# Message in Support of the UVA

# Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community

The University of Virginia, including the Health System and the College at Wise, is deeply proud of the contributions to research, teaching, patient care, service, scholarship, and learning made by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni who are transgender and gender non-conforming. On October 17, 2018, the University actively participated in International Pronouns Day, a global initiative to honor the pronouns of transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals, passing out pronouns buttons and hosting a film event and dialogue. Those actions -- taken to honor and respect all gender identities -- reflect the values of our community and our commitment to inclusion. We will continue to lead and promote other efforts to make the University a more inclusive, respectful and equitable place for all.

Recent news reports that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) may propose a rule to potentially construct a new federal definition for gender, however, understandably has caused anxiety and fear, similar to last fall’s rolling back of the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights’ Transgender Dear Colleague Guidance, for transgender and gender non-conforming community members and their allies. We, as a University, take this opportunity to affirm our strong commitment to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity – a policy that absolutely protects individuals on the basis of their affirmed gender. Discrimination or harassment based on sex, gender, or gender identity, including such actions taken against transgender or gender non-conforming members of our community, runs directly counter to our University’s values of respect, diversity, and inclusion and violates University policy.

* For questions regarding the University’s Notice of Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Statement or Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment Policy (the PADH Policy), please contact the Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR) staff at (434) 924-3200 or by email to [uvaeocr@virginia.edu](mailto:uvaeocr@virginia.edu).
* For questions regarding the University’s Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence Policy (the Title IX Policy), please contact EOCR Title IX staff at (434) 297-7988 or by email to [titleixcoordinator@virginia.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@virginia.edu).
* For questions regarding the University of Virginia College at Wise Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence Policy, please contact UVA-Wise Title IX staff at (276) 328-0121 or by email to [tabitha.smith@uvawise.edu](mailto:tabitha.smith@uvawise.edu).

EOCR, and our partners across the University, will be closely following the HHS proposal as it moves through the federal rule making process. We are committed to keeping the University community updated on these matters as they continue to develop, to participating in the federal comment period, and to sharing resources for our transgender and gender non-conforming community members, as they are needed. We encourage you to visit the EOCR website for more information and education: <http://eocr.virginia.edu/pronouns>.

Thank you for your attention to this important message and your invaluable assistance in supporting an inclusive environment for everyone at the University of Virginia, the College at Wise, and the Health System.