

The Importance of History

Understanding the LGBTQA Services mission requires orientation to the historical context that is particular to people at UVM who identify as members of a sexual minority. When LGBTQ people in our community think about bias, marginalization, recognition, opportunity it is this kind of history that comes to mind (note: this is an ongoing project, not presented as an exhaustive listing of LGBT-related events during this time period):

- **Late 60's:** a clinic run on campus by faculty from the Psychology department was rumored to be using aversion therapy on gay men.
- **Early 70's:** Monthly campus meetings including GLB campus and community members.
- **1982:** Esther Rothblum, Ph.D. joined UVM's Psychology Department. Over the coming years she would prove to be one of UVM's most productive research faculty members, with several dozen books and well over 100 journal articles, many of them focusing on the experiences and wellbeing of lesbians. Of the 24 grant-funded research projects she was awarded, 12 of them focused on lesbian issues.
- **1982:** Brian McNaught spoke about homophobia at UVM.
- **1983:** Burlington hosted Vermont's first gay pride celebration.
- **1984:** the GLSA (Gay, Lesbian Student Alliance) was "reintroduced" on campus. For the next three years students waged campaign to have sexual orientation added to non-discrimination policy, which included lobbying the President, publishing articles in Vermont's GLB newspaper and conducting a student poll.
- **1984:** Robert Torres, a Latino grad student supervised by Professor Harold Leitenberg, presented the first doctoral dissertation in the Psychology department focused on gay issues.
- **March 1986:** UVM President Lattie Coor issued a letter to the campus community "adopting a policy of compassion and sensitivity regarding AIDS."
- **March 1987:** UVM becomes the 28th school in the nation to add sexual orientation to non-discrimination policy. Non-discrimination bill introduced in to VT legislature that same month.
- **1988:** a UVM fraternity parked a car on it's 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).
- **Fall 1990:** Brian McNaught returns to UVM and a second incident involving beating of gay men.
- **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.”
- **April, 1992:** GLBA organization organized regional conference, “Burlington ’92,” for GLB campus organizations
- **1994:** Eric Nichols, Ph.D., Director of UVM’s Masters in Counseling Program and Dorothea Brauer, M.A., begin appearing each semester in a large lecture course taught by Jim Barbour for the Human Development and Family Studies Program entitled simply “Sex.” Nichols and Brauer volunteer for one class session to answer student questions about being gay and lesbian.
- **August, 1995:** Glen Elder, Ph.D., joins UVM’s Geography Department as a visiting Assistant Professor. He stood alone in his department and to an extent in his discipline in the course content and scholarly research that included a focus on sexuality.

- **August, 1996:** Jackie Weinstock, Ph.D., a UVM graduate alumna returned to campus as tenure-track faculty in the College of Education's Human Development and Family Studies Program. She defied prevailing wisdom that still discouraged LGBT focused work pre-tenure and developed two influential courses: Introduction to Sexual Identities (HDFS 167), and Advanced Seminar on Sexual Identities (HDFS 267).
- **October, 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.
- **March, 1997:** 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 and Jackie Weinstock drove for 6 hours through a snow and ice storm in order to attend. None of the students' requests received immediate attention.
- **September, 1997:** Provost Gamble agreed to meet with twenty-five LGBT members of the faculty and staff, where they 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 contingent on the NCOW programming for October '97 proving successful (that is, if it attracted LGBT and ally participation). Esther Rothblum agreed to chair the NCOW.
- **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."*
- **Spring, 1998:** After a successful NCOW and continued activism on the part of students, staff and faculty, Provost Gamble appointed a committee of staff and faculty that included Professors Jackie Weinstock, Glen Elder, and Eric Nichols to create a job description for a half-time staff position.
- **August, 1998:** The staff position was approved and a search committee was formed with Co-Chairs Jackie Weinstock and Esther Rothblum, and other staff, faculty and student community members appointed by the Provost. The posted advertisement was for a new half-time, temporary position; again, the Provost's plan was to first document the need and use of this position before agreeing to create it as a permanent position. The newly hired Coordinator for LGBTQA Services started at \$13K. The program initially had an operating budget of \$7,500. Many expenses, like telephone, office space, paper, copying, and furniture were donated by the Center for Cultural Pluralism.
- **November, 1998:** Two UVM students begin a needs assessment for a LGBT community center for a class project in Sexual Identities (HDFS 167). Their project work culminated in the formation of

the R.U.1.2? Community Center (now R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center) which began to host annual community dinners and was further helped by the Samara Foundation.

- **1999:** HDFS 167 and HDFS 267 pass the College of Education curriculum committee and become the first two LGBT focused courses in the history of UVM included in the permanent curriculum.
- **April, 1999:** GLBTA student organization held visibility celebration. All of their posters were stolen, chalking was erased, a rainbow flag raised on the flagpole outside the student center was stolen and the flag pole was knocked down.
- **May, 1999:** After one year of having an LGBTQA Services Coordinator, funding for this position was withdrawn, despite strong evidence of the importance of this position to the UVM LGBTQA community. 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 thought it was important that the LGBTQA Services position be both re-instated and made a permanent position (see Attachment 4D).
- **Fall, 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.
- **October, 1999:** NCOW committee brought Ellen Degeneres to campus. More than 2,000 people attended.
- **April, 2000:** UVM student Kellie Arbor organized "VT State Queer Conference" held at UVM.
- **October, 2000:** On October 3rd a letter arrived in the mailbox of the Free to Be GLBTA student club containing graphic and explicit threats of rape and murder, naming four club members, the club's faculty advisor and the LGBTQA Services Director as intended targets. A police investigation stretched into weeks, disrupting the lives of the six people named in the letter before the author of the letter was identified. The UVM student responsible for the letter was barred from campus, but never charged.
- **Fall, 2000:** Members of Psychology Department faculty, lead by Assistant Professor Sondra Solomon, organize first "Fall Institute on Racism, Heterosexism, Bias and Oppression."
- **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. In April Provost Bramley presented Faculty Leadership awards at the first annual LGBTQA Awards and Rainbow Graduation Ceremony to Professor Esther Rothblum and newly tenured Associate Professors Jackie Weinstock and Glen Elder.
- **July, 2002:** LGBTQA Services operating budget increased to \$9K.

- **August, 2002:** Assistant Professor Valerie Rohy joins UVM's English department. She is the first faculty member with a background in LGBT Studies, hired to teach in that subject area.
- **September, 2002:** LGBTQA Services' first Practicum intern from the Higher Education and Student Affairs program begins a project to assess the needs of transgendered students on campus.
- **October, 2002:** Seventeen 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).
- **November, 2002:** Assistant Professor Val Rohy begins working with students and faculty members on a proposal to create a minor in Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies.
- **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.
- **January, 2003:** Dean of Student and Campus Life, David Nestor, begins working with LGBTQA Services to implement the recommendations contained in the Practicum student's report on the needs of transgendered students.
- **February, 2003:** LGBTQA students attended one of President Fogel's open student forums and asked 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.
- **March, 2003:** 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.
- **April 12th, 2003:** Free to Be members plan and host an all day regional conference entitled "Translating Identity," with 300 in attendance including UVM President Daniel Fogel and his wife Rachel. Keynote was author and Gender PAC Director, Riki Wilchins.
- **April 24, 2003:** 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. Fourteen of sixty Deans and Department Chairs attended the panel presentation that included two transgender students and two supporting faculty members.
- **May, 2003:** 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 May 2003 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.

- **July, 2003:** LGBTQA Services operating budget increased to \$12K. In November (retroactive to August) the Coordinator position was upgraded to Director and the salary was raised.
- **Summer, 2003:** UVM's Physical Plant department works to change signs on single use bathrooms throughout campus from assigned sex to unisex.
- **Fall, 2003:** UVM's Women's Studies program offers "Introduction to Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies for the first time and submits proposal to the College of Arts and Sciences to change the program's name to Women and Gender Studies.
- **October, 2003:** 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).
- **November 3rd, 2003:** President's Commission on LGBT Equity held its first meeting.
- **November 9th, 2003:** 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 LGBTQ student center.
- **November 19th, 2003:** UVM's GLBTQA student club holds the first Transgender Remembrance Day event on campus. The CatCard office processes the first chosen-name ID card to a transgender student, then in his junior year.
- **2003 – 2004:** 33 of 59 bias incidents reported at UVM targeted sexual minorities (see Attachment 3A).
- **January, 2004:** CCP Administrative Assistant position was filled allowing the LGBTQA Services Administrative Assistant to begin working full-time.
- **February 28th, 2004:** Free to Be hosts the second annual "Translating Identity" conference. Registrations fill up even faster, cutting off at 325. Keynoter, attorney and Director of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Dean Spade, filled Billings CC Theater at the end of the day.
- **April 10th, 2004:** The President's Commission on LGBT Equity submits their first proposal asking for the addition of "gender identity and expression" to the existing non-discrimination policy.
- **June 16th, 2004:** President Fogel writes a memo to the Commission promising a response to their proposal in the fall of that year.
- **August, 2004:** Provost Bramley agreed to fund a Graduate Assistantship for LGBTQA Services. Khristian Kemp-DeLisser, a graduate student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program becomes the first Graduate Assistant to LGBTQA Services.
- **October, 2004:** Co-President of Free to Be and the HESA student who served as LGBTQA Services Practicum the previous semester co-present with LGBTQA Services Director, Dorothea Brauer at AAC&U national conference on Diversity & Learning, a session entitled: "LGBTQA Community and Institutional Change."
- **November, 2004:** Members of Free to Be accompany LGBTQA Services staff members for the first time to NGLTF's national conference "Creating Change."

- **January 31st, 2005:** Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, Mara Kiesling visits UVM and meets with Vice Provosts and Vice Presidents to discuss proposal to add “gender identity and expression” to non-discrimination policy.
- **February 3rd, 2005:** President Fogel announces plan to amend existing non-discrimination policy with a footnote indicating that “sex” shall be interpreted to include “gender identity and expression.” No Board action is taken.
- **March 5th, 2005:** Members of Free to Be hold the third annual “Translating Identity” conference. Opening plenary features author and LGBTQA Services staff member, Eli Clare and keynote is by author Leslie Feinberg.