

July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003

ANNUAL REPORT

**Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student
Support Services**

**Indiana
University**

INTRODUCTION

It was an award-winning year from beginning to end. In July 2002, at our first-ever SMYHL (Sexual Minority Youth in the Heartland) Conference, former U.S. Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders praised the GLBT Office and Indiana University for hosting this ground-breaking event, suggesting that we should be an example to campuses across the country. The following April, the Monroe County Convention & Visitors Bureau honored us with the “Local Host of the Year” award for sponsoring this first-ever gathering which attracted several hundred people to our community from over 20 states for a weekend of professional growth. And, as the spring semester came to a close, the office was honored, once again, as the Professional Staff Award of the Division of Student Affairs was presented to the GLBT Office Coordinator.

As much as awards and the recognition which comes with them are appreciated we, who work with glbt students, understand that their need for affirmation and recognition is what is essential to the work that we do. And our rewards, as staff, come when students and their parents come to understand and appreciate each other in new ways following the coming out process; or when a student can celebrate landing his/her first job, in part, as a result of work they did in our office; or when a student feels empowered to stand up for what they know to be right and, in the process, make an impact on others.

A case in point...for the third time in the course of a year, a small group of loud and obnoxious individuals from another part of Indiana invaded the city of Bloomington, taking over a local park and displaying signs such as GOD HATES FAGS, intimidating passersby in the process. Each time this group appeared, students expressed variations of anger, sadness, frustration, and guilt as they confronted these individuals and each time they appeared citizens became embroiled in shouting matches which always led to fists flying and arrests being made.

The third visit was different because a group of concerned citizens from ‘Bloomington United’ were ready. Signs reading ‘Buck the Hatred’ were posted in the windows or stores surrounding the park inviting people to ignore the demonstrators and to walk a block and visit a nearby church to pick up ‘Bloomington United in Diversity’ buttons and, if interested, to make a financial pledge to support groups which these agitators were disparaging.

Community leaders and students stood side by side handing out cards to steer people away from the demonstrators. One student, in particular, a soft-spoken undergraduate quietly walked between a screaming agitator and a passerby who was getting angrier by the minute and simply invited the passerby to consider an alternative to shouting (inviting him to take a button and/or make a pledge). The intervention worked. An outraged citizen found an alternative to his frustration and an IU student learned an important lesson in conflict management. That’s the work we strive to accomplish. Those are the moments which are rewards in themselves.

SMYHL – ANOTHER FIRST FOR INDIANA UNIVERSITY

In July of 2002 when the campus is, typically, as quiet as it gets, over 250 youth-serving professionals gathered one weekend at the Indiana Memorial Union for the first-ever “Sexual Minority Youth in the Heartland” conference sponsored by the GLBT Student Support Services Office. Teachers, guidance counselors, nurse practitioners, social workers, probation officers, librarians, and parents from 20 states met to consider how they might be more supportive of the teenagers with whom they work who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Highlights of the weekend included a Youth Speak-Out featuring glbt youth from area high schools, workshops on a variety of topics, a film festival, an interactive theater production, and a keynote address by former US Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders. Feedback on the conference was overwhelmingly positive with numerous requests that the event become an annual event. Welcoming Dr. Elders to the campus at the Saturday luncheon was Chancellor Sharon Brehm who was praised by Dr. Elders for her strong support of the conference. Brehm cited the university’s unique history (the strong commitment to diversity by former Chancellor Herman Wells, the establishment of the Kinsey Institute, and the development of the GLBT Office) as good reason for the hosting of the event in Bloomington. Elders went on to encourage organizers and those who attended the conference to be leaders in the nation in providing needed services and support for minority youth.

One SMYHL conferee was quoted as saying: “This conference sparked my thinking, re-energized me in my support of glbt youth, and provided me with numerous invaluable resources.” The conference received widespread support from a number of departments and offices on the campus. It was organized by a steering committee of IU staff, students, and friends from the larger community. For more information about the conference, visit www.iub.edu/~glbtyou.

SERVING STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI

Providing direct services, particularly for students, continues to be the main focus of our work, relating daily to those who stop by the office, who call on the phone, who write or email or contact us through our web page. A reading of the monthly overviews which are distributed each semester to members of the Advisory Board provides an introduction to some of the individuals whom we were privileged to serve this past year.

During the month of July, in addition to taking care of last-minute details surrounding the SMYHL Conference, including appearing on WFIU's 'Noon Edition' and being interviewed by the Herald Times, The Indianapolis Star, and Fox 59 in Indy, staff hosted the Resource Table for 5 weeks for Summer Orientation and participated in several Family Forums for parents of incoming students. We also assisted a GROUPS student with a class assignment, spoke to a graduate student about his gay brother who was abusing drugs, and provided support to a student who felt his disability limited his opportunity to date others.

In August staff participated in three separate sessions for the training of RA's (Resident Assistants); attended the annual GLBTSSS picnic, along with 125 enthusiastic alum; hosted an Open House at the office for new students, and served fruit-flavored 'smoothies' and pink triangle cookies to hundreds of students at the third annual CultureFest. Support was also provided to a graduate student with health concerns. A book review was written by a staff member for a new work by a former HESA intern. And a married graduate student spoke to us about his identity as a gay man. Referrals were made to several gay-friendly therapists in the community.

As the fall semester began our staff met with a graduate student who raised questions about coming out to the international students with whom she works. An undergraduate shared his frustrations about the 'gay scene' on campus and we suggested ways of socializing apart from drinking and doing drugs. We also assisted several students in finding housing accommodations. In addition, staff attended a first-ever GLBTAA gathering in Chicago with over 25 former graduates in attendance; the traditional WelcomeFest for new students; and the annual Lambda Legal Defense awards ceremony in Indianapolis where former Advisory Board Chair Steve Sanders was honored for his work in encouraging IU to, finally, adopt a domestic partner benefits program for the campus.

In October we provided information and support to the bisexual husband of an IU student facing a divorce and a custody battle; to a former IU student, now on the staff at the University of Utah, as he plans a conference similar to our SMYHL conference; and to a graduate student bothered by what he perceived to be harassment by his supervisor. We also spoke with a local pastor who wanted to be more supportive of parents with gay or lesbian children. We met with an IDS reporter writing an article on 'coming out'. And we referred several students who were struggling with coming out issues to our Peer Supporters.

Responding to community concerns took some of our time in November as a local high school teacher contacted us to plan a day-long series of training sessions on glbt issues for teachers and as we agreed to work, again, with a community activist in providing holiday gifts for people in the community who were HIV + or living with AIDS. Considerable help was also provided to students doing papers on a variety of topics, everything from gay marriage to gay adoption. Staff also met with several students who were part of a ‘resistance project’ (addressing the issues of a group of individuals with whom they would normally resist relating). Resources from the library were provided and interviews were granted.

Research papers and class presentations brought a number of students to our office during the early weeks of December. Students sought information on the history of activism at IU (including glbt activism) trans issues and religion, the ‘bear’ culture among gay men, and a comparison between incidents of racial discrimination on campus versus harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Other interesting encounters included a conversation with a staff member at IFS (Intensive Freshman Seminar) who sought our input on the development of a diversity staff position there and an exchange with a faculty member at a western university who was interested in corresponding with Myles Brand as he moved into his new position with the NCAA. She was a member of a group called ‘Sexual Minorities in Athletics’ and wanted some input on Brand’s support of glbt issues.

In January a woman called our office asking if we knew of clergy who performed ‘gay weddings’. We referred her to several local clergy. A representative of the BFC (Bloomington Faculty Council) contacted us regarding the development and distribution of a questionnaire related to the current policies in applying for domestic partner benefits. Staff made suggestions for improving the survey format and agreed to distribute on our listserve. Several students reported an incident of harassment related to the painting of the word ‘Fags’ on the outside wall of a campus fraternity house. The case was reported to the GLBT Anti-Harassment Team and discussions were held with the fraternity president and communicated to the Student Activities Office. Graffiti was, eventually, removed.

During the month of February our staff had the unique experience of speaking with and/or meeting fathers of several IU students. One was the father of a graduate student for whom we provided support when he was an undergraduate. Dad is now on the school board of his hometown in NJ and was looking for resources on glbt issues for his colleagues. We referred him to GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network). The second father called concerned about his son who had just come out to him and, now, seemed very depressed. We asked questions, offered insights, and provided resources. The third gentleman was the father of an undergraduate who had just come out to him and his wife. He chose to visit the office with his daughter to discover what additional resources he could utilize and to thank us for our work.

In March a graduate student in HESA (Higher Education & Student Affairs) requested help in organizing an 8-week class on ‘Homosexuality & Religion’ which will be offered in the fall. Staff agreed to assist in teaching the class. A graduate student in Counseling & Educational

Psychology interviewed with the staff for a summer counseling internship and was offered the position. And an undergraduate who is president of his fraternity and had just come out to his

ANNUAL REPORT – GLBT Student Support Services July 2002-June 2003
Page Six of Ten

“brother” as a gay man visited the office to process the experience which was largely positive. The student wants to use the experience to help other fraternities and may work with us in developing a program with the Student Activities Office. Staff also collaborated with the program director of Hillel to organize a program on homosexuality in the orthodox Jewish tradition and attended an ACPA (American College Personnel Association) conference in MN, participating in a workshop on ‘Multiple Dimensions of Identity’ led by a former IU graduate student, now on the staff of the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Events surrounding the National Day of Silence kept the office busy during the month of April. A special luncheon attended by 50 students, faculty, and staff, including the Chancellor, heard the story of a former IU student who came out while serving as the manager of the IU soccer team. His story has been featured in Dan Woog’s book “Jocks 2”. Former NFL player, Esera Tuaolo who, recently, came out on national television, was the featured speaker for a larger gathering of students that same day. Other events surrounding NDOS included a silent march and a hate crimes vigil. Staff also assisted in interviewing a candidate for chair of the Department of Communication & Culture, led a forum on homosexuality and religion at a local Lutheran Church, and worked with our counseling intern in organizing a program to assist gay men to meet others for socializing.

During the month of May, after bidding farewell to many graduating students, we had calls from a number of schools seeking input on a variety of topics. A staff member at Emory University called seeking references for a HESA graduate student who had done intern work in our office. A faculty member at the University of Southern Illinois called seeking information on establishing a GLBT office. An on-sight visit was arranged. And a staff member at the University of Georgia, Athens called seeking information on the formation of a GLBT alumni organization. Over the course of several phone conversations, information and resources were provided. A small group of students, staff, and faculty met in the middle of the month for a half day of strategic planning with office staff to establish objectives and set goals for the office for the coming years.

As the summer schedule unfolded and the year came to a close, staff met with students from ‘Diversity in a Pluralistic Society’ class and passed on information about the Anti-Harassment Team; provided support to a gay graduate student who defines himself as bipolar and was struggling with homophobic comments he overheard at a recent family gathering; assisted a lesbian student couple in their quest for information about domestic partner benefits at IU; and made connections between a recent graduate and a friend on the faculty at Yale as the student moves their for graduate school. We also answered questions from a faculty member regarding the term ‘lesbian’; met with another faculty member as he seeks to create a dialogue in his church on homosexuality; led a training session for Orientation leaders on glbt issues; and spoke at a local press conference highlighting the “Indiana Initiative” – an effort to include sexual orientation and gender identity to the state’s civil rights laws.

MINING THE MINUTES

Four times during the academic year the members of the GLBT Advisory Board meet to support the office staff, to examine programs, to discuss policy changes and to exchange information. The Board consists of 8 students (2 graduate and 6 undergraduate, including the OUT President and a representative from IUSA), 6 staff members, and, at least 2 members of the faculty. In reviewing the minutes from the meetings of the past year, these additional items are worthy of note:

- A record number of alumni and friends (125) attended the GLBTAA Annual Meeting and summer barbeque
- A variety of groups were organized to reflect the varied needs and interests of glbt students. Established groups like OUT (undergraduate glbt student group), ALLYS (supportive straight students), and CROSSROADS (graduate student glbt group) continue to attract a number of students to their regular educational programs and social gatherings. Two new women's groups, Girls Like Us and Outspoken continued to provide social outlets and support for lesbian and bisexual women. The Bisexual Support Group continued to meet and a new group called Gendercore provided support for students who have questions and/or who identify as transgender.
- Overall reports of harassment based on sexual orientation were lower than earlier years. Most incidents continue to occur in the residence halls where reporting is encouraged. Many of the cases reported were for information only. Those of a more serious nature included appropriate follow-up.
- The Library Coordinator removed a number of books from the shelves which had never been borrowed to make room for new donations. A number of videos and several DVD's were also purchased for the library.
- The SMYHL conference, which received outstanding evaluations, actually ended in the black, netting a profit of almost \$6000.
- The office, in conjunction with Bloomington United, sparked interest in responding to a hate group from outside the community with its "Buck the Hatred" campaign.
- The Bloomington Faculty Council reviewed the new Domestic Partner Benefits policy in response to complaints about double standards. The office assisted in changing the policy to be more equitable for gay/lesbian couples.
- A glbt Support Group for staff in Residential Programs & Services was organized.
- Pam Freeman and Bill Shipton, long-time supporters of glbt students and, more particularly, the GLBT Office were awarded the 2002 Spirit Award at a reception in November.
- The Office Coordinator and the President of the GLBT Alumni Association traveled to Chicago to welcome over 25 recent graduates to an event organized to boost membership in the organization.
- Staff attended the Midwest LGBT College Conference at Ohio State with 14 students from IU during the worst blizzard in recent memory!

- The Office assisted in co-sponsoring a lecture by Gloria Steinham during a 50th anniversary celebration by the Kinsey Institute as well as an appearance by Esera Tuaolo, former NFL football player, as part of the National Day of Silence.
- Our counseling intern organized a program entitled “Fast Friends” providing a model for gay men to socialize in a structured setting which was alcohol-free.
- The GLBT Alumni Association hosted a ‘Happy Hour’ for alumni returning to Bloomington for the Miss Gay IU Pageant in April and joined in honoring graduates at this year’s Senior Salute at the DeVault Alumni Center.
- A Strategic Planning Session was hosted in May to examine the work of the office and to consider priorities for the next three-five years. The half-day session was ably facilitated by faculty member from the School of Ed, Barb Bichelmeyer.

NOTES FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – May 12, 2003

Vision: Acceptance of self that leads to advocacy for others

We value

- the under-represented and oppressed
- diversity in all its forms
- social visibility that comes from group identity
- acceptance, inclusiveness, hospitality and safety
- advocacy and activism in the community
- the willingness to listen, learn and grow
- networking and collaboration
- those who do good work

Mission: The IU GLBT Office models, mentors, counsels, and supports the communities of Indiana University and Bloomington through networking, collaboration, education, outreach, and consulting in order to create a climate where all community members promote and defend diversity.

Stakeholders

- IUB students
- IUB faculty and staff
- IUB parents
- IUB alumni
- citizens of Bloomington
- people in need

Strategic Objectives (listed in order of importance)

1. Develop transition plan to move from information center to cultural center, which will involve:
 - increase in space (meeting areas)
 - longer hours of operation (evenings and weekends)
 - increase in size and diversity of staff
 - increase in funding
 - [Timeframe: 2-3 years]
2. Develop a formalized, sustained calendar of educational programs and experiences that serve to:
 - provide student leadership training
 - provide issues-related education to broader public
 - offer programs that connect with other groups interested in human rights issues
 - provide resources for education on GLBT issues to faculty
 - [Timeframe: immediate]
3. Unify IU-GLBT student groups by serving as an umbrella organization through:
 - facilitating collaboration between groups regarding initiatives and events
 - coordination of schedules and dissemination of calendars
 - [Timeframe: immediate]
4. Engage in a targeted public relations and marketing campaign to create awareness of services to the IU GLBT community [Timeframe: immediate]
5. Develop and sustain networks:
 - with IUB faculty
 - with cultural centers
 - with human rights groups
 - [Timeframe: immediate]
6. Provide a watchdog (advocacy) function for GLBT issues [Timeframe: 1-2 years]
7. Maintain student focus while extending scope and reach of activities

Threats

1. ignorance related to cultural constructions of gender identity and issues
2. acceptance of status quo
3. culture of fear
4. institutionalization of discrimination toward GLBT people
5. division from within the GLBT community

Opportunities

1. the sense of community and identity within the IU GLBT population
2. the existing commitment to diversity at IUB and in Bloomington
3. current political climate, policies and laws that support GLBT community
4. environment of education
5. established relationships with allies, including: students, alumni, faculty, administrators, cultural centers, community organizations, faith communities, high schools, law

enforcement, legislature, political action committees, and human rights organizations at local, regional, national, and international levels

ANNUAL REPORT – GLBT Student Support Services July 2002-June 2003
Page Ten of Ten

CONCLUSION

So, awards have been presented and rewards have been experienced. It's been another amazing year with the opportunity to work with a dedicated staff and a highly-motivated group of students. Thanks to the Strategic Planning process, we have some new direction for the coming year. Thanks to the individuals named below, we have made a difference in the lives of many people over the past twelve months.

Advisory Board:

Khyla Barnes	Ben Kincannon
Barbara Bichelmeyer	Melanie Payne
Adam Bowling	George Pinney
Mike Crow	Bill Shipton
Kim Davis	Edyta Sitko
Beth Ellis	Andrew Wilson
Mike Gregg	Andrew Shea
Helen Harrell	
Rebecca Jimenez	
Jason Jones	

SMYHL Planning Committee

John Clower	Rob DeCleene
Mike Crow	Mary Morgan

Staff

Carol Fischer, Office Services Assistant Senior (full-time)
Michaela Martin-Almy, Office Assistant (Work study)
Adam Bowling, Library Coordinator (Work Study)
Andy Becker, Program Coordinator
Jaime Cohen, School of Education, Counseling Intern
Vicki Pierce, School of Education, Counseling Intern (summer 2003)
Kelly Heck, School of Social Work Intern
Gina Senarighi, HESA practicum student

Doug Bauder, Coordinator