A group of students at Utah State University is calling for a change to gendered events, such as Mr. and Miss USU -- and they’re taking their case to the student government.

Arts senator Sierra Wise said transgender students at the university already feel they are on the margins of society and that these gendered events further exclude them.

“Even though I may face these things as a woman,” Wise said, “or I may see gender inequality because I am a woman, the people that are most affected by this are students who are part of the trans community.”

Several senators share this same view and believe gendered events are pushing the trans community away from participation.

“The Man of the Year and Woman of the Year has never made sense to me,” engineering senator Erik Olsen said. “I don’t know why we look at it in a binary way. Achievement is not binary.”

After elections week, Wise plans on meeting with the Queer Student Alliance as well as the new student advocate to have a conversation about their experiences.

Wise wants to address their concerns and find out what the university can do to be more supportive of these students.

This isn’t the first time in recent years that the gendering of awards has been addressed by student leaders.

Awards for Man of the Year and Woman of the Year are part of the Bill E. Robins award, the highest award offered to USU students. Previously, the definitions for these awards were different from each other.

“The qualifications for man of the year and woman of the year were similar, but the wording was different,” Wise said. “If you read them, then it made it seem that there were more qualifications necessary to be nominated for Woman of the Year than Man of the Year.”

When she took this concern to her adviser, the definitions were changed immediately. Currently, the wording is exactly the same, except for the gendered pronouns.

Beyond non-inclusive gendered events and awards, there has also been concern raised about the ability to change one’s gender on MyUSU.

“You have to start by listening,” Wise said. “You have to realize that the way that you see the world isn’t how everyone sees the world. If someone is bringing something to your attention or if someone is feeling marginalized, you need to listen to that and investigate that quickly. The only way you can know that you’re being inclusive is that you’re listening to the voices of everyone.”