REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

Preface

History of the UW-Madison Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues:

The UW-Madison Campus Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues was created in 1994 by the University Faculty Senate as the Committee on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues and charged with reporting to the senate on the state of the curriculum and campus climate for LGB students, faculty, and staff. Although in subsequent years the committee was reorganized as a joint-governance committee and renamed to include explicitly transgender concerns in order to strengthen its reach and representation, its mission remains the same. By recommendation of a previous assessment, the committee offers a formal report at least every three years.

Background to and Methodology of Current Recommendations:

This committee met monthly during the academic year 2006-07 and during fall semester of the current academic year. We have met twice monthly this semester. In addition, we have held two listening sessions for students and talked separately with faculty and staff from across campus. Finally, we have examined LGBT initiatives from other peer institutions across the country to try to understand “best practice” in this area.

This report represents both an analysis of progress on the recommendations of the GLBT Issues Committee Report 2004 and an analysis of new concerns and challenges facing our campus community.

We recognize and commend the UW-Madison for the important strides it has taken since 1994 to foster LGBT scholarship across campus and to promote a campus climate welcoming and respectful of LGBT persons and concerns. These include:

- The creation of an LGBT Studies Certificate Program;
- Increased support for the LGBT Campus Center;
- The creation of two student positions as liaisons in University Housing and the inclusion of LGBT content in the training of residence house fellows and of transgender concerns in the annual student survey conducted by University Housing;
- The inclusion of transgender privacy concerns in the construction and remodeling of campus facilities;
- The elective coverage of students’ domestic partners in University Health Services and the coverage of non-surgical therapies for transgender care for those enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Program.

As impressive as these initiatives are, however, they represent a beginning only—a foundation to be maintained and enhanced as we continue to work together as a campus toward the goal of a respectful and intellectually diverse and exciting community. This report seeks to identify areas of “leverage” necessary to those ends.

---

1 We understand “transgender” to include but is not limited to those persons whose gender expression (outward expression of gender, e.g., clothing, appearance, mannerisms, societal role etc.) and/or gender identity (internal self-conception of gender) differs from conventional expectations of the physical sex they were born into or currently possess. This may include people whose internal identity, appearance, anatomy, behavioral characteristics and/or physical characteristics do not conform to culturally predominant gender roles. Transgender identity does not require that a person have either the means or the desire to pursue physical, chemical, hormonal, and/or other physiological changes to their body. In addition, this definition shall not be limited only to formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria as defined in the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-IV manual.
Summary of Recommendations

1. We recommend that the vice provost for diversity and climate assume campus-wide oversight of LGBT issues and report annually in December to this committee on the initiatives undertaken and results achieved campus-wide in this arena.

2. We recommend that the College of Letters and Science provide the following new support for the LGBT Studies Certificate Program:
   - A 100%-budgeted faculty line in LGBT Studies with a tenure home in any appropriate area;
   - A 15% increase in funding for the undergraduate advisor position in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies in recognition of that position’s responsibilities for advising LGBT Studies Certificate students.

3. We recommend that the College of Letters and Science Office of Student Academic Affairs work with the LGBT Studies faculty to solicit increased First-Year Interest Group opportunities dealing with LGBT themes.

4. We recommend that University Housing create a residential learning community focused on LGBT themes for undergraduates at all levels on the UW-Madison campus.

5. We recommend that the campus secure and stabilize the operations of the LGBT Campus Center by:
   - Providing adequate office space both for staff functioning and for private student consultation and discussion;
   - Funding the academic staff positions of the center through 101 monies.

6. We recommend that the LGBT Campus Center (supported by additional campus resources), undertake the following initiatives, in coordination with the Office of the Dean of Students and the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Climate:
   - Develop and supply a comprehensive LGBT brochure (services, academics, etc.) for distribution as part of the orientation program for new students;
   - In partnership with relevant offices, provide a targeted LGBT student orientation program for incoming freshman, transfer and graduate students;
   - In partnership with relevant offices, develop and provide a “senior year experience” program focusing on preparation for job and/or graduate/professional school exploration;
   - Continue to develop the “Opening Doors” mentorship program pairing students and faculty/staff.

7. We recommend that the Office of Admissions give greater attention to the recruitment of LGBT students by:
   - Improving accessibility to LGBT information on its website;
   - Attending national LGBT recruitment fairs;
   - Working with the LGBT Campus Center to create a recruiting pamphlet on LGBT life at UW.

8. We recommend that the vice provost for faculty and staff work closely with the vice provost for diversity and climate and with the LGBT Campus Center to ensure the inclusion of LGBT faculty and staff in the campus’ various recruitment efforts and to provide programs and services important to LGBT faculty and staff retention, to include:
   - Continued aggressive leadership in working with the state legislature to achieve domestic partner benefits for LGBT and other unmarried campus faculty and staff;
   - The creation and funding of an LGBT faculty/staff mentoring program parallel to the existing mentoring program for female faculty.

(continued)
Recommendations and Discussion

Administrative Accountability:

Recommendation:

We recommend that the vice provost for diversity and climate assume campus-wide oversight of LGBT issues and report annually in December to this committee on the initiatives undertaken and results achieved campus-wide in this arena.

Discussion:

Much of the progress in LGBT issues since 1994 has arisen from the initiative and commitment of a relatively few committed individuals, either as volunteers or in their capacity on this committee. Obviously, we applaud this work. But in the absence of campus-wide coordination many important LGBT concerns (some of which have appeared perennially in this committee’s reports, some of which have arisen since the 2004 report) remain entirely unaddressed or only partially addressed. For example, we are able to identify no steps toward training department chairs in LGBT issues and no implementation of the Board of Regents’ Resolution on Gender Identity/Gender Expression, mandating that non-discrimination clauses and practices system-wide include addressing issues related to gender and gender identity.

We see this lack of campus-wide accountability as a serious obstacle to further progress and as an indication that the campus has not yet integrated LGBT issues into the university’s structural understanding of its responsibilities for a diverse and inclusive climate.

Among the specific areas we would like to see the vice provost’s office address immediately are:

- Full integration of LGBT training into the programs of the Office for Equity and Diversity, including development of a “Train the Trainer” program for department chairs and administration staff;
- Implementation of the Board of Regents Gender Identity/Gender Expression Resolution, through informational vehicles and training initiatives;
- The participation of the UW-Madison campus in round 2 of the UW System Diversity Climate Assessment Project being conducted by Rankin and Associates;
- Support for the Safe Zone “Opening Doors” training program for a student-faculty mentorship program;
- Continuing support for and assessment of the efforts of University Housing in addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people;
- Continuing support for and assessment of the efforts of the Office of Admissions in recruiting and welcoming prospective and matriculating LGBT students.

---

2 Resolution I.1.c.(2). “That, upon the recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, Regent Policy Document 75-5 is amended by inserting the words ‘gender identity or expression’ after the word ‘sex’ in paragraphs one and three of the policy statement; and that Regent Policy Document 88-12 is amended by inserting the words ‘gender identity or expression’ after the word ‘sex’ in the first line of paragraph two.”

Passed by the Board of Regents Feb. 11, 2005.

(continued)
Curriculum:

Recommendation:

We recommend that the College of Letters and Science provide the following new support for the LGBT Studies Certificate Program:

- A 100%-budgeted faculty line in LGBT Studies with a tenure home in any appropriate area;
- A 15% increase in funding for the undergraduate advisor position in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies in recognition of that position’s responsibilities for advising LGBT Studies Certificate students.

Discussion:

At the recommendation of this committee, the university created an LGBT Studies Certificate in spring 2003. The program’s success has been remarkable. The first students entered the program in the fall of 2003. Seventy-one students have completed the certificate to date; there are an additional 56 LGBT Certificate students currently declared. Faculty from across campus have participated by adding LGBT content to existing departmental courses and by creating new courses within their existing departmental responsibilities that can also count toward the certificate.

This growth has paralleled and been fostered by the continuing expansion of LGBT Studies as a cutting-edge field of intellectual inquiry in history, literature, anthropology, psychology and others as well as in the interdisciplinary fields of, for example, cultural studies and gender studies.

The university’s investment in this program, while pivotal, has also been minor: roughly 25% of a single faculty appointment split between the Department of History and the Department in Gender and Women’s Studies (formerly the Women’s Studies Program). Meanwhile, the Department in Gender and Women’s Studies has absorbed, as an unfunded overtime responsibility, the cost of advising the LGBT certificate students, a situation that has placed considerable strain on their own part-time undergraduate advisor. We conclude that it is time for a more substantial university investment in LGBT studies.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the College of Letters and Science Office of Student Academic Affairs work with the LGBT Studies faculty to solicit increased First-Year Interest Group opportunities dealing with LGBT themes.

Discussion:

FIGs provide not only a richly integrative intellectual experience but also a small-group experience important in helping first-year students find community in a very large university. Both of these dimensions are necessary as we work together toward a diverse scholarly and social community. LGBT-related FIGs can bolster our growing LGBT curriculum while bringing into being, from their first day on campus, students interested in LGBT issues as a component of an inclusive community—as the variety of existing FIGs on other aspects of diversity suggest: Race, Place, and Story, Arts Against Oppression, Race and Ethnicity in the Americas, and Understanding Human Rights, for example. At present, only one such LGBT FIG exists—Professor Tom Armbrecht’s “Gay and Lesbian French Writers.” We would like to see the Office of Student Academic Affairs encourage additional LGBT-related FIG proposals.

(continued)
Recomendation:

We recommend that University Housing create a residential learning community focused on LGBT themes for undergraduates at all levels on the UW-Madison campus.

Discussion:

UW-Madison now houses ten residential learning communities, which extend the FIG experience through the later years of undergraduate work. Students enroll in residential learning communities voluntarily in the process of applying for university housing. Probably the closest model to the community we envision is the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) community. WISE offers the opportunity to meet and socialize with other like-minded students and live in a supportive environment. Unlike WISE, we recommend that an LGBT learning community not be limited to LGBT students.

LGBT Campus Center:

Recommendations:

We recommend that the campus secure and stabilize the operations of the LGBT Campus Center by:

- Providing adequate office space both for staff functioning and for private student consultation and discussion;
- Funding the academic staff positions of the center through 101 monies.

We recommend that the LGBT Campus Center (supported by additional campus resources), undertake the following initiatives, in coordination with the Office of the Dean of Students and the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Climate:

- Develop and supply a comprehensive LGBT brochure (services, academics, etc.) for distribution as part of the orientation program for new students;
- In partnership with relevant offices, provide a targeted LGBT student orientation program for incoming freshman, transfer and graduate students;
- In partnership with relevant offices, develop and provide a “senior year experience” program focusing on preparation for job and/or graduate/professional school exploration;
- Continue to develop the “Opening Doors” mentorship program pairing students and faculty/staff.

Discussion:

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Campus Center first opened its doors in July 1992 with $29,400 in start-up funds from student government and the commitment of a handful of volunteers. Since that time it has come to play an essential role as safe space, social hub, and intellectual center not only for the LGBT communities but for the wider campus concerned about LGBT issues—a role recognized in the hiring of a professional director, additional office staff and in the moving of operations, programming and student staff funding from 128 funds (student segregated fees) to 101 funds (general purpose revenue). These have been important steps toward regularizing and stabilizing the center’s operations. However, critical issues of stability remain. Since its founding, the center has struggled with problems of space. Not only to accommodate its
enlarged staff and its library (recognized in 2006 by the Library Services Council of the UW Libraries as an official UW library), but also because of the particular privacy concerns that attach themselves to LGBT issues, the campus needs finally to resolve that problem. In addition, although many of the other funding sources for the center have been moved to steady 101 funds, the academic staff positions, which are essential to the stable operation of the center, continue to be funded through less secure program revenue 136 funds.

Student Recruitment:

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Office of Admissions give greater attention to the recruitment of LGBT students by:

- Improving accessibility to LGBT information on its web site;
- Attending national LGBT recruitment fairs;
- Working with the LGBT Campus Center to create a recruiting pamphlet on LGBT life at UW.

Discussion:

The Office of Admissions and SOAR have made strides toward addressing concerns of prospective LGBT students, including the inclusion of a new student social at the LGBT Campus Center. We believe those efforts could be fairly easily enhanced, however, by making it easier to navigate the admissions web site to arrive at concrete information about LGBT life and concerns on campus (the current multicultural link does not accomplish this) and by taking a more assertive posture in outreach to LGBT students by participating in national recruitment fairs such as those currently sponsored by Campus Gay Pride.

LGBT Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention:

Recommendation:

We recommend that the vice provost for faculty and staff work closely with the vice provost for diversity and climate and with the LGBT Campus Center to ensure the inclusion of LGBT faculty and staff in the campus’ various recruitment efforts and to provide programs and services important to LGBT faculty and staff retention, to include:

- Continued aggressive leadership in working with the state legislature to achieve domestic partner benefits for LGBT and other unmarried campus faculty and staff;
- The creation and funding of an LGBT faculty/staff mentoring program parallel to the existing mentoring program for female faculty.

Discussion:

We recognize the legislative obstacles to providing faculty and staff domestic partner health insurance benefits at the University of Wisconsin. We also recognize the steep and continuous price the campus pays for these obstacles—first and most important in terms of creating a campus community founded on justice, but also, more concretely, in terms of the morale of current LGBT staff and faculty and in terms of the campus’ difficulty in recruiting and retaining the finest faculty

(continued)
and staff available. We urge in the strongest possible terms that the campus continue to seek ways to extend domestic partner benefits to all faculty and staff. In the meantime, we recommend that campus administration make a concerted effort to improve the morale and climate for current LGBT staff and faculty, including the creation of a mentoring program for new staff and faculty and the sponsorship of other community-building opportunities (luncheons, social events, etc.). We suggest that such initiatives be fashioned through a combined effort of the vice provost for faculty and staff, the vice provost for diversity and climate, the LGBT Campus Center, and LGBT faculty and staff.

Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues
Daña Alder
Thomas Armbrecht
Lori Berquam
Jeanne Boydston, chair
Julie D’Acci
Justin Hager
Elliott Rezny
Eric Trekell, ex-officio
Christina Treviño-Murphy, student alternate
Mariamne Whatley
Tehshik Yoon