

## **LGBTQA Services – A Brief History**

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. As of September 2004, funding for a \_ time Graduate Assistant has been added to the program.

The work of the program has steadily grown over the past five years. Although the program is relatively new, the impact on the campus has been significant.