

# First-Year Housing Proposal

## Blue Devils United & Duke Student Government

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Blue Devils United and Duke Student Government have identified inequities—especially those facing the LGBTQIA+ community—in the First-year housing experience and offer the following proposals to make East Campus Residential Halls more inclusive.

### **The Issues:**

Through meetings, gathering testimonials, and talking to the community of students, we isolated 6 issues in the current first-year housing process. These include:

- (1) Lack of all-gender bathrooms,
- (2) Lack of all-gender showers,
- (3) Lack of clear and accessible information about all-gender bathrooms and showers,
- (4) Extremely binary housing throughout dormitories,
- (5) Random roommate assignments causing harm to marginalized students in some instances, and
- (6) Difficulties in forming an inclusive community in larger dorms.

### **Context:**

#### ***I. Lack of All-Gender Bathrooms & Showers***

The lack of all-gender bathrooms and showers on East campus identifies large inequities and disparities in safe and inclusive housing. In Belltower, for example, all residential floor bathrooms correspond to either “Women’s” or “Men’s.” This severely restricts individuals who do not feel comfortable or who fear harassment in either space from performing their daily hygiene. In many dorms, all-gender bathrooms - often without showers - only exist on the first floor of a Residence Hall. Furthermore, the all-gender bathrooms that do exist have extremely gendered signs (i.e. “man” and “woman” bathroom symbols instead of a gender-inclusive design). Such signage ought to be changed to the [agreed upon sign from the 2016 initiative](#).

There also is a complete lack of information on gender-inclusive showers and bathrooms available. When applying for first-year housing, one student had to contact housing to make sure that he was placed in a dorm with gender-inclusive housing with toilets and showers. There is also no comprehensive list of gender-inclusive or all-gender restrooms for students which causes stress, confusion, and anxiety for individuals who need those spaces.

#### ***II. Lack of All-Gender Housing & Issues Within Roommate Assignments***

The next outlined issue is the lack of all-gender housing. Halls are often segregated by male and female identifying students (students’ recorded sex according to the University). Room assignments are very gendered as well. Aforementioned, students have had to contact HRL to specifically receive all-gender housing. As such, extra research and outreach is often put on the marginalized students to find affirming and safe housing.

In conjunction with the last point, the current method of pairing up roommates puts undue stress and work on marginalized students. The survey for random roommate assignments, although well-intentioned, allows for unsafe living conditions for marginalized communities. Microaggressions— and true aggressive actions— run rampant in randomized first-year housing. We have heard testimonials regarding homophobic roommates making negative comments about their

queer roommate, a white woman making fun of her Black roommate's hair, etc. While these students can request to move, students are oftentimes unsure about how their RA or RC will respond to these issues. In other instances, some students are afraid that their roommates will share their gender identity or sexual preference with others, which is concerning for students who are not comfortable with that information being made public. This topic is a serious issue that should be mitigated prior to the start of the school year.

## **Proposed Solutions:**

### ***I. Lack of All-Gender Bathrooms & Showers***

**To increase the number and accessibility of all-gender bathrooms and showers as soon as possible, we propose:**

1. Turning all single-occupancy bathrooms/showers into all-gender bathrooms;
2. If a residential hall has an existing structure with 3 or more multiple-occupancy bathrooms on a single floor, at least one must be all-gender; and
3. If a floor does not have an all-gender bathroom *with a shower*, there must be an all-gender bathroom *with a shower* on the floor directly above or directly below that floor.
4. For future residential halls: for each 100 students in a dormitory, there should be an all-gender single capacity, wheelchair accessible bathroom with a shower.
5. For future residential halls, consider the benefits of expanding suite bathrooms.

The lack of information about all-gender bathrooms and showers is easily remedied. DSG and BDU have gone through the floor plans of residence halls provided and noted which ones ought to be all-gender based on our criteria above. See Appendix A below. Additionally, we propose the following:

1. All gender-neutral bathroom information should be publicly available and would be a great addition to the new Blue Book for incoming first-years. This information should also be shared with the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity who have worked tirelessly to map out the all-gender bathrooms on campus.
2. All Residential Assistants should have a handout with this information for their dorms and point out these bathrooms and explain why they are important to their hall at the beginning of the year.

### ***II. Lack of All-Gender Housing & Issues Within Roommate Assignments***

**In order to minimize and eventually eradicate harm caused by housing assignments to students of marginalized communities, we propose:**

1. All halls should be default all-gender halls. Incoming first-years may opt-out of this in the housing application.
2. All students may choose to live in all-gender rooms through an opt-in selection.
3. We propose including one dorm that is completely all-gender which could possibly feed into an all-gender dormitory on West Campus through the new Next Generation Living and Learning Committee 2.0 Initiative. We suggest a dormitory on the main quad for this initiative, particularly Wilson, due to the ease of implementing full all-gender bathrooms and policy.
4. Additional questions added to the roommate assignment survey that allows for students to indicate their background and preferences in order to promote comfortable and

non-discriminatory rooming situations. This should prioritize safer living conditions for marginalized students.

After doing thorough research on peer institutions,, we found [the rooming survey for Kansas University](#) to be the most promising. This survey asks questions such as “Would you be a good roommate to \_\_\_ identified individuals?” and proceeds to explain why they were asking this question. Answers will be “yes, no, and no preference.” It is important to note that questions for LGBTQ and transgender, non-binary, and gender minorities are asked separately. Despite the fact that these identities are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, that separation of the questions is very important due to a large amount of transphobia from straight and queer students. Although this may not prevent all poor roommate pairings, we believe this will help more marginalized students feel comfortable and safe in their dorm rooms.

### **Conclusion:**

With the implementation of all these proposals, the first year housing experience will be more comfortable and accessible for students - especially with marginalized gender and sexual identities.

### **Contact:**

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## Appendix A: All-Gender Bathroom Plan

Key:

Purple words = proposed locations for all-gender bathroom

- **Neighborhood 1 (Basset, Brown, Pegram)**
  - **Bassett**
    - **1st floor**
      - 101T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 102T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
    - **2nd Floor**
      - 201T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 202T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
    - **3rd Floor**
      - 301T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 302T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
  - **Brown**
    - 1st floor
      - 101T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 102T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
      - 103GT Bathroom (no shower, just toilet)
    - 2nd floor
      - 201T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 202T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
    - 3rd floor
      - 301T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
      - 302T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
  - **Pegram**
    - 1st floor
      - 101T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 102T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
      - 103V vending has single toilet off to the side
    - 2nd floor
      - 201T Bathroom (3 showers, multi-stall)
      - 202T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
    - 3rd floor
      - 301T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
      - 302T Bathroom (4 showers, multi-stall)
- **Neighborhood 2 (Alspaugh, Giles, Wilson)**
  - **Alspaugh**
    - **1st Floor**
      - 101T Bathroom (shower, multi-stall)
      - 102T Bathroom (shower, multi-stall)
      - 103GT Bathroom (no shower, single stall)
      - \*\*120 Bedroom
    - **2nd Floor**
      - 201T Bathroom (shower, multi-stall)
      - 202T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
    - **3rd Floor**

- 301T Bathroom (shower, multi-stall)
    - 302T Bathroom (shower, multi-stall)
  - **Giles**
    - **1st floor**
      - 101T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
      - 114GT HCP Toilet (no shower, single stall)
      - 102T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
    - **2nd floor**
      - 201T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
      - 202T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
      - \*\*202S
    - **3rd floor**
      - 301T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
      - 302T Toilet (shower, multi-stall)
  - **Wilson: suite-style bathrooms/showers**
    - **1st floor**
      - Bathroom (no shower, single stall)
- **Neighborhood 3 (GA, Jarvis, Southgate)**
  - **GA:** all showers in multi bathrooms have changing stalls attached
    - **Basement**
      - 0003T (single, no shower)
      - 0004T (single, no shower)
      - 0002T (multi, no shower, 1 accessible Toilet stall)
      - 0001T (multi, no shower, 1 accessible Toilet stall)
    - **1st floor**
      - 0101T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T and SH)
      - 0101GT (single, shower)
      - 0102T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T and SH)
    - **2nd floor**
      - 0201T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T and SH)
      - 0201GT (single, shower)
      - 0202T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T)
      - 0202GT (single, shower)
    - **3rd floor**
      - 0301T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T and SH)
      - 0301GT (single, shower)
      - 0302T (multi, showers, 1 accessible T)
      - 0302GT (single, shower)
  - **Southgate:** in each multi bathroom, all but one shower has changing room
    - **1st floor**
      - 108T (single, no shower)
      - 108T2 (single, no shower)
      - 101GT (single, no shower)
    - **2nd floor**
      - 201T (multi, showers, 1 Accessible SH and T)
      - 203T (multi, showers, 1 T + 2 SH accessible)
      - 202T (multi, showers, 1 accessible SH and T)
    - **3rd floor**

- 301T (multi, showers, 1 Accessible SH and T)
  - 303T (multi, showers, 1 T + 2 SH accessible)
  - 302T (multi, showers, 1 accessible SH and T)
- **Neighborhood 4 (Blackwell and Randolph)**
  - **Blackwell**
    - **1st floor**
      - 107 ST (single, shower)
      - 109T (single, shower)
      - 134T (single, shower)
      - 115GT (single, no shower)
      - 114GT (single, no shower)
      - 128GT (single, no shower)
      - 129GT (single, no shower)
    - **2nd floor**
      - 212T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 220T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 235T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 243T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
    - **3rd floor**
      - 312T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 320T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 335T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 343T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
  - **Randolph**
    - **1st floor**
      - 105T (single, shower)
      - 111GT (single, no shower)
      - 110GT (single, no shower)
      - 124GT (single, no shower)
      - 125GT (single no shower)
      - 130T (single, shower) → might be part of RC apartment now?
      - 132T (single, shower)
    - **2nd floor**
      - 212T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 220T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 235T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 243T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
    - **3rd floor**
      - 312T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 320T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 335T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
      - 343T (multi, accessible stall, 4 showers)
- **Neighborhood 5 (Bell Tower and Trinity)**
  - **Bell Tower:** 16 Gender-Specific vs 0 Gender-Neutral Bathrooms
    - **1st Floor**
      - Left Wing: 1 Men Bathroom (no shower) and 1 Women Bathroom (no shower)

- Right Wing: 1 Men Single-Occ Bathroom (no shower) and 1 Women Single-Occ Bathroom (no shower)
- **2nd Floor**
  - Left Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
  - Right Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
- **3rd Floor**
  - Left Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
  - Right Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
- **4th Floor**
  - Left Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
  - Right Wing: 1 Men Bathroom(Shower) and 1 Women Bathroom(Shower)
- **Trinity:** Floors are co-ed (males on one side; females on the other)
  - **1st Floor**
    - 1 gender neutral bathroom (single stall; without key card access)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (male)
  - **2nd Floor**
    - 1 gendered bathrooms (female)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathrooms (male)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (male)
    - 1 gender-neutral bathroom in the middle (single-occupancy)
  - **3rd Floor**
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (male)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (male)
    - 1 gender-neutral bathroom in the middle (single-occupancy)
  - **4th Floor**
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (female)
    - 1 gendered bathrooms (male)
    - 1 gendered bathroom (male)
    - 1 gender-neutral bathroom in the middle (single-occupancy)