

Know Your Rights!

LGBTQ SPECIAL EDITION

AAUP-KSU believes strongly that Kent State University must become a more LGBTQ-friendly workplace. In the past we have faced many obstacles on this front, yet progress has also been made. In the last three years, for example, we have seen the implementation of health care benefits for children of domestic partners, and the inclusion of “gender identity” as a protected category in the University policy regarding unlawful discrimination (5-16).

Still, there is more work to be done. Ongoing challenges include transgender health care issues, and the lack of representation of LGBTQ faculty members on university-wide committees and in the faculty in general. We look forward to working with the Kent State administration to address these issues and more.

For Newly Hired LGBTQ Faculty:

Please realize that if you sign up for domestic partner benefits the estimated value of these benefits will be considered taxable income and reflected as such on your W-2 form. This is true for same-sex or other-sex partners. Only married couples are not taxed on their benefits. If you are gay and got married after gay marriage became legal in the U.S. (June 26, 2015) these benefits should not be included as taxable income.

To apply for domestic partner benefits, an affidavit of domestic partnership must be completed and notarized. This document requires that three forms of evidence of financial interdependence of the partners from a list on the affidavit be provided to HR. The form must be signed and notarized and the three forms of evidence taken to the HR office. Visit the HR website to access the affidavit and directions for applying for domestic partner benefits. <https://www.kent.edu/hr/benefits/domestic-partners>

Human Resources asks for proof of marriage via a marriage license for married couples, gay or straight.

For Transgender Faculty:

Transgender individuals are protected under KSU policy, the CBA, and Title IX.

However, health benefits at KSU currently do not cover some procedures for transgender individuals due to denial by our insurance carriers. Procedures that are not indicated for the gender identified on an employee’s paperwork have been denied if it is different from the sex assigned at birth. AAUP-KSU is committed to bargaining for health insurance carriers that will cover these procedures in the future. In the meantime, if you have questions about health care coverage at KSU, contact Loretta Shields in Human Resources lshields@kent.edu 330-672-8314

Universal restrooms help to ensure privacy. These restrooms typically have one or two stalls and a locking door. A list of universal restrooms and their location on a campus map can be accessed at the LGBT Center website under Gender-neutral resources. <https://www.kent.edu/lgbtq/gender-neutralinclusive-resources>

Preferred Name. If your e-mail name or Blackboard salutation is not your preferred name or salutation, contact the Registrar’s office to make a change. KSU currently has no written policy on preferred name for faculty and refers to the Registrar’s office on a case-by-case basis.

LGBTQ Resources:

There is a new social group for LGBTQ faculty, staff and allies called SPECTRUM. For more information, e-mail spectrum@kent.edu with any questions and to join the listserv. The website for SPECTRUM is <https://www.kent.edu/diversity/spectrum-connecting-queer-ally-faculty-and-staff>. Find their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SpectrumKent>.

The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in conjunction with the LGBTQ Student Center is developing a resource guide to LGBTQ-friendly vendors in the area. You will soon be able to access the guide through the DEI website. www.kent.edu/diversity

An LGBTQ Research Interest Group has been developed for faculty conducting or interested in conducting research on LGBTQ issues. The group meets a few times a semester and provides an opportunity for collaborations, support and encouragement in research and research dissemination efforts. If interested contact Dianne Kerr (dkerr@kent.edu) to be added to the group.

To inquire about filing a grievance, or if you have any questions about whether a violation of the CBA, a department or college handbook, or relevant University policy has taken place, contact AAUP-KSU at (330) 673-9118 or office@aaupksu.org.