

### S.R. 3 – Protection for LGBTQIA+ Persons at WWU

**Sponsor:** Joshua Peinado and Hayden Sherill

**Preamble:** Homophobia is defined as “prejudice, discrimination, bias, or hatred against another person based on their non-heteronormative sexual identity”. As an institution, the church has a long and ugly history with the LGBTQIA+ community. The frequent hate crimes, discriminatory attitudes, and legal oppression of the group has mostly been based on **religious values** that most Americans now understand to **undermine human value, decency, and worth**. Since 2015, when gay marriage was legalized, one can see the church making strides to be a better neighbor to our LGBTQIA+ guys, gals, and non gender-binary pals. However, Walla Walla University still holds onto inherently **homophobic** principles in its **student handbook**.



“...sexual relationships are to be protected and celebrated in the context of a committed marriage between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:23-25). Walla Walla University supports this conviction through its policies and requires faculty, staff, and students to reflect this conviction in their behavior.”

“Walla Walla University, as a religious institution owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, formulates policies for students that reflect the conviction that marriage is “a lifelong union between a man and a woman” (from the “28 Fundamental Beliefs”). In keeping with this conviction, we expect students to refrain from premarital and extramarital sexual relationships. Only couples united in a legal marriage between a man and a woman will be acknowledged as married in the policies of the university.”



This **statement** is a part of the student handbook, which outlines rules that all students, staff, and faculty are expected to abide by. If people do not follow the rules outlined in the student handbook, there is a punishment process that could result in potential expulsion or termination from the University. In this context, Walla Walla University has made it clear in this statement there is not a safe home for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff at the University, as if they violate hetero-normative standards, they would be in violation of the student handbook. This would potentially include behavior such as supporting gay marriage publicly, engaging in a not hetero-normative relationship, or marrying in a non hetero-normative context.



If Walla Walla University is truly dedicated to upholding human rights, as described in the student handbook



“Human rights guarantee full and abundant life and citizenship in the university’s community and ensure liberty, freedom, and participation in an effective democratic student-government. Furthermore, **human rights guarantee equity of conditions and treatment as well as access to nutrition, shelter, education, work and fair wages, etc.** All students are equally entitled to such human rights without discrimination.”



Also saying that “Every student at Walla Walla University has human rights, which are rights inherent to all human beings. They are inalienable, and they recognize the intrinsic dignity in every person regardless of nationality, place of residence, **sex or gender identity and expression,** national or ethnic origin, color or race, religion, language, **sexuality,** class, neurodiversity, **or any other status, group affiliation, or characteristics.**”



However, they give themselves a reason to take away these fundamental human rights.

“Moreover, **human rights** may not be taken away, except in specific situations and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a student is found to have violated university’s policies or county, state, and federal laws and regulations.”



Here, they have expressed that a student or staff’s human rights can be taken away if they found in violation of the University Handbook, i.e. their right to an education or a wage. (expulsion or termination respectively).




If Walla Walla University truly remains dedicated to its policy of non discrimination, as outlined above and in the Title IX statement



“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”



Then it must **remove** the section that categorizes non heteronormative behaviors or relationships as punishable by the University. **BECAUSE this passage either**

- a) Discriminates against students based on sex, sexual identity, or preference


- b) Is unenforceable, and simply serves as an aesthetic of homophobic attitudes that contribute to an unwelcoming environment towards LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff. 

Walla Walla University has proven to be a **home** to many students, faculty, and staff of various sexual identities, and preferences, but it reflects poorly on the University to keep these **homophobic** attitudes in the University Handbook.   



**Be it resolved by the Associated Students of Walla Walla University Senate assembled, that,**


1. Walla Walla University removes these passage from its handbook

i. *Affirmation of Seventh-day Adventist teachings*

*We are founded on Christian teachings and values as understood and appreciated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which teaches that sexual relationships are to be protected and celebrated in the context of a committed marriage **between a man and a woman** (Genesis 2:23-25). Walla Walla University supports this conviction through its policies and requires faculty, staff, and students to reflect this conviction in their behavior.* 

ii. *Sexual Standards Policy*

*Walla Walla University, as a religious institution owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, ~~formulates policies for students that reflect the conviction that marriage is “a lifelong union between a man and a woman” (from the “28 Fundamental Beliefs”).~~ In keeping with this conviction, we expect students to refrain from premarital and extramarital sexual relationships. Only couples united in a legal marriage ~~between a man and a woman~~ will be acknowledged as married in the policies of the university.* 

2. The University can continue on the path towards **justice and equality** for students, faculty, and staff of all sexual identities and preferences. 

**Vote Margin:** 2/3

**Signatures:**

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Wils Haffner, President of the Senate

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Eric Welch, ASWWU President

\*Suggestions to Writer:

- Consider including that we are not requiring the University to alter its opinion of the church or NAD in one fell swoop but rather just to change eliminate unfair treatment of one certain community of students.
- Consider only eliminating only parts of the handbook that deal with marriage between man and woman so that we don't accidentally remove parts about pre-marital sex (since that it is a different conversation that could be had, I.e. only take out the parts that have strikethroughs)
- **Does the University take any grants? I.e. cares act – if so, they are legally required to give these equal rights to members of this community.**

