

CCSLGBI

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

To: James Stukel, Chancellor
From: Curt Winkle & Jo Campbell, Co-chairs
Date: February 4, 1994
RE: Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns Proposal

The following proposal for an Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns was submitted by a Task Force of our Committee headed by Dr. David Barnett.

The Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Issues is proud of the work that we have accomplished in the past two years. It has become clear, however, that demands from committee member's home departments make it increasingly difficult to accomplish all the projects that we would like to undertake. Although we recognize the financial condition of the University leaves much to be desired, we are fearful that by continuing to rely on volunteer efforts each year, attention to lesbian, gay and bisexual issues will become increasingly marginalized as these volunteers "burn out" or move on to other opportunities.

Through various meetings and discussions our committee has held over the past two years, we have identified the following issues as particularly relevant for such an office to address: homophobic/heterosexist behavior by students, by staff, and by faculty; safety concerns; career advancement — including promotion and tenure issues; and training, education, and program development needs around issues of sexual orientation.

The establishment of offices dedicated to serving lesbian, gay and bisexual students, faculty and staff has occurred with increasing frequency across the country. Offices for lesbian, gay & bisexual issues have been established at the following campuses: Emory University, Iowa State University, University of Kansas, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Mankato State University, University of Michigan, Western Michigan University, Rutgers University, the Ohio State University, the University of Oregon, the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, as well as the recently created office at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Duke University established a coordinator of gay, lesbian and bisexual services and sexuality programming in their counseling and psychological services center. Unfortunately, many of these centers were created only after a negative, disruptive event on the campus (such as student demonstrations, a vicious hate crime, etc.).

We anticipate several long-range benefits with the establishment of an Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns. Our Chancellor's Committee is currently trying to perform many of the functions that are more appropriately housed in a office with dedicated staff for these tasks. Such an office would parallel the Office of Women's Affairs in the diversity of functions it provides. This is particularly true in the areas of programming, training, and resource development. In addition, this office would help to satisfy the heightened and organized demands by lesbian, gay and bisexual students for a community center. The needs of students for some attention from the university are also exhibited by recent efforts to organize a Queer Campus chapter at UIC (an activist arm of Queer Nation focusing on college and university concerns).

Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns

Staffing considerations:

- 1) The Director of the Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns is conceived of as a full-time academic professional position. In order to maximize credibility with the faculty, the director should preferably have a doctorate (master's degree required). This person would report to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
- 2) Support for the Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns will be provided by a full-time civil service staff member, preferably an Information Services Supervisor.

Structural considerations:

- 1) Space on campus will be designated for this office. Minimal needs are a private office for the Director and a public space which would house the clerical staff and provide access to resources in the Center by the campus community and a small meeting area. Equipment needs are two desks and telephones, network computer support, a desktop computer system, shelving, file cabinets, and a meeting area with a table and six chairs.
- 2) The Director will be provided funding to attend professional conferences and meetings to access the most current knowledge, data, information, and program development strategies regarding lesbian, gay and bisexual people, concerns and issues.
- 3) The Office will subscribe to various national lesbian, gay and bisexual publications in order to access contemporary thought, knowledge, and information regarding lesbian, gay and bisexual people, concerns and issues. These might include the *Advocate*, *BLK*, *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, *Lesbian Connection*, *OUT*, and *Ten Percent*. In addition, a small collection of video and other media resources will be purchased for the office collection.
- 4) The Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Issues shall recommend members for an advisory group for the Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns. This shall be composed of faculty, staff, and students who represent various gay, lesbian, and bisexual constituencies as well as representatives of campus offices (such as Student Development Services, Affirmative Action Programs, Counseling Center, Campus Housing, uic police, etc.) to keep abreast of the local climate and perceived problems concerning lesbian, gay and bisexual persons at UIC. The Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs shall appoint members for the advisory committee from among these nominations and from nominations of other individuals by other campus units.

Interim:

- 1) The Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Issues recommends that such an office be established with an Interim Director. This person would have a 30% time appointment and would begin development of the office and the position. A national search would be conducted for the permanent Director. We suggest that nominations for the search committee be collected from all the Chancellor's Committees on the Status of... and from vice chancellors, deans, directors and department heads.
- 2) An office space, perhaps temporary, should be established quickly to give a physical presence to the Office and to serve the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community center function. With vacancies in University Hall and other buildings when Student Affairs moves to the Student Services Building, we suggest a space on the east central campus be allocated for a permanent office site.

Position Description: Director, Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns

The Director will provide individuals and groups with information on and referral to campus and community resources; provide direct service to the staff and faculty of campus units to improve and enhance their work; promote an environment of affirmation and support for lesbian, gay and bisexual members of the UIC community; and coordinate training and program efforts of the campus on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. In addition, the Director will work to facilitate research efforts at the university on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

Specific responsibilities are envisioned to encompass, but are not limited to, the following four areas:

Support Services:

- 1) Provide opportunities for lesbian, gay and bisexual faculty, staff and students to discuss their concerns in a safe and supportive environment. Develop the Center as a cultural/community center for gay, lesbian and bisexual students.
- 2) Work with the staff of various campus units to increase sensitivity and effectiveness in responding to individuals experiencing discrimination, harassment, heterosexism or violence based on actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- 3) Collaborate with appropriate faculty, staff and student organizations to develop programs and activities for events of particular significance to lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons.
- 4) Serve as a clearinghouse for requests for speakers on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues for classes, department meetings, student organizations, and special events.
- 5) Help lesbian, gay, and bisexual faculty, staff and students to identify existing resources and services on campus and in the metro Chicago that can be used to address problems, issues, and concerns. Develop a guide to appropriate campus services for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.
- 6) Develop and disseminate a publication for faculty and staff to assist them in working more effectively with lesbian, gay and bisexual students and colleagues as a companion piece to the service guide.
- 7) Attempt to develop additional means of communicating information about lesbian, gay, and bisexual concerns and resources to the campus community (e.g., through the ADN, campus newspapers columns, newsletter, etc.)

Advocacy services:

- 1) Gay, lesbian and bisexual students may need someone on campus who will assist them in getting the help or services they need. This may go beyond a simple referral, particularly if it appears that the student's needs have not been met perhaps due to his or her perceived sexual orientation.
- 2) Faculty and staff concerns around issues such as domestic partnership can be supported by this Office. This may involve gathering data to provide to appropriate administrators to facilitate decision making or planning efforts.

Grant development:

- 1) Although there appears to be limited foundation and government grant support at this time for research or projects addressing lesbian, gay and bisexual issues, the Director will attempt to secure and disseminate information on funding opportunities.
- 2) The Director will also attempt to link faculty and staff with similar interests in order to promote the development of successful grant proposals.