

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO RENAMING THE LGBTQA CENTER AT UVM

The LGBTQA Center was founded in 1999 as the Office for Services to People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Allies (LGBTQA). At the end of the first academic year, the office was renamed The LGBTQA Coalition by a coordinating committee, but appears to have continued to be referred to as LGBTQA Services and/or LGBT Services. The name LGBTQA Services was in use until around 2010 when the name changed to the iteration still in use today, LGBTQA Center.

Over the years, LGBTQA Center staff have received feedback from students especially about the limitations of using an acronym for a name and the lack of inclusion it conveys for communities and identities that are not named. As queer and trans* communities have grown and diversified, this diversity is increasingly lacking from the acronym, even when the acronym is lengthened and expanded (for example, LGBTQQIAAPSGL).

Misnaming is another challenge of having an acronym for a name. The Center is frequently misnamed by people struggling to remember the acronym correctly and what it stands for. We anticipate this confusion would only get worse if the acronym were lengthened. Although the misnaming is often unintentional, the impact can be anything from confusion to frustration; and the students, faculty and staff who use the Center feeling dismissed, ignored or invisible in our campus community.

According to data gathered last year by the Consortium of LGBT Professionals in Higher Education, there is a nation-wide trend away from the use of acronyms in Center names and toward something more descriptive of the services provided, audience served, or host institution's particular identity (such as naming the Center after an individual). We're using this report to inform our process.

The name of our Office may change, but our purpose will continue to be to serve the diverse queer and trans communities at the University of Vermont. We will continue to do much of the same work you know and love us for and welcome new opportunities and partnerships that a new name may bring to achieve our vision of a responsive and supportive environment that promotes equity, inclusion, academic success, community, and social justice for individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities at UVM.

Feedback will be gathered during April & May 2018 with the aim of having a new name in place for the 2018-2019 school year.

Please attend a community forum in April and/or provide your feedback online <http://go.uvm.edu/renaming>

With love,

Kate Jerman
Director