

**LGBT Concerns Committee Report  
2013-2014 Academic Year**

*SU is a **national leader** among colleges and university in its support of LGBT issues. Since 2007, we have received a **five star campus climate rating** on the Campus Climate Index. This is the third year in a row that we have earned this distinction.*

**I. New Business:**

**A. Proposed Resolution from the Senate Committee on LGBT Concerns**

In response to an incident of vandalism that occurred this past semester against members of the campus community, the Senate Subcommittee on LGBT Concerns, with the full support of the Senate Diversity Subcommittee, wishes to propose the following resolution.

Background: On Friday November 15th, 2013 a student staff member of the LGBT Resource Center observed that a campus display aimed to raise transgender awareness and inclusion was torn down in what may best be described as an act of symbolic violence. This act sent a message of intolerance and disrespect and elicited both fear and intimidation.

Moreover, because this vandalism coincided with Transgender Day of Remembrance events taking place both within the Syracuse community and across the nation, it was an all too real and disturbing reminder of violent acts that have led to the deaths of transgender individuals here in the city of Syracuse, as well as across the state of New York and the world. Although the violence in this instance was directed at an awareness display (in other words, a physical object), it nonetheless communicated that individuals who so identify are similarly unwelcome and unsafe.

Because discrimination and bias can take many forms, including symbolic violence, we ask the senate to explicitly condemn all acts of physical or symbolic violence or bias directed toward people with marginalized genders and sexualities including, but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming identities or expressions as incompatible with our community values of inclusiveness and respect for all.

The resolution:

*The Syracuse University Senate condemns all acts of physical or symbolic violence against those protected explicitly in the University's non-discrimination policy, whether targeted toward any individual or group of students, faculty, staff or community*

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*members. Such acts of bias are incompatible with our community values of inclusiveness and respect for all. In particular, we condemn the symbolic violence perpetrated in the tearing down of a campus display aimed to raise transgender awareness, which took place November 13, 2013—just days away from the official Transgender Day of Remembrance for victims of vicious hate crimes that have led to serious injuries and deaths, even within the past few years in the city of Syracuse.*

**B. DOMA:** We communicated with Human Resources and Payroll after the DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) was overturned. There was no need for any actions or recommendations on behalf of our committee because SU was quite proactive in making policy and other changes to ensure that employee tax statements and earnings were adjusted correctly any employees who had any changes to their legal status.

## II. Old Business

In continuing our work from last year, a major focus of the committee has been on following up on the issues of homophobia in university athletics that we raised in last year's report to the Senate. This past Fall, our committee met with the faculty representative to the NCAA and Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Athletic Concerns (Michael Wasylenko), the Associate VP of Human Capital Development and Title IX Compliance Officer (Cynthia Maxwell-Curtin), and the Associate Director of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (Jamie Mullen). We also recently had an additional follow up meeting with the Senate Subcommittee on Athletic Concerns.

We can report the following progress regarding the recommendations included in last year's report:

1. *Remodel all locker rooms and shower facilities to provide adequate privacy for showering and dressing for all athletes of all sports.*

At our first follow up meeting, we were informed of the "limited resources and funding" available at this time for remodeling locker and shower rooms. Although it may not be feasible to renovate all of the locker rooms immediately or all at once, we were assured that privacy issues would be included in any future renovations to the locker and shower facilities. We have no schedule for these renovations at the present time.

We also discussed the possibility of less expensive ways to improve privacy for student athletes. We suggest, for instance, that athletics consult with campus

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resources (such as faculty and students in the design programs at SU), who might be able to recommend some inexpensive ways to improve privacy until more major renovations can be scheduled.

Finally, renovating for privacy would be a proactive way for SU to address trans\* inclusion, something that has been recommended by the NCAA. A report commissioned by the NCAA states, *“Every locker room should have some private, enclosed changing areas, showers, and toilets for use by any athlete who desires them (NCAA Inclusion, 2011, pg. 20).* More recently, another NCAA commissioned report affirms that,

*“It is unrealistic to assume that all members of a team are comfortable with open shower areas and public nudity in locker rooms. Individual student-athletes have many reasons for wanting a private area in the locker room to change clothes or shower...”*

(Champions, 2012, pg. 31). This report can be accessed

from: <http://www.ncaapublications.com/p-4305-champions-of-respect-inclusion-of-lgbtq-student-athletes-and-staff-in-ncaa-programs.aspx>

Having separate shower stalls are also recommended due to concerns about safety and health of athletes in terms cross contamination and infection.

We reaffirm our recommendation that SU develop and communicate a plan to renovate the shower and locker room facilities to ensure privacy for our student-athletes.

*2. Ensure that until locker rooms and shower facilities are remodeled that no coaches (male or female) are allowed into locker rooms until athletes are fully dressed.*

Again, before facilities can be renovated, it is recommended that Athletics develop a policy that ensures players have some assurance of privacy while they are showering and getting dressed. We discussed several ways to do this, but ultimately it would make most sense to develop a policy with the coaching staff so that it is relevant to each team’s situation. Once a policy is developed, however, it should be communicated to all coaching staff and to players. Including this policy in the student handbook is recommended so that students are aware of the policy.

*3. Ensure that all athletes staying in hotels are provided with their own bed.*

We were assured at both meetings that this *is* the policy of the athletic department and it has been communicated to staff. We recommend that this policy be included in the student handbook, so that students are aware of the policy.

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*4. In consultation with the LGBT Resource Center and outside consultants, establish on-going and mandatory anti-harassment training for all coaches, staff, and athletic personnel.*

Cynthia Maxwell-Curtain reported to the committee that this training has been conducted. We have no further details.

*5. In consultation with the LGBT Resource Center, outside consultants, and current or former LGBT student athletes create a meaningful ally program for student athletes and encourage participation across every sport.*

We plan to reach out to the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) about the possibility of starting an Ally program in the Fall.

*6. In consultation with the LGBT Resource Center and outside consultants, develop an explicit anti-harassment/anti-homophobia policy for athletes, coaches, referees.*

We were told that anti-harassment training was conducted, but we have no details about who participated.

*7. Consult NCAA and the LGBT Resource Center in developing pro-active policy for transgender athletes.*

We recommend that the university consult the *NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes* from the NCAA Office of Inclusion (August 2011) in developing a pro-active policy. This report can be downloaded

from: [http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender\\_Handbook\\_2011\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender_Handbook_2011_Final.pdf)

*8. Eliminate all gender-normative expectations and requirements for appearance for student athletes.*

The report (see above) also states that, “*Dress codes for athletic teams when traveling or during a game day at school should be gender-neutral*” (NCAA Inclusion, 2011, p. 21).

Our committee was asked to draft a gender-neutral dress policy, (which we include here). Our recommendation would be to add this statement to the existing language in the student-athlete handbook.

*Our recommendation:*

*“Syracuse University respects student athletes’ choices for personal expression and does not enforce gender normative requirements for dress, appearance, grooming, attire, hair, and accessories. This applies to dress code expectations for travel, receptions, media interactions, games, and other formal team functions.”*

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Existing language: "Travel appropriate attire includes: dress shirts, dress pants, skirts, sweaters, ties, dresses, suits, vests, and khaki pants. Inappropriate attire includes: jeans, sweatshirts and sweatpants (unless team gear/uniform is indicated as required attire for travel), sneakers, flip-flops or casual sandals, tank tops, and hats."

9. *In consultation with the LGBT Subcommittee, conduct a survey of current and former student athletes to explore climate issues around LGBT issues.*

This was discussed in our second meeting (with the Senate Subcommittee on Athletics Concerns). Athletics is looking into doing a climate survey of student athletes. We agreed to serve as consultants in drafting questions and in analyzing the results.

10. *Offer exit interviews with neutral party or exit survey for any student athlete that quits a team.*

These interviews are currently being offered by the Faculty Oversight Committee.

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11. *Ensure that NCAA officials or referees receive anti-harassment/anti-homophobia policy and ensure that any violation to this policy is included in any referee evaluation.*

We have been told that officials in the ACC do participate in anti-harassment training. We recommend that coaches or other staff discuss with athletes what to do if they experience harassment from an official or referee.

### **III. Future work of the committee**

We plan to continue to work on these issues in 2014-2015. In particular we plan to consult with Athletics in conducting a climate survey. We also plan to schedule a meeting with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee about starting an Ally Program.

We recently discussed the ramifications of merging our committee with other "diversity" committees. We understand the difficulty in fully staffing senate subcommittees, but are concerned that LGBT issues would be less visible and that students, faculty and staff would not necessarily want to address LGBT concerns, particularly if they were not "out" about their sexuality and genders in the context of a more general diversity committee.

We are also currently working on collecting examples to use to compose a syllabus statement that addresses LGBT inclusiveness. We plan to make this statement available to faculty, but will suggest that this statement be voluntary.