

LGBTQA Services – A Brief History

Note about LGBTQA acronym: This acronym covers six different identity groups: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and ally. Within this report there are places where a shorter acronym is used, excluding one or more of these six identities. This exclusion is intentional, because the statement being made does not apply to one or more of the identities.

Note about data: There are spreadsheets that provide details of program activities, print media samples, supporting documents and articles attached to this document. These have been summarized for the body of the report.

In 1999 Provost Geoffrey Gamble committed funding for a staff position to address LGBT concerns at the University of Vermont. A committee of faculty, students, and staff, charged with establishing the new staff position named the new program Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Ally (LGBTQA) Services and wrote, “The function of the Director is to administer and manage the office of LGBTQA Services at UVM. This includes being able to assess and meet educational, developmental, social, and safety needs of LGBTQA students, faculty, and staff, within the larger University community, as well as, build a campus-wide climate of acceptance.”

The committee made significant decisions in their deliberations that continue to guide the work of the program today. UVM’s program differs from many similar programs in two important ways:

- 1.) inclusion of Questioning and Ally as responsibilities of the office, and
- 2.) explicit inclusion of staff, student and faculty concerns in the responsibilities of the office.

This broader mission has provided LGBTQA Services with the opportunity to foster greater collaboration and connection between constituencies in ways that impact more of the university.

In the years since that original committee’s work the program has grown from \$4,000 funding support for National Coming Out Week, to a program staffed by a full-time Director, a full-time Administrative Assistant, several work-study employees and, most semesters, a Practicum student from the Higher Education and Student Affairs program.

The work has steadily grown and although the program is relatively new, the impact on the campus has been significant. This report will detail accomplishments as well as challenges and unmet needs and proposals for new initiatives to meet those needs.

LGBTQA Services Mission

LGBTQA Services at the University of Vermont is committed to assisting the University of Vermont in understanding and meeting the needs of affiliates who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, affiliates who are questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and affiliates who are, or would like to become, allies to any or all of these groups. This work includes:

- Ongoing assessment of these needs;
- Helping to foster and create cultural education for the community at large;
- Building community among and between LGBTQA affiliates, and
- Providing consultation and information to offices and programs throughout the university.

These measures are intended to transform the UVM experience for LGBTQA affiliates to one that is **safe, positive** and **fully engaging**. Improvements in climate and culture that benefit one group have been found to benefit the population at large (see Attachment 6D). Similarly, improvements in the UVM experience for LGBTQA affiliates would improve the experiences of all UVM affiliates. By improving UVM's formal and informal reputation as a positive and engaging academic institution we hope to deepen the lifelong connection of all alumni and emeriti to the institution.

LGBTQA Services Goals

Since its inception the work of the LGBTQA Services program has been guided by the principle that transforming an institution requires the participation of an entire community. In addition to planning our own events and programs, we invest time and effort in developing the LGBTQA awareness of programmers and organizations across the campus. We don't try to be the main source of direct service and advocacy for LGBTQA affiliates. Instead we emphasize training, in order to increase LGBTQA-related knowledge and skills among all UVM affiliates. We work to counteract the stigma associated with LGBT identities and create opportunities for social interactions between constituent groups (i.e., student, staff, faculty), in order to involve many LGBTQA affiliates in shaping UVM's institutional change, and to increase leadership and community involvement among LGBTQA affiliates. All of this increases the visibility and engagement of LGBTQA community at UVM.

Our efforts have been rewarded by dramatic increases in LGBT related programming throughout the academic year (spreadsheets attached) provided by many different organizations on campus, increases in involvement of LGBTQA affiliates in LGBT community leadership, and increased demand for trainings, information, library materials, etc.

Long Term Goals

- Develop LGBTQA awareness, knowledge and skills throughout the institution
- Increase inclusion of LGBT community, perspectives and concerns throughout the institution, particularly in the classroom and in the curriculum
- Create a network of support and affirmation for LGBTQA affiliates throughout the institution
- Build community among and between LGBTQA students, faculty and staff
- Foster leadership among LGBTQA affiliates in capacities that serve the well-being of the LGBTQA campus community

Some, but not all of this work will include confronting homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, discrimination and exclusion. All of the work will be done from a social justice perspective that assumes links between racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and other forms of systematic oppression.

Objectives specific to the '03 – '04 academic year included:

- Emphasizing intersections of identities (race, ability, sexual orientation, gender-identity, etc.) in programming
- Increasing collaboration with other departments in programming
- Stimulating interest in LGBT studies through programming
- Pursuing the idea of a Climate Survey to gather current data on the experiences of LGBTQA affiliates

- Completing work begun the previous year on improving access for transgendered affiliates (see Attachments 2H and section 8)
- Recruiting and training for a newly created Administrative Assistant position
- Supporting the creation of a commission on LGBT concerns
- Continuing to develop UVM Pride Alumni
- Finalizing overhaul of Ally Development training materials
- Participating in review of existing Bias Protocol
- Increasing involvement of community members in Awards Ceremony
- Increasing awareness of bias incidents across campus
- Continue supporting the development of LGBT-related curriculum
- Supporting other campus organizations in producing LGBT-related programming
- Rebuilding and expanding program's web pages

We are proud to present this report demonstrating our successful inroads on all of these goals with the exception of the web page project which will go live early in fall '04.

LGBTQA Services Strengths And Challenges

Resources and Support Provided to Campus Affiliates – A Strength: We consider it part of our mission to facilitate the engagement of affiliates by providing information that supports their inquiry and institutional activism. Some examples of this support from the past year:

- President’s Commission on Climate for LGBT Members of the Campus Committee:
 - Curriculum Subcommittee – Distributed SAGIS course listings to interested students. (See Attachments 5A, 5B and 5C).
 - Gender Identity Policy Task Force – Provided background information
 - Commission as a whole – Provided information on Bias Protocol and NGLTF Climate Survey
- President’s Task Force on Race/Climate Survey Subcommittee – Provided information on alternative climate survey process.
- Dept. of Justice Grant Focus Groups – Assisted with formation of and facilitation of groups and questions used
- Free to Be GLBTA – Provided advising re: club’s governance structure and support to club activities.
- HDFS 266, Committing to Caring: Intellectual and Ethical Development in Adulthood – Provided background information, statistics and individual student consultation for semester-long class project on Bias Protocol
- Resource Library – Our library is small and highly specialized. Many of the books and tapes have been donated. We purchase current titles on selected topics as we can. Last year students, both undergraduate and graduate as well as members of the faculty, signed out 59 items from our 300-volume library for use in classrooms and for course assignments.

Training – A Strength: In order to **increase LGBTQA awareness and knowledge** throughout the institution we try to meet every request for training or class presentations from students, faculty and staff. This allows us to go to an established “audience,” rather than scheduling trainings and hoping the audience will come. The content of these trainings is designed to give UVM affiliates the skills and knowledge they need to feel competent at providing services to LGBTQ students, faculty and staff in a way that feels welcoming, safe and affirming. In the 2003 – 2004 academic year LGBTQA Services staff were invited to, and provided 31 trainings, including presentations in 18 different classes and 7 different staff meetings (see Attachment 2C).

Outreach – A Strength: LGBTQA Services staff members are well respected on campus and are actively sought by departments, faculty and administrators for consultation, committee service, information and training. We continue to expand our **visibility** by placing a high priority on attending every information fair, event, and conference to which we are invited. We are not able to serve on every committee that invites us, but try to attend most on an as needed basis to provide information and input. From July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004 LGBTQA Services staff (see Attachments 2D, 2E and 2F):

- Staffed tables at 28 information fairs, events and conferences where we made up to 1000 contacts;
- Served on 20 committees, taught two courses and advised B.A.S.I.C. a Living/Learning program suite.
- Provided 43 scheduled consultations: 13 to administrators, 9 to graduate students, 6 to faculty, 11 to staff, and 4 to undergraduate students (these numbers reflect scheduled meetings and do not include the hundreds of calls and drop-ins we respond to throughout the year).

These activities brought us into contact with several thousand affiliates throughout the year. At each of these events we provided information designed to **increase awareness, and/or build community** (see Attachments section 8 for a sampling of these materials). Anecdotally, LGBTQA affiliates have volunteered that they feel more connected to LGBTQA events and community in recent years, and have credited our availability, visibility and outreach efforts with helping them get connected (see Attachments section 7).

Programming – A Strength: Our Events Planning Committee always includes: several students representing the student club Free to Be, a Student Life staff member, a Women’s Center staff member, and an ALANA Student Center staff member. Assorted other staff members also attend. A number of people around campus are happy to be included on the committee’s email distribution list, adding suggestions and information from time to time. The committee meets weekly for about seven weeks in the beginning of the fall semester and about 10 weeks toward the end of the spring semester, with monthly meetings in between and a break over the summer. The committee serves largely to facilitate collaboration, information exchange, generating new ideas, and problem solving. Members describe the meetings as fun and productive. In ’03 – ’04 LGBTQA Services produced 18 educational/cultural programs for students, faculty, staff and community members, ranging from distributing 2000 pieces of literature at Margaret Cho in October to hosting 130 affiliates at our annual Awards and Rainbow Graduation Ceremony.

Beyond LGBTQA Services’ 18 programs, other organizations on campus produced 27 additional LGBTQA-related programs, a dramatic increase over previous years (see Attachment 2B). The cost for the 18 programs produced by LGBTQA Services was \$16,000, a figure that exceeds our total operating budget by \$3,400 (see attached budget). In order to produce this amount of programming we raised an additional \$8,800 from other campus departments and programs. **Free to Be GLBTA** and **Student Life** were the most prolific of our partner programmers. Student Life invested an additional \$14,800, producing 6 programs themselves and supporting the programs of others. (In each of the previous two years Student Life’s investment in LGBTQA programming had amounted to a few hundred dollars of co-sponsorship.) The student club, Free To Be GLBTA spent \$22,000 in ’03 – ’04 on programming, (\$11,500 of that raised from other sources) nearly twice what they were able to produce the previous year, and five times what they spent the year before that.

Collaboration – A Strength: LGBTQA Services has been exceptionally successful at building a broader base of community support through collaboration. Of the 18 programs we hosted, we actively collaborated, from the planning process to the day of the event, with at least one other campus organization on every one. We worked with eleven different campus organizations in all (see Attachment 2A), the student club, Free To Be GLBTA being our most frequent collaborator, on eight different programs. This is the third year of this approach and the result has been a dramatic

increase in LGBT programming offered by other organizations on campus. Highlights include the department of Student Life, increasing LGBTQA programming from zero programs in 2002 – 2003 to ten programs in 2003 – 2004, and the excitement generated among LGBTQA affiliates when the First Year Diversity Committee brought Margaret Cho. LGBTQA Services capitalized on Cho's appeal to a wide audience, arranging to distribute 2000 copies of a pamphlet we published explaining the history of National Coming Out Day (see Attachment section 8). We also helped the Free to Be organization arrange a Cho "demonstration" that may find its way into Cho's next DVD. We increased our collaboration with Academic programs this year co-sponsoring the writer Joanna Kadi with CCP and Women's Studies and co-sponsoring the two-day institute, Constructing Identity/Performing Self with Women's Studies.

Community Building – A Strength: The result of nurturing by LGBTQA Services has been a steady increase in the number of affiliates who choose to identify as LGBTQA within the campus community and who take on leadership roles and activities on behalf of LGBTQA-related concerns. The Annual LGBTQA Awards and Rainbow Graduation Ceremony provides an example of this shift in leadership. The first year, 2002, the entire celebration, determining awards, recipients, planning ceremony details, was carried out by LGBTQA Services. To everyone's surprise 75 people came out to North Lounge to see Provost Bramley present the newly designed rainbow stoles to the first ever recipients of the LGBT Faculty Leadership Awards, and faculty in turn present stoles to 7 graduating students. The second year we instituted a nomination process, a committee of community members selected award recipients and a faculty member and alumna served as emcee. Word had spread and close to 100 people came out for the celebration. Ten students participated in the Rainbow graduation, including four graduate students. By the third year, an Awards and Nomination committee carefully reviewed and revised all awards and descriptions, sent out the call for nominations, prepared a script for the ceremony and emceed the event which was more popular than ever, filling and overflowing North Lounge with seventeen proud students lined along the wall awaiting their turn to cross the stage and shake the hand of Professor Beth Mintz while Professor Jackie Weinstock placed their stole around their shoulders. Affiliates who have "come out" by attending events, participating on committees or on the President's commission have expressed excitement and satisfaction about their involvement (see Attachment section 7).

Stigma – A Challenge: Individuals who are not LGBTQ often underestimate the challenges of building community among LGBTQ people. Unlike many other cultural groups, almost all people who identify as LGBTQA grow up in isolation, surrounded outside the home and within their own families by people who not only don't celebrate LGBTQ identities, but also actively scorn and oppress them. Instead of learning about their culture and community through osmosis, they learn to fear and hide from it. They approach adulthood with no experience of "family" or "community" associated with their LGBTQ identity. After they learn that such a community exists, the bias and stigma associated with LGBTQ identities provides a strong motivation for remaining hidden and isolated.

Our strategy for meeting this challenge with our limited resources has been to divide our time between activities designed to have an immediate, positive impact on the largest possible number of LGBTQA affiliates, and activities designed to broaden the base of LGBTQA support in the hopes of reaching more affiliates in the future. Given the hidden nature of our community, electronic and print media are a critical form of communication. Print media is prohibitively expensive and quickly

out of date. We use print media, but sparingly. Being part of a university means our constituency has access to the internet, so we invest significant time and effort in electronic media: maintaining and promoting community membership and discussion via listserves, and continuously refining and expanding the information available on our web pages. This allows affiliates who wish to remain hidden, access to important information about policies, services and community. By expanding the network of LGBTQA people on campus who are actively participating in LGBTQA community, we establish more and more supportive points of contact for affiliates who are questioning or closeted.

Stigma also serves as a barrier to **fostering and facilitating LGBTQA leadership** among affiliates. A 2003 report entitled **Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People: A National Perspective - May 1, 2003** (full document available as PDF from ngltf.org) explains:

A survey of nearly 1700 LGBT people (students, faculty and staff) at a representative sample of 14 different colleges and universities across the country found that:

- More than one-third (36 percent) of GLBT undergraduate students have experienced harassment within the past year.
- Twenty percent of all respondents feared for their physical safety because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and **51 percent** concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation.
- Undergraduate students were the most likely to experience harassment, with faculty close behind.

LGBTQ affiliates do provide leadership at UVM, but often in ways that have no connection to LGBTQA concerns. An impressive number of LGBT faculty have served as department chairs, on the faculty senate, on commissions, or spearheading new initiatives. Likewise, LGBTQ students are active throughout the university as RA's, and as members and officers of many organizations. It is significant that in these leadership roles, some individuals remain rigidly neutral or dismissive regarding LGBTQ issues, avoid public LGBTQ events and do not identify themselves as LGBT in the classroom. (Some of these same individuals actively support LGBTQ issues in the community outside the university, with donations of money or by serving as volunteers for local agencies.) In books on this topic (e.g., *Poisoned Ivy: Lesbian and Gay Academics Confronting Homophobia* by Toni A. McNaron) faculty members describe feelings of dissonance and disconnection, and describe themselves as living double lives.

LGBTQA Services responds to this challenge by taking every opportunity to facilitate new connections, relationships and collaborations between and among LGBTQA affiliates, producing programs designed to bring community members together for educational, cultural and social interactions, and providing cross-referrals to people working on similar projects or related topics, building community, one interaction at a time. President Fogel's willingness to publicly support LGBTQA concerns has increased some community members' comfort in coming out.

Drop-In Space – A Challenge: Another important way to build community and create new connections is through informal, drop-in space. The physical location of LGBTQA Services, on the second floor of the Center for Cultural Pluralism is problematic for several reasons.

1. **Physical visibility.** The Allen House building is physically isolated by four lanes of traffic from the majority of the main campus and from all of student housing by a 10 to 15 minute walk. Since LGBTQA Services is only a tenant in the building, there is no external signage to direct anyone looking for us.
2. Our offices are **not wheelchair accessible**, in conflict with our philosophical stance on intersecting oppressions.
3. **Inadequate space.** We are housed in two small rooms. The smallest is the Director's office, which provides for private meetings as appropriate. The full-time Administrative Assistant, one to three work-study students, a Graduate Assistant, a HESA practicum student, anyone who drops in for information, and the 300-volume resource library occupy the larger (14' x 14') room. We have one small closet to house all of our program supplies so our offices contain as many file cabinets and shelves as we can fit, all of which are overflowing. Everything that doesn't fit in the available space clutters our two small rooms. We maintain one small table and a few chairs that visitors use when looking through library materials or interviewing one of us for a class project. We have no dedicated space that is conducive to spontaneous, informal gatherings of community. Our attempts at holding events in the general use spaces in Allen House have had mixed results. Since we compete with many other users of the space, it is not reliably available, and community members never gain a sense of place. Because of the location, students have described the space as inconvenient for evening events.

Bias and Marginalization – Challenges: Understanding the LGBTQA Services mission requires orientation to what “bias” and “marginalization” mean to people at UVM who identify as members of a sexual minority. When LGBTQ people in our community think about bias and marginalization it is this kind of history that comes to mind (note: this is not an exhaustive listing of LGBT-related events during this time period):

- **1967?:** The Psychology department discontinued research that involved using electric shock in a lab in John Dewey Hall as aversion therapy for gay men.
- **1988:** a UVM fraternity parked a car on its lawn on the corner of Pearl and Prospect with twelve inch letters spray painted across the side: “DRINK BEERS, KILL QUEERS”(see Attachment 3I).
- **1989:** Acacia fraternity denied Winston Braithwaite, a first year African American student, membership after he came out to them as gay (see Attachment 3H).
- **1990:** On Easter morning, a patron of Pearl's, Burlington's only gay bar, was beaten and left severely brain damaged. In May of that same year Hate Crimes legislation passed in Vermont and in September, another Pearl's patron was beaten and robbed while two brothers shouted anti-gay epithets (see Attachment 3G).
- **1991:** In September, a UVM faculty member published an unsigned article in *Networking: A Newsletter About Women at the University of Vermont* entitled, “No One's Favorite Cause: Lesbian Faculty at UVM.” She talks about feeling unsafe, limited in terms of pursuing lesbian research topics, and how all of this impacts her job satisfaction and her personal well being. On August 30 and mid-September, in separate incidents, lesbian women were attacked and beaten in Burlington by men shouting angry slurs (see Attachment 6B).

- **1991:** A committee of volunteers hosted the first annual National Coming Out Week celebration in October.
- **1991:** UVM's Women's Center conducted a Campus Climate Survey. A report compiled by the President's Commission on the Status of Women in October of 1994 documented comments by students, faculty and staff from this survey. A sample of these comments shows that experiences or concerns regarding negative attitudes regarding sexual minorities were not isolated:
 - "I am also concerned with the very strong anti-gay/lesbian/bisexual attitude I see on campus;"
 - "In general, I think we have a rather homophobic campus climate;"
 - "I think the homophobia is alive and very strong at UVM and is tacitly approved by the community. I think it is a very unsafe environment for gay people—both[sic] socially, politically at UVM and in Burlington;"
 - "I feel that the UVM community stifles and restricts gays, lesbians and bisexuals providing them with an unhealthy environment. Comments about homosexuality are heard all the time;"
 - "I do believe these abnormal people shouldn't be allowed to speak in public about that kind of sexual orientation;"
 - "Gays, bisex[sic], etc. are fine as long as they stay within their 'types' of people in regard to sexual behavior and 'flirting';"
 - "The strongest discrimination I have seen on the UVM campus has been towards homosexuality;"
 - "I found my medical school classmates quite homophobic;"
 - "While I do speak out on lesbian issues, against heterosexism, I am not comfortable. I am never certain of the response I will get from students or faculty. I rarely 'come-out' in classes (although there are many appropriate opportunities to do so) because of my concerns about the implications;"
 - "The whole neglect of gay and lesbian issues as well as fair treatment of the faculty who are gay and lesbian is very poor here;" and
 - "Regarding the sexual orientation questions, there is an absolute fear on campus that career advancements do not take place if you are actively involved in educating people as to sexual differences, or you are known on campus as lesbian or gay."
- **1996:** The beating and eventual death of Matthew Shepard dominated the headlines. Only people who identify as LGBT realized that his murder was one of many, with people perceived as having transgressive sexual orientations or gender identities topping the FBI's list for violent hate crimes year after year.
- **1997:** In March members of Free to Be and their Advisor, Professor Jackie Weinstock met with President Ramaley and Provost Gamble and asked for a staff position to address LGBT concerns, a center for students, and a commission to study LGBT issues. The meeting students had been asking for over a year was scheduled on the second Sunday morning of Spring Break. One student drove for 6 hours from Boston through a snow and ice storm in order to attend. None of the students' requests received immediate attention.
- **1997:** In September Provost Gamble met with twenty-five LGBT members of the faculty and staff, all of whom advocated for the creation of a staff position to address LGBT issues

on campus. Provost Gamble promised \$4,000 of funding for NCOW programming for that fall and a half-time position starting the following year (see Attachments 4C and 4D).

- **1997:** Student responses to a Student Satisfaction Inventory conducted by Assistant Research Professor Sherwood Smith evidenced continued climate problems at UVM. Students who identified as sexual minorities were: less likely to feel they had equal opportunities; less likely to feel a sense of pride in their campus; less likely to feel their student activities fees are put to good use, and less likely to think campus is free from physical or sexual assault or from harassment and bias crime. In a report submitted to the Board of Trustees Dr. Smith wrote, *“Of all the groups in the survey, this is perhaps the most at risk for harassment and physical abuse. The university needs to continue its work to respond effectively to heterosexist and homophobic acts.”*
- **1998:** In August a committee appointed by the Provost posted the advertisement for a new half-time position. The newly hired Coordinator for LGBTQA Services started at \$13K. The program had no operating budget. Expenses, like telephone, an office, paper, copying, and furniture were donated by the Center for Cultural Pluralism.
- **1999:** In May, funding for LGBTQA Services was withdrawn. Planning for NCOW ‘99 was frozen until funding was restored some time in July. Professor Jackie Weinstock wrote a memo to Provost Gamble detailing why she thinks it is important that the LGBTQA Services position be made full-time (see Attachment 4D).
- **1999:** Annie Stevens, then the new Director of Residential Life, instituted a new policy of publicizing, via email, information regarding bias incidents that occurred within residential buildings. That first year 88% of the bias incidents reported targeted sexual minorities.
- **2000:** On October 3rd a letter arrived in the mailbox of the Free to Be GLBTA student club that contained graphic and explicit threats of rape and murder and named individual students, the faculty advisor and the LGBTQA Services Director as intended targets. A police investigation stretched into weeks, disrupting the lives of many affiliates before the author of the letter was identified. The UVM student responsible for the letter was barred from campus, but never charged.
- **2001:** Provost John Bramley agreed to fund LGBTQA Services full-time, eleven months. The program had an operating budget of \$7K. The availability of a full-time staff position made it possible to establish a Practicum position through the Higher Education and Student Affairs program. Graduate students have selected the program as a practicum site every semester since then.
- **2002:** On February 22nd, LGBTQA students were granted an audience with the Board of Trustees Diversity Committee. Students presented examples of how they had been targeted and proposed six institutional remedies including the creation of a Center for LGBTQA students, expansion of LGBTQ curriculum and safe housing for LGBTQ students (see Attachments 3C, 3D and 3E).
- **2002:** In April Provost Bramley presented Faculty Leadership awards at the first annual LGBTQA Awards and Rainbow Graduation Ceremony.
- **2002:** In July LGBTQA Services operating budget increased to \$9K.
- **2002:** In October 17 members of the faculty and 22 students participated in a fishbowl forum on “LGBTQ Concerns in the Classroom and the Curriculum.” Seventy-five to 80

people including UVM's President Fogel and his wife attended the forum. Students and faculty described ways that they feel unsafe on campus (see Attachment 6A).

- **2002:** Starting early in the fall and continuing for 10 weeks a student who lived on campus was targeted by repeated threats by phone, notes slid under the door to his room, within his suite, and even a note taped to the wall next to his window, which looked out onto a 3rd floor balcony. All of the threats named him as gay and expressed hatred for his identity. The student left campus for fear of his safety. The police investigated, but never identified the person who was stalking this student.
- **2003:** In February LGBTQA students attended one of President Fogel's open student forums and ask him to create an LGBTQA Commission, to establish an LGBTQA Student Center and to provide funding for a conference on transgender issues. The President agreed to create an LGBT commission and to contribute \$6K conference funding, but made no promises regarding a center.
- **2003:** In March students held the highly successful first annual regional conference entitled Translating Identity. Three hundred attended the daylong multi-session conference. President Fogel and his wife attended afternoon and evening events.
- **2003:** On April 24, LGBTQA Services was granted an audience before the Deans and Department Chairs to present on concerns raised by transgender students about classroom climate and lack of faculty readiness to respond to the needs of transgender students. Only 14 of 60 Deans and Department Chairs attended the panel presentation that included two transgender students and two supporting faculty members.
- **2003:** In April The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force issued a report on a climate survey conducted at a national sample of colleges and universities. In May LGBTQA Services distributed copies of this report to Deans and Department Chairs and to the President of UVM.
- **2003:** Provost Bramley agreed (in late fall of 2002) to fund a 40% administrative support position for LGBTQA Services. In late May the new hire started, shared 60% with CCP. By July Provost Bramley agreed to fund a full-time position for both CCP and LGBTQA Services.
- **2003:** In July LGBTQA Services operating budget increased to \$12K. In November (retroactive to August) the Coordinator position was upgraded to Director and the salary was raised.
- **2003:** In October a student Senator who was also Vice President of Free To Be sent President Fogel a letter expressing disapproval of the President's failure to establish the LGBTQ Commission as promised. President Fogel sent out appointment letters two days later (see Attachments 4A and 4B).
- **2003:** On November 3rd, LGBTQA Commission held its first meeting. On November 9th, after over a year of requests, 24 members of the Free To Be club hosted President Fogel at one of their business meetings in Billings B163, where they expressed the urgency of their need for an LGBTQA student center.
- **2003 – 2004:** 33 of 59 bias incidents reported at UVM targeted sexual minorities (see Attachment 3A).

- **2004:** In January a new Administrative Assistant to CCP was hired and Administrative Assistant to LGBTQA Services begins working full-time with program. In August, Provost Bramley agreed to fund a Graduate Assistantship for LGBTQA Services.

This summary describes over a decade of evidence collection conducted at the expense and effort of the members of the marginal group, and submitted to the members of the administration. In some respects the University of Vermont has placed itself among higher education's lead institutions:

- Extending benefits to domestic partners in the late 1990's;
- Establishing LGBTQA Services (one of 100 funded offices in the U.S. today) in 1999, and
- Convening UVM's first President's Commission on Climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Members of the Campus Community in November of 2003.

The proposals contained in this report are based on the premise that the University of Vermont can do more to create "an outstanding student experience" for students, staff and faculty who are targets of bias or who live in fear of intimidation at UVM. In addition, more can be done to "ensure that institutional policies and expectations are consistent with and promote the climate and community enshrined in 'Our Common Ground'." And finally, there is more that UVM can and should do to provide vision and leadership to other Vermont institutions in meeting the standards described in Vermont law and in the Board of Education's Standards that obligate educational institutions to work actively to provide education to students in an environment that is free from harassment.

LGBTQA Services Staff Resources

Our small staff engages in planning and problem solving collaboratively while other duties are assigned along more typical lines. Time-sensitive tasks are taken on according to availability so that the Director takes on secretarial duties as needed and the Administrative Assistant takes on occasional training presentations. Program planning and execution require heavy recruitment of volunteers since the work far exceeds the capacity of the existing positions. Staff positions consist of:

- Director, full-time, eleven months
- Administrative Assistant, (Added during '03 – '04) full time, eleven months
- Graduate Assistant (added August 2004) half time, ten months

LGBTQA Services has historically been closed during the month of July.

In spite of the heavy workload we come to work each day excited about what we do. Members of the UVM community reward us with positive feedback about the impact of our efforts (see Attachment section 7).

Ongoing Concerns Facing LGBTQA Affiliates At UVM

Recruitment and Retention of LGBTQ Students:

A Population At Risk: It is impossible to count the number of LGBTQ students at UVM. A study published in The American Journal of Public Health in 2001 found 7% of boys and 5% of girls reported having romantic same sex feelings (“Adolescent Sexual Orientation And Suicide Risk: Evidence From A Natural Study,” By: Russell, Stephen T., Joyner, Kara, American Journal of Public Health, 00900036, Aug2001, Vol. 91, Issue 8). Out of 8,000 undergrads that would suggest around 500 students who fall within this population. If graduate students are included, the number increases to 660. In addition, larger numbers of non-LGBTQ students are becoming actively involved in LGBTQ advocacy, with allies representing up to 40% of the 90 student members in the Free to Be GLBTA student club.

There have been many studies in recent decades documenting the increased risks faced by LGBTQ youth: suicide, substance abuse, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases to name a few. The “cause” for this risk-taking “effect” is not sexual orientation or gender identity and it is not entirely mediated by other factors, like class or race. That is because the cause, hate, penetrates all boundaries. When a person witnesses widespread expression of hate directed at their identity, the impact is deeply damaging. Close to 40% of UVM students grow up in Vermont, and Vermont has its own fair share of hate and resulting risky behavior. The attached table of selected results for the 2001 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (see Attachment 3B) shows that from using seatbelts to shooting heroin, students who self-identified as having had a same-sex sexual experience were at higher risk of choosing not to protect themselves from risk of harm. At particular risk are young gay men. For a few decades, heroic efforts at safe sex education within the LGBT community had turned the tide on new HIV infections. Today young people are once again topping the charts for new infections and troubling new nihilistic trends among young gay men place them at particular risk (see Attachment 3F).

All young adults have a compelling interest in intimate relationships. Psychologically, intimacy is the main developmental task associated with young adulthood. Since a young person’s sexual orientation and gender identity is tied to the future of their intimate relationships, it is no surprise that so many college students feel compelled to address these issues. The conflict between this developmental drive and the stigma associated with LGBTQ identities puts enormous pressure on young people and can exacerbate the risk for suicide, substance abuse, and risky sex. Concerted outreach efforts over the past three years to gay male students, staff and faculty members have met with limited success. Gay male students remain almost completely closeted, seeking their social interactions elsewhere in situations that are likely to include significant risks. Even the student club Free to Be with close to 40 active members only counts one gay male among them. Much work remains to be done to make the UVM experience feel less hostile to gay identities and safer for young gay men to be open about their identity.

In contrast to the closeting of gay men on campus is the increase every year in the number of affiliates who are coming out as transgender, a trend on campuses across the country. Our office is in contact with up to six individuals at a time who are at some stage of gender transition. The

gender transition process takes several years and involves medical treatments and procedures that place significant emotional, financial, and interpersonal stress on the individual and on their social support system. As mentioned earlier in the report, transgender individuals as a group are historically one of the most frequently targeted by hate crimes, often violent. UVM affiliates at services points across campus are struggling to understand how to respond to the needs of transgender individuals at the gym, in the classroom and in line at our dining halls. We have been actively at work trying to make UVM safer and more accessible to transgender affiliates, but our small staff has only been able to reach a small portion of the campus and much training is left to be done.

Unfortunately UVM provides no relief to LGBTQ affiliates from society's steady diet of homophobic and transphobic bashing. Students live in residences with other students who scribble homophobic epithets and threats on hallway walls, gay affirming posters, and the doors of individual rooms. Often these messages include rape imagery and/or death threats and target named individuals. Students and faculty report that our classrooms and staff settings are not much better with students, staff and faculty reporting comments that range from uncomfortable to outright hostile from other affiliates as a common experience.

All of these pressures are more than enough to diminish a student's chances of success in college. In addition to these risks, LGBTQ students face a high risk of rejection by their parents. It is not uncommon for a student who comes out to even be cut off financially by their parents. Currently UVM does not have an adequate safety net for identifying these students, and supporting them with community, advocacy and even emergency scholarship funds when necessary to help insure their success.

UVM Falls Short in the Curriculum: Like every other cultural group, LGBTQ students at UVM are acutely aware of and deeply affected by the exclusion of their perspectives and experiences in the classroom. LGBTQ faculty members at UVM and elsewhere continue to be afraid to risk disrespect or even harassment by non-LGBTQA students if they come out in the classroom. In order to hide their own non-majority sexual orientation or gender identity LGBT faculty members sometimes exclude LGBTQA-related topics from their curriculum. The study described in the article "Coming out in the classroom...An occupational hazard?: The influence of sexual orientation on teacher credibility and perceived student learning (see Attachment 6C) suggests that their fears are well-founded. UVM's non-LGBTQA faculty remain ignorant of LGBTQA perspectives and experiences and don't feel compelled by UVM, as an institution, to confront their own ignorance or in some instances negative bias.

A small committee of faculty and students continue to work on a proposal for a minor in Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies, but confront a shortage of departments that are willing to add a qualifying course to their permanent curriculum. In contrast, numerous other colleges and universities have established LGBTQ Studies programs during the past decade or before, supporting the intellectual needs and interests of both LGBTQ students and faculty members (see Attachment 5D).

Next Steps – The Case for an LGBTQA Center

Currently LGBTQA Services offers a sense of community, advocacy and support to a fraction of LGBTQA affiliates. We have seen how this feeling of connection and community has improved the UVM experience for this subset of LGBTQA affiliates and would like to have the capability to reach more LGBTQA affiliates. Currently we estimate that our office and activities are well known by perhaps 100 students; a good number of these identify as allies. **The number of students who know we exist should be much higher**, but it will take more than our Herculean efforts to appear in every classroom and at every fair. We continue to fight confusion on the part of students, staff and faculty about whether LGBTQA Services is the same thing as Free To Be GLBTA. Many people assume that we are part of the Center for Cultural Pluralism and report to Sherwood Smith. Why? Because that is where we are housed and that is how people think of institutional organization.

The second serious barrier to building community is the **difficulty creating connections between LGBTQA faculty and students**. The classroom does not feel safe to faculty members or students. Public events are not necessarily better for community members who feel the most vulnerable.

The third barrier is **the perception of “legitimacy.”** Whether or not it is intended, size and place convey status that matters to people who feel vulnerable and tentative about seeking out community. LGBTQA Services currently appears, and is marginal to the institution. A brief look at the history of the program in the timeline above only underlines this marginality. The establishment of a center will bring LGBTQ issues in from the margins, conveying the university’s commitment to LGBTQ inclusion, not only to LGBTQ affiliates, but to non-LGBTQ affiliates who currently remain too comfortable abstaining from, or even working against, this aspect of UVM’s strategic goals.

In order for LGBTQA Services to reach more LGBTQA affiliates and provide timely and effective supports to students who are in danger of failing or worse, as well as to staff and faculty members who are dissatisfied, requires that we maintain and build on the momentum we have established in creating community among LGBTQA affiliates. In order to do this we need a dedicated, adequate space with a sense of some permanence, a space where LGBTQA students, and members of the staff and faculty can meet and interact with each other and develop a sense of affirming community safely away from the threat of harassment and bigotry.

An earlier section of this report details the space limitations faced by the LGBTQA Services program. Obviously one goal of establishing a Center should be to provide more adequate space for the staff and operations already in place. Student space needs are even more compelling. For over a decade UVM affiliates who identify as LGBTQA have been asking the university to provide a facility LGBTQA students could use for meetings and gatherings, where they could feel safe spending time with other LGBTQA students. The answer heard most frequently from administrators is: “but LGBT students already have a space, don’t they?” It feels important to provide information here that will hopefully clear up this confusion.

The only space outside of LGBTQA Services' two small rooms that is currently reserved for LGBTQA affiliates is room B-163 in Billings Student Center. This room is located in a portion of the basement in the Billings annex that houses UVM's Student Government Association. Large permanent spaces are set aside for the student newspaper, the student radio station, a conference room, an administrative office, and some general meeting space. In addition, a few small rooms are assigned on a year-to-year basis to particular clubs. Clubs that have held spaces for a number of years include Free to Be GLBTA and Volunteers in Action.

As recently as two years ago, a challenge arose in the SGA concerning Free to Be's continued use of that room. The room in question is 9'6" x 16'6" and houses a desk, a computer stand, bookshelves, a sofa, a loveseat, and all of the club's supplies and materials. In recent years club members have been increasingly successful at recruiting new members so a typical meeting draws from 20 to 40 students, a number that undoubtedly exceeds the fire code for a room that size. Because all SGA clubs share the other meeting space available, with no assurance of privacy, members usually choose to crowd into B-163, rather than use the larger, but more exposed general use space. This tiny room is where club members volunteer for office hours in case a student with a question should call or stop by. It is where they meet to plan highly successful events like the Translating Identity Conference. It is where they provide the only space on campus that feels safe and welcoming to many LGBTQA students.

Some members of the campus community have expressed confusion about whether or not LGBTQA students will have permanently dedicated space set aside for them in the new Student Commons. The answer to that question is **no**. The most they can hope for in the current plans is a continuation of their current situation: a year-to-year assignment of a small generic clubroom.

In recent years increasing numbers of students have expressed an interest in LGBTQA curriculum. Non-LGBTQ as well as LGBTQ-identified students in Social Work, Education, Sociology, History, Psychology, Anthropology, Geography, and Literature are asking for courses on LGBTQ topics. Two years ago a group of students began meeting with faculty members about creating a new minor in LGBTQ Studies. This ongoing process has been taken up by the President's Commission's Committee on Curriculum. A Center could provide a point of contact for students with similar interests, a safe space for students to meet with LGBTQ faculty, essentially an incubator for new curricular interest and ideas. A space like this would increase the academic engagement of LGBTQA faculty as well as students.

One of the seven students who provided testimony to the Board of Trustees Diversity Committee in February of 2002 remarked that a critical part of her process of selecting a graduate program included whether or not the school included "sexual orientation" in their non-discrimination clause. When this student selected UVM there were only a handful of campuses with LGBTQA **Student Centers**. The number of campuses grappling with this issue increases every year. Of the 660 LGBTQ students on campus some portion are "out" in various aspects of their lives and others remain closeted. A facility dedicated to providing community for these students would increase the number of LGBTQ students who would feel safe no longer hiding and would help all LGBTQ students feel less marginal at UVM, increasing both their recruitment and retention.

Finally, an LGBTQA Student Center would provide a point of contact between students and staff where risk factors faced by this student population could be addressed with appropriate prevention, education, and support.

A Center for LGBTQA Community at UVM

In order to meet the needs of LGBTQA students, staff and faculty, LGBTQA Services will need additional resources for the 2005 – 2006 academic year:

		Cost		
Current Staffing				
Director		\$71,760 salary and fringe		
Administrative Assistant		\$39,744 salary and fringe		
GA Program Assistant		\$20,000 (estimated stipend and tuition)		
HESA Practicum		no cost to program		
Additional Staffing Needs				
Student Advocate/Trainer		\$41,400 salary and fringe		
Programming/Outreach		\$41,400 salary and fringe		
Current Program Expenses		Budget Allocation	Fundraising	
Operating		\$5,000		\$0
Programming		\$7,000		\$9,000
Additional Funding Needs		Current Expenditures	Unmet Need	
Equip Computer Lab		\$0		\$8,000
Student Emergency Requests		\$0		\$2,000
Student Conference Scholarships		\$0		\$6,000
Library Development		\$0		\$800
Awards Celebration		\$3,600		\$1,400
Educational/Outreach Materials		\$1,500		\$3,500

An LGBTQA Center should include the following:

- Drop in space with comfortable furnishings, a television, and CD player
- Office Space for:
 - LGBTQA Center Staff:
 - Director
 - Administrative Assistant/Office Manager
 - Student Advocate/Trainer
 - Programming/Outreach Assistant
 - Graduate Assistant
 - Practicum Student
 - Affiliated Programs:
 - Free to Be
 - Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies
- Training/Meeting Space fully equipped for A/V functionality
- Library/Small meeting room
- Kitchen equipped for community meal preparation