

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

ANNUAL REPORT

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Support Services

**Indiana
University**

INTRODUCTION

There are several ways in which compiling an annual report is useful. 1) It gives those of us who carry out the day-to-day tasks in an office the chance to “toot our own horn.” 2) It provides us with some specific information which we can share with those who support our efforts with their money and their time. 3) It allows all of us the opportunity to reflect on what we do and to ask: Where can we make improvements?

I, actually, enjoy writing our Annual Report and one of the reasons is that, in doing so, I am reminded of a myriad of faces of those with whom we interact throughout the year – students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, people from the community, friends on the campus and those with whom we communicate around the world on Facebook, our Web Page, and email. Names (of individuals) have always been more important to me than numbers. But, of course, both have value in a report such as this. And, while, many names will not be mentioned in these pages because of confidentiality, I will be citing a variety of scenarios which tell something of the stories of those unnamed individuals. These scenarios are just a small representation of the large number of individuals we are privileged to serve from month to month. Before doing so, however, I did want to mention two numbers - fifteen hundred (1500) and one hundred thousand (100,000). The past 12 months have been significant for a variety of reasons, two of which relate to those numbers.

In February, our office hosted the oldest and largest college conference of its kind for g-l-b-t-q-i-a (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, ally) students. Over 1500 students from the heartland attended the Midwest BLGTA College Conference which boasted close to 100 workshops, three major keynote addresses and some very funny entertainment. Almost two years in the planning, attendees rated the conference very high and it was, eventually, honored to be the 2009 recipient of the Dean of Students Program Award. What was particularly gratifying was to hear kudos from all the professionals with whom our student planning committee worked – IU Conference Bureau, Bloomington Visitors’ & Convention Bureau, IU Foundation, Indiana Memorial Union. The conference was, truly, a celebration of the progress we are making in society in relationship to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. At the same time it provided scores of students with the opportunity to educate themselves on issues of mutual interest and to have their own self-esteem affirmed.

In the midst of all our planning and collaborating on the conference, our office learned that our friends and colleagues from the Office of Student Ethics & Anti-Harassment Programs, with whom we share the building at 705 E. Seventh St., will be vacating their space to move to other quarters, enabling us to expand our services with a significant increase in office space. Mindful of this opportunity, the GLBT Alumni Association made a commitment in April to raise \$100,000 within the next year to enhance our Scholarship Fund and to provide our renovated offices with new furnishings and equipment. After 15 years of operating in very tight quarters, our professional staff will soon have private offices, an expanded library and additional space will be available for more students to be involved in the work that we do, including a student lounge.

SERVING STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI

A new year begins for our office every July as we join with other support services on campus in welcoming hundreds of students and their parents to IU during Summer Orientation. According to those in the know, our table at the Resource Center (with our trademark multi-colored M&M's) is one of the most popular destinations for parents and students, gay & straight. Staff members from our office are also involved in Family Forums and the Partnering with Parents presentation. Last July, in the midst of Orientation activities, we were contacted by the field organizer of the Obama campaign asking us to distribute literature regarding the senator's stance on glbt issues. We agreed and, then, contacted Senator McCain's campaign office to ask for similar literature. Interestingly enough, we never heard back from the local Republican organization. July was also the month when some former students who volunteered in our office in the past, stopped by to visit. One graduate was returning from two years of service in Gambia with the Peace Corps. Another was leaving the country to serve a second tour of duty with the Army in Afghanistan.

During August, as we were preparing for our Annual Open House and Culture Fest, we provided information and support to a number of graduate and undergraduate students, as well as several faculty members. A faculty member in the School of Education requested help in suggesting job possibilities for a friend who is currently working with glbt youth in the Syracuse area. We encouraged her to check job postings at the Consortium of Higher Education for LGBT Resource Professionals, an organization of which Indiana University was a founding member. A doctoral student on campus sought our help in finding housing for a high school senior who was kicked out of his house in a nearby community for being gay. He had been sleeping in a park in our community for several nights. We were able to make some contacts and find a sensitive parent in the community who was able to provide housing for a time.

Over the course of the next few months, we encouraged the student who was enrolled as a senior in one of Bloomington's high schools, to consider applying to IU for the coming academic year. He is currently enrolled and involved in the GROUPS program. We were also able to be of help to a student at IUPUI in her appeal hearing regarding residency. Her partner is transgender and, because they are not able to marry, she was appealing for understanding regarding housing options. A letter from our office was, apparently, helpful in influencing the committee's decision in her favor.

As students began attending classes, again, in September, our office provided support for students, information for parents and consultation regarding a public relations snafu in the Kelley School of Business. The student was in a graduate program looking to do research on the experience of international students who come out in American culture and, then, face difficulties as they anticipate going home. We assisted the student in making contact with glbt staff and students associated with International Services. A documentary film will, in all likelihood, be the result of this student's research. Later in the month a mother of a high school student contacted us by email to help her son find a glbt-friendly college to attend. We, of course, recommended IU and, then, passed on information about the "Advocate College Guide," a paperback listing dozens of colleges and universities and the services they provide for their glbt students. (The book was authored by an IU grad and a friend of the office.) Mom and son were very pleased with the information and agreed to stop by the office when visiting IU.

SERVING STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI, Cont.

At months end, a controversy surfaced surrounding the appointment of General Peter Pace, former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a visiting lecturer in the Kelley School of Business. Scores of email messages were exchanged from students, faculty, and staff protesting this appointment because of the general's negative public comments regarding homosexuality. At the request of the Dean of the Kelley School, the Coordinator met with General Pace and a small group of students to share our concerns. The dialogue continued in the local press, among students, alumni, staff and with members of the Bloomington Faculty Council.

Outreach to the campus and the community continued during the month of October. A staff member from University Division contacted us with a concern for a student who had experienced some harassment. We followed up with the student providing support and information on the GLBT Anti-Harassment Team. The father of a current doctoral student who happens to be gay contacted the office asking if we would write a review for a book he was planning to publish on religion and homosexuality. The manuscript was sent, read and reviewed. The book was published a few months later with a glowing endorsement from the GLBT Office at Indiana University. Within a week of that request, the member of a local congregation requested help in sponsoring a discussion on a glbt- friendly film entitled "For the Bible Tells Me So." The Coordinator and several students provided responses to the film and facilitated a spirited conversation with fifty members of the local church. We also received a request to co-sponsor a production by Bloomington Playwrights featuring a lesbian character. We agreed to assist with publicity and offered a small contribution. We were also contacted by the staff of our local AIDS service agency, Positive Link, asking if our office could be used as an HIV testing sight in the spring. Due to space limitations we had to decline, but promised to re-consider the request next year when our office space doubles.

During the month of November, planning for the spring Midwest BLGTA College Conference intensified as a variety of committees met to organize volunteers and assign duties. Meeting with professionals on campus and the community continued on a regular basis. In addition to all of this activity we were asked by a faculty member in Folklore and Ethnomusicology to discuss the issue of polyamory as well as an incident of hate speech in his class. The meeting was scheduled following some consultation with the GLBT Any-Harassment Team. Several students requested letters of recommendation, as often happens at this time of the year. Letters were written. An undergraduate who had read an article in the local newspaper wondered if there was any way in which students could organize to assist elderly gay and lesbian individuals who may not have family to provide them with support. We met with the student and suggested several agencies in the community who might be interested in assisting with such a project. And three students and one community group were nominated for our annual "Spirit Award," in celebration of the anniversary of the establishment of our office in 1994. Two students were selected by members of the GLBT Office Advisory Board for their work in assisting families and organizing campus events for glbt students.

SERVING STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI, Cont.

December marks the end of a semester, an opportunity to express thanks to many of our supporters, and a unique time of tension for students anticipating coming out over the holidays. A number of students utilized our library during the closing weeks of the semester for final papers and projects. Others borrowed films to enjoy with family/friends over the holidays. A variety of gifts were received from faculty, former students, and alumni who are grateful for our services. Checks were deposited in our Foundation account and were utilized for program expenses and adding resources to our library. One student, who came out to his parents over Thanksgiving, lost his financial support as a result of being honest. We encouraged him to apply for an Emergency Scholarship through the GLBT Alumni Association and he was awarded a \$1500 scholarship to assist with some of his expenses. And a considerable amount of time and energy was spent providing support for a former student hoping to return to IU upon his release from prison next year. We sought information from and provided information to a variety of individuals in an attempt to provide a positive and supportive environment for the student when he returns to the campus. Contacts included University Counsel, Office of Student Ethics, Student Legal Services, local real estate agencies, the County Probation Office, and faculty members at the Jacobs School of Music.

As we began our ‘countdown’ in January for the Midwest BLGTA College Conference we responded to scores of questions via email, on the phone and in person: Can someone provide me with a breakdown of the Conference demographics? Will childcare be provided? Will the Kinsey Sicks (acapella drag group) be able to visit the Kinsey Institute? Can I distribute surveys at the conference? When will you need volunteers? I’m having trouble registering online, can you help? What about people who need a gluten-free diet? How do we get 1500 T-shirts wrongly delivered to the GLBT Office over to the IMU? Needless to say, it was a fascinating experience in problem-solving and a wonderful opportunity to assist students in guiding the whole process. In between answering lots of questions, we responded affirmatively to a staff member in the Department of Athletics to host a program on homophobia in sports. Utilizing the film in our library “It takes A Team,” we designed a program with several student panelists, responding to the film and answering questions. We also participated in a variety of GLBTAA “Homecoming” events including a reception at the Kinsey Institute, a Silent Auction (to benefit our scholarship fund) at a local restaurant, a brunch at the Tudor Room, and the annual PRIDE Film Festival which is the result of a student initiative several years ago. All events were well-organized and well-attended.

February was the month of “The Big Gay Conference” as our students affectionately came to call it. Our office staff worked almost non-stop through the weekend of February 13-15 to roll out the ‘crimson’ carpet for hundreds of students from colleges and universities around the Midwest. Our Provost and Dean of Students welcomed our visitors by highlighting the accomplishments of IU in providing services for students whose sexual orientation and gender identity was different from the norm. In doing so, they spoke about what a small group of dedicated students can do. Participants were very much impressed with the university’s support of our efforts. Scores of workshops, keynote addresses, great entertainment, and a Resource & Career Fair with close to 50 vendors rounded out three days of education and advocacy. As a local celebrity remarked in wandering through the IMU...”What are all these wonderful queer kids doing in Bloomington!?”

SERVING STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI, Cont.

☺ Even though the conference was our main focus in February, we still responded to staff requests in Residential Programs & Services for information on Safe Zone projects. We provided IUSA representatives with information on gender neutral bathrooms. We encouraged students at the Kelley School of Business in their establishment of a new student group for business students called OUT@Kelley. And we met with a group of HESA (Higher Ed & Student Affairs) graduate students to discuss the role of the office in confronting heterosexism on campus.

In March we responded to a host of different issues for students. We supplied a speaker for a club in the Kelley School related to being out on the job. A former undergrad who volunteered with our office was visiting town from San Francisco and agreed to speak to the student group. Our social work intern arranged for an in-service on glbt youth issues for a local youth services agency. A graduate student from SPEA who had organized volunteers for our Midwest BLGTA Conference requested a letter of recommendation for a White House internship. (Not being awarded the position was, clearly the President's loss!) We also distributed to readers of our listserv a survey related to tobacco use in the glbt community. It was sent to us as part of a research project from a student from the University of PA. It's the kind of request we receive often and distribute regularly. And, at the end of the month, the Coordinator presented a workshop at Ball State on "Establishing a GLBT Office on Campus." Seventy-five students attended the day-long conference, including several IUB students

Education, harassment, estate-planning, and leadership development are some of the themes that emerged in our office during the month of April. A graduate student in the School of Informatics asked our staff to serve as advisors as he pursues a Capstone project related to gay issues in Indian culture. Thanks to the concern of another Indian student at the School of Medicine in Indianapolis, a group of students presented a panel on glbt issues and physicians to students and administrators there. Months earlier the student had expressed concern that no attention was being paid to glbt students studying medicine, many of whom were very closeted and fearful, and no mention was made of glbt health issues. This led to the panel presentation and a promise from the Dean that, as a result of the program, glbt issues would be addressed more openly in the curriculum in the coming years. A staff member in the Kelley School of Business was embarrassed when a friend visiting from out of town was harassed as a 'faggot' by students in off-campus housing. The Team intervened quickly a few days before graduation and received an apology written to the visitor by IU students whose own visiting friends made the comments. A faculty member whose long-time partner died wrote asking for assistance with estate planning. We referred him to another member of the faculty with a similar experience she was willing to share. As the semester wound down, the counseling and social work interns from the office joined forces and provided a day-long workshop on leadership training for leaders of campus glbt groups.

The month of May was highlighted by the opportunity to meet the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, an openly gay man who is a visiting professor in the School of Law. He spoke at IUB's Commencement, noting the debt of gratitude he owed to Herman B Wells and Dr. Alfred Kinsey. The GLBT Alumni Association hosted a brunch for him the day following graduation. During the remainder of the month various individuals turned to us for consultation

SERVING STUDENTS, PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI, Cont.

on various issues. A staff member in the Alumni Office sought our input on a Diversity Statement which is meant to be used as guide for ongoing programs and projects. The Office of Admissions asked to meet with us to discuss ways in which we might collaborate more closely. Their participation in the Indy PRIDE event was one outcome of the meeting. A staff member at Middle Way House in Bloomington met with us to discuss ways in which men who have experienced abusive relationships in our community might find support. And the Office of First Year Experience Programs (Orientation) turned to us, again, for assistance at their Resource Center and with the Family Forums and the Partnering with Parents presentation. Staff also traveled to Hanover College with several members of the GLBT Anti-Harassment Team and met with students and administrators to help their campus respond to incidents of hate. This particular request was the direct result of the participation of several students from Hanover who attended the Midwest BLGTA Conference.

Former, current, and potential students were in conversation with us throughout the month of June.

A visiting choir brought high school students to Bloomington from Charlotte, NC and one of the singers, a senior who is gay with an interest in music and theater, was thrilled to learn more about IU's Jacobs School of Music and our Department of Theater. We suggested he keep in touch via email and we'll continue to be ambassadors for the university. An incoming doctoral student in Sociology who has just visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC was aware of a traveling exhibit and encouraged us to try to bring it to campus. She agreed to assist us and we are currently seeking exhibit space somewhere on campus. A former student and organizer of the Student Global AIDS Campaign here at IU wrote to us about his work as an activist and AIDS research in the nation's capitol. We responded with a note of thanks and support. One of our current student activists is traveling through the Netherlands this summer and sends regular reports of his travels. We keep in touch every week. A new graduate student in opera visited the office seeking ways in which he could assist the office. We discussed several possibilities tailored to his demanding grad student responsibilities. A former volunteer in the office, and campus leader, invited us to his 'wedding' in Washington this fall. And so it goes.

INSIGHTS FROM INTERNS

During the past year, our work was enhanced by the good work of a number of interns – graduate and undergraduate students who gave considerable hours to the planning of the Midwest BLGTA College Conference, as well as a variety of other projects and programs. Representing a growing number of students who seek employment or class credit by working in our office, three of our summer interns share some of their insights regarding their work in our office.

Christy Fox

I am going to be a senior for the 2009/2010 school year. My major is Human Development and Family Studies which is in the school of HPER (Health, Physical, Education, and Recreation). I interned this summer at the GLBT Student Support Service Office on IU Bloomington's campus. I really have enjoyed interning at the office. I have done an assortment of things. I started out doing inventory for the office. I counted buttons, brochures, and condoms. There were quite a few of all of them, but I was happy to do it because it helped us know what to order for the new semester. Another thing I did was to put a photo album together for the incoming freshman to

INSIGHTS FROM INTERNS, Cont.

gaze at during orientation. The album included older and current pictures of GLBT events that were taken around campus and elsewhere, including a variety I had taken myself. When orientation started I went every day to the Wells Library to set up the table and greet incoming students and their families. I loved doing that because it gave me a chance to meet new people which I love to do. On the office's website there is a Resource Guide for GLBT individuals showing places around town and noting professionals who are GLBT-friendly. I sent out about 70 letters to hair salons in Bloomington asking if they are GLBT friendly. Changing a few things on the cover letter, I also sent out about 100 letters to attorneys in town asking the same thing. We got quite a good response back and more are still coming in.

Another big thing this internship has given me is the opportunity to network. I feel as though I know so many important people on and off campus just by interning here. I have made connections for future jobs and beyond. One of the most influential things that happened to me here in the office was participating on the Speakers Bureau on GLBT issues in college classes. In doing so, I came to terms with my own bisexuality. I think I had always known, but talking about it to people and sharing my experiences really opened my eyes. I have made many friends in this office and have met so many wonderful people that when my internship is up in August I don't want to leave. My plan is to come back and help as much as I can when school starts up again. The office has helped me so much and I want to help the office as much as I can in return. I have learned a lot about diversity, future jobs I might hold, and, most importantly, about myself. I feel privileged to be a part of such an uplifting experience.

Rene Henry

It's full-steam ahead for things at IU's GLBT Library. So far this summer we've acquired nearly 80 new items! Many of them from our community friends who generously donated books, DVDs, and CDs, while the rest came from our first major material purchase in over a year. The library coordinator and volunteers have been feverishly cataloging, shelving, and advertising these new materials so as to keep the patrons inspired. Aside from these duties, the library coordinator has worked to reorganize and re-shelve many existing items while also working to revitalize the library blog and weekly library emails. The office is planning a movie screening for the beginning of August, and we hope to promote the library through various other screenings and outreach opportunities through the school year.

Erika Klosterhoff

Over the past nine weeks, I have had the privilege of interning as the counselor at the GLBTSSS office. During that time, I have completed nine intakes with new clients and have been meeting with clients on an individual basis to help them explore themselves and the issues they face. My work has involved offering support and facilitating self exploration as clients strive for personal growth. As my internship will continue into the spring semester, I have much planned for the academic year which will include continuing to work with individual clients as well as couples, developing and implementing a curriculum for a coming out group, and organizing a series of sexual minority workshops.

CONCLUSION

And so as we approach our 15th year of service to the campus and the community we are surrounded by a number of competent students who are developing their skills and preparing for the future as they serve their peers in a variety of ways. The opportunity to teach and to learn from these bright and committed students will be enhanced as we enter into the fall semester and the beginning of a capitol fund drive organized by the GLBT Alumni Association and planned in cooperation with the IU Foundation. Our goal, as I mentioned in my Introduction is to raise \$100, 000. Half of that will be set aside to provide for scholarships to students who lose the financial support of their parents when they choose to be honest about their sexual orientation or gender identity, a discovery which often comes about during one's college years. The other half of the fund drive will be used to assist in the expansion and the renovation of our offices, a place that has helped many students feel at home during their years at Indiana University.

When our office opened, in the midst of a storm of controversy in November 1994, a simple sign which read "Welcome Home" was placed in a prominent spot to serve as a symbol of hospitality for students who were experiencing harassment, were struggling with coming out issues and, in doing so, were facing the prospect of losing the support of their own family or circle of friends. Much has changed in our culture since those early days, although we still have work to do. Some of those issues of harassment, of feeling isolated and being silenced are still a reality in the lives of people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. But, more and more students who come into our office are proud of who they are and are looking for opportunities to make the world a better place, to be advocates for change. That is also true of the growing number of straight students who visit with us. It is an exciting time to be involved with this particular aspect of higher education and we continue to give thanks for the support we receive from every corner of the campus and the community in which our campus exists.

The following individuals assist us in our work:

Advisory Board:

Students

Michael Cooper
Jakob Cutter
René Henry
Solomon Hursey
Gopinaath Kannabiran
Bryan Popa
Erica Rezendes
Alex Simmons

Faculty

Professor Angela Courtney, Library & Information Science
Professor George Pinney, IU Theater Department
Professor Rex Sprouse, Germanic Studies
Professor Laura Scheiber, IU Anthropology Department
Professor Carolyn Wiethoff, Kelly School of Business

Staff

Kim Davis, Indiana Institute on Disability Community
Beth Ellis, Tim Ellis Realtors
Helen Harrell, Budget Manager, African Studies Program & OUT Advisor
Amy Ira, User & Systems Support Specialist, SES Data Access & Security Office.
Liam Newlin-Blackwell, Reporting Analyst – University Reporting and Research
Melanie Payne, IU Orientation Programs & Services
Andrew Shea, Staff Psychologist, IU Counseling & Psychological Services
Bill Shipton, IU Residential Programs & Services

GLBT Office Staff:

Carol Fischer, Office Assistant (full-time)
Michael Morris, Library Coordinator (hourly, Fall/Spring 08-09)
Ryne Shadday, Program Coordinator and GLBT Alumni Association 'intern' (hourly, Fall/Spring 08-09)
Solomon Hursey, Conference Coordinator (hourly, Fall/Spring 08-09)
Erica Rezendes, Social Work Intern (Fall/Spring 08-09)
René Henry, Counseling Intern 2008-09 (Summer/Fall/Spring 08-09)
Julia Napolitano, Conference Coordinator (work-study, Fall/Spring 08-09)
Christy Fox, HPER Intern (Summer 09)

Volunteer

Bethany Lister

Doug Bauder, Office Coordinator