

## Syracuse University Senate LGBT Concerns Committee Report Academic Year 2016-2017

**Members:** Mark Braiman, Britany Cashatt/BCash, Frederick Cieri, Francine D'Amico (Chair), Emily Vey Duke, Rachel Fox von Swearingen, Tiffany Gray/TGray, Margaret Himley, Margie Johnson, Jude Lewis, Andrew London, Charles Morris, Mindy Reger, Robin Riley, Kent Syverud (*ex officio*), Derrick Taylor, 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 LGBT Resource Center staff, the SU Office of Career Services, Counseling Center, and Health Services. In 2016-2017, we met with representatives of the LGBT Resource Center, the Department of Public Safety, and the Office of Human Resources.

### 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. The index is intended to provide "an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policy, program, and practice" and to assess how LGBTQ-friendly a campus climate is. For 2016, Syracuse rated 5 of 5 stars for LGBTQ Student Life and for LGBTQ Campus Safety; however, our overall rating was 3.5 of 5, and areas of concern the index identified are housing and residence life and recruitment and retention. The Campus Pride Index is at <http://www.campusprideindex.org/> and Syracuse's 2016 assessment can be viewed at <https://www.campusprideindex.org/campuses/details/120?campus=syracuse-university>

We also plan to review the detailed results of the SU campus climate survey. The executive summary and other preliminary information is available at <http://survey.syr.edu/> We will also review information from the Athletic Department's "Spring 2015 Student-Athlete Survey" and to request information from any planned follow-up surveys.

Some highlights of our work for the academic year were:

**October 19, 2016:** We met with staff members at the LGBT Resource Center: Tiffany Gray, Center Director, Britany Cashatt BCash, Associate Director, and Jesica Norman, Graduate Assistant. We discussed advantages/disadvantages of the current space/location, including centrality/marginality, disability access limitations, and visibility. For example, the Resource Center was not informed about /invited to be represented at SU "Orange Days" (student recruitment) or accepted student days programming. TGray noted that five students work at the Center, and students facilitate discussion groups, but only professional staff conduct the "Safer People, Safer Spaces" trainings, so staffing presents a challenge as requests for these trainings expands. A suggestion regarding the establishment of LGBTQ scholarships – perhaps a memorial scholarship - was discussed. BCash will be working on alumni outreach, so please direct suggestions to them.

**December 7, 2016:** We met with Department of Public Safety officers Chief Bobby Maldonado and Associate Chief John Sardino regarding safety/security concerns of campus LGBTQ community members. The officers detailed the procedures for reporting and responding to hate crimes via the STOP BIAS link on the SU homepage at <http://www.syr.edu/currentstudents/stopbias/> and <http://dps.syr.edu/law-enforcement/report-a-crime/>. Chief Maldonado noted that all DPS officers participated in the “Implicit Bias Training” held on campus on November 23<sup>rd</sup> but that this training did not explicitly address LGBTQ issues. He also noted that while he and other DPS officers have participated in the LGBT Resource Center’s “Safer People, Safer Spaces” training, this is not required of all DPS officers. The committee suggested that DPS consider incorporating the LGBT Resource Center’s “Safer People, Safer Spaces” training into the in-service training that DPS officers receive twice a year as well as designating an outreach officer to work with the campus LGBTQ community.

**February 15, 2017:** We met with Office of Human Resources representatives Andrew Gordon, Karen Morrissey, and Ann Verillo regarding services and benefits for LGBTQ faculty, staff, and student employees. Andy noted that all staff receive diversity training in on-boarding process and annual training conducted by Sheila Johnson-Willis/Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services and that five members of the HR team recently completed LGBT Resource Center “Safer People, Safer Spaces” training. Karen noted that in terms of health benefits, there is one dedicated person on point with POMCO re: transition benefits support. Andy indicated a willingness to work with LGBTIQ Resource Center staff to develop an HR-specific training for the 45 HR staff members. The balance of the discussion focused on suggestions for improving the OHR website to better assist LGBTQ community members. Initial changes to the website were made within a week after this meeting, and OHR representatives consulted with committee members on further changes via email as well as in person, as OHR’s Michelle McCormick attended our committee meeting on **April 27<sup>th</sup>** to review the planned revisions before the OHR website changes went live on May 1st.

For the 2017-2018 academic year, we plan to request consultations with the following SU offices/agencies: Alumni Services; Athletics Department; Housing/Student Life; and the LGBT Studies Program. We also plan to follow-up on previous consultations and to continue to encourage faculty, staff, and administrators to improve their ability to work with LGBTIQ-identified community members by participating in the “Safer People, Safer Spaces” training available through the LGBT Resource 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, and BCash as Associate Director. We plan to continue our collaborative work to support and assist one another in our respective areas of community engagement. <http://lgbt.syr.edu/>

## **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)

#### **4. Committee Membership/Leadership**

The committee welcomes new members, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Dr. Diane R. Wiener, Director of SU Disability Cultural Center in the Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience, will be participating in the committee for the 2017-2019 term. Graduate students Montiniquë D. McEachern (Education), Joseph Railey (Law), Seok Wun Au Yong (VPA/Transmedia) and Jiayi Zhang (Maxwell/PSC), will be participating in the committee for AY 2017-2018. The Chair for AY 2017-2018 will be Emily Vey Duke.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The committee members recommend amending the Senate By-Laws to revise the title and charge of the committee to engage more inclusive language and to reflect contemporary usage and the scope of work in which the committee engages. This proposal was sent to the Senate Agenda Committee on April 21, 2016, and we hope to see the proposal come to the floor of this body for a vote soon.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francine J. D'Amico".

Francine J. D'Amico, Chair, LGBT Concerns Committee  
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