English Graduate Union Statement on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

Language, communication, connection—we, in the English program, are happy to be part of disciplines that have espoused ideals of empathy and respect throughout academia. The foundations of respect, especially in a university setting, come from a belief that each individual’s right to have a voice, to push creative boundaries, to explore multiple and fluid identities, and to feel safe physically and emotionally, must be protected. As the English Graduate Union at the University of Arizona looks forward to a new year, we find that it is time to define the parameters of equity, diversity, and inclusion from a graduate student’s perspective. We will not be discriminated against based on any facet of our identities: race, gender, (dis)ability, religion, culture, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

Graduate students in the English department often exist as both teachers and students. At times we are asked to take on the responsibility of caring for the needs of undergraduates, and yet we are often in a position where we too need support from our professors and administrators. As boundaries are blurred, instances arise, and graduate students are no longer given the chance to grow and take risks in a secure environment. We seek mentorship that we do not always receive. The graduate students in this department need to be thought of as contributors to their field of study, but they must also be seen as early-career academics and creatives who should be given guidance as needed. We ask, then, of the administrators and professors of the department to partner with us in the creation of a community that puts learning and mentorship with integrity first.

To this end, the English Graduate Union humbly requests that faculty publicly recognize both the need for such a community, and that those practices which run counter to this mission fundamentally undermine the purpose of this department. The English Department must function as a space which defends the fair and equitable treatment of its graduate students. Without the ability to feel safe within this institutional space, English graduate students immediately become marginalized in the academic programs that they call home.

The English Graduate Union stands firm in its resolve that those policies set forth by the University of Arizona’s Board of Regents should be adhered to by both faculty and graduate students. As the appropriate channels for addressing issues of inequity exist on campus, we ask that the English department’s administration and faculty become proactive in utilizing these resources alongside graduate students as a part of an ongoing conversation to ensure the integrity of our department. The English Department faculty must take the stance that discrimination of any kind is unwelcome in this academic space.

In our precarious status as students, we depend on faculty to provide us with the necessary mentorship and support for developing a positive teaching and learning environment. With this dependence on faculty comes a trust that faculty will treat us fairly. When this trust is violated, our ability to fully contribute to the academic community is imperiled.

Thus, we implore the faculty of the University of Arizona English department and Writing Program to foster a collegial atmosphere in which graduate students may continue to thrive. We are certain that such a commitment between faculty and graduate students can pave the way for building the kind of academic institution we all deserve.

To show support for our values, the English Graduate Union would appreciate a small gesture from professors within the English department. We believe that all students should have easy access to the
University of Arizona's existing policy regarding anonymously reporting instances of inequity. Making this policy available to students within syllabi, and verbally acknowledging the information on the first day of the semester would strengthen the bond between graduate students and faculty while also reinforcing collaboration between English faculty and graduate students. The policy is stated as follows:

**Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation**

**Reporting Complaints to University Offices**

An individual who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy should report the matter immediately as set forth below to obtain information about resolving concerns, including complaint-filing options and procedures, and to enable the University to take prompt remedial action. If the alleged policy violator is a University student, the individual who has been the subject of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy should contact:

Dean of Students  
Dean of Students Office  
Old Main 203  
P.O. Box 210021  
Tucson, AZ 85721-0021  
(520) 621-7057  
**dos-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu**

For all other instances, the recipient of the alleged conduct should contact:

Assistant Vice President for Equity Compliance  
Office of Institutional Equity  
University Services Building, Room 217  
P.O. Box 21058  
Tucson, AZ 85721-0158  
(520) 621-9449  
**equity@email.arizona.edu**

If the alleged policy violator is employed by the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Institutional Equity, then the individual who has been the subject of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy may contact the **Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.**

**Anonymous Inquiries and Complaints**

Members of the University community may contact the Office of Institutional Equity or the Dean of Students Office at any time to ask questions about discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or complaint-filing procedures and may provide information without disclosing their names. This provision does not relieve managers, supervisors, instructors, or advisors of their responsibility to promptly report under this policy.

**Confidentiality**

Employees of the Office of Institutional Equity, employees of the Dean of Students Office, and all responsible administrators who receive reports of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation shall maintain the confidentiality of the information they receive, except where disclosure is required by law or is necessary to facilitate legitimate University processes, including the investigation and resolution of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation allegations.