

Commission for LGBT People

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2017

Attendance: Jennifer Jabson, Danielle Burton, Bonnie Benson-Palmgren, Denise Gardner, Luke Garton, Cody Harrison, Shannon Herron, Kevin Kidder, Stephanie Langley, Tatiana Leavitt, Joe Miles, Mitsunori Misawa, Joanne Patterson, Michael Porter, Jennifer Russomano, Jordan Smith, Sarah Swinford, Mary Lucal, Jennifer Richter, Eric Carr, Beauvais Lyons, Ashley Morris, Kalina Blazanovic, Joel Kramer, Zach Stumbo, Matthew Theriot, Adrianna Parker, Nancy Thacker

- I. Welcome from co-chairs Jennifer Jabson and Danielle Burton
- II. Introductions
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Report from Joe Miles
 - a. Joe Miles is working on a grant proposal targeted at improving the climate for women in STEM fields. The grant program initiatives address implicit bias training, dialogue across diverse groups, etc. He hopes to make the program intersectional and asked for support of the Commission in the form of a letter. He read the letter to commissioners and all approved of its contents.
 - b. Jennifer Jabson inquired about the program begin date if it were to be funded.
 - i. Joe Miles responded it would begin during the 2018-19 academic year and would be funded for three years.
- V. By-laws review and approval
 - a. Revisions unanimously approved
- VI. Update from co-chairs
 - a. Update on Pride Center Coordinator
 - i. Sarah Swinford reported Chancellor Davenport and Vice Chancellor Carilli are planning to meet and decide on a Pride Center Coordinator in the next week.
 - b. Discussion of activities and preparation over summer 2017
 - i. Activities included: membership priority survey, review of 2014 engagement survey data findings, planned and hosted a joint Commissions kick-off event, presented on the Commission at the new faculty orientation, scheduled dialogue sessions with LGBTQ+ faculty/staff, scheduled guests to attend Commission meetings, met with sub-committee co-chairs, constructed a statement against white supremacist rallies—sent to the Chancellor and posted to our website.
 - c. Review of objectives for the 2017-18 academic year
 - i. Assess needs of LGBTQ+ faculty and staff
 1. We will hold 2 listening sessions on Nov. 1 (12-1:30 and 5:30-7)
 2. Discussion of flyer created to advertise

- a. Points of consideration: Timing of sessions, include email contact for attendees that can only attend for limited time or do not want to out themselves in a group, include facilitator info, include link to RSVP with FAQ sheet
 - ii. Support and advocate for the needs of transgender & nonbinary people on campus
 - 1. Proposal for changing bathroom signage
 - 2. Name changes in banner
 - iii. Enhance LGBT Mentorship program
 - iv. Advocate for training in LGBTQ+ issues across campus
 - v. Support Pride Center
 - vi. Create “monthly commission roundup”
 - vii. Collaborate with leadership and Pride Center for hiring a Pride Center Coordinator
 - viii. By-laws revision

VII. Updates from sub-committees

- a. Membership & Awards
 - i. Luke Garton and Cody Harrison are co-chairs for 2017-18. Luke Garton discussed a suggestion from Joe Miles to develop a database or network of people across campus that conduct LGBT research and/or clinical practice, teach about LGBT issues, or have completed in SafeZone. Cody Harrison reported awards work will occur mostly in the spring, and they are willing to support other committees as needed.
 - ii. Beauvais Lyons discussed recording training (SafeZone, STRIDE, etc.) in iRIS. If individuals could submit documentation of their trainings, it would be useful for centralized reference.
 - iii. Joanne Patterson inquired about public access to iRIS and/or a database we would create.
 - iv. Sarah Swinford stated the most important piece of information in the database from a student’s perspective would be identifying faculty/staff who are conducting LGBT research.
- b. Communications & Alumni
 - i. Shannon Herron and Jordan Smith are co-chairs for 2017-18. They both discussed planning a happy-hour/mixer on Oct. 5th from 5-7pm at Sunspot to provide an opportunity for LGBT folks to intermingle. This event would replace the LGBT tailgate during homecoming, but they are thinking about hosting a homecoming reception from 4-6 pm on the Friday of homecoming week at the conclusion of the parade. Goals for the year include collaborating with UT alumni network, assisting with communication efforts and monthly roundup email, and improving marketing of mentoring program. They may also reach out to local high school GSAs.
- c. Transgender & Non-binary Issues
 - i. Bonnie Benson-Palmgren and Aaron Burnell are co-chairs for 2017-18. Bonnie discussed preliminary efforts on bathroom signage changes by

reviewing appropriate language and suggested symbols. Bonnie shared preliminary designs with commissioners. She discussed plans to advocate for name changes in banner.

- ii. Mary Lucal noted advocating for faculty and staff options to change names as well.

d. Equity & Climate

- i. Michael Porter and Mitsunori Misawa are co-chairs for 2017-18. Michael Porter reported their committee meeting is planned for next week. He requested for commissioners to share information regarding recent issues or legislation with him and Mitsunori. A preliminary goal is to determine financial costs for changing bathroom signage and name in banner.

VIII. Other updates

a. Zach Stumbo: OUTgrads

- i. The next social will be on Sept. 29th. They are planning to coordinate attendance to the San Francisco Gay Men's chorus event on Oct. 11th at 7:30pm.

b. Joel Kramer: VolOUT

- i. 49 students attended the first meeting. Main events for the fall semester include a rainbow rave and drag show.

c. Sarah Swinford: Pride Center

- i. They held an open house on Aug. 24th. They are still waiting on a Coordinator to be named. They are having an Ice Cream Social on Pride Day, Oct. 11th at 5pm, in the Melrose Courtyard.

d. Tatiana Leavitt Messersmith: Mentorship program

- i. She is in the process of organizing records, recruiting more mentees, and familiarizing herself with the program. She inquired about including graduate students as mentees, and proposed we may include local LGBT professionals as mentors to increase numbers.

e. Tatiana Leavitt Messersmith: OUTstanding

- i. Tatiana and Shannon Herron have discussed planning an OUTstanding network mixer around the festivities leading up to the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. The mixer would take place from 11-1pm on Oct. 11th. The goal is to resume OUTstanding as a full conference next year.

IX. Planning for meeting with Chancellor on Oct. 2nd

- a. Nancy Thacker will send a google doc out for commissioners to add questions.
- b. Danielle Burton noted they feel the Chancellor is an ally for us, and highlighted the importance of working with the Chancellor rather than criticizing her during her visit with us.

- X. Update on recent Knox County Schools proposal to remove "gender and sexual orientation" and replace it with "sex" in the anti-harassment policy. Commissioners were encouraged to reach out to school board members to *vote no* on the proposed amendment.

XI. Adjourn