

ANNUAL REPORT
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Support Services,
Indiana University
July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002

INTRODUCTION

If I could choose one word that defines the work of the GLBT Office this past year, it would be the word 'outreach' (defined as 'the extending of services or activities beyond current or usual limits'). In addition to the day-to-day tasks of providing support to students, supplying information to inquiring minds and keeping current on a host of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, our staff assisted in several major projects this year that went far beyond our 'usual limits' and which have positively affected a wide variety of individuals.

In September, the IU Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution recommending the adoption of domestic partner benefits for university students, faculty, and staff. This was a long-term accomplishment that was the direct result of the hard work of many people, but key to its passing was the work of the full-time staff in the GLBT Office. Staff was also instrumental in collecting responses to a nation-wide "*Campus Climate Assessment For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Persons*" which was released in November. Specific statistics related to student life at Indiana University are available in the office upon request. Over thirty college campuses participated in this survey.

In July of 2002 the office hosted the first-ever "Sexual Minority Youth in the Heartland" Conference here on our campus. Fifteen months of planning by office staff, community activists, students, and the IU Conference Bureau resulted in over 250 youth-serving professionals (teachers, social workers, librarians, probation officers) from 20 states attending a 3-day conference designed to better equip these individuals to provide meaningful support to glbt youth in their respective communities. Evaluations from the conference are still coming in, but all have been overwhelmingly positive.

And, finally, during the past year, we noted with some pride the fact that since our opening in 1994 we have spoken to well over 10,000 individuals in various communities and on other college campus about the needs of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. In the midst of these special projects, we continue to fulfill our mission to "supply educational resources on glbt issues and offer information, support, and referral to glbt individuals." This annual report highlights some of the accomplishments of the past twelve months.

SERVING STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI

Direct services, particularly for students, continues to be the main emphasis of our work, relating daily to those who stop by the office, who call us on the phone, who write or email or contact us through our Web page. A brief glance of the monthly 'Overviews', which are distributed to our Advisory Board, will provide you with an introduction to some of the individuals whom we are privileged to serve.

For the entire month of **July**, GLBT Office personnel and Advisory Board members staff the GLBT Office Resource table during Summer Orientation. Hundreds of students and parents pass by our table and a surprising number of them stop by to chat or to ask questions about our services or glbt issues on campus. This was also the month when we provided support for a graduate student in the School of Music who had just come out to his parents and who had received an abusive letter from his mother refusing to cut off his financial support. We were able to provide some helpful suggestions in dealing with this conflict. We also worked with the Department of Residential Programs & Services in mediating a stressful situation between two roommates – one gay, the other straight. And we provided support for a recent graduate who happens to be HIV+ and will be attending grad school in California, encouraging him to attend to his emotional and physical needs.

August provides us with the opportunity to welcome students back to campus, via CultureFest, our Open House, and a variety of Resource Fairs. The Office Coordinator also served on the staff of a weeklong student leadership conference at Bradford Woods called LeaderShape IU. Among those visiting our office early in the semester were the new interns at CaPS (Counseling & Psychological Services), a journalism student who, over the summer, voluntarily designed a 'diversity' curriculum for secondary schools and wanted some feedback, and a transfer student who plans to host a Global AIDS Conference on campus during the coming year. Requests from others campuses this month about our work came from Penn State, from Butler University, and from IU Fort Wayne.

Student reactions to the events surrounding **September 11** caused staff to spend much of our time this month listening and providing support and what perspective we could to many students who stopped by the office to share their feelings and their thoughts. In addition, we met with two women (one an international student) who were struggling with legal issues involving their relationship. We made referrals to a local attorney and to International Services. We also provided support for a former graduate intern who was having problems with a homophobic supervisor in her doctoral program, with an undergraduate concerned about student apathy on campus, and with a gay man who's involved in a fraternity and had questions about coming out.

During the month of **October** the campus was visited by a group of religious fanatics who chanted anti-gay slogans and, generally, disrupted community life. Meeting with students who were angry or depressed by the group's activities, we noted the positive response from many in the community. Students organized a counter 'protest' with one student sporting a sign that read, "Kiss a bigot for Jesus." We also provided information to a faculty member in the School of Education who was looking for a gay-friendly therapist. We contacted the local postmaster on behalf of a staff member at the Kinsey Institute who, along with her partner, had received anti-gay literature in the mail. And we counseled an undergraduate who was being harassed by a former partner to consider mediation, individual counseling or a protective order.

In **November** our Office Assistant organized a class on glbt issues in the workplace for IU staff. Our Library Coordinator worked with a student in finding films for a research project on movies with AIDS-related themes. The Office Coordinator participated in a number of panels and residence life programs. This was also the month when the office provided support for two different members of the IU Board of Trustees. One was looking for help in providing support to a friend whose son has just come out and was having some roommate problems in one of the residence halls. The other was seeking insight as to how to be supportive of a married family member with children who had recently come out as a lesbian.

As students utilized the office library in preparing final papers during the month of **December** others stopped by to deal with coming out issues with family as the holidays approached. One student who was verbally harassed in HPER filed a complaint for the GLBT Anti-Harassment Team and received support from office staff. Another student needed to talk about their feelings related to the end of a significant relationship. We also met with a staff member from the Student Life & Diversity Office at IUPUI to plan a 3-hour workshop in January on glbt issues for students and staff on their campus.

In **January** staff met with IDS (Indiana Daily Student) reporters and editors to discuss diversity issues on campus. We also participated in the annual ML King Day Unity Summit. We provided information to a faculty member at Ohio State seeking to establish support services for students there, to the mayor's office in their search for videos to be used on local cable channel to highlight diversity, and to teachers from a local high school who were planning a workshop for teachers on glbt students. IU students visiting us included someone wanting to organize a group on transgender issues, another frustrated by an Indiana legislators' anti-gay record, and a student struggling with his GPA.

A phone call in **February** from a staff member in COAS (College of Arts & Sciences) alerted us to the fact that a potential contributor to the school was questioning whether a scholarship gift for gay students would be of more help as a source of support for current students or as an incentive for future students. (Either or both, we indicated, would be great!) Our School of Education Counseling practicum student reported that she is currently providing support for seven students. In addition, she provided a daylong training session for our Peer Supporters. Several students from HESA (Higher Education & Student Affairs) who are doing a research project on campus GLBT offices across the country met with us to discuss the history of the office here.

During the month of **March** we visited with a student from Seattle auditioning for the School of Music and two students from Alabama considering graduate school. They are among a growing number of students who ask about campus climate before choosing the school they will attend. Staff participated in a Diversity Resource Fair in the School of Education, a current volunteer requested a letter of recommendation for a summer intern position (which he was offered) with HRC (Human Rights Campaign) in Washington DC, and an officer of Pan Hellenic Association called seeking input on how to stage a drag show. We encouraged her to collaborate with OUT and, perhaps, utilize the consulting skills of Miss Gay IU. ☺

As the spring semester came to a close, our office participated in a variety of Pride Week programs and assisted staff and faculty at IUPUI in hosting its first-ever graduation party for glbt students. While preparing for finals students visited us with concerns ranging from issues of bisexuality to health concerns to matters related to religion and homosexuality. A gay faculty member visited our office to report an intimidating meeting with his dean whose condescending attitude toward homosexuality created a very uncomfortable situation for him. No action was requested, but documentation of the incident was encouraged.

The month of **May** found staff attending a variety of graduation events and celebrating the lives of two long-time supporters of the GLBT Office – Jack Hopkins and Alan Bell – at memorial services in the community. We also worked closely with the principal at Harmony School in providing learning opportunities for a graduating senior there and, in continuing the preparations for the upcoming SMYHL (Sexual Minority Youth in the Heartland) Conference, we responded to a number of requests for media coverage, including coverage about an unfortunate controversy with the Mayor's Office in Bloomington over support of the event.

June found us working daily on last-minute arrangements for the SMYHL Conference concentrating on program arrangements, publicity, finances and security. In addition we worked closely with a graduate student who designed a questionnaire for the conference as part of his doctoral program in higher education. We also assisted in training student Summer Orientation leaders, offered direction to two doctoral students in counseling who provided counseling services during the summer, and assisted in preliminary planning for the organization of a Gay Men's Chorus in Bloomington. The Coordinator also attended a national conference in St. Louis on ending 'spiritual violence' against glbt individuals.

MINING THE MINUTES

Four times during the academic year the members of the GLBT Office 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 of IUSA), 6 IU staff members, and, at least, 2 members of the faculty. In reviewing the minutes from the meetings from the past year, these additional items are worthy of note:

- A number of groups were organized during the year to reflect the varied needs and interests of glbt students. Established groups like OUT (undergraduate glbt student group), ALLYS (supportive straight students), and CROSSROADS continue to attract a variety of glbt undergraduate and graduate students and their friends to regular educational programs and social gatherings. Two new women's groups (Girls Like Us and Outspoken) were organized to provide social outlets and support for lesbians and bisexual women. A new group called GenderTalk provided support for students who have questions and/or who identify as transgender. And a Bisexual Support group met periodically, as well, for women and men.
- Monthly potlucks were held for glbt students and allies at La Casa.
- ALLYS provided a weekend training program for 15 straight students who were seeking ways to be more supportive of their glbt friends.
- Without an actual program budget, several low-budget programs were provided by the office, including a panel program on transgender issues, a slide show on erotic art at the Kinsey Institute, and a play on AIDS entitled "T Cells and Sympathy".
- The GLBT Alumni Association hosted its annual Homecoming Event in the Frangipani Room with over 75 alumni attending.
- The recipient for this year's GLBT 'Spirit' Award was Steve Sanders who was honored at a reception in November for his considerable work in facilitating the passage of domestic partner benefits by the university trustees.
- Copies of the Campus Climate Survey were distributed. Results indicate progress has been made in dealing with homophobia, but intolerance, which, often, leads to harassment still create problems for glbt students on campus.
- CaPS sponsored an interpersonal counseling group for gay men.
- A new fraternity began on campus. Delta Lambda Phi, founded by gay men and open to all, attracted the attention of several dozen men on campus. Recognition by the Interfraternity Council is still pending.
- A Global AIDS Conference was hosted during the month of February. Over 50 students from around the country attended.
- The office web page has been updated and includes a photographic history of the office complete with newspaper articles chronicling the office origins.
- The office, in conjunction with OUT and the CUE (CommUnity Educators) Program hosted a series of Pride Week events in April including a National Day of Silence March and Rally, a Hate Crimes Vigil, a Diversity Seder, and a Faculty/Staff/Student Luncheon featuring noted author and activist Leslea Newman.

CONCLUSION

Apart from all the programs planned, meetings attended, books loaned, and information given, the most important thing the GLBT Office does is establish trust with some amazing students, many who come to us, often, more than a little bit battered and bruised. The negative impact of homophobia on all of us is still a problem that needs attention, particularly on a college campus where young people are working hard at planning their careers and establishing their identities. At the end of this spring semester, one of the students who worked in our office wrote a poem as an expression of her thanks for what the office meant to her. It was also an expression of what she offered to us...not just her considerable gifts, but her very own heart, as well.

This is, in part, what she wrote...

*Once upon a time there was a little girl,
Who stumbled into an office afraid of the world.*

*She fumbled with her key chain and fumbled with her coat
And fumbled right into a wealth of support.*

*And office – AMAZING – with people so kind.
Every person, regardless, is welcome to a mind.*

*A library of books ALL GAY!! Can it be?
There's nowhere in the world a little lesbian would rather be.*

*So she worked through the semester and kept the books neat.
She straightened up videos and entered donation receipts.*

*And then one day it all came to an end.
The semester was over, but she had new friends!*

*She realized on that day (the last one she had)
That being a little lesbian is not all that bad.*

*As long as there are people, who clearly care so true,
Who care about students and the job that they do.*

*See, it's people like these who make the rest of us proud
To say that we know them...to shout it out loud!*

*There is a place in the world that's here for you and me.
We owe it all to those who work at the GLBT!*

Establishing a place of welcome is still what we do best in our office and the need to extend that 'place' beyond the confines of our office must continue to be part of our purpose. We could do that more effectively if we had more space ourselves, so that students in higher education and social work and counseling who are waiting to do practicums here would be able to do so. We could continue the outreach, which we did this past year if we were able to afford a graduate assistant who could assist in planning the next SMYHL Conference. We could, clearly, enlarge upon our mission to educate and support if we had more resources. That said, we continue to give thanks for that which we do have...and for the ongoing support we receive from the campus and the community and the wonderful students who utilize our services and who assist us in providing them.

Staff – Fall and Spring:

Carol Fischer, Office Services Assistant Senior (full-time)
Jennie Heslar, Office Assistant (work-study)
John Bogeman and Kimberly Brown, Library Coordinators (work-study)
Sharlene Toney, Program Coordinator (part-time hourly)
Dan Richter, HESA Practicum student
Emily Nagowski, School of Education, Counseling Intern

Summer:

Adam Bowling – Library Coordinator (work-study)
Andy Becker – Office Assistant (work-study)
Andy Case and Kenin Krieger, School of Education, Counseling Interns

SMYHL Planning Committee:

John Clower Rob DeCleene
Mike Craw Mary Morgan

Advisory Board:

Barbara Bichelmeyer	Ben Kincannon
Adam Bowling	Duane Krambeck
Mike Craw	Melanie Payne
Kim Davis	George Pinney
Beth Ellis	Bill Shipton
Mike Gregg	Laura Smith
Helen Harrell	Sharlene Toney
Rebecca Jimenez	Andrew Wilson
Jason Jones	Andrew Shea

Doug Bauder, Coordinator, GLBT Student Support Services