

CEDI ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE BATHROOMS ACTION TEAM REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Carleton is “renowned for its rigorous liberal arts curriculum and excellence in undergraduate teaching.”¹ The administration, faculty, and staff work hard to ensure that students’ academic experience is robust and consistent with the college’s mission.

Although the academic experience is the most significant part of life at Carleton, most students spend their lives outside of the classroom and in residential and community spaces. Carleton represents itself as a “warm and welcoming campus.”² Unfortunately, the lived experience of certain populations within our community are not in line with how Carleton represents itself to the outside world. For example, the everyday reality of transgender, gender non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals, as well as individuals with physical disabilities, does not align with Carleton’s self-representation.

The goal of CEDI’s Inclusive and Accessible Bathrooms Action Team is to provide achievable recommendations that, when implemented, offer tangible evidence that Carleton is a welcoming campus in which the lived experience of all community members and visitors matter.

¹ From the Carleton College Home Page (www.carleton.edu), World-Class Academics

² From the Carleton College Jobs Page (jobs.carleton.edu), Information & Resources for Visitors Page (<https://apps.carleton.edu/visitors/facts/>), Admissions About Carleton (<https://apps.carleton.edu/admissions/about/>), and multiple other places on the Carleton website. Everyone one of these websites includes the statement that Carleton is “known for its academic excellence and warm, welcoming campus community...”

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A careful review of state codes, best practices as articulated by national organizations, and Carleton's current facilities along with conversations with community members that have a vested interest in the availability of accessible and inclusive restrooms prompts us to make the following recommendations. Support and reasoning for these recommendations are treated in detail in the Full Proposal. The six major recommendations (numbered) are of equal weight, with the most immediate recommendations occurring first. The sub-recommendations (lettered) provide additional guidance on more completely meeting the goals of the major recommendations.

1. CONDUCT AN INITIAL AUDIT

The college should complete an initial audit of restrooms and other gender-specific facilities, such as changing rooms and showers, in every building that includes restrooms, changing rooms, and/or showers.

2. CONVERT EXISTING FACILITIES

We recommend converting all existing single-occupancy or single-stall restrooms in all Carleton buildings from gender-specific to all-gender restrooms.

A. STANDARDIZE SIGNAGE

College signage should follow the minimum signage required by the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADA). For restrooms, limiting the room identification to "Restroom" is recommended, but "All-Gender Restroom" is acceptable.

B. POST LIST OF RESTROOM LOCATIONS

The GSC's website should not be the only means of advertising the locations of all-gender and ADA-accessible facilities on campus. Locations should also be posted, at a minimum, on the following sites: Information & Resources for Visitors, Facilities, and Residential Life.

Outdoor public signage should indicate current locations of all-gender, ADA-accessible, and family restrooms.

C. POST DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

All main entryways on campus buildings should include directional signage for all-gender and ADA-accessible restrooms. In buildings that cannot provide all-gender and/or ADA-accessible facilities, the college should install directional signs indicating the nearest ADA- and/or gender-inclusive facilities.

3. EMPOWER FACILITIES AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF RESTROOMS

We recommend that the administration explicitly give Facilities and Residential Life permission to change the official designation of restrooms from gendered to all-gender even if it puts the college in violation in code.

A. PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE RESTROOMS OVER BUILDING CODES

We recommend that the administration intentionally provide access to inclusive and accessible bathrooms for community members in spaces where providing inclusive and accessible bathrooms is feasible but would otherwise cause the college to be in violation of building codes.

B. LOBBY FOR CHANGES TO CODE

We recommend lobbying the state to adopt the proposed 2018 edition of the International Building Code to count all-gender restrooms towards the number of required restrooms in a building so that the college does not have to worry about being in violation of code.

4. CREATE AND PUBLISH A COLLEGE POLICY ON NONDISCRIMINATION AND RESTROOMS

The college should develop a restroom access policy that is consistent with its policy on nondiscrimination.

A. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WHOM STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT IF THEY REQUIRE ACCOMODATION

The housing form on Residential Life's website should indicate whom students should contact if they require access to an ADA accessible and/or all-gender restroom accommodation. The same information should also appear on the Residential Life and the Housing and Gender and Sexuality Center websites in a way that is easy for students to find. Ideally, the websites would indicate the types of accommodations that students can reasonably request.

5. INTEGRATE ADA ACCESSIBLE AND ALL-GENDER RESTROOMS IN NEW CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATIONS

We recommend providing at least one all-gender restroom on each floor where restrooms are required, or, at a minimum, at least one all-gender restroom within in a building. The all-gender restrooms on each floor should be ADA accessible consistent with the Minnesota Building Code. These restrooms should be in accessible and visible locations rather than in hidden, out-of-the-way places.

A. CREATE A BUDGET LINE ITEM IN THE FACILITIES BUDGET FOR INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS

We recommend designating financial resources that will be used to address needs identified in the restrooms audit.

B. PRIORITIZE RENOVATIONS IN HIGH TRAFFIC/HIGH USAGE AREAS AND STUDENT LIVING SPACES

We recommend placing renovation priority in high traffic and usage areas and in student residential spaces.

C. PROVIDE ALL-GENDER CHANGING ROOMS

New recreational buildings and extensive renovations should include at least one all-gender changing room in each location in the building where locker rooms or changing rooms are provided, so the user need not leave the space.

D. PROVIDE ALL-GENDER SHOWERS

We recommend constructing all-gender showers in new buildings that include at least one shower. If the shower is located within a locker room/changing room facility, the all-gender shower(s) should be located so that the user need not leave the area to use the shower. Further, when extensive renovation occurs or when the existing showers are renovated, we recommend constructing at least one all-gender shower in each location in any building that provides showers. The all-gender shower should be located within the locker room/changing room facility so that the user need not leave the space to shower.

E. PROVIDE CHANGING STATIONS IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

We recommend adding changing stations to all-gender restrooms in locations that receive high visitor traffic such as the Library, Sayles, the new science complex, Alumni Guest House, Admissions, and the Weitz Center to accommodate parents and caretakers during special events like graduation, reunion, and music events.

F. PAY CONSISTENT ATTENTION TO SALIENT DETAILS

The college should pay greater attention to significant details such as placement of fixtures and inclusion of appropriate receptacles when building and renovating restroom facilities to ensure ADA accessibility and inclusivity.

6. COMMUNICATE CHANGES TO THE CARLETON COMMUNITY

The entire Carleton community should be made aware of decisions related to creating more accessible and inclusive restrooms on campus. CEDI should provide annual updates on Carleton's progress in meeting the five prior recommendations.

NEXT STEPS

The implementation of the six major recommendations must be authorized by the college leadership, which would ideally happen on receipt of these recommendations. However once authorized, one or more subcommittees could be formed to carry out the details of the major recommendations and the sub-recommendations. The composition and duration of these committees would naturally depend on their charge. To monitor progress, CEDI should report progress on these six recommendations annually.

College leadership should strongly lobby (and encourage the Carleton community to lobby) to adopt new building codes that allow more flexibility in providing all-gender restrooms in buildings so that the campus does not violate code. Realistically an audit would take approximately one year from authorization and the conversion of restrooms that only require updated signage would occur immediately after the audit is complete. During the audit, a committee would focus on standardizing signage so that new signs could be created once the audit is complete. Facilities is already charged with making sure ADA accessible and all-gender restrooms are included in new construction and major renovation projects. However addressing the needs identified in the audit will likely require significant financial resources. A timeline for addressing those needs will depend on how aggressive the college leadership chooses be in addressing these needs.