

Date of Meeting:	February 6, 2025
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PURDUE GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

RESOLUTION No. SP25-R002

Expresses Public Opposition and Concern regarding SB 235



Author(s): Francesco Fuentes, Levi Li, Sonja Nusser
Sponsor(s):

WHEREAS, According to the official Purdue Nondiscrimination Policy Statement as of January 2025, “Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life,” *; and

WHEREAS, “Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran,” *; and

WHEREAS, We the members of the Purdue community, join together to support and reaffirm this non-discrimination policy which promotes belonging and community on our campus, protection from harassment and discrimination for all students, faculty, and staff, and an environment that reduces prejudice, allowing us all to thrive; and

WHEREAS, Indiana State Senate Bill 235, Limitations on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, prohibits “as the official position of an agency a particular opinion referencing: unconscious or implicit bias... cultural appropriation... allyship... transgender ideology... microaggressions... group marginalization... antiracism... systemic oppression... social justice... intersectionality... neopronouns... heteronormativity... disparate impact... gender theory... racial or sexual privilege... or any related formulation of the concepts [above]”; and

WHEREAS, Indiana State Senate Bill 235 has the potential to restrict freedom of speech by prohibiting Purdue officials from voicing thoughts, opinions, and referencing peer-reviewed data on a wide variety of topics, especially on topics concerning the safety of underrepresented communities, and harms the Purdue community by prohibiting any efforts to identify, address, or correct institutional and interpersonal inequity; and

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WHEREAS, Indiana State Senate Bill 235 states that “A state educational institution may not establish, support, sustain, or employ an office or individual whose primary duties include coordinating, creating, developing, designing, implementing, organizing, planning, or promoting noncredit earning diversity programming that includes DEI”; and

WHEREAS, , The offices or individuals affected by Indiana State Senate Bill 235 are important components of Purdue’s efforts to uphold the nondiscrimination policy and their absence would directly contradict Purdue’s commitment to protect the inherent worth and dignity of every person and foster tolerance and understanding within our community; and

WHEREAS, The Purdue Graduate Student Government recognizes the work of the Office of Institutional Equity, the Office of the Vice President for Ethics and Compliance, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, the Cultural and Resource Centers, and all other offices and individuals who work to promote belonging and community; and

WHEREAS, These offices, colleges, departments, and individuals are crucial to maintaining Purdue University’s non-discrimination and anti-harassment values and policies and any attempts to shut them down would be detrimental to the campus community; and

WHEREAS, Indiana State Senate Bill 235, Limitations on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, is contrary to the non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and values of Purdue University; and

WHEREAS, The developing nature of SB235 requires fast action on the part of Purdue students, precluding further delay of this legislation. SB 235 has passed committee and sources working in the Indiana State senate estimate the bill will be called for a full vote on the senate floor in the next two weeks. A PGSG resolution passed prior to the full vote will convey a strong and unified stance in opposition to this effort, enhancing its overall impact and effectiveness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG) reaffirms its commitment to the University’s nondiscrimination policy as of January 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That PGSG opposes SB 235 on the grounds that it would harm the campus community and restrict the freedom of speech and right to safety of students, staff, and faculty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That PGSG supports the rights of all campus communities targeted by this bill, especially racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and gender minorities, as well as disability, immigration, residency and criminality status.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That PGSG stands in opposition to any attempt to prevent or limit the crucial work done by offices and individuals upholding Purdue’s nondiscrimination policies.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge Purdue's Office of the Provost and Office of the President to make a statement reaffirming their commitment for the nondiscrimination policy as written at the time of this resolution without any substantial alterations.

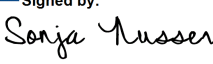
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That PGSG endorses the statement in Appendix A, and the PGSG Executive Board will make a public statement of their own in collaboration with the authors of this legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this be sent to the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate for consideration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be sent to the Office of the President; Office of the Provost; Vice Provost for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging; Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars; Vice Provost for Student Life; Senior Director of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging; Senior Vice President and General Counsel; and Chair of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge Purdue's Office of the Provost and Office of the President to promptly develop a strategic plan to ensure the continued existence of the offices, centers, and individuals targeted by SB 235.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND RESOLVED 6th day of February 2025.

Signed by:

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 Sonja Nusser
 Author

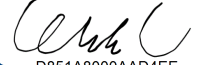
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 Author

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 Victor Gutierrez Schultz
 Senate Chair, PGSS

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 Ethan Johnson
 Parliamentarian, PGSG

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Certification

I, Abigayl Novak, Senate Clerk of the Purdue Graduate Student Senate, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was regularly passed and adopted by the Purdue Graduate Student Senate of Purdue University, at a regular meeting thereof held on the 6th day of February 2025 by acclamation

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21st day of March 2025.

DocuSigned by:
Abigayl Novak
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Abigayl Novak
Senate Clerk, PGSS

EXHIBIT “A”

PROPOSED POLICIES OF THE THG

[SEE ATTACHED TWO (2) PAGES]

EXHIBIT A:

According to Purdue University's official nondiscrimination policy as of January 2025, "Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life." ¹

As members of the Purdue community, we join together to support and reaffirm this non-discrimination policy. Our campus community is constantly expanding to include people of all backgrounds, and it is important to us that all students, faculty, and staff do not face harassment or discrimination. This policy is vital to our campus' safety and allows students to thrive.

Purdue's commitment to developing and nurturing tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect cannot be implemented through words alone and requires action. Many groups and individuals across the university are doing important work protecting the inherent worth and dignity of all people. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Cultural Centers
 - LGBTQ Center
 - Black Cultural Center
 - Latino Cultural Center
 - Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center
 - Native American Education and Resource Center
- Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence
- ADVANCE-Purdue and the Center for Faculty Success
- Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Office of Institutional Equity
- Office of the Vice President for Ethics and Compliance

and the various department-specific committees working to enrich the campus community, among many others. Their efforts benefit everyone by attracting and retaining talented students, faculty, and staff, introducing valuable perspectives which promote the exchange of ideas, and helping every Boilermaker reach their full potential. We believe that stopping that work will hurt not just those who have direct connections to these offices and centers, but the entire campus community as a whole.

A wealth of published research²⁻⁷ directly links student health and wellness to initiatives similar to the offices and centers listed above. Halting these crucial programs and firing related staff would quickly endanger student wellbeing and undermine Purdue's efforts to support student resilience and success.

As a top-tier educational and research institution, Purdue should align its actions with scientific evidence demonstrating that students' sense of belonging is directly tied to positive academic outcomes.⁸ Preserving and funding the Cultural Centers is essential to achieving that goal. Many Boilermakers interact frequently with the Cultural Centers and often rely on them as a source for building personal support networks and as a way to connect with others through mutual experiences. Without these invaluable resources, Purdue's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) will very likely face significant strain in providing professional mental health care and crisis response.

We oppose actions by our state's elected officials that distort and vilify the purpose of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and principles. At the time of writing this statement, Indiana Senate Bill 235 is one of many targeted attacks on the inherent worth and dignity of Boilermakers, and is subsequently a hindrance to Purdue's long-standing record of academic excellence. Without the crucial efforts of diversity programs and staff at Purdue, our campus community will be unable to achieve true academic excellence.

In order to uphold the mission of Purdue University, we urge Purdue's Office of the President and Office of the Provost to make a statement reaffirming their commitment for the nondiscrimination policy quoted above¹ without any substantial alterations. We urge Purdue's Office of the President and Office of the Provost to promptly develop a strategic plan to ensure the continued existence of the offices, centers, and individuals targeted by SB 235 and other similar local, statewide, and national efforts.

- [1] Purdue University. (2025, January 28). *Nondiscrimination Policy Statement*. Purdue.edu. https://web.archive.org/web/20250128160156/https://www.purdue.edu/home/ea_eou_statement/
- [2] Basarkod, G., Dicke, T., Allen, K.-A., Parker, P. D., Ryan, M., Marsh, H. W., Carrick, Z. T., & Guo, J. (2024). Do intercultural education and attitudes promote student wellbeing and social outcomes? An examination across PISA countries. *Learning and Instruction*, 91, 101879. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.101879>
- [3] Comello, M. L., Jain, P., Francis, D. B., Porter, J., Lake, S., Thompson, J., & Gray, J. (2024). DEI in crisis: Reframing diversity, equity, and inclusion workplace programming as a health issue. *Communication Studies*, 75(5), 559–577. <https://doi.org/0.1080/10510974.2024.2390725>
- [4] Duran, A. (2021). "Outsiders in a niche group": Using intersectionality to examine resilience for queer students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 14(2), 217–227. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000144>
- [5] Bourdon, J. L., Saunders, T. R., & Hancock, L. C. (2018). Acknowledgement and support matter: A brief report on gender identity and sexual orientation at a large, urban university. *Journal of American College Health*, 66(8), 809–812. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1432627>
- [6] Pitcher, E. N., Camacho, T. P., Renn, K. A., & Woodford, M. R. (2018). Affirming policies, programs, and supportive services: Using an organizational perspective to understand LGBTQ+ college student success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11(2), 117–132. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000048>
- [7] Griffin, K. A., Muniz, M., & Smith, E. J. (2016). Graduate Diversity Officers and Efforts to Retain Students of Color. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 53(1), 26–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1083437>
- [8] Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*, 331(6023), 1447–1451. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1198364>