

## ANNUAL REPORT

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Support Services  
Indiana University  
July 1, 1999 – June 30, 2000

### INTRODUCTION

The setting was the Convention Center in Indianapolis. The gathering was the NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Conference 2000 in March of this past spring. The most riveting plenary session was entitled “The Legacy of Matthew Shepard” featuring Matthew’s mother, Judy. She spoke softly, but passionately to several thousand college and university staff members, sharing her unique perspective on the brutal murder of her college-age son in Laramie, Wyoming in October 1998.

When her presentation was over and we all had a moment to catch our breath and wipe the tears from our eyes the facilitator announced there would be time for just one or two questions. I happened to be near a microphone and stood to speak. I thanked Judy for her presence with us, for her courage, and for challenging those of us who work on college campuses to deal forthrightly with ignorance and intolerance. I asked her how her other college-age son, Logan, was doing and what she would say to us about our responsibility to students like him. Her response reminded me how essential is the work of offices like ours in supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender students and their families; in educating the larger community about glbt issues; and in standing against the hatred which, these days, too often leads to violence. That brief conversation was one of several ‘defining’ moments in my life this past year. This report offers a glimpse of the work that is related to such moments.

Doug Bauder, Coordinator, GLBT Student Support Services

## SERVING STUDENTS

Direct student services continues to be the main emphasis of our work, relating daily to students who stop by our office, who call on the phone, who write or email or contact us through our Web page. A brief glance at the ‘Overviews’, which are shared each month with our Advisory Board, will serve as an introduction to some of the individuals we are privileged to serve.

One of the highpoints of last summer was the opportunity to work with School of Education Counseling graduate student Greg Chaffin. During July Greg designed a counseling component for our office as part of his summer practicum. As a result of his efforts, our office has become a ‘satellite’ of the Center For Human Growth offering supervised counseling, in addition to the support, and information we have been providing glbt students for the past five years. Six student clients utilized this new service during the course of the summer, including several international students. These students received weekly counseling (up to six sessions) at no cost. The sessions were videotaped and discussed with a certified supervisor. Steve Nichols and Stephanie Burnett, graduate students in the School of Education, continued the development of this counseling service during the fall and spring semesters with an additional fourteen students benefiting from the program.

The month of August brought a number of new visitors to our office, including the interns from Counseling & Psychological Services, graduate students from the School of Social Work, students doing research on hate crimes and same sex marriage, and over fifty students who stopped by our Open House during Orientation Week. We also visited with the mother of two IU students, both of who are straight, but who referred her to us because their cousin is struggling with transgender issues. We visited at length and provided several insights and resources for which she was very appreciative.

During September our staff trained three undergraduate students to serve the office as work-study students. Another ten students were trained to serve as volunteers in a variety of capacities including a new group of Peer Supporters. We worked with a staff member of the Alumni Office and her supportive supervisor in dealing with an issue of harassment in the workplace. We offered insight and expertise to a doctoral student from the Kinsey Institute developing a project related to risky sexual behavior among men. We assisted a professor in developing his syllabus for a course on “Gay Issues In The Workplace”. And we collaborated with a staff member in the Department of Residential Programs and Services in organizing a program with students and the visiting cast from the musical, “Rent”.

Hate crimes and the lack of benefits for glbt individuals at IU seemed to be a common theme during the month of October. A professor in the School of Business called us to discuss the lack of benefits for domestic partners as she sought information for a colleague who was considering a faculty position here on campus. We were sorry to verify that there are no benefits. Several students filed a complaint with the Anti-Harassment Team regarding the need for fairer policies for partners of gay/lesbian students in using recreational facilities on campus. This case has yet to be resolved. The office also co-sponsored a lecture and a workshop by Kerry Lobel, Director of NGLTF (National Gay & Lesbian Task Force) and a presentation by Morris Dees, Executive Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center, in addition to a series of programs for Pride Week in conjunction with OUT, IU's student glbt organization.

During the month of November, a good bit of time was spent in organizing our Fifth Anniversary Brunch and Reception. Twenty-five friends and donors to our office gathered for a wonderful meal on November 21, which featured congratulatory speeches and letters from IU administrators. Following the brunch over one hundred people attended a two-hour reception in the IMU, which included remarks from recent graduates and current students. One attendee remarked: "It's been a long time since I've been to a party where everyone in attendance was genuinely pleased to be invited."

Contacts during December reflected the varied concerns, which come to our attention each month. A first-year student who was anticipating coming out to his parents over the holidays requested resources and support. A faculty member concerned about an African-American woman who had just come out as a lesbian called us for information. A graduate student who had worked in our office requested a letter of recommendation for application to a doctoral program in counseling. And an international student from Japan who had benefited from our office two years ago, stopped by to invite our staff to his final voice recital.

In January we referred a student who has been inspired by reading one of the books in our library ("And The Band Played On") to a local agency to provide support for people with AIDS. We met with area United Way officials who were seeking input on dealing with the controversy surrounding funding for the Boy Scouts, in light of their anti-gay policy. We collaborated with the Office of International Services in supporting a gay student from China who was seeking information on obtaining a green card. We sent information to an alumnus on the staff at Wake Forest as he seeks to develop an office similar to ours. And we provided information and support to a graduate student concerned for his partner who had been disowned and threatened with physical violence by his family since coming out.

A gay high school student with dyslexia who had just been admitted to IU, a new officer on the Bloomington Police Department, an undergraduate wanting to come out to his fraternity brothers, and an older, married gentleman from the community who was coming out at age 61 were among the individuals who contacted us for information or support during the month of February. We also met with new staff members in Residence Life to talk about our services, coordinated a panel program on glbt issues for fifty academic advisors, and initiated the Study Circles program on campus with 6 groups of students meeting to discuss diversity issues of various kinds.

March provided us with a number of opportunities to collaborate with others in providing inspirational and educational programs. We worked with a graduate student in the School of Music to present a concert in memory of Won-Joon Yoon. We responded to a request to participate in a panel program at the School of Library Science to discuss our own resources. We assisted in co-sponsoring, along with the International Center, a lecture with a lesbian activist from Zimbabwe. We met with staff members at MiddleWay House to present a program on domestic violence in lesbian and gay households and we met with local high school students to discuss the changing image of gay/lesbian characters in film. We also participated in a workshop at the NASPA Conference in Indianapolis on the topic of GLBT campus offices.

As the spring semester came to a close in April several more programs were offered and a variety of individual students were served. A program featuring local PFLAG (Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) activist, Rhea Murray, mother of a gay son, attracted a large group of students in Collins Living Learning Center. The office hosted a luncheon prior to the National Day of Silence for faculty, students and staff on issues of silence among glbt individuals on campus. A graduate student from Germany received support as she struggled with coming out to her roommate. An undergraduate who had done poorly academically received support from our office and from the Office of Student Financial Assistance. And an RA in McNutt received considerable support in dealing with harassment issues on his floor.

The month of May always provides us with a bit of a change in pace. This year was no exception. We had the unique experience of meeting with an undergraduate student who had been sanctioned by the Office of Student Ethics. Due to the nature of the harassment, it appeared as if the student may have been struggling with his own sexual orientation, so in the process of examining the impact of harassment, we also addressed the nature of internalized homophobia. We also met with staff at the local Girl, Inc., at the request of their Director, to deal with homophobic comments among participants in that program. And visiting our office this month was a new staff member of the FASE mentoring program on campus and six staff members from the Dept of Residence Life at Purdue who wanted to discuss ways they might provide service for gay & lesbians students there.

The year ended with several unexpected encounters during the month of June, as well. A recent graduate of IU contacted our office frustrated by the lack of equity in housing for he and his partner as he considered accepting a job at an Ohio university. We provided support and assisted him in writing a letter to the university. Later that same day we were treated to lunch by the parents of a student who was grateful for the support we offered their son. We also met with a student who had been expelled from IU for assaulting another student and for his abusive (anti-gay) language. We discussed issues of anger management and homophobia and communicated with staff in the Office of Student Ethics. During the course of one week, several recent graduates, now living in other parts of the country, stopped by to visit and catch us up on their lives.

## POSITIVE PROGRAMS

A wide variety of programs with glbt themes were planned over the past twelve months and we participated in dozens of panels reaching over 1200 students in classes in sociology, education, and human sexuality. During Pride Week in October, we hosted a program entitled "Overcoming Homophobia" at the request of Union Board. A lecture and a workshop featuring IU alumni who serve on the staff of the Human Rights Campaign, was held in the fall and the spring to examine political issues which affect our community. A well-attended potluck dinner and program featuring the film "If These Walls Could Talk" was hosted for women on campus. We also co-sponsored, along with the Community Educators, a luncheon for students, faculty and staff to celebrate the National Day of Silence in April and we honored graduates at our third annual "Rainbow Reception" in May.

In addition to addressing issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, staff members were involved in various efforts on campus and in the community to deal with issues of diversity, including the Community Gathering To Heal and Unite on July 12, 1999, Martin Luther King Day activities on January 17, 2000 and the Walk Towards Justice and Peace on July 6, 2000. Working in conjunction with the Commission on Multicultural Understanding, staff assisted in providing Study Circles (diversity dialogues) to 75 students during the month of February. In March the office coordinator accepted an invitation from the White House to attend a daylong conference with President Clinton and community leaders on responding to hate. And in May, staff led a workshop at a conference in Indianapolis on diversity for religious leaders and student support professionals from around the state.

## MINING THE MINUTES

In reviewing the minutes from the four Advisory Board meetings held this past academic year, these additional items are worthy of note:

- Thirty-five alumni attended our annual GLBTAA summer picnic.
- Approximately 50 videos were ordered for our library.
- Assistance was offered to the staff of the Kinsey Institute in relationship to a grant studying sexual activity of gay and straight men. This resulted in a gift of \$1,000 to our office.
- A new office brochure was designed and widely distributed.
- A grant of \$500 was received from the Gill Foundation in Houston, Texas.
- Our Web Page was updated and the professional list added.
- Our library coordinator made a presentation to staff of libraries in residence halls.
- Staff continued to meet weekly with the GLB Anti-Harassment Team and to respond to a large number of reported incidents of harassment on campus.
- Letters were mailed to friends and supporters of the office in consultation with the Director of Development. Over \$5000 was received as a result of our efforts.
- Staff assisted intern with Office of Student Ethics in developing a campus resource in dealing with glbt harassment.
- Staff worked in close association with OUT officers to plan programs, workshops and a possible regional conference.
- Office continued relationship with Center For Human Growth with student intern working out of our office.
- Student from the School of Social Work served as an intern in our office during the spring semester.
- Staff continued to work with student coordinators of Crossroads, graduate student support group.
- Staff assisted Office of Orientation programs in development of CultureFest.
- Coordinator offers to assist Office of Multicultural Affairs in further development of 'Conversations on Race' (Study Circles).
- Discussions were held with Tom Swafford in Space Management regarding space needs in office.

## CONCLUSION

“The GLBT Office has grown substantially in the past few years and we are in need of more space. Our library has run out of room for new books and videos. Our full-time staff members need their own private, confidential offices. Our students need a larger, private space for consultation and quiet conversation.” So stated the petition that was signed by over 100 students, faculty, and staff earlier this spring. We continue that search because it is clear that the work that we do could be done even more effectively if we had more room in which to do it. Our hope is that as we enter our sixth year of service to IU students, that dream might be realized.

It is those students, with whom we interact from day to day, who continue to challenge and inspire and delight we who work in GLBT Student Services. Mindful of the ‘cutting edge’ work that we are doing we continue to be appreciative of the support we receive from the administration, from alumni, from faculty, staff, students, and from the families of those students. Earlier this summer, the father of one of the students to whom we offered support this past year wrote us a note. He is in the field of education, himself, and he and his wife visited with us in our office to express their appreciation for the relationship we have established with their son. In closing his note he wrote: “Karen and I are so pleased to have shared some time with you. Your work there is as essential as any I know or can imagine and we’re grateful that our son has access to you.” We are grateful, too.

Doug Bauder, Coordinator  
Carol Fischer, Office Services Assistant Senior  
John Bogeman, Library Coordinator  
Miya Tamura, Office Assistant  
Greg Chaffin, Steve Nichols, Stephanie Burnett,  
Interns from Center For Human Growth  
Nick Brannock, Intern, School of Social Work