



P.O. BOX 56157
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70156

MARJORIE R. ESMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P: 504-522-0617
F: 888-533-0911

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OPEN LETTER REGARDING LGBT STUDIES MINOR

Via email

president@louisiana.edu

and by regular mail

Dr. Joseph Savoie

President

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

104 University Circle

Lafayette LA 70504

Dear Dr. Savoie:

The ACLU of Louisiana commends you for offering the first LGBT Studies minor available to students in Louisiana. ULL, as any university, has the right and the obligation to provide its students with an education in whatever fields the university deems appropriate. Expanding educational opportunities to include interdisciplinary curricula is part of what makes a community of ideas. The principles of academic freedom, supported by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, are essential to the free flow of knowledge and to the full education of a free people.

Moreover, a program of study that encourages understanding of a cultural minority can have only positive results for society. The LGBT community faces discrimination across Louisiana and this country. For students to learn about the institutionalized discrimination, as well as about cultural stereotypes and biases, bolstered by the best scientific information available on this subject, is a clear step towards equality for all.

The curriculum that comprises this new minor consists of courses already available to ULL students. That the University has decided to organize these courses so that students can create a systematic study of an issue of social concern does nothing more than acknowledge a contemporary reality and provide students with tools to understand that reality. This is an important component of a university education.

Faculty and students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette should all be proud to be part of a community that values the free exchange of thoughts and ideas, that is open to new areas of study, and that is committed to the understanding of the human condition in all of its forms.

Sincerely,

Marjorie R. Esman
Executive Director