

I have no comment regarding personnel issues.

More generally, LGBTQ related issues at Milligan have been an ongoing topic of discussion for many years. We're aware that several months ago, some specific concerns were raised by some students and alumni. It is important to point out that we had already begun to address the matter through respectful and productive conversation with a number of students. As a result, in recent months, we have approved the establishment of a student led campus support group, modified several student handbook policies to, among other things, assure LGBTQ students that they are safe from harassment and bullying, and are considering modifications to other policies that will reinforce Milligan's desire to be a welcoming community for everyone.

I would like to share a couple of quotes from our "Statement Concerning Human Sexuality." This is the official position of the University, as established by the Milligan Board of Trustees, that is published in our student handbook. It states clearly that we endorse the position that "*The Christian scriptures portray human sexuality as a gift from God intended to be expressed within the context of chastity in singleness or covenant marriage.*" Further, we believe that "*Biblical marriage is heterosexual.*" It is important to understand, however, that this position does not prohibit someone who identifies with the LGBTQ community from enrolling here. Nor does allowing enrollment imply acceptance of this lifestyle. It does, however, demonstrate the sort of grace that Jesus would show.

Stated directly from our position statement:

*Milligan recognizes that all persons are created in the image of God and that God desires that we reflect God's image in our thoughts, words, and behavior... We are persons for whom Christ died and who possess the potential to glorify God within the context of our sexual being. We achieve such potential only by submitting ourselves to the teaching of the scriptures, aided by the guidance and support of a faith community, and subject to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.*

*By joining the Milligan community, we covenant with each other to demonstrate faithfulness to the scriptures in our personal behavior as well as forbearance toward one another as fellow disciples of Jesus Christ. We recognize that not all members of the Milligan community will agree with every aspect of our understanding of human sexuality. We welcome respectful dialogue and careful discernment as we work together to nurture a Milligan community that values both the authority of scripture and the needs of persons.*

While Milligan's position may run counter to trends in popular culture and society, we remain committed to our interpretation of scripture and the protection of religious freedom that is provided by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Likewise, we remain committed to providing a safe, welcoming educational environment for everyone.