

Commission for LGBT People
December 7, 2015

25 in attendance:

David Byrd, Jennifer Jabson, Yolanda Kirkpatrick, Ed Smith, Sarah Curtis, Elizabeth Hall, Donna Braquet, Rachel Cross, Bonnie Benson-Palmgren, Mackenzie Cartin, Kristen Godfrey, Eric Carr, Corinne Nicolas, Erin Bennett, Joel Kramer, Phyliss Shey, Jennifer Ann Morrow, Luke Garton, Diane Goble, Bonnie Ownley (for Bruce MacLennan), John McNair, Elizabeth Stanfield, Tamara Griffin, Michael Porter, Jennifer Dobbins

- I. Introductions
- II. Minutes from November approved
- III. Office of Dean of Students: Dr. Tashika Griffith, Associate Dean of Students
 - a. Stop Bias Protocol
 - i. Goals: manage the response to a bias incident in a timely manner, implement a plan of action and support, follow-up after incident to ensure resolution was helpful, and offer any additional support
 - ii. Four pillars: advocate, challenge, connect, support
 - iii. Bias Incident Response Team: Dean of Students, HR, OED, Housing, UTPD
 - b. What is bias?
 - i. Defined in *Hilltopics*
 - ii. “Bigotry, harassment, intimidation, coercion, or damage to property,” based on identity, including, “age, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, etc.” and includes many more.
 - c. Clery Reporting
 - i. Federal rules and standards for hate crimes (criminal offense targeting another due to their identity)
 1. 4 types of hate crimes: simple assault, larceny, theft, intimidation, destruction/damage/vandalism
 - d. What is harassment?
 - i. Unwelcome conduct that is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with ability of person to work, learn, live, or participate in or benefit from services
 - ii. Separate from freedom of expression / speech (or where a student may be offended by speech).
 - e. Bias reporting
 - i. Provides a system for students to report any incidents of bias.

- ii. You may report even if you aren't a victim – if you witnessed the incident, you can also use the system.
- iii. Not limited to students reporting, faculty and staff may also report.
- iv. What does the bias website require for a report?
 - 1. Contact, classification (student, staff, faculty, etc.), where you live (on campus / off campus), date, time, incident location, type, nature of bias, witnesses, option to upload files (images, video, etc.).
 - 2. Also asks if you like a of the bias response team to contact you regarding the incident.
- v. No “mark” on student record for being a victim of act of bias.
- f. Response
 - i. Occurs within 24 hours.
 - ii. Process for student vs. student act of bias:
 - 1. Info, support services to victim, engage UTPD and Office of Student Conduct for investigation (DOS does not do own investigation; Student Conduct does not report to DOS and does own investigation and response), bias incident communication if applicable (i.e., emails to campus, emails to staff and faculty if imminent dangers), follow-up
- g. When an employee is involved in a bias incident against a student, the Office of Equity & Diversity (OED) is also involved.
 - i. When the bias incident is between two employees, OED resolves the conflict.
- h. Snapshot of Bias Incident Types: 14 incidents (the largest number are based on racial bias)
- i. Please direct future contact to Dr. Danny Glassman, Associate Dean of Students (dglassm1@utk.edu), or Emily Parker, Associate Dean of Students (eparker@utk.edu), as Dr. Griffith has accepted another position and will be leaving the University in early 2016.

IV. Commission Statement to Address Holiday Best Practices Article Controversy

- a. Approved. See below for the text of the statement:
 - i. The Commission for Women, Commission for LGBT People, Commission for Blacks, and Council for Diversity & Interculturalism at the University of Tennessee would like to respond to the ongoing controversy surrounding the Office for Diversity and Inclusion's article on Best Practices for Inclusive Holiday Celebrations in the Workplace, which addressed UT employer-sponsored events for its employees.
 - ii. The Commissions and Council support the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in providing recommendations that embrace diversity and inclusivity pertaining to the University as an employer. We offer our outspoken support to Chancellor Cheek's efforts to support diversity and inclusion; the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Rickey Hall, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion; and the University's goal of a campus that is welcoming to all and hostile to none.

- iii. The article supports this goal by including in workplace holiday celebrations all religions--those that celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Mawlid an-Nabī, Pancha Ganapati, the Winter Solstice, and still others. All religious beliefs and holidays are treated with equal respect at the University of Tennessee, including Christianity and Christmas celebrations. As a public institution, the University will not endorse celebrations in the workplace of any one religion, but instead encourages and celebrates all religions. The Commissions further affirm that the best practices article offers suggestions for University employees to celebrate the winter holidays with respect for all employees, inclusive of all religious denominations.
- iv. Moreover, as the University continues to fight against racism, homophobia, sexism, and bullying, we must recognize our institution lags behind Top 25 institutions, which already embrace all types of diversity, including religious beliefs. We must promote diversity in all of our actions each day at the University of Tennessee. It is common practice among other highly regarded colleges and universities, both public and private, to offer guidelines and suggestions for making their campuses more welcoming to diverse faculty, staff, and students. In its journey to the Top 25 and in its efforts to offer students a world-class education, UT is among excellent company with its increased emphasis on diversity, tolerance, and inclusion.

V. Website Updates:

- a. Goal of more consistent updates, spotlight on Commissioners, and a feature on LGBTQ+ research.

VI. Updates (not included in meeting—via email after meeting)

a. VolOUT:

- i. Meetings start the first day of class, Wednesday, January 13, at 6 pm in HSS 53B, with a Welcome Back Social with pizza.
- ii. Officer elections will be on January 20.
- iii. Other upcoming meetings and events include: volunteering, ice skating, baseball, a gender neutral clothing swap, and of course, the Drag Show with Sex Week on April 7.

b. Pride Center

- i. Programming will kick off with a meet-and-greet Dinner Dialogue event with multiple student groups at the Pride Center, on Thursday, January 14, from 6 pm to 8 pm.
- ii. Regular programming including Wednesday inQUEERies discussions at 4 p.m. will begin on January 20.
- iii. The Center's Birthday Celebration will be at the end of February, and Lavender Graduation will be at the end of April.

c. Mentoring:

- i. Plan to attend a VolOUT meeting and work with undergraduates to get more student mentees.

- d. OUTgrads
 - i. First social get-together was on December 5, and more events are planned for January.
- e. Tennessee Equality Project
 - i. Maryville LGBT Community Center opened in mid-December. Be on the lookout for volunteer opportunities.
- f. SEAT
 - i. Updates coming as to any funding changes or need for outside funding.