

## **Syracuse University Senate LGBT Concerns Committee Report Academic Year 2015- 2016**

**Members:** Blythe Bennett (August-December), Nadaya Brantley, Mark Braiman, Rick Cieri, Todd Conover, Francine D’Amico (Chair), Erin Duran, Rachel Fox von Swearingen, Margaret Himley (*ex officio*), Margie Johnson, Andrew London, Charles Morris, Robin Riley, Emily Vey Duke, Eric van der Vort

Our committee’s charge is to improve the campus climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and other non-conforming sexual/gender identified students, faculty members, staff members, and administrators, to educate campus leaders about LGBT issues, and to facilitate public dialogue on LGBT issues. In past years, our committee has addressed concerns regarding university policies on domestic partner benefits, gender-neutral housing and facilities, and services for transgender Faculty/Staff. Our committee work for the 2015-2016 academic year included consultations with the SU Office of Career Services, Counseling Center, and Health Services.

### **1. Surveying Climate, Educating Our Campus Community, and Creating Space for Dialogue**

One measure of campus climate is provided by the annual Campus Pride Index report, which helps us to assess how our campus climate and policies compare with best practices at other colleges and universities. For 2015, Syracuse rated 5 of 5 stars for LGBT Campus Safety and for LGBT Student Life; however, our overall rating was 3.5 of 5, and areas of concern the index identified are housing and residence life, counseling and health concerns, and recruitment and retention. The Campus Pride Index is at <http://www.campusprideindex.org/> and Syracuse’s 2015 assessment can be viewed at <https://www.campusprideindex.org/campuses/details/120?campus=syracuse-university>

Some highlights of our work for the academic year not covered in our previous report were:

**December 9, 2015:** Discussed Campus Pride SU rating and suggestions for Chancellor’s Workgroup on Diversity & Inclusion:

- Additional staff & programming resources for LGBT RC & LGBT Studies; endorse appointment of Tiffany Gray as Director (vs. Interim)
- Implement preferred name/pronouns/email-SUID policy via “My Slice” for course rosters and SU documents (LGBT RC list available)
- Enable self-identification for sexual orientation/gender identity on application
- Institutionalize presence/support by establishing a formal LGBTQ Alum Group, Standing Advisory Committee to Chancellor, and Faculty/Staff Organization (& space)
- Provide LGBTQ-inclusive student services and encourage staff training & specific programming in interviews/benefits, roommate matching, trans-inclusive health services, more confidential distribution of free condoms, LGBTQ Admissions Fairs, Student Scholarships, Peer & Faculty Advisors

**February 17, 2016:** Consultation with Mike Cahill, Director, SU Career Services, Dan Olson-Bang, Associate Director, Graduate Student Programs, and Ryan Smith, Recruiting and Assessment Analyst.

Recommendations:

- Address LGBT career concerns in dedicated program/space, such as a focused workshop, include LGBT career panels at academic conferences, provide career mentoring and campus events on being “Out in Academia.”
- Develop links between LGBT Center webpage and Career Services webpage section on LGBT career services/resources
- Help job candidates understand employer’s policies and state/local laws/context
- Coach job candidates on how to handle improper interview questions that violate privacy
- Develop LGBT alumni career networks

**March 1, 2016:** The LGBT Concerns Committee endorsed the Women’s Concerns Committee’s proposal to establish an Ombuds Office at Syracuse University

**March 31, 2016:** Consultation with Ben Domingo, Director of Health Services

Our discussion focused on how services, programming, and materials provided by SU Health Services might be more LGBTIQ-inclusive and sensitive to the particular needs of our community. Ben described current services and expressed a commitment to make the facility more welcoming to the LGBTQ community, to review and revise intake forms to allow students to self-identity and to indicate preferred pronouns, to improve access to safer sex supplies, to update print materials and make them more inclusive, and to ensure that staff members receive specific training on working with LGBTIQ-identified people. In a report to the committee dated 9/2/16, Ben noted that Health Services has created a safer sex weekly initiative, placing baskets filled with safer sex supplies at Health Promotions, Counseling Center, Recreational Services, and the Office of Student Assistance and relocating supplies at Health Services to areas that are more discreet and labeling supplies clearly. He also reported that staff participated in two “Safer People, Safer Spaces” trainings conducted by the LGBT Center and completed complete the Fenway Health Module *Achieving Health Equity for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People*. Changes to forms and electronic health records options are in process.

**April 20, 2016:** Consultation with Cory Wallack, SU Counseling Center Director

Cory Wallack has been a staff member of the Counseling Center staff since 2003 and Director since 2009. He noted that the Center offers mental health services, alcohol/drug counseling services, and sexual relationship/violence counseling services. Last academic year, 1,986 students used Counseling Center services; projection for this academic year is approximately 2,100. When fully staffed there are 17 clinicians; currently there are 16 clinicians, and staffing is rarely at full capacity due to turnover, which he attributed to high workload and low salaries relative to community practice (off-campus). Of the 16 current staff, two identify as LGBTIQ. Cory emphasized the “social justice” (SJ) commitment of the Center in hiring only individuals with a history of SJ engagement and that on-going education on SJ issues is required of all staff. He further noted that all current staff have participated in the “Safer People/Safer Spaces” training offered by the LGBT Center and are expected to attend at least 5 campus events each academic year to be visible and active participants in the community. New print and web LGBT-related materials are being designed in consultation with Tiffany Gray at the LGBT Center.

## **2. LGBT Resource Center Liaison**

The University Senate LGBT Concerns Committee works collaboratively with the LGBT Resource Center to identify issues of concern and to address these at the policy level. The Committee welcomes the appointment of Tiffany Gray, former Associate and Interim Director, as Center Director. We plan to continue and improve our collaborative work and to support and assist one another in our respective areas of community engagement.

## **3. LGBT Studies Program Liaison**

Several faculty members and students affiliated with the SU LGBT Studies Program serve on the University Senate LGBT Concerns Committee, and the Committee supports the commitment of additional university resources to enable expansion of academic options in this program.

Currently, only an undergraduate minor is available.

[http://asacademics.syr.edu/LGBT/requirements\\_LGBT.html](http://asacademics.syr.edu/LGBT/requirements_LGBT.html)