

# UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

**Chancellor's Committee on the Status of  
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues**

## **Annual Report for 2007-2008 Robbie Lopez and Bernie Santarsiero, Co-Chairs**

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the CCSLGBTI continued to follow elements of a Strategic Plan that was generated in 2006 by the CCSLGBTI and other LGBT entities on- and off-campus. That process, implemented during the fall semester of 2006, dictated a new committee substructure, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, with five active members serving as chairs of five sub-committees. We continued to work on the committee as a whole, but discussions were focused around the tasks of the designated sub-committees, to more efficiently achieve our goals. The committee also launched a new website that includes important links, past meeting minutes, and a section for online donations to the scholarship funds. Previous CCSLGBTI co-chair Dr. Stacey Horn ended her term early in January to enjoy a sabbatical leave, and Dr. Bernie Santarsiero was chosen to join Robbie Lopez as co-chair for the remainder of the 2007-2008 academic year.

The Finance sub-committee distributed employee payroll deduction cards to encourage donations to the CCSLGBTI scholarship fund. The CCSLGBTI hosted the annual scholarship competition through the Scholarship Association at UIC, and awarded one scholarship to an undergraduate student and a second to a graduate student. Other ideas that were explored included discussion with the UIC Development and Alumni Association Offices to promote donations to the scholarship fund. The Finance sub-committee prepared a draft of an annual newsletter for UIC GLBT Alumni, but has not yet distributed it. Liz Thomson and Bernie Santarsiero represented UIC in the formation of a Chicago area College/University GLBT Alumni organization, "Out Alumni in Chicago," and all social events were well attended.

The CCSLGBTI hosted the first annual UIC Lavender Research Forum that highlighted groundbreaking LGBT-related campus research by four faculty members and four graduate students: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/lrf>. The event also celebrated the recent publication of the book "MediaQ" edited by Dr. Kevin Barnhurst, who was a former CCSLGBTI co-chair. He made a short keynote video presentation to commemorate the event. It was well received, and there was enthusiasm to convene the forum again in following years. The oral presentations were digitally taped, and will be soon accessible on the CCSLGBTI website.

Through the work of the Research & Scholarship sub-committee, especially Dr. Brian Mustanski and Dr. Francesca Gaiba, two proposals for providing seed grants were submitted. The David Bohnett Foundation granted the request in the amount of \$20,000, and the CCSLGBTI now manages an LGBT seed fund for campus research. We encourage the Provost to match this funding as we continue to seek even more foundation funding.

The CCSLGBTI also focused on issues concerning LGBT research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for review and approval of research protocols. Based on a meeting with

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campus LGBT researchers and several salient incidents, it was increasingly evident to our committee that there were conflicts and misunderstanding by the IRB that may have been delaying the approval of research needed to improve the health of the LGBT population (e.g. misunderstanding the difference between populations that are vulnerable to health issues relative to the IRB sense of “vulnerable” due to diminished autonomy, or concerns about how research on LGBT people might be perceived by non-research participants). Most of the identified problems appeared to be related to the review of research with LGBT youth. After several meetings by committee members with IRB representatives, the committee made six recommendations to improve the ethical review of LGBT-focused research. Here is a summary and the status of these recommendations:

- 1) Increase the number of board members with LGBT expertise, particularly in research on youth. In December 2007, Dr. Mustanski began serving on IRB2, and in August 2008, Dr. Horn joined him as an alternate. Dr. Tonda Hughes is already serving on IRB2. This likely meets the needs of IRB2, but it is unclear how this expertise is best extended to the other IRBs.
- 2) Increase the awareness of all board members regarding LGBT people and the understanding of the federal definition of “vulnerable” populations. Drs. Labott and Fischer offered to come to a CCSLGBTI meeting to discuss an approach to work together. We also discussed hosting a LGBT research forum with OPRS. These are yet to be scheduled.
- 3) Have consultation available to the IRB around LGBT cultural issues that are relevant to the protections of human subjects. The director of Office of GLBT Concerns (OGLBTC—now Gender and Sexuality Center) and the co-chairs of the CCSLGBTI have offered to serve as consultants in this area.
- 4) A formal relationship should be established with the federally-approved IRB at Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC), which is the Midwest’s premier LGBT health center. The CCSLGBTI considers HBHC an exceptional resource for UIC. This recommendation was rejected by OPRS.
- 5) The IRB response should more clearly define the identified human subject’s protection issue so that the PI has a context in which to reply. In the absence of such information some comments have appeared insensitive to the LGBT community. Mr. Chuck Hoeney indicated that there has been discussion about the need to make some changes to the format of the review response to make it clear what are human subject’s issues and what are regulatory issues. This is yet to be implemented.
- 6) Many institutions, including the NIH intramural IRB, invite PIs to attend the initial review session to establish a dialogue on how best to protect participants. This should be considered for implementation at UIC so that a PI with expertise in LGBT research can answer questions at the meeting, and avoid further confusion and the potential for mutual misunderstanding. This appears to have been partially implemented with IRB2, but is unclear how well it has been implemented with other boards.

The Advocacy and Policy sub-committee focused on two prominent issues: the shortcomings of the UI/CMS implementation of Domestic Partnership Benefits and GLBT issues concerning the President’s Blood Drive. Domestic Partnership Benefits are available, but a number of issues still remain to be resolved. The Domestic Partnership Task Force, coordinated by the OGLBTC (now Gender and Sexuality Center), continues to advocate on this issue. The sub-committee began work last year to promote greater awareness of the FDA policy that permanently restricts

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blood donations from men who have sex with men, and the fact that it is scientifically indefensible in light of recent epidemiological evidence. Members of the sub-committee met with Dr. John DeNardo, CEO of the UIC Health Care System, and others to voice support for the annual blood drive coupled with a need for an educational campaign. A small campaign was launched to create some educational literature about the policy to disseminate at campus blood drives, and a letter and blood drive advocacy packet was assembled. The sub-committee continues to stay engaged with this issue through future blood drives, petition filings, and health campaigns. We continue to advocate for GLBT campus constituents, and promote greater awareness as a premier educational and health services institution.

The CCSLGBTI appointed Dr. Horn as our representative to the campus-wide Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC); she acts as a liaison between the CCSLGBTI and the DAC. This is a natural extension of one of our goals to increase the number of GLBT individuals on campus in faculty and staff positions, promote greater awareness of GLBT issues on campus, and to foster a more tolerant, cohesive, and diverse campus climate in all aspects of race, gender, and ethnicity.

Throughout the academic year, CCSLGBTI co-sponsored several events: the very successful GLBT Heritage Month programs in October organized by the OGLBTC, the annual UIC production of the Vagina Monologues, a "Meet and Greet" event to all members of the Chancellor's Status Committees, "Ten Percent: Sexual Orientation and Homophobia in the Workplace," an event organized and co-sponsored by the College of Dentistry, and the Office of Women's Affairs leadership retreat. In our goal to make funding of student groups a high priority, we were able to co-sponsor four undergraduate (delete paragraph return) students from the GLBT group PRIDE to attend the Midwest Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Ally Collegiate Conference, the Coming Out Ball, hosted last year by UIC PRIDE (the undergraduate LGBT student organization), and a group of individuals representing UIC in the Chicago Pride Parade. We also co-sponsored five events during the summer as outreach to Chicago GLBT youth.

Following the inaugural celebration in 2006, we again co-sponsored the second annual Rainbow Banquet and Lavender Graduation Ceremony. This event, organized by the OGLBTC (now the GSC: Gender and Sexuality Center), involved both the CCSLGBTI annual scholarship award ceremony and the graduation ceremony for LGBTQ graduates. The keynote speaker at the graduation ceremony was actor/activist Wilson Cruz. A total of eighteen graduates participated in the ceremony, and over 100 people were in attendance. The ceremony was held in the Student Services Building, with the reception following at Stanley's on Racine Restaurant. There was additional support and co-sponsorship from the Alumni Association, LAS Alumni Association, and Office of Career Services, as well as addresses from Dean Lon Kaufman and Provost Michael Tanner. The CCSLGBTI scholarship recipients were recognized, and each of the graduates received a "Rainbow Diploma," rainbow tassel, and other gifts. The Rainbow Banquet and Lavender Graduation was a wonderful way to close out a very busy and successful year, and we will continue with the tradition next year.

The year closed with the departure of co-chair Robbie Lopez, and the election of new co-chair Dr. Francesca Gaiba. Dr. Santarsiero and Dr. Gaiba will serve as CCSLGBTI co-chairs for the 2008-2009 academic year.

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