

Graduate Student Senate



Graduate Student Senate, UNH Graduate School
Thompson Hall, 105 Main Street, Durham, NH 03824
Email: Grad.Student.Senate@unh.edu

GSS Financial Affairs Officer, Alex Padilla, submitted the following letter for the consideration of the Graduate Student Senate.

To: David Bachrach, Faculty Senate Chair
William Woodward, Faculty Senate SAC Chair

For the past few years, the topic regarding the gender question on teaching evaluation forms has been discussed amongst the different academic senates at the University of New Hampshire. In Fall 2017, our colleagues in the Student Senate passed a resolution to change the binary gender question to include additional gender options in the teaching evaluation form. Our body, the Graduate Student Senate, passed a similar resolution (*Resolution AY2019/2020.4*) in Fall 2019 urging the University of New Hampshire to add other gender identity options on the teaching evaluation forms and we stand firm in supporting this resolution.

Even with the various resolutions that have been passed in recent years, the discussion of the gender question on teaching evaluation forms is still under discussion. During the 2020 spring semester, there has been discussion of removing the gender question completely from the teaching evaluation form. The Graduate Student Senate would like to emphasize that while that is an option, we do not believe that it would be the most effective option.

The potential for adding more options to the current binary identification of student gender is of importance due to various reasons. Firstly, students have the right to be able to correctly identify with their appropriate gender identity. To this end, the University of New Hampshire has already made a step in this direction by adding a non-binary/third gender option in addition to “prefer not to say” to the Graduate Student Education Form. Secondly, we believe that it is important to collect information of gender in the teaching evaluation forms to inform departments if there are gender biases in the classroom. As the 2019 Campus Climate report showed, there are significant discrepancies in how students are treated based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status. In *Resolution AY2019/2020.3*, passed by this body, we encourage graduate academic programs to offer incentive for faculty to go through diversity training to help identify any unconscious biases they may have. Thus, it is the firm belief of this body that the gender information on teaching evaluation would be an important tool to help achieve this goal.

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Therefore, the Graduate Student Senate encourages the Faculty Senate to strongly consider not removing the gender question from the teacher evaluation forms, but to add an open-ended fill in the blank box as stated in our *Resolution AY2019/2020.4*, with gender information on teaching evaluations not being disclosed to faculty.

**This letter was approved by the Graduate Student Senate on 3/9/2020.*

Sincerely,

Casey O'Heran

Graduate Student Senate