



March 5, 2026

### A Call to Action for Veterinary School Leadership

To whom it may concern,

The LGBTQ+ community is experiencing an alarming rise in fear for their safety and uncertainty about their rights; this is deeply affecting many veterinary students. We recognize that many of you are already doing meaningful work to support students, often under significant institutional and legislative constraints, and we want to express our sincere appreciation for that effort. However, we are currently hearing from veterinary students who are deeply impacted and concerned. We recognize how challenging it is for universities to navigate shifting state and federal restrictions on DEI, but this is exactly when visible leadership matters most.

This is about human beings who are our veterinary colleagues. It's about our shared responsibility to ensure that every student feels safe, valued, and seen within our colleges of veterinary medicine.

Across multiple states, recent legislative actions have targeted fundamental rights, safety, and representation for LGBTQ+ individuals. These include restrictions on bathroom access, bans on DEI programming and language, limits on mentorship and open dialogue, suppression of identity acknowledgment, and bans on proper identification for transgender and nonbinary individuals. These developments have created tangible threats to safety, inaccuracy in documentation, fear, and uncertainty in the LGBTQ+ community. Many of our own PrideVMC and PrideSVMC members are struggling with the impact of the current climate. Likewise, students across campuses have expressed how difficult it is to manage the stress of the current climate on top of the demands of veterinary school; this is directly affecting learning, wellbeing, and retention. These challenges are leaving students feeling unsupported and unheard.

Leadership plays a crucial role in maintaining a space where all students can thrive. Students are asking for reassurance and meaningful action. A message of support from college leadership carries tremendous weight that is generational. **When students hear directly from their dean or faculty, it tells them they belong and that their wellbeing is as important as their education.**

Based on what students have shared with us, here are a few key actions that communicate strong, tangible support:

- Sending a message of support from your office reaffirming safety, inclusion, and belonging. Acknowledge the realities of the impact on their safety and validate their existence.
- Increasing counseling hours with LGBTQ+ trained and supportive therapists.
- Hosting a town hall with your veterinary leadership and students to assess campus-specific needs are also impactful steps.
- Signing the [Gender Identity Bill of Rights \(GIBOR\)](#) to stand in solidarity with gender-diverse students and professionals.
- Providing access for staff and faculty to participate in diversity or allyship training, such as [blendVET](#) or [Brave Space](#).
- Ensuring that, at a minimum, one gender-neutral restroom is available in every veterinary building — a simple but powerful signal of safety and respect. Additionally, tampons and pads should be available in ALL restrooms.

We understand that language and policy restrictions vary by state. While terms like “DEI” are restricted, actions rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion should not be restricted. We encourage efforts fostering overall wellbeing, student success, and professional development. The intent of fostering belonging, dignity, and safety does not change regardless of policy.

We are currently developing a university toolkit to support veterinary schools in navigating these challenges. While this will take time to finalize, in the meantime we are available to meet one-on-one with any university seeking guidance or collaboration.

Our students are the voice of tomorrow, and they are eager for strong leadership in the present. They need to know their schools stand beside them not quietly, but courageously. Let us use our voices to build trust, safety, and hope for the next generation of veterinarians.

In partnership with PrideVMC & PrideSVMC,

  
**Dr. Omar Farías (he/him)**

Board President

  
**Dr. April Clayton (she/her)**

PrideVMC Student Liaison

  
**Dr. Mo Miller (they/them)**

PrideVMC Student Advisor



info@pridevmc.org



584 Castro Street, #492 |  
San Francisco, CA 94114, USA