

Commission for LGBT People

Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2019

Attendance: Joel Anderson, Mitsu Misawa, Bonnie Benson-Palmgren, Danielle Burton, Ciara Gazaway, Brandon Harris, Cody Harrison, Allison Heming, Bonnie Johnson, Chloe Lane, Stephanie Langley, Joanne Patterson, Tammy Renalds, Luke Sciulli, Chris Shuping, Jordan Smith-Porter, Lizeth Zepeda, Rachel Chen, Misty Anderson, Mary Lucal, Jennifer Richter, Matthew Theriot, Ashley Blamey, Megan Steed, Amy Forrester, Anne Hensley, Nancy Thacker

- I. Welcome
- II. Approval of Meeting Minutes
- III. Report from co-chairs Joel Anderson and Mitsu Misawa
 - a. Restroom report update. Interim Chancellor Davis approved our recommendations and changes to signage have begun. The campus map has been updated to read “all gender.”
 - b. Annual United at the Rock event will take place on February 20th from 3-5pm.
 - i. Misty Anderson, Faculty Senate president, discussed details of the event. Tyvi Small will be speaking at 4pm. Chad Goldman, a community member and Pride Center sponsor, will be joining us as well. The Volunteer fair will also begin at 3pm, and all sponsors are listed on the Faculty Senate website. There will be remarks at 3, 4, and 5pm including an intergroup dialogue presentation from Joe Miles and graduate students, and remarks from Hillel leaders. Angie Batey and chorus will end the event with a song. Any who would like to join are welcome to attend their rehearsal at 1:30pm.
 - c. Tyvi Small, Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement, will visit with us on March 4th. Nancy Thacker will send google document to gather questions by Feb. 22nd.
 - d. Tisha Benton, Vice Chancellor for Communications, will visit with us on April 1st.
- IV. Updates from sub-committees.
 - a. Equity and climate. Bonnie Johnson reported recently meeting with an assessment coordinator in Student Life to discuss the development of a survey instrument for the Commission. Bonnie noted considering how to maintain collaborative relationships with existing bodies and conduct this needs assessment + campus climate survey. The conversation led to a decision for the Pride Center and Commission to collaborate by separating foci; the Pride Center can focus on the needs assessment portion, and the Commission can focus on climate and policy sections. The sub-committee is planning to meet soon and review peer institutions’ climate surveys for reference. They hope to adapt from those models and individualize our survey to the unique makeup of UT, with consideration for what we can realistically advocate for in our current office. In terms of timeline,

Bonnie suggested completing a first draft of the survey by March 4th and sharing the proposed survey with Tyvi Small at that time. Then, they hope to open the survey in April, conduct data analysis in May, and begin writing a report.

- i. Mitsu Misawa noted the Commission for Women wants to collaborate with us to create and distribute this survey. Interim Chancellor Davis would like to review before we distribute as well.
- b. Membership and Awards. Cody Harrison noted award nominations close on February 15th. Cody encouraged commissioners to nominate and forward the announcement. The committee is in process of recruiting new CFLGBT leadership for 2019-2020; they have reached out to a few individuals to gauge interest. Cody encouraged commissioners to nominate individuals by emailing him at charri88@utk.edu, or Stephanie Langley at langley@utk.edu.
- c. Trans and Non-binary Issues. Bonnie Benson-Palmgren shared an update regarding The Qloset, a free clothing pop-up shop for transgender individuals at UT. They have advertised the first pop-up shop via flyer distribution and on the Pride Center Facebook page; Nancy Thacker will distribute the flyer via the listserv. The first pop-up shop will be in Hodges Library in the Mary Greer Room on February 6th from 6-8pm. The committee has requested funding from the Commission – up to \$1305. Bonnie shared an itemized list of what types of items they need to purchase and their cost. The Commission leadership team will vote on the proposal in the coming week.
 - i. Misty Anderson asked if the committee has reached out to Smokey's Closet.
 1. Cal Lane responded no, but they have partnered with the Trans Empowerment group.
 - ii. Cal Lane reported the committee is also working on a trans friendly organization guide; and they will be hosting teach-in about trans friendly organizations after spring break, either Wednesday or Thursday during trans-visibility week.
 - iii. Bonnie Benson-Palmgren shared she is leaving UT. Commissioners thanked her for her hard work and dedication to LGBTQ+ folks over her years at UT and on the Commission.
- d. Mentoring Program. Jordan Smith-Porter reported editing the mentor and mentee application forms. The revamped program will now include a brief training for mentors and completion of a check-in form to monitor mentoring relationships and needs for mentorship.
 - i. Danielle Burton asked if we have given any more thought to allowing graduate students to apply to be mentors?
 1. Nancy Thacker responded we have not. Historically, the program was designed for faculty-undergraduate student pairings to avoid potential boundary issues between graduate students and undergraduate students. Graduate students have not been included in the program at all, as it was designed for undergraduate students. Nancy welcomed feedback from commissioners.
 - ii. Allison Heming noted LGBTQ+ graduate students could benefit from mentoring, particularly during the job application process. Allison also

noted the focus of the mentoring relationship, whether personal or more professional, may influence the decision. To determine what type of mentorship mentors may provide, we could ask in the mentor application form – what types of topics or issues are you willing to mentor your mentee about (e.g. personal or professional)?

- iii. Lizeth Zepeda asked if there is a way for mentees to report if the mentoring relationship is not working well?
 - 1. Jordan responded yes, we can develop a check-in form for mentees as well.
- iv. Joanne Patterson agreed graduate students could benefit from mentorship and also be viable mentors. For those that desire to be mentors, we might ask explicitly what experience they have mentoring others and what they want to provide to a potential mentee; we also should discuss boundaries in our training before the mentoring relationship begins.
- v. Cody Harrison asked if previous mentors need to fill out the new application form?
 - 1. Jordan responded yes, because there are new questions to be considered.
- vi. Commissioners agreed to offer graduate students the option to apply to be a mentor or a mentee. Jordan and Nancy will edit the application and check in forms and open and advertise the program soon.

V. Update from other groups.

- a. Commission for Women. Rachel Chen reported the Commission is currently focused on preparations for Women’s history month in March. The planning sub-committee will reach out to our group to collaborate on some of the programs.
- b. Pride Center. Bonnie Johnson reported an upcoming event to support fundraising for the Pride Center. The Knoxville Endowment campaign event will take place on February 21st from 6-8pm at the Knoxville Museum of Art. Nancy Thacker will send out a flyer with an RSVP this week. Bonnie noted all are invited, one does not need to donate to attend. Bonnie discussed the Pride Center needs for funds, as it is 100% privately funded.
 - i. Joel Anderson asked if Bonnie could share a small chart or graph detailing where the funding comes from. It may be helpful to promote LGBTQ+ issues and show the depth of support for our LGBTQ+ community.
 - ii. Luke Sciulli noted that we might consider shifting language to “giving” rather than “funding.”
- c. Bonnie Johnson reported Lavender Graduation will be hosted in the Student Union ballroom on April 25th from 6-8pm. Around 90 people attended last year. The Pride Center is hoping to have an administrator speak at the event. Bonnie encouraged commissioners to offer suggestions for speakers.

VI. New Business

- a. Discussion to establish a Development/Excellence Fund for the CFLGBT. Rachel Chen shared information re: the Commission for Women’s Excellence fund, which was established to support professional development opportunities for

faculty and staff, scholarships for students, and fellowships for scholars. Commissioners discussed potential uses of the fund. Nancy Thacker will contact Steve Catlett to discuss how we might set up a fund.

- i. Cal Lane noted they have spoken to queer students on campus about this fund, and students have expressed interest in hosting a fundraiser event if needed.
- ii. Bonnie Johnson noted the LGBTQ+ alumni council has a scholarship fund with some similar purpose. She suggested we might consider distinguishing our scholarship by having a specific focus.
- iii. Misty Anderson noted a Vol-starter account may be an option. Legal questions around the fund would be a point of discussion.
- iv. Bonnie Johnson noted we might bring a proposal to Tyvi Small during the March 4th meeting, where we detail intents for funding, with rationale for need, and provide examples of successful funds (i.e. the CFW Excellence fund).

VII. Adjourn