COMMITTEE ON GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
REPORT TO THE FACULTY SENATE

Note: The Faculty Senate established the Committee on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues in May 1994 for the purpose of "fostering lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) scholarship and considering concerns about services for and equity toward LGB students, faculty, and staff." In April 1997 the Committee on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues submitted a report to the Faculty Senate describing what it had done since its inception and including 18 recommendations for further steps it might take to carry out its purpose.

Seven years have passed since the committee made its last report to the Faculty Senate. During the interim, the title of the committee has been changed to the Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. In this 2004 report the committee cites each of the 18 recommendations in its 1997 report, identifies the current status of each recommendation, and recommends what further steps should be taken.

THE EIGHTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 1997 REPORT

1. The university establish and fund a program in lesbian, gay, and bisexual studies. Initially, this program should grant a certificate in LGB studies, but not provide a dedicated major. After five years, the certificate program should be evaluated, and, if it is successful, the university should expand and enhance it so LGB studies can be a major field of undergraduate study.

Status: Achieved. As of April 4, 2003 the UW-Madison has a Certificate Program in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies (LGBT Studies). The UW Women's Studies Program is providing an administrative home for the LGBT Certificate Program. And students are fulfilling the requirements for the Certificate in LGBT Studies.

Recommendation: We recommend that in 2008 the LGBT Program be evaluated for possible expansion and enhancement so LGBT Studies can be a major field of undergraduate study.

2. The Division of University Housing increase its efforts to provide a housing environment that is safe and free of harassment for all students. In particular, it is essential to add more training for house fellows about how to create and implement a safe and inclusive environment, and how to respond quickly and effectively to harassment of LGB or transgender students. Housing should provide fast, predictable, effective systems of making and responding to complaints about harassment in any form.

Status: Achieved. University Housing works in an ongoing way to assess ways to improve its services to students who have traditionally been marginalized (including LGBT students) and how to train its staff to meet these students' needs.

In 1997 University Housing established its LGBT Liaison positions, created by the LGBT Housing Task Force. The positions began as part-time jobs for 10 hours per week. By 2000-2001 the LGBT liaison positions had been elevated to the same status as all other housing live-in staff positions and received the same remuneration package.

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In the Fall of 2003 University Housing began its LGBT Safe Zone Program that provides two-and-a-half hours of training to students who identify themselves as LGBT and LGBT allies/supporters. On completion of the training, these allies are given a postcard to display indicating that they support LGBT students. Through this program and other efforts, University Housing actively expresses that UW-Housing is a safe and affirming place for all students regardless of sexual orientation and assists students in identifying persons as resources and support in the residence halls. The LGBT Safe Zone Program was initiated by students living in the residence halls, and a committee made up of students and professional staff developed the Program.

All live-in staff in University Housing (house fellows, multicultural resource coordinators, and LGBT liaisons) participated in the Safe Zone training this past fall. This will continue to be part of the training for all beginning live-in student staff.

University Housing has a standing committee assessing (i) how residence life can improve its outreach to the transgender student community before they decide where to live and (ii) what University Housing needs to improve once transgender students choose to live in university housing.

The standing committee has developed a training program for professional staff, and University Housing has invited people in the campus community who identify themselves somewhere under the large umbrella as being transgender, gender queer, or having family members who so identify to participate in the training program. University Housing is also reviewing (i) policies and procedures that may cause discomfort for students who identify themselves as transgender, (ii) restrooms to determine if they can be converted into unisex facilities, and (iii) marketing information to identify ways for students to know that University Housing wants to meet their individual needs most effectively.

Recommendation: We commend University Housing for the significant efforts it has made to improve the climate in housing for LGBT students and staff and recommend a continuation of these efforts.

3. The university support University Health Services' efforts to secure the availability of health insurance that covers domestic partners for students within the framework of the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP).

Status: Achieved. Since 1998 the University Health Services (UHS) have provided domestic-partner benefits for both mixed-sex and same-sex student couples through the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP). Since 1999 the University Health Services have provided clinical and counseling services to students’ domestic partners and spouses. Purchase of SHIP coverage entitles domestic partners and spouses to all UHS services. Spouses and domestic partners who do not buy SHIP can separately purchase access to UHS clinical and counseling services by paying the same amount that students pay in their student segregated fees for UHS services. The opportunity to purchase these services is promoted on the UHS Web site and the UHS printed materials.

Recommendation: We recommend that the University Health Services continue to provide health services and SHIP insurance that covers domestic partners for students within the framework of the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP).

4. The university work diligently and quickly to obtain coverage for domestic partners in the health insurance plans it provides to every category of its employees.

Status: Not Achieved. The UW-Madison and the UW System have been woefully negligent in attempting to achieve this recommendation. For the past several biennia the UW-Madison and the UW System have included domestic-partner health insurance coverage in their compensation plan recommendations to the UW-Madison Fac Doc 1799 - 4 October 2004
state. However, UW-Madison and UW System administration have shown no evidence of doing anything more to obtain health insurance for domestic partners and their children. The administration falls back on the position that ultimately the state legislature must open the state group health insurance pool to include domestic partners.

Despite the fact that members of the Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT Issues, in cooperation with the Academic Staff Assembly's Compensation and Economic Benefits Committee, the Faculty Senate's Commission on Faculty Compensation and Benefits, the Teaching Assistants' Association, and the UW-Madison Coalition for Domestic Partner Benefits have met with campus and system administrators at various levels, the university administration has failed to make domestic-partner health insurance a priority. The most significant progress was made during the TAA contract negotiations in 2001, when former Vice Chancellor for Administration John Torphy advocated on behalf of domestic-partner health insurance during a meeting he had with former Secretary of the Department of Employment Relations Peter Fox.

In the absence of administrative leadership on this issue, members of the Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT issues, in cooperation with their ally organizations cited above, coordinated campus and system efforts and lobbied the legislature to support domestic-partner health insurance legislation (AB 609) introduced in 1999/2000 and AB 720 and SB 386 introduced in 2001/2002. We could not get these bills scheduled for public hearings. We asked UW System administration to ask the legislature for a hearing but were told this was not the process to follow. Instead, system administration waits until a hearing is scheduled and then testifies at the hearing. Our committee also lobbied the legislature to oppose anti-domestic-partner bills (AB 499 and AB 500) in 1999/2000.

Recommendation: We recommend that the university work more diligently and quickly to obtain coverage for domestic partners in the health insurance plans it provides to every category of its employees. We further recommend that the provost designate one of the campus's vice chancellors to lead the efforts to obtain domestic-partner benefits for all UW employees and to serve as a liaison between the Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT Issues and the provost's office. The state legislature, by not providing funds for domestic-partner benefits for all UW employees, is in effect requiring the university to maintain a policy of workplace discrimination in violation of principles enunciated by the State of Wisconsin, the City of Madison, and the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

5. The university examine all of its policies and procedures for providing benefits of other kinds to spouses and dependents and re-write them as necessary to provide the same benefits to the domestic partners of its faculty, staff, and students.

Status: Partially achieved. The UW-Madison Academic Personnel Office and the System Payroll and Staff Benefits Office developed a chart listing benefits and eligibility/ineligibility based on marital status in response to the 1997 Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT Issues Report. The UW-Madison Academic Personnel Office prepared a list of soft benefits available at UW-Madison. Since 1997 members of the Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT Issues have asked UW-Madison and UW-System to keep these documents up-dated and to post them in appropriate web sites and in appropriate print publications. We have also asked for a complete and thorough review of all policies and procedures and to rewrite them as necessary to provide the same benefits to the domestic partners of its faculty, staff, and students. This has not been done. We are aware that inequities still exist, as evinced by the fact that domestic partners of UW employees do not qualify for resident tuition; whereas spouses of UW employees do qualify for resident tuition.

The Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT Issues and allies proposed, developed, and ensured implementation of a campus policy on domestic-partner benefits that was announced on May 15, 2002. (continued)

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The policy codified UW-Madison's commitment to providing spousal benefits to the domestic partners of all qualified employees of the university. It simplified and clarified the documentation necessary for domestic partners of UW-Madison students and employees to obtain access to services such as housing, recreational sports facilities, and libraries.

The Faculty Senate Committee on GLBT issues and its allies, through ongoing communication with Jack Wilson and Sue Chamberlain of System Payroll and Staff Benefits Office, obtained domestic-partner coverage for dental insurance in January 2003 and for accidental death and dismemberment insurance in November 2003. Domestic-partner eligibility for individual and family group life insurance is expected around June 1, 2004.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the provost charge the designated vice chancellor with the responsibility of reviewing all benefit policies to determine if any benefits other than health insurance are offered to spouses but not to domestic partners of UW-Madison faculty, academic staff, and students and to rewrite the benefit policies as necessary to provide the same benefits to the spouses and domestic partners of UW-Madison's faculty, staff, and students. We recommend that UW-Madison and UW System work diligently and quickly to improve access to and awareness of the benefits available to the domestic partners of its faculty, staff, and students. We also recommend that resident tuition become available to domestic partners of UW employees to parallel resident tuition now available to the spouses of UW employees.

**6. The Equity and Diversity Resource Center and the Professional Development and Training Office work together to organize a focused, coherent strategy for effective orientation and continuing training of faculty and staff to promote sensitivity to LGB issues and to reduce the frequency of harassment and discrimination against LGB employees.**

**Status:** Not Achieved.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the Equity and Diversity Resource Center (now located in 179A Bascom Hall) and the Office of Development and Training (now titled Office of Human Resources and located in 180 Bascom Hall) work together to organize a focused, coherent strategy for effective orientation and continuing training of faculty and staff to promote sensitivity to LGBT issues and to reduce the frequency of harassment and discrimination against LGBT employees. We also recommend that the designated vice chancellor develop a monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of whatever strategy is developed.

**7. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs include in the required training of department chairs and deans (a) particular attention to lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues as they affect equity and fairness in employee hiring and evaluation, determining salaries, and promotion and tenure; (b) encouragement of institutional or community service by faculty and staff concerning lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues; and (c) recognition of the value and importance of lesbian, gay, and bisexual scholarship.**

**Status:** Not Achieved.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the designated vice chancellor see that materials are developed and provided to appropriate administrators to facilitate the transmission of these LGBT concerns during the required training of department chairs and deans. We also recommend that the designated vice chancellor develop a monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of the transmission of these concerns.
8. The vice chancellor for academic affairs also include in the required training for deans and department chairs (a) particular attention to lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues as they affect equity and fairness in the recruiting, admission, evaluation, retention, and rewarding of students; (b) encouragement of students' contributions in campus or community service concerning lesbian, gay, or bisexual concerns; and (c) recognition of student research and scholarship in lesbian, gay, and bisexual topics.

Status: Not achieved.

Recommendations: We recommend that the designated vice chancellor see that materials are developed and provided to appropriate administrators to facilitate the transmission of these LGBT concerns during the required training of deans and department chairs. We also recommend that the designated vice chancellor develop a monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of the transmission of these concerns.

9. All faculty and instructional staff re-examine their courses and syllabi to determine where they could be enriched by including lesbian, gay, and bisexual content or perspectives.

Status: Not achieved

Recommendations: We recommend that a letter (either from our committee or some other appropriate campus office or committee) be sent to all faculty and instructional staff suggesting they re-examine their courses and syllabi to determine if they could be enriched by including LGBT contents and perspectives. We also recommend that the Teaching Academy make resources available for faculty and instructional staff who wish to add LGBT content to their courses and syllabi.

10. All faculty and instructional staff also consider how the climate in their classrooms might be negative for LGB students, and use that assessment in fostering a more inclusive, affirming environment.

Status: Not achieved

Recommendation: We recommend that a letter (either from our committee or some other appropriate campus office or committee) be sent to all faculty and instructional staff suggesting they consider how the climate in their classrooms might be affecting LGBT students. Classroom climate might be improved by faculty and instructional staff including in their course introductions a statement that efforts will be made throughout this course to maintain an open and friendly classroom climate.

11. All faculty and staff examine in their work, programs, services, and social interactions the presence of the assumption of heterosexuality and make efforts to overcome this narrow assumption.

Status: Not achieved

Recommendation: We recommend that a letter (either from our committee or some other appropriate campus office or committee) be sent to all faculty and staff encouraging them to examine the assumption of heterosexuality and make efforts to overcome that assumption.

12. The university fund the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Campus Center (LGBCC) with stable moneys and provide it with visible, accessible space in a central campus location.

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Status: Partially Achieved. The center (now referred to as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Center, or LGBTCC) has an appropriate space on campus in the Memorial Union. Funding for the center's student staff and operations remains subject to the General Student Segregated Fees allocation process and is not institutionalized. Currently funding for the center's new professional director must be renewed annually, at the discretion of the vice chancellor for student affairs.

Recommendation: We recommend that obtaining funds from the General Student Segregated Fees be ended and that 100% of the funds for the LGBTCC staffing, programs, and services be institutionalized. This would relieve the center from the annual uncertainties associated with the General Student Segregated Fees allocation process. It would also demonstrate the UW-Madison's commitment to its diversity policy.

13. The university create a full-time position for a university liaison to the LGB and transgender student community. The person in this position should be highly visible as a resource and support person for wide-ranging matters of LGB student life.

Status: Achieved. This recommendation was achieved from the Fall of 1999 to the Fall of 2003 by creating and filling the position of LGBT issues coordinator through the Office of the Dean of Students. This position was phased into the position of the director of the LGBT Campus Center in the Fall of 2003, enabling the LGBTCC to become a reporting unit in the Office of the Dean of Students.

Recommendation: We recommend that this position be continued and provided with necessary supplementary resources.

14. The Summer Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) Leadership Team greatly expand the attention given to LGB and transgender issues in SOAR. The Office of the Dean of Students should make it as easy as possible, and as safe as possible, for new or transferring students (both undergraduate and graduate/professional) to obtain information about the university and city LGB communities and to access LGB resources and services.

Status: Partially achieved. SOAR incorporates LGBT issues in its "campus life vignettes" and in small group discussions as a follow-up. Materials (such as an LGBT resource brochure) that at one time were distributed to all students are no longer distributed. The Office of the Dean of Students provides a listing of LGBT campus resources on its web site and makes referrals to the LGBT Campus Center as appropriate.

Recommendation: We recommend that at all SOAR and super-SOAR events the SOAR personnel: (i) publicize procedures for reporting harassment or discrimination; (ii) provide information about university and city LGBT communities and accessible LGBT resources and services; (iii) include descriptions of the LGBT Liaisons along with descriptions of House Fellows and Multicultural Resource Coordinators during housing tours.

15. The Office of the Dean of Students develop an LGB mentoring program, providing a connection between LGB students (of any level) and university LGB faculty and staff.

Status: Not achieved.

Recommendation: We recommend that the LGBT Campus Center and the Faculty-Senate Committee on GLBT Issues initiate a mentoring program, providing connections between LGBT students (of any level) and university LGBT faculty and staff.
16. The Office of the Dean of Students develop referral information that faculty and staff can use to provide assistance to students with questions or concerns.

**Status**: Partially achieved. The dean of students' and the provost's web sites offer referral information that faculty and staff can use to provide assistance to students with questions or concerns. The Allies program is preparing referral information for faculty and staff. A brochure presenting LGBT resources exists but is out-of-date.

**Recommendation**: The dean of students' and provost's offices should regularly up-date their brochures and the referral information that appears on their Web sites. The dean of students’ office should improve and publicize procedures for reporting harassment and discrimination.

17. Every three to five years, the Faculty Senate's Committee on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues reassess the effectiveness of processes to provide a campus environment that is safe, equitable, and free from harassment and discrimination for LGB students, staff, and faculty.

**Status**: Achieved (if a bit late).

**Recommendation**: We recommend periodic reports to the Faculty Senate from the Faculty-Senate Committee on GLBT Issues reassessing the effectiveness of processes to provide a campus environment that is safe, equitable, and free from harassment and discrimination for LGBT students, staff, and faculty.

18. The chancellor charge one of the associate vice chancellors with the responsibility of implementing the preceding recommendations.

**Status**: Not achieved. During the past seven years it has sometimes been difficult for our Faculty-Senate Committee on LGBT Issues to know to whom in the UW-Madison administration we should address our concerns.

**Recommendation**: We recommend (as we did with Recommendation 4) that the provost designate a vice chancellor to serve as a liaison between our Faculty-Senate Committee on GLBT Issues and the UW-Madison administration. We further recommend that the designated vice chancellor: (i) provide leadership in speaking out on LGBT issues on behalf of the UW-Madison campus; (ii) provide leadership at the UW-System level regarding LGBT inclusivity initiatives; (iii) seek to institutionalize the processes and funding of efforts to foster lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) scholarship and to provide services for and equity toward LGBT students, faculty, and staff.

**Commentary**

In the past few months statements have been made and laws have been passed in the United States and in Wisconsin that demean the status and threaten the well-being of the LGBT community and their allies. We call upon the UW-Madison campus to challenge those demeaning and threatening activities, welcome the diversity that enriches our campus, and uphold our historical principles of equality and respect for all.
Current Members of the Faculty-Senate Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues
Mary Ace, Council for Non-represented Classified Staff
Daña Alder, Team Manager, University Health Services
Thomas Armbrecht, Assistant Professor, French and Italian
Michele Basso, Assistant Professor, Physiology
Janice Czyscon, Senior Editor, Engineering
David Danaher, Assistant Professor, Slavic Languages
Joseph Elder (chair), Professor, Sociology/Languages and Cultures of Asia
Eric Trekell, Director, LGBT Campus Center
Mariamne Whatley, Professor, Curriculum and Instruction/Women's Studies