

SR020505

A Resolution in Continued Support of Domestic Partner Benefits at Miami

Jens Sutmoller, Morris Hall Senator
J.M. Downey, Western Campus Senator

Authors

Bill Forsythe, Student Body President
Evan Carpenter, Academic Affairs
Juliana R. Johnson, Treasurer
Joshua Jacobs, Secretary of On-Campus Affairs
Alex Quay, Off Campus Senator
James Ferguson II, Off Campus Senator
Alexandra Wallace, Dodds Hall Senator
Stephanie Czuba, Dorsey Hall Senator
Patrick Bloom, Stanton Hall Senator

Sponsors

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- Whereas:** Our campus community strives to create a climate that maximizes each individual's capacity to learn, which requires an institution where a rich intellectual and cultural life is not only necessary, but embraced, valued, and celebrated;
- Whereas:** The actions of ASG as a governing body, both past and present, reinforce that preserving and working for the rights and freedom of all citizens and communities is necessary and mandatory in order to cultivate, maintain, and encourage the intellectual integrity that is the basis and roots of our, and all, academic communities;
- Whereas:** The recent passage of Ohio Issue 1, an Ohio Constitutional Amendment that legally defined marriage as that existing between one man and one woman, stands in contrast to Ohio House Bill 272, the Defense of Marriage Act, thus potentially jeopardizing Ohio Universities the right to offer Domestic Partner Benefits, rights that Miami University was pleased to offer to its faculty members;
- Whereas:** Last year, we the Miami University Associated Student Government passed SR020425, A Resolution to Implement Domestic Partner Benefits at Miami, which was implemented this summer;
- Whereas:** Miami University strives for an increasingly diverse population, including many foreign faculty, staff, and students, whose contributions are vital to the culture, character, and learning environments of our campus and community best formulated in the University Statement Asserting Respect for Human Diversity in hardcopy *The Student Handbook* of 2000-2001 (back of front cover);

Whereas: In 1998 President Garland implemented a Plan for Institutional Diversity. In Garland’s statement, he asserted that: “A more diverse environment makes good sense for Miami University, for four reasons, one being:

1. The heart of a college education is the development of critical thinking skills, and the development of these skills requires a process of challenge, debate, argument, and reflection. Our students would be greatly handicapped in their educational goals were we to deny them opportunities to encounter others having different ideas, backgrounds, values and perspectives;

Whereas: Miami’s initiative, “First in 2009” outlines the goals and standards by which Miami University wishes to achieve;

Goal 5: Greater campus diversity

Both the content and context of a Miami education are shaped by the students and faculty who form the core of our community. To encourage the energetic exchange of ideas and to provide the broadcast exposure to different cultures, languages, and ways of understanding, Miami has long sought a diverse student body and faculty. First in 2009 provides a detailed strategy for pursuing this goal, with the ultimate aim of creating a climate in which difference is respected and diversity is valued.

Goal 6: A richer intellectual and cultural life

Listen in on almost any conversation at Miami, and you can hear it: the energy and excitement of intellectual engagement. A love of ideas and an appreciation for culture in its many forms pervades campus life at Miami, and First in 2009 aims to enhance this richness of understanding and interaction. By creating a community that exemplifies the life of the mind, that draws on ideas and ideals from across communities and continents, Miami will extend its reputation as one of the most intellectually and culturally rich universities in America;

Whereas: The Preamble of the ASG Constitution states the Senate’s responsibility is “to play a clearly defined and significant role in the formation and application of institutional policy affecting both academic and student affairs;”

Whereas: Article 1 of the Associated Student Government (ASG) Constitution, indicates our responsibility “to promote and further the educational experience and opportunities of the student body” (Sec. 2) and “to coordinate activities, communication, and services of general benefit to students; (Sec. 3)

Whereas: This academic environment sought by Miami is not obtainable with discriminatory practices, especially discrimination in the hiring of staff and faculty, the backbone of the university;

Whereas: In order to adhere to the aforementioned policies and missions of Miami University and those of the Associated Student Government, it is necessary to support the continuation of Domestic Partner Benefits to those who qualify;

Whereas: With the support of Ohio Governor Bob Taft, February 6, 2004 saw the signing of the Defense of Marriage legislation into law, thus giving universities “ the discretion to decide to whom they will offer benefits;”

Whereas: Reiterating the necessity of Domestic Partner Benefits within academics, Miami University’s President Garland stated in a June 25, 2004 meeting of the board of trustees: “It is clear to me that domestic partner benefits have important practical implications for the university and, specifically, for our ability to recruit and retain talented employees. I have no doubt that this modest change in our benefits package will be a tangible factor as we recruit new people to the campus in the coming years;”

At the same June 25th meeting, President Garland also pointed out that Domestic Partner Benefits today are offered by more than 150 universities, including 75 percent of the top-ranked national universities, nearly 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies and nearly 60 percent of Fortune 100 companies;

Whereas: According to Miami’s recent accreditation study and the First In 2009 initiative, Miami has listed 10 benchmark institutions, four of which—SUNY Binghamton, University of Michigan, University of Vermont, and Northwestern University— offer Domestic Partner Benefits;

Whereas: Ohio’s passage of the Defense of Marriage Act in April of 2004 conflicts with the November of 2004 passage of Ohio’s Issue 1, a Constitutional amendment defining marriage, and sends a mixed and confusing message to state universities, this is especially threatening to those universities offering Domestic Partner Benefits;

Whereas: Miami University has developed a reputation that is open and welcoming, that has allowed the ability to attract as diverse and talented a work force as possible

Therefore Be it Resolved: The Associated Student Government, acting on the behalf of the best interest of its students, recommends a committed effort by Miami University to maintain and defend the practice of providing Domestic Partner Benefits for eligible employees;

Further be it Resolved: The current policy granting Domestic Partner Benefits will continue to be available to employees in accordance with Ohio law, and in our continued commitment to Miami students and academic community to which we serve.