

## Transitioning on Campus

During her first year at school, Ciara told close friends that she was a transgender woman. Ciara's campus did not offer housing for trans students. As opposed to being forced to live on a male wing for sophomore year, Ciara and a few trans friends got an off-campus apartment. Then, Ciara started their transition and began using their preferred pronouns.

Students that had been friendly with Ciara during their first year suddenly started to treat Ciara differently. As Ciara walked around campus, they could feel people staring at them and making jokes. In one class, Ciara was partnered with students with whom they had taken several classes for a semester-long group project. When the group met at the library to work on the project, two of the other group members got into a heated argument about whether or not Ciara was a boy or a girl. Ciara asked the group to reschedule the meeting.

When Ciara would meet with their academic advisor, they left feeling attacked. Ciara explained that the advisor would insist on "gendering me as the gender I was assigned at birth and calling me by my full legal name and using the wrong pronouns intentionally."

Meanwhile, at LGBT Alliance meetings, Ciara felt more accepted. But, Ciara still noticed a disproportionate focus on sexual identity without much consideration for gender identity. Ciara wasn't sure that most of the cisgender members had any idea what challenges trans students were facing on campus. They didn't seem curious about trans issues.

### For Discussion:

- What would you do if Ciara came to you for help?
- Trans students at the start of their transitions might be particularly vulnerable to personal attacks. How can we help students during this challenging period?
- Why do you think it is more difficult for some people to be accepting of different gender identities than sexual identities?
- What are some steps that our campus could take to create awareness and acceptance of differing gender identities on campus?

*Note: Case inspired by <https://bit.ly/2VDXIIIh>*