

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS STUDENT SENATE

**Authors:** Kenna McNally, *Community Affairs Council Chair*, Kristopher Long; Michael Hanzelka.

**Sponsors:** Evanna Dominic, *Student Body Vice President*; Christopher Raithel, *Speaker of the Students' Assembly*; Robert Eppler, *Internal Affairs Director*; Emma Atherton, *Chair of the Student Rights & Affairs Council*.

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**A Resolution Urging the Reinstatement of Gender Inclusive Assignments at Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall and the Repeal of a Report-Based System of Bathroom Use Enforcement**

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**Summary:** Address the decision by KU Housing & Residence Life to end Gender Inclusive Assignments at Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall and enforce gendered bathroom usage via resident reports. Urge review and reconsideration of this policy to preserve the inclusive community at Grace Pearson and the availability of GIA.

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**WHEREAS,** University of Kansas Housing & Residence Life (KU Housing) operates all on-campus housing, including residence halls, scholarship halls, and apartments. Generally, units in on-campus housing are segregated by gender. However, KU Housing offers Gender Inclusive Assignments (GIA) for some units, which allows two or more students of different genders to share a unit. KU Housing determines which units are available for GIA.

**WHEREAS,** GIA are an essential part of KU Housing for many students, including transgender students. For example, transgender students who are unable to update their gender markers with the university may use GIA to avoid being assigned to units marked for a gender they no longer identify with.

**WHEREAS,** In recent correspondence, KU Housing announced their intention to end gender-inclusive assignments in Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall (GP) beginning in the 2025–26 academic year and begin a report-based system to police gendered bathroom usage. This correspondence is reproduced in Appendices A and B to this legislation. KU Housing informed residents of the decision eight days before residents were supposed to select their rooms, and after they had signed their housing contracts.

**WHEREAS,** Eight gender inclusive spaces have been available on the first floor of GP as of the fall 2022 semester, and returning residents could designate any room as GIA as of the fall 2023 semester. Since the fall 2022 semester, GP has had one gender-neutral multi-stalled bathroom on the first floor, one women's multi-stalled bathroom on the second floor, and one men's multi-stalled bathroom on the third floor. GP has not enforced gendered bathroom usage across this time period.

**WHEREAS,** New residents placed in GIA room assignments are required to sign a GIA agreement, and are thus informed they will live in a housing unit open to any gender.

**WHEREAS,** KU Housing claims that residents of GP did not follow KU Housing policy when implementing GIA beginning in the fall 2023 semester. This assertion does not address correspondence from KU Housing staff in previous years detailing the GIA process at GP (see Appendix C), nor how KU Housing could be unaware of policies they were responsible for implementing over multiple years. This assertion also does not address why GIA on the first floor of GP, which KU Housing does not claim was improperly implemented, is also being ended.

**WHEREAS,** KU Housing cites the International Building Code of 2018 as basis for prohibiting GIA in scholarship halls with multi-stall bathrooms. This assertion ignores the fact that the IBC only requires that communal bathrooms be formally sex-segregated, and does not include any stipulations regarding GIA. The only current policy in GP that potentially violates IBC is the gender-neutral multi-stalled bathroom on the first floor, which could be changed while preserving GIA. Residents in GIA are not required to use the bathroom on the floor they live on, so residents could live on one floor and have a sex-segregated bathroom available to them on another floor.

**WHEREAS,** The report-based system for enforcing gendered bathroom usage is unnecessary, invades residents' privacy, and has potential for abuse. KU Housing's outline of the policy suggests that any resident could report others for using a bathroom that the reporting resident does not believe they can use. The report would then open a student conduct case. KU Housing has not cited a specific policy forcing them to instate an enforcement mechanism for bathroom usage (see Appendix B), and it is unclear how KU Housing plans to decide if a resident is entitled to use a particular bathroom should a conduct case be opened. A report-based policy also creates an opportunity for bullying and harassment.

**WHEREAS,** KU Housing offered GP residents who wanted to remain in GIA housing the option to move, but did not guarantee funding to offset additional housing costs. An unspecified number of rooms were available at KK Amini Scholarship Hall, which is also co-ed, for \$518 more per year (see Appendix A). If KK Amini did not have the capacity to house all of the residents from GP requesting to move, KU Housing planned to move them to a residence hall, which could cost an additional \$1000 or more per year. KU Housing only suggested that students apply for scholarships to offset the costs. Because of this cost and the desire to maintain the GP community, returning GP residents did not take the option to move (see Appendix B).

**WHEREAS,** Rooms at GP are to be assigned based on student's gender listed in the KU housing portal. KU Housing suggests that students can change this gender marker, but doing so requires legally changing one's gender. Legislation from the State of Kansas currently prohibits changing one's gender on state-issued documents.

**WHEREAS,** Removing GIA, and potentially placing transgender residents with randomly assigned roommates next year who have not signed the GIA agreement, puts these residents in danger of harassment and other harm.

**WHEREAS,** The consensus of GP residents is that GIA should be maintained and that the community is committed to stopping the policy change. Residents have gathered evidence of this consensus and broader community support for the maintenance of GIA housing via a petition with over 500 signatures as of February 18, 2025.

**AND WHEREAS,** KU Housing’s own inclusion statement, which claims that they “seek to understand and affirm all identities,” would seem to support the maintenance of GIA assignments wherever possible. The vast majority of GP’s residents belong to the LGBTQ community. GP residents feel that living in a supportive environment is integral to their academic success, and the dismantling of this community entirely contradicts KU values.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** That the University of Kansas Student Senate—

1. (*Reversal of Policy Change*) Calls upon KU Housing & Residence Life to maintain Gender Inclusive Assignments as previously implemented during the fall 2023 semester at Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall.
2. (*Rescission of Policy Proposal*) Calls upon KU Housing & Residence Life to rescind its proposed report-based enforcement policy for gendered bathroom usage in Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall.
3. (*Consideration Before Future Policy Changes*) Urges University administration not to preemptively restrict the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming students at KU in anticipation of federal or state legislation.

**AND BE IT ORDERED,** That the Speaker of the Students’ Assembly will transmit copies of this resolution to the following persons and groups:

- Douglas Girod, Chancellor, University of Kansas.
- Barbara Bichelmeyer, Provost, University of Kansas.
- Tammara Durham, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, University of Kansas.
- Sarah Waters, Executive Director, Housing & Residence Life, University of Kansas.
- Carrie Fitzwater, Director for Residence Life, Housing & Residence Life, University of Kansas
- Emily Chellgren, Assistant Director for Residence Life, Housing & Residence Life, University of Kansas
- Jacque McKenna, Director for Housing Services, Housing & Residence Life, University of Kansas
- Rebekah Love, Complex Director for Scholarship Halls, Housing & Residence Life, University of Kansas
- Cierra Roberson, Associate Director for Student Community Programs, Student Engagement Center, University of Kansas
- University Daily Kansan.

**APPENDIX A:**  
**Correspondence from KU Housing & Residence Life of February 5, 2025**

**From:** KU Student Housing <housingsmtp\_sa@ku.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025 3:32 PM  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Grace Pearson Hall 2024-2025 Update

Dear [Redacted],

Housing & Residence Life is committed to serving and supporting students. Additionally, we have the administrative responsibility to ensure housing communities and policies are informed and aligned with university policy along with local, state, and national regulation. A specific portion of that responsibility is to designate community-style bathrooms in housing facilities with a gender of either male or female.

You are receiving this message because you are currently a resident of Grace Pearson Hall and have a housing application and contract for the upcoming academic year.

In the 2025-2026 academic year, Grace Pearson Hall will be occupied as a co-ed hall with gendered room assignments and gendered community-style bathrooms (floors 1 and 2, female; floor 3, male). We will not be able to offer spaces for Gender Inclusive Assignments (GIA) in Grace Pearson Hall. Housing & Residence Life has identified spaces in facilities with in-room bathrooms and have designated those spaces for GIA. Some of these spaces are in the scholarship hall community and additional spaces are designated in apartments and residence halls.

Housing and Residence Life staff will be available at an upcoming hall meeting in the 1st floor living room of Grace Pearson Hall on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 7 p.m. to answer questions and briefly discuss the next steps and housing options with individual residents.

As a current resident of Grace Pearson with a housing contract for the upcoming academic year you have the following options to determine or select housing for the 2025-2026 academic year:

- 1) Remain in Grace Pearson Hall for the 2025-2026 academic year, participate in the upcoming room selection meeting, and select a room assignment in either a female or male designated room/floor.
- 2) Request a gender inclusive housing assignment in the housing application by 8 a.m. Monday, February 10, 2025. Complete the GIA Agreement by selecting the “Special Interest Community” button in your housing portal and Housing & Residence Life staff will contact you to share available options for a Gender Inclusive Assignment.\*

\*If you have already indicated interest in a Gender Inclusive Assignment, Housing & Residence Life staff will contact you soon to review GIA options.

A set amount of space in KK Amini Hall has been designated for GIA. If requests for GIA exceed the available designated space in KK Amini Hall, residents will be offered options in other housing spaces for GIA.

Housing & Residence Life remains committed to working with students to provide housing options that are affirming and supportive of their academic success. While this information may be upsetting, please know that our staff is here to support you and work with you to find solutions. If you have questions or would like to discuss options with a staff member, we will be available at tonight's meeting or you can contact us at [housing@ku.edu](mailto:housing@ku.edu) or 785-864-4560 to speak with or schedule a meeting with a staff member.

KU Housing & Residence Life  
[housing@ku.edu](mailto:housing@ku.edu)  
785-864-4560

**APPENDIX B:**  
**Correspondence from Housing & Residence Life of February 13, 2025**

**From:** KU Housing <[housing@ku.edu](mailto:housing@ku.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 1:30 PM  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Update to Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall Residents

February 13, 2025

Dear Residents of Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall,

I am writing as follow-up to your February 6 email with questions after the community meeting on February 5, where Housing & Residence Life staff met with you about the updates to Grace Pearson's occupancy plans for the 2025-26 academic year.

During a recent review of facility usage and housing assignments, the following points were brought to my attention:

- The only spaces designated by our department for gender inclusive assignments in Grace Pearson for 2024-25 are two rooms (8 spaces) on the first floor. These spaces have access to a multi-stalled bathroom that contains two sinks, two toilets, and one shower area on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- Multi-stalled bathrooms in residential dormitory buildings are required by International Building Code (IBC Chapter 29, 2902.2) to have separate facilities provided by sex. This means that in Grace Pearson, the bathrooms that include multiple toilets, showers, and sinks on floors 1, 2, and 3 need to be designated for use by either males or females.
- In similar areas throughout Housing buildings, students who are assigned to rooms on floors with multi-stalled bathrooms are of the same gender as the multi-stalled bathroom on their floor.

To comply with building code requirements, Housing & Residence Life has determined an occupancy update in Grace Pearson is required beginning the 2025-26 academic year. Operating the 1st multi-stalled bathroom in Grace Pearson as gender neutral violates the International Building Code. The 1st and 2nd floor bathrooms will be designated female and the 3rd floor bathroom designated male.

In 2025-26, K.K Amini Scholarship Hall will have some rooms designated for gender inclusive housing assignments. K.K. Amini has bathrooms inside each dwelling unit (suite) and does not require bathrooms be designated for male or female use.

Students in Housing & Residence Life, including students currently living in Grace Pearson, have the voluntary opportunity to request a gender inclusive housing assignment in on-campus housing through their Housing portal under the "Special Interest Community" section. Students in Grace Pearson are eligible and encouraged to use this process to request on-campus housing that meets their specific needs.

Housing & Residence Life makes room assignments based on the student's gender in their official KU Record. To Update or Correct Personal Information with KU, a student needs to

follow the process outlined by the University Registrar on their website and in the Correction to University Records form.

As a part of community expectations, residents and guests are expected to abide by signs and posted regulations, including bathroom use. Any resident who observes an individual potentially violating housing policy within the community should report the issue. Housing also hires staff, including proctors, food board managers, and resident assistants, to uphold community standards and document policy violations, when necessary. After an incident report is filed about a violation, student conduct processes are initiated to determine responsibility and assign sanctions, as warranted.

Students living in the scholarship halls are encouraged to consider applying for housing scholarships and include information related to their specific needs. Additionally, students who decide living on-campus for 2025-26 no longer meets their needs due to the change in Grace Pearson's occupancy plan should follow the steps to cancel their housing contract in the Housing portal. Housing will waive the \$50 application fee for returning scholarship hall residents who cancel by March 3, 2025.

The returning student room selection meeting for Grace Pearson is February 27, 2025. Students who are interested in a gender inclusive assignment need to complete the GIA agreement by selecting the "Special Interest Community" in the Housing portal by February 17, 2025, to be considered in areas outside of Grace Pearson.

We understand the impact this change has on the community, and we will continue to support our residents in navigating this change to meet their housing needs.

Should you have any additional questions, I encourage you to reach out to Assistant Director Emily Chellgren or email [housing@ku.edu](mailto:housing@ku.edu) so that our office team can assist you.

Sincerely,

**Sarah Waters**

Executive Director, Housing & Residence Life  
University of Kansas

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Correspondence from KU Housing & Residence Life of February 27, 2023**

**From:** Yuengst, Evelyn Corrine<[evelynn.yuengst@ku.edu](mailto:evelynn.yuengst@ku.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 4:05 PM  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Room Selection

Hey GP,

I just wanted to clarify something with gender markers, and I apologize this did not come sooner. Any Gender can live in any room regardless of the gender marker, however rooms that do this will be considered a gender inclusive assignment. I will just need to mark which are GIA so housing can update that on the system when placing new residents. Thus, if you chose to make your room GIA and feel comfortable sharing that with me, please do so during selection. However, if you do not feel comfortable sharing that information, please know they can still update that on the back end and get it all figured out and you will all still be able to live together.

Thanks,  
Evelynn Yuengst  
She/Her/ Hers (What's This?)

Office Phone: (785)-864-1789  
Sellards, Pearson, and Grace Pearson Scholarship Hall Director  
Student Housing, University of Kansas