups

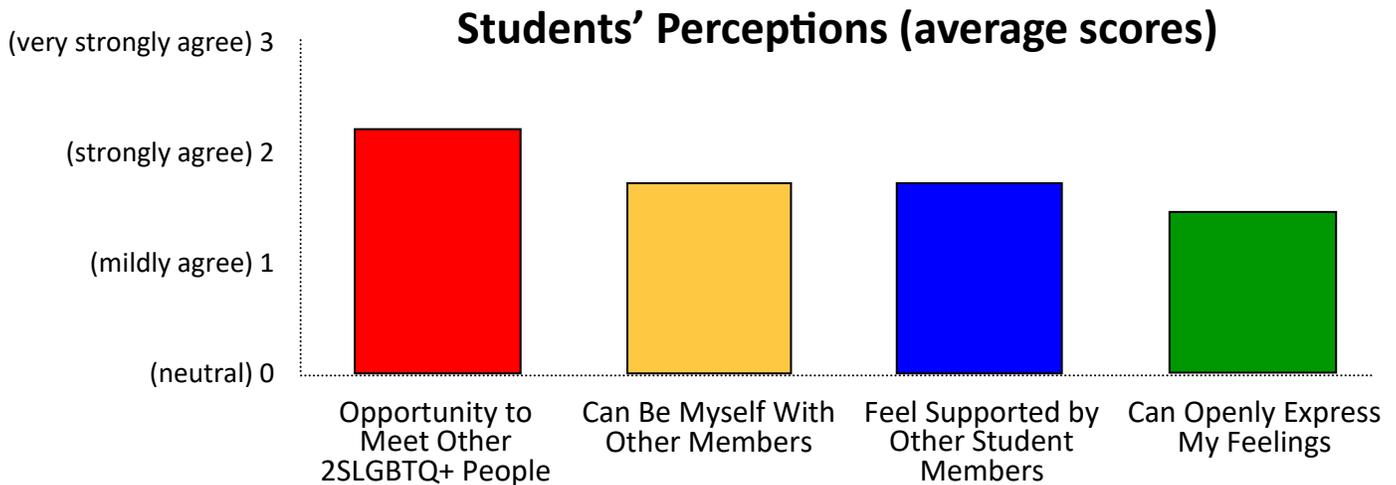
Participation in 2SLGBTQ+ Centres/Groups

Survey participants were asked about engaging with 2SLGBTQ+ student centres or groups on campus since the start of the academic year.

- 25% ($n = 885$) of students participated in a 2SLGBTQ+ student centre/group
- More trans students participated in these centres than cisgender students (37% vs 21%)

Perceptions of 2SLGBTQ+ Centres/Groups

All respondents who participated in 2SLGBTQ+ student centres/groups were asked about their perceptions of these spaces. This can be seen in the chart below.



Note: Participants reported their level of agreement with each statement (-3 = very strongly disagree, 0 = neutral, 3 = very strongly agree). Higher score indicates more positive assessment. The disagree portion of the chart is omitted because the average scores were above zero.

As reported in the chart above, students overall rated their experiences with 2SLGBTQ+ centres/groups on campus positively. However, as seen in the table below, not all students reported positive perceptions.

Survey Question:	Selected a Disagree options or Neutral
Opportunity to meet other 2SLGBTQ+ people	8.0%
Can be myself with other members	18.6%
Feel supported by other student members	18.5%
Can openly express my feelings	24.3%

In the interviews, some students talked about their experiences with 2SLGBTQ+ student centres/groups. Students reported both positive and negative experiences.

“I know there is an LGBTQ centre on campus. I’ve never been there. Part of me has this fear of going there, because when you go there, other people can see you going in there.”

– Cisgender man, gay, disabled, BIPOC, undergraduate student

“Whenever I’m in those spaces I feel like I am safe, and I’m embraced by this community. But at the same time, I feel like these spaces, they’re not as advertised as I think they should be ... a lot of people don’t know about it.”

– Trans woman spectrum, lesbian, BIPOC, undergraduate student

“I went to one meeting, and I didn’t really get what I wanted out of it ... I don’t know, I thought the environment wasn’t really for me. And so, I ended up going to one meeting and then never went back.”

– Cisgender woman, queer, BIPOC, undergraduate student

General Campus Services

Students were asked if they had used various services on campus at any point since the start of the academic year. For those who answered yes, follow-up questions were asked about their experience using the service specifically as an 2SLGBTQ+ student.

Top 5 Services Used (across all survey participants)

Recreational Spaces	51%
Academic Advising	42%
Medical Services	39%
Mental Health Services	29%
Career Counseling	18%

Making Sense of the Data

As displayed in the chart on the next page, across each survey question relatively large percentages of respondents rated services positively, especially in terms of feeling welcomed and respected. However, room for improvement exists, in particular when delivering services to nonbinary students.

Across all services, the lowest percentage of respondents tended to agree that staff were knowledgeable about 2SLGBTQ+ students' needs and were skilled in providing them services.

Based on student satisfaction, considerable improvements are needed in medical services, mental health services, and career counselling services.

"I had [an experience] where I had a doctor make all kinds of really awful assumptions about me and my health, based on what I told them about my gender identity and sexual orientation. And it [left] me feeling rattled and shaken, and really, really upset."

– Trans, nonbinary, queer, disabled, white, graduate student

"I was seeing a counsellor back in my first year ... and as soon as I mentioned I was queer, he was like, "that's why you're depressed." And I was like, "I don't think so, I'm very comfortable with my identity"... and he was like, "no, you'll figure it out – you'll come to that conclusion yourself.""

– Trans, nonbinary, queer, white, disabled, undergraduate student

Evaluations of Campus Services⁷: Gender Breakdown

	2SLGBTQ+ Student Agreement ⁸		
	Nonbinary Students	Trans Students	Cisgender Students
Recreational Spaces			
Felt welcomed and respected	78.0%	73.8%	86.7%
Staff skilled in providing services	67.0%	63.3%	76.6%
Overall, satisfied with services	79.9%	73.3%	87.1%
Academic Advising Services			
Felt welcomed and respected	81.3%	82.8%	86.9%
Staff knowledgeable about needs	72.5%	75.5%	80.0%
Staff skilled in providing services	76.9%	74.5%	80.4%
Overall, satisfied with services	75.7%	77.1%	80.2%
Health/Medical Services			
Felt welcomed and respected	70.9%	75.7%	82.2%
Staff knowledgeable about needs	61.7%	66.4%	77.5%
Staff skilled in providing services	64.8%	74.3%	80.2%
Overall, satisfied with services	63.0%	74.3%	78.4%
Psychological/Mental Health Services			
Felt welcomed and respected	77.9%	83.3%	86.0%
Staff knowledgeable about needs	61.3%	69.4%	75.0%
Staff skilled in providing services	69.1%	64.9%	73.6%
Overall, satisfied with services	62.7%	70.1%	70.5%
Career Counselling Services			
Felt welcomed and respected	77.3%	74.7%	86.0%
Staff knowledgeable about needs	65.5%	66.3%	77.3%
Staff skilled in providing services	74.5%	69.9%	79.3%
Overall, satisfied with services	71.8%	72.3%	79.5%

Recommendations

In implementing these recommendations, we encourage campuses to partner with 2SLGBTQ+ students and collaborate with 2SLGBTQ+ service providers in the community.

Gender-Inclusive Facilities & 2SLGBTQ+ Student Centres/Groups

Washrooms:

- Increase the number of gender-inclusive washrooms available and ensure they are conveniently located and well-advertised.
- Include gender-inclusive washrooms in new buildings alongside gendered (male/female) washrooms.
- Audit existing buildings to identify gendered washrooms that could be converted to inclusive ones.
- Develop a campaign communicating that gendered washrooms are for everyone who identifies with that gender.
- Include the location of gender-inclusive washrooms on campus maps and list them on resource pages for 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Changerooms:

- Increase the number of gender-inclusive changerooms in recreational facilities.
- Ensure barriers do not exist in accessing these changerooms (e.g., gender-inclusive changerooms are clearly advertised)

Housing:

- Increase the number of gender-inclusive housing units available and review application processes to remove any unnecessary processes.

Student Centres & Groups:

- Identify any barriers to students' participation and conduct assessments to ensure they are responsive to members' needs.

Name & Gender Change Policies

Campuses that do not offer students the opportunities to change their names and gender markers on official and university records should implement a process to begin to offer these options.

All campuses with these policies should ensure that information about these policies is easily available to students and application processes are user friendly.

*To learn about the University of Toronto's Washroom Inclusivity Project, check out [this presentation](#) given during one of *Thriving On Campus*' webinars.*

2SLGBTQ+ Culturally Responsive Services

Student services should adopt a lens of 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion by ensuring services are responsive to the needs, experiences, and strengths of diverse 2SLGBTQ+ students, especially nonbinary students.

Organizational values and systems need to prioritize 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion (alongside inclusion for other marginalized groups). For example, staff training and development in 2SLGBTQ+ service provision is important and needs to be supported through supervision and mentoring. Campuses could establish communities of practice to support inclusive service delivery across departments.

Student feedback about the quality and responsiveness of services is vital. Consider

consulting with 2SLGBTQ+ student groups on campus or establishing an advisory committee. When conducting general feedback surveys, ensure questions about gender and sexual identity are included to allow for data to be disaggregated for 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Campuses should ensure information about gender-inclusive facilities, name and gender marker change policies, 2SLGBTQ+ student centres/groups, and other specialized 2SLGBTQ+ campus services is widely available and promoted in communications to both 2SLGBTQ+ students and the general

Check out some of the training available through two of our community partners, [Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity](#) and [EGALE](#).

Endnotes

¹ Three campuses do not have recreational facilities.

² One university campus does not offer any student housing.

³ Three campuses do not have wellness facilities.

⁴ Data not reported for 16 campuses.

⁵ Data not reported for 4 campuses.

⁶ Students who indicated that they changed their names or gender markers were asked about their perceptions of the process.

⁷ Students were asked to provide feedback thinking about their experience using the services as a 2SLGBTQ+ student.

⁸ Percentages reflect students who selected “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree.”



The study was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Wilfrid Laurier University's Division of Student Affairs and the Manulife Centre for Community Health Research at Wilfrid Laurier University's Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work supported an earlier pilot survey designed to evaluate select scales developed for Thriving on Campus. For further information please visit lgbtq2thrivingoncampus.ca

Recommended citation:

Michael R. Woodford, Eric Van Giessen, Harrison Oakes, & the Thriving On Campus team (2022). *Thriving On Campus: Campus Policies, Facilities, & Services*. Thriving On Campus, Wilfrid Laurier University: Kitchener, ON.



UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL



McGill
UNIVERSITY



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada