

July 1, 2005– June 30, 2006

ANNUAL REPORT

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

**Indiana
University**

INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to reflect on a year of service to students is always a humbling experience. Faces, names, special events, and particular moments in time flood one's memory. The past academic year in the GLBT Office was, yet, another year of challenge and growth filled with a number of such moments. As we continue the work of supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students and educating both friends and allies, and others, to a deeper understanding of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, I am pleased to share some of those memories with you.

One of the most unusual opportunities to provide both support and education this past year was as a result of three young men (who happen to identify as 'straight') who came to our office last fall seeking the sponsorship of the office in their attempt to ride in the classic Little 500 bike race in April 2006. The surprise request was met with some initial skepticism on the part of the staff, but in a relatively short period of time, a wonderful relationship developed between these students and everyone who supports our office. Over the months of training, the students found a fourth friend to ride with them (a student who happens to be gay). Significant conversations ensued about the meaning of riding for a cause and the impact that that cause might have on the lives of these students. Trials were held. The "Rainbow Cycling Team" qualified and support for the Team continued to build. T-shirts sporting the office logo and the Team's name sold like hot cakes. Several extensive articles appeared in the local press and, as a result, students and townspeople who often avoided the race, made a point of coming and cheering on the Team on the big day.

A few days before the race, I sent the following email message to the Team:

Todd, Patrick, Jacob, and Gary:

Before the big day arrives, I wanted to take this opportunity to share a story with you. Over 20 years ago, while I was serving as a pastor (you may not know that was part of my past life) I received word one day about a former parishioner, an amazing young man named Paul, who had committed suicide. I was no longer serving as his pastor, but I had come to know him as a sensitive, fun-loving, intelligent young man during his high school years and had maintained contact with him through occasional letters. I am certain that Paul would be making a tremendous contribution to some community today.

About the same time that I was struggling with my own identity as a married man who needed to finally acknowledge his sexual orientation, Paul and I had spoken. We became friends and, while I didn't come out to him, he continued to correspond with me when he went away to college and I had moved to another town. During his sophomore year, he drove off campus one afternoon, attached a hose to his exhaust pipe, rolled up his car windows and fell asleep, never to wake again. No one could understand why he would do what he did – not his parents, not his friends. I began to recall his attempts at sharing some

of his struggles and, while I wasn't able to be of much help, because of my own confusion and pain, I'm convinced that Paul was gay and that he felt entirely isolated and alone.

I think of Paul often. Its one of the reasons I do the work that I do. And I'll think of Paul on Saturday as you make history as the first group of students, ever, to ride in Little Five under the rainbow banner. If there had been young men like you willing to make a statement of support for their gay friends twenty years ago, Paul might be alive today.

Actually, I know for a fact that there ARE people like Paul who still struggle, but, thankfully, their world is different and their struggles, somewhat less painful, because guys like you have chosen to "embrace the rainbow" (the slogan on the Team T-shirts).

You may never know the full impact you are having on individuals in this community as you circle Armstrong Stadium on Saturday, but I want each of you to know that my heart will be filled with pride and thanksgiving as you do so. It has been a tremendous privilege to get to know each of you.

Warm regards, Doug

Later that day, I received this message from one of the members of the Team.

Doug,

Thanks for sharing the story and, from day one, for being so open with us. I personally have learned a lot from this experience. Honestly, it has taken me time to get 100% comfortable with talking with people about why were are riding under the rainbow flag and how we hope to reach people, but I wouldn't trade that process for anything in the world.

In my heart, I feel fulfilled knowing that I was able to open the eyes of friends and family and try to reach out to a community more strongly than I ever have before. We will ride hard and strong on Saturday and trust that the GLBT Office and Rainbow Cycling have helped to create a future that is open and brighter for all!

Best wishes and, thanks, again, for everything.
Todd Diemer

Rainbow Cycling did not win this year's Little Five, but they DID win the hearts of many of the fans in the stands that day in April and we believe that a large number of students were well served by the example set by a team of mostly straight guys riding on behalf of their gay friends. The remainder of this report will recount the stories of some of the other individuals whom our office served during the past academic year.

SERVING STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI

During the month of **July** we had the opportunity to provide services for students who had just arrived on the campus, as well as those who had been here and moved on. A graduate student from the School of Music seeking support found a glbt-friendly therapist from our Professionals Listing on our web page. A former student, now on the staff at the University of Florida, emailed us seeking assistance for a transgender student studying abroad in Japan. We were able to refer him to a colleague in our Overseas Study Program who is a leading expert on glbt issues abroad. Another IU graduate, now directing the LGBT Office at the University of Utah called to “catch up”. We shared information which included some suggestions of programs we may duplicate. We also responded to a faculty member in Communication in Culture agreeing to provide training for new faculty and we assisted in introducing a new faculty member in Gender Studies to members of the gay community.

In **August** we participated in a variety of events in which we met hundreds of new students. Those events included the campus-wide Culture Fest for incoming students; our annual Open House co-hosted along with our good neighbors at La Casa; the RA Resource Fair for all resident assistants; and the Graduate Student and Professional Organization Resource Fair. In addition we helped to host this year’s GLBT Alumni Association Annual Dinner and Dance and announced, for the first time, the recipients of the new GLBT Alumni Association Scholarship.

The beginning of the fall semester brought many new students, as well as others, to our varied services – counseling, library, web page, listserv – during the month of **September**. A former IU Kokomo student who faced considerable harassment in that community asked for assistance in transferring to IU Bloomington. We were able to write a letter of recommendation to the University Division and, eventually, welcome him to campus. A retired member of the faculty, who identifies as gay, was seeking some physical assistance around his house. A student who had registered for our listserv was able to provide him with care, so that he could remain in his home. A staff member at the IU Foundation requested information to pass on to a potential donor about the work that we do. The Coordinator met with the Foundation representative to discuss the mission and history of the office.

October provided us with the opportunity to serve students, while serving the larger community at the same time. A graduate student requested help in organizing a panel presentation for the second annual Men of Color Conference. Five gay men of color participated and their presentation was said to be the highlight of the conference. A former counseling intern in our office encouraged our participation in a workshop on gay students for the Indiana School Counselor Association. Several IU students spoke about their experience as gay or lesbian high school students. A local congregation contacted us about organizing a program on gay marriage. Another former counseling intern and her partner agreed to participate in the program discussing the particulars of their wedding ceremony and the reason behind the celebration.

SERVING STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI (cont.)

Current and former students were in contact with us during the month of **November**. Five students in HESA (Higher Ed and Student Affairs) applied for a spring practicum position in our office. We agreed to work with two of them. One assisted us in developing an assessment tool for the office. The other student designed some study guides to be used in conjunction with our ever-growing collection of topical DVD's. A doctoral student who is part of COMU (Commission on Multicultural Education) sought advice for the production of a video on glbt issues. Staff agreed to serve as consultants. A former volunteer, now on the staff of HRC (Human Rights Campaign) wrote to ask us for a letter of recommendation for law school. Letter was written and sent.

During the month of **December**, as many students sought out resources from our library for end of the semester papers and projects, we, also, provided advocacy services for several individuals including a doctoral student in the School of Education who raised concerns about the listing of gay/lesbian issues as a pathology in a counseling course and a former student who identifies as lesbian and who was fired as a teacher's assistant in a local parochial school. In each situation we were able to provide some support and, at least, partial resolution in working with staff in the department and/or the local diocese. Follow-up responses will include ongoing training for new faculty and staff and educational forums in local churches.

Following the winter break, in **January**, students with whom we met included an undergraduate in Telecommunications who needed help in distributing a survey on the impact of the media on gay men's coming out experience. We also had a call from a mother from St. Louis who wondered about the campus climate for her lesbian daughter. We spoke with a 2000 graduate from IUPUI who was frustrated regarding the separate manner in which the IU Foundation insisted on acknowledging his giving and his partner's giving to the university. And we collaborated, once again, with the campus/community PRIDE Film Festival – a project begun by a group of Fine Arts students several years ago. Our Program Coordinator, a HESA intern, assisted with that effort. In each instance we were able to respond positively to the needs expressed and the resources desired.

Our collaboration with individuals, offices, and departments continued throughout the month of **February**. A faculty member in the School of Social Work requested a letter of recommendation for a grant to research best practices related to diversity on the IUB campus. We were happy to provide that letter. An Academic Advisor in the University Division sought help in providing support for a closeted lesbian student who was among her advisees. Our counseling intern offered his insight. A member of the community contacted the office for assistance in encouraging the Bloomington Common Council to adopt a resolution including sexual identity in the city's non-discrimination ordinance. The Office Coordinator wrote a letter to the council president. And an undergraduate student in the School of Education sought our help in dealing with a conflict involving the Office of Admissions and a local school district. This incident was referred to the GLBT Anti-Harassment Team.

SERVING STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI (cont.)

In **March**, as in other months, staff and student volunteers participated in a number of panels in classes throughout the campus on issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. A colleague in the Student Activities Office requested our involvement in a brainstorming session on campus leadership. Staff participated. Several students utilized our library in completing their requirement for an immersion project in the School of Ed. A doctoral student visited the office and discussed, with our staff, ways in which the gap between transgender individuals and the counseling profession could be bridged. And the Coordinator met with a group of former IU students at a GLBT Alumni Association-sponsored event in Washington DC during this year's ACPA (Association of College Personnel Administrators) Conference. He also met with the staff of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in Washington where several former students are employed.

In addition to Little 500, the office co-sponsored this year's AIDS Walk initiated by the Student Global AIDS Campaign during the month of **April**. We also hosted a Rainbow Dinner for 30 graduating students and GLBT Alumni Association members and sponsored a variety of programs centered around the National Day of Silence, including a lecture by a transgender (male to female) professional mountain bicyclist, a luncheon for faculty and staff featuring a former IU student and Field Director at HRC, a talent show, a Walk For Homelessness, and a Kiss-In which garnered a great deal of publicity.

As many of our students graduated, our staff took time during the month of **May** to meet with a variety of other individuals, including the principal of a Bloomington middle school to consider ways to address homophobia; a local pastor who was seeking to provide support for a member of his congregation who is lesbian and who is planning to attend seminary; the Director of the Asian Culture Center who is concerned for a gay student; an international student who was concerned about an issue of harassment by another international student; and the parent of a gay student on campus who wants to provide a 'home away from home' over the holidays for glbt students shunned by their parents. We also met with the members of a newly-organized support group for glbt students of color (Black Like Us – BLU) to assist them in providing funding for the Black Pride Festival in Indianapolis.

Continuing to provide creative programming for and by students, our staff organized a workshop for this year's Munger Conference (School of Ed) in **June** entitled "Coming Out As A Family" featuring a gay IU graduate student in counseling along with his parents who are also counselors. We met with colleagues in the various cultural centers to plan a fall program called "Food For Thought" which will feature food from different cultures and a discussion about difference. We participated in a program called "Journey for Justice" which encouraged local churches to be more sensitive to glbt individuals and issues. And, in collaboration with staff at the Health Center, we organized a fall training session for RA's titled "Gay, Lesbian, Questioning, Queer...I'm Confused!"

MINING THE MINUTES

Four times during the academic year, members of the GLBT Office Advisory Board meet to provide support for the office staff, to consider programs, to discuss policy changes, to share ideas and to exchange information. The Board includes 16 members: 8 students (2 graduate and 6 undergraduates), 6 members of the professional staff and two representatives from the faculty. In reviewing the minutes and agendas of meetings from the past year, these additional items are worthy of mention:

- A variety of support groups are now being co-sponsored or facilitated through the office including: Blacks Like Us, Crossroads, Girls Like Us, the Bisexual Group, Gender Dialogue, Hoosier Rights Campaign, and Common Ground (new men's group)
- A brand new library database has been designed by our Library Coordinator and two volunteers from the professional staff in the Main (Wells) Library
- Extensive changes were made to the office web page and updates were added to the listing of glbt-friendly professionals
- In conjunction with the 11th anniversary of the office, our annual Spirit Award Ceremony was planned, nominations were made, and a recipient was selected
- Updates on the work of Indiana Equality (a state-wide advocacy group) were offered regularly by our faculty representative who also serves on the IE Board
- Several GLBTAA receptions were planned around the country for the coming year, including, New York City, Chicago, Washington DC, and Indianapolis
- The office library now has its own blog; the entire collection of books, videos, and DVD's has been re-labeled; a number of new DVD's have been purchased; a new system for checking out books electronically has been established, and an online catalog will soon be available for our growing collection of the "Journal of Homosexuality"
- Additional space has been made available for our counseling services and that portion of our library which has been "in the closet" for several years can now be displayed as a result of the Alcohol and Drug Information Center moving to Eigenmann Hall
- In cooperation with a group of women's basketball fans, the office sponsored a vigil in response to a campus visit by the Penn State women's basketball game (Penn State Coach Renee Portland's homophobic history was recounted in flyers which were distributed and signs stating "Great Ladies' Basketball Teams (GLBT) include ALL Athletes were on display). A letter of concern was also sent to IU's Director of Athletics regarding the confiscation of the signs at the game

- One of our Board members, on the staff of Residential Programs & Services reported that RPS is taking “baby steps” in changing the housing contract and offering more housing options for transgender students

CONSULTING WITH OUR COUNSELING INTERN

For the first time since our office instituted a counseling internship at the request of students in the Counseling Program in the School of Education, we are including in this report a brief overview of the outstanding work of this year’s intern. The total number of students seen by our intern was 24. That included 14 men, 9 women, and one person who identifies as transgender. The majority of those individuals identify as lesbian or gay, but several identify as bisexual, two as questioning, and two as straight. Among this group were 2 African-American students, 2 international students, and 3 students who represent a religious minority. The group included undergraduates, graduate students, staff, one faculty member, three members of the community, and one visitor.

Our intern provided individual (one-on-one) counseling for 17 individuals and hosted a group for 7 for glbt adult children of alcoholics. While coming out issues surfaced among some students, the focus of therapy included a wide variety of other issues. Several clients had been referred from the previous intern or practicum student and some were referred by CaPS (Counseling & Psychological Services). Others found our services as a result of a faculty or staff referral or through the recommendation of a friend. Follow-up care included support groups, GLBT Office resources, peer support, community therapists, and one hospitalization.

We are exceedingly grateful for the excellent work of each of our counseling interns or practicum students over the years and we are especially indebted to members of the larger community who provide professional supervision for our students at no cost to us. This year’s counseling supervisor is Jean Capler MSW, LCSW.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I want to return to the events surrounding this year’s Little 500. A week or two before the race, a well-known columnist in the Bloomington Herald Times wrote an extensive article on the “Rainbow Cycling” Team. The office received a number of wonderful notes and email messages in response to that article congratulating us and, more importantly, the team on their willingness to support the cause of diversity. Among those notes was one from the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs on the Bloomington campus.

Todd, Patrick, Jacob, and Gary,

You represent what is great about IU and why a whole group of us think this place is special – because of students like you! A colleague of mine is fond of saying that IU has always worked because people have been willing to give a

piece of themselves to the place. You are the next generation of students to validate this assertion. You may be aware of the steps which Herman Wells took to more fully integrate the campus and raise the level of racial understanding. Your decision to ride with the support of the GLBT Center mirrors Dr. Wells's approach which was simply to do the right thing for the right reason.

My best wishes in all your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Bruce Jacobs

To be recognized as an office which provides services in the spirit of Herman Wells is, perhaps, the highest compliment we could receive. We are grateful to our staff and to the members of our Advisory Board who assisted us in that work this past year.

Doug Bauder, Coordinator

Advisory Board:

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tahirah Akbar-Williams | Ilan Blustein |
| Kim Davis | Anna Eaglin |
| Lucas Elliott | Beth Ellis |
| Amy Ira | Rebecca Jimenez |
| Ryan Merckle | Will O'Berry |
| Melanie Payne | George Pinney |
| Bill Shipton | Kathryn Schluntz (IUSA Rep) |
| Owen Sutkowski | Carolyn Wiethoff |
| CAPS Liaison: Andrew Shea | OUT Advisor: Helen Harrell |

GLBT Office Staff:

Carol Fischer, Office Services Assistant Senior
Victor Kinzer, Library Coordinator
Will O'Berry, Program Coordinator
James Cummings, Office Assistant
Brad Baranowski, Summer Counseling Practicum Student 2006
Matt McSorley, Fall, Spring Counseling Practicum Student 2005-2006
Ryan Merckle, HESA Intern 2005-2006
Jeff Harlig, HESA Intern 2005-2006
Volunteers:
Amanda Berry
Moxie Stoeher
Preston
Anthony
Anouk

Doug Bauder, Coordinator