

The Chancellor of Texas Tech University, a public university system with five campuses across the state, [recently announced](#) that all faculty must teach “within the course and scope of their employment” that there are only “two human sexes: male and female.” As faculty members of the [CUNY Alliance to Defend Higher Education](#), we find this decree appalling and frightening for all the following reasons:

- It rejects [scientific knowledge](#) about human sex and gender variation and decades of [peer-reviewed](#) and widely accepted research.
- It rejects the basic premise of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies programs, and years of research by [scientists](#), [humanists](#) and [social scientists](#) in these fields. We are concerned about what this means for [Women’s and Gender Studies programs and researchers working in related fields at Texas Tech](#).
- This mandate is a clear violation of academic freedom. Chancellors and federal/ state governments cannot decree what research should be taught in our classrooms.
- We are concerned that this will accelerate the firing of faculty and administrators who don’t abide by the government’s definition of sexual differentiation, even though it flies in the face of research. Another [Texas university recently fired](#) a faculty member for teaching that sex occurs on a spectrum, which in turn led to the resignation of the university’s president. Texas Tech’s announcement opens the door for more firings that have the potential to radically change higher education and how we teach in our classrooms.

This announcement further marginalizes and endangers trans and nonbinary people who are employed by the Texas Tech university system or attend as students.

Texas Tech’s retrograde policy undercuts its own stated mission to prepare learners to be “ethical leaders for a diverse and globally competitive workforce.” Texas Tech leadership has sacrificed the university’s core values in a desperate effort to bend to the will of an over-reaching and censorious federal government. Particularly in light of the [recent reporting](#) that the Trump administration may soon give grant funding preference to ideologically-aligned institutions, this move can only be viewed as a betrayal of the basic principles of academic research in an effort to please the most divisive forces in the administration who enact their culture wars by scapegoating our nation’s college campuses.

We offer our support to all Texas Tech faculty members who teach about gender, sex, and sexuality across the disciplines. University leaders, including the CUNY Chancellor, must pressure the Texas Tech Chancellor to overturn this wrongful new mandate. [As the AAUP asserted in 2024](#), “Discriminatory attacks on efforts to advance knowledge about race, gender, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability are inseparable from a larger and even more dangerous campaign against core academic values.”

We call on CUNY leadership to be courageous and determined in the face of these attacks; to reassure vulnerable students that CUNY will not betray them; to present a united front against the forces that seek to implement these scare tactics in our own city; to articulate unequivocally the ideals and values that are the foundation of our public institution. As CUNY's [own mission states](#), "the University seeks to develop a community that is **inclusive of all individuals and groups**. Given CUNY's long history of proactive support for diversity and inclusion, it is uniquely positioned to build upon that strong foundation and **serve as a national leader and model**, exemplifying the benefits that accrue when diversity and inclusion are integral components of an institution's educational philosophy and core mission."

CUNY leaders must actively and vocally commit to academic freedom at this moment, including the freedom to teach about gender, sex, and sexuality without political interference.

In solidarity,

CADHE Organizing Committee (in alphabetical order)

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