

From: Vice President for Administration
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 5:15 PM
To: All Faculty; All Staff; students
Subject: All-Gender Restroom Project

To the College Community:

In recent months, Sarah Franco, Special Projects Coordinator, and Jennifer Herrera, Special Assistant to the Dean of the College, have been engaged with a group of students to develop a plan for creating all-gender (also known as gender-neutral) restrooms in non-residential buildings on campus. This initiative grew out of a recommendation put forth last spring by an ad hoc study group that published a review of [potential student life issues facing transgender students](#). In their final report, JJ Boggs, Associate Director of Campus Activities, and Mary Hurlie, Associate Director for Career Services, recommended that the College "initiate a collaboration with other appropriate college offices, with a goal to convert as many gender-designated bathrooms into gender-neutral bathrooms as possible."

In pursuing this recommendation, the College hopes to provide support for the safety and health of Middlebury's transgender students, faculty, and staff. We also believe that acting on this recommendation will benefit other members of our community. For example, the presence of all-gender restrooms would provide more flexibility for disabled individuals who have opposite-gender caretakers. It would also help parents of young children since they would not have to decide which restroom to use. In sum, all-gender restrooms would create more restroom options for all people to use.

It is important to note that the majority of restrooms on this campus would still have a male or female gender designation. There are many within our community who are unable to use mixed-gender restrooms for a variety of religious and personal reasons. These perspectives are equally valued by the College.

Now that the group has engaged President's Staff, the Space Committee, Community Council, Faculty Council, and Staff Council in conversations about the proposed changes, the College will begin implementation in two phases. In the first phase, we will change the signs on all non-residential single-stall restrooms to one that includes the male and female symbols as well as the universal symbol of accessibility where applicable. Single-stall restrooms may then be used by anyone. We expect that this phase of the project will be complete by the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year. Because not all buildings have single-stall restrooms, the College will work collaboratively with the occupants of such buildings to identify a multi-stall restroom that could be converted to an all-gender facility. This process will likely begin in the fall. We recognize this is a sensitive issue, and so if it is not possible to reach a consensus, then there may be some non-residential buildings that do not have any all-gender restrooms.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please do not hesitate to send a note to vpadmin@middlebury.edu.

Thank you,

Tim Spears, Vice President for Administration
Shirley Collado, Dean of the College and Chief Diversity Officer