The University at Albany

LGBTQI Concerns Advisory Committee

2010-2011 Report

To

Provost Susan D. Phillips

and

Vice-President for Student Success Christine Bouchard

The University at Albany, SUNY

July 22, 2011
Committee Members

Dana Peterson and Carol Stenger, Co-Chairs
Jay Oddi, Committee Staff

Language and Policy Subcommittee
Joanne Kaufman (Sociology), Chair
Randall Craig (English)
Lauren Ford (Undergraduate Student)
Leslie Mortland (Undergraduate Student)
Jay Oddi (Residential Life)
Dana Peterson (Criminal Justice)
Punkin Clay Stephens (Public Health)

Training and Academic Affairs Subcommittee
Courtney D’Allaird (Multicultural Student Affairs), Chair
Nancy Belowich-Negron (Disability Resources Center)
Sue Faerman (Undergraduate Studies)
D. Ekow King (Multicultural Student Affairs)
Arlene Istar Lev (Social Welfare)
Jonny Puglia (Undergraduate Student)
Barbara Rio (Social Welfare)
Carol Stenger (Counseling Center)

Web Presence and FAQs Subcommittee
Elizabeth Conrad (Student Involvement and Leadership), Chair
Holly Barker-Flynn (Residential Life)
Lee Friedlander (Undergraduate Student)
Brenda Seckerson (Employee Assistance Program)
Carey Jean Soijka (Graduate Student)
Kevin Tyle (Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences)

Other Members:
Agostino Futia
Richard Ingles
Jim Mancuso (Human Resources)
Errol Millington (Facilities Management)
Robert Miller (Social Welfare)
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Overview of Committee Structure, Work, and Challenges

The LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex) Concerns Advisory Committee was established by Provost Sue Phillips and Vice President for Student Success Christine Bouchard for the 2009-2010 academic year in order to review, report on, and make recommendations for improvement in the current UAlbany campus climate for LGBTQI faculty, staff, and students. The Advisory Committee was continued by the Provost and Vice President for Student Success for the 2010-2011 academic year to work toward implementing some of the Committee recommendations documented in the extensive May 6, 2010 report (available at http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/committee.shtml). Through a series of meetings between Provost Phillips, Vice President Bouchard, former Committee chair Eric Keenaghan, and current Committee co-chairs Carol Stenger and Dana Peterson, the 2009-10 Committee recommendations were prioritized and a list of potential tasks for 2010-11 developed for consideration by the ongoing Committee. The 2010-11 Advisory Committee met for the first time on September 24, 2010, with Vice President Chris Bouchard in attendance to welcome Committee members and issue our charge.

At the first meeting, the Committee agreed to group the prioritized tasks and create three subcommittees to take responsibility for moving the tasks forward: the Language and Policy Subcommittee, the Training and Academic Affairs Subcommittee, and the Web Presence and FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) Subcommittee. The following tasks were proposed for each of the subcommittees, with decisions about prioritization of specific tasks for the year left to each subcommittee:

1) Language & Policy Subcommittee

Identify locations of needed changes and recommend language of change (in consultation with Counsel’s office and ODI) to appropriate approval body

Clarify UAlbany’s policies and guidelines (see p. 44-45 of May 2010 Report)
- Develop and recommend language to ensure that all University at Albany diversity statements and policies are inclusive of all members of our University community (with ODI)
- Recommend language for “Principles for a Just Community” document to be inclusive of all members of our University community (with Provost’s, President’s offices)
- Review of all the University’s websites so that when a search for LGBTQI information is initiated, any services or contacts that a department provides for the LGBTQI community are evident (with Office of Media Relations, ITS)
- Develop and recommend language for guidelines for University websites to ensure that all content on the websites is consistent with the University’s diversity policy and its guiding principles (with President’s & Provost’s offices, VP for Student Success, ODI, Media Relations, ITS)
Improve forms to better represent gender identity and gender expression (p. 45 of May 2010 Report)

- Develop and recommend language for inclusion various forms
- Work with VPSS, other units (Health Center, Counseling Center) to identify and recommend places for change

2) Training and Academic Affairs Subcommittee

Advise and/or design various levels of awareness-sensitivity-ally development training; Coordinate with existing bodies (LGBTQ Resource Center, Career Services Center, Safe Space Training, Project SHAPE: Sexual Health & Peer Education, University Counseling Center, ITLAL, Academic Affairs); engage unions, HR, VPs in consideration of training for other segments; consider developing “train the trainer” model.

Form an LGBTQI Faculty and Staff Speakers Bureau (see p. 32 of May 2010 Report)

- Bureau will consist of trained volunteers from the faculty and staff to speak to various academic and administrative units about LGBTQI issues and encourage the teaching of and sensitivity to LGBTQI issues in all UAlbany classrooms
- Conduct outreach workshops in academic and staff units throughout the University to address social issues pertaining to professional life and training issues (this may fall under or connect with the Faculty/Staff Issues Subcommittee, if formed)

Establish Project Outreach (pp. 33-34 of May 2010 Report)

- Identify strategies for encouraging those faculty and staff and students who are not yet identified as allies to receive LGBTQI ally education and training
- Explore and implement new efforts to grow the number of UAlbany LGBTQI allies
- Help organize and coordinate such outreach events

Include LGBTQI sensitivity training in all instructor (tenure-line, part-line, adjunct) orientations (p. 38 of May 2010 Report)

- Make available to college deans and department chairs materials related to LGBTQI concerns, issues, and resources to be presented at orientation sessions for new faculty
- Provide training to schools and departments at deans’ and chairs’ request
- (see overlap with FAQs and Speakers Bureau)

Train classified employees and additional University staff (pp. 43-44 of May 2010 Report)

3) Web Presence and FAQs Subcommittee

Develop a relocated and expanded LGBTQI webpage (see p. 31 of May 2010 Report)

- Advise VPSS on content and links to make page more useful
- Consider moving from Division of Student Success page and providing link from main UAlbany page
- Expand to include many of the resources and policies and guidelines listed in parts 1 and 3 (pages 8-11, 14-19) of the May 2010 Report
- Include student, faculty and staff resources
- Publicize the LGBTQI Concerns Advisory Group, its 2010 report, and the newly formed LGBTQI Faculty and Staff Association and Speakers Bureau
- Provide information about the LGBT minor and associated faculty
- Relocate (or link) the Office of Media Relations’ “Faculty Expert” page and expand the number and names of faculty to reflect the large number who are teaching LGBTQI-related issues
- Work in conjunction with ITS and other appropriate departments to ensure that the appropriate resources are made available and that the appropriate links are established

**Develop and distribute FAQ sheets about LGBTQI-sensitive issues (pp. 31-32 of May 2010 Report)**

- Develop list of relevant FAQs and determine who should receive and when
- May wish to develop FAQs to address specific concerns and needs of 3 groups: faculty, staff, and students
- Provide at new faculty orientation and possibly to all faculty at the beginning of each year; engage ITLAL
- Include resources and ‘best practices” to help avoid placing students in potentially uncomfortable situations
- Provide at student orientations, Post on website

The Advisory Committee had also discussed a fourth subcommittee on Faculty and Staff Issues that would work on, for example, identifying issues that affect the quality of academic/professional life for LGBTQI faculty and staff, coordinating with the new Faculty/Staff Association and perhaps CLUE (UAlbany’s Career, Leadership, and University Excellence program), and developing and making recommendations to appropriate units and/or other subcommittees. It was decided, however, that it would be best for each of the three existing subcommittees to address faculty and staff issues, as relevant, in the process of working on their prioritized tasks.

Following the first full Advisory Committee meeting, the subcommittees set their own meetings for the year and also worked between meetings to accomplish their work. The full Advisory Committee met three more times during the year (12/9/10, 3/30/11, 5/4/11), for updates from the subcommittees, to provide necessary feedback to subcommittees, and for other Committee work.

The Advisory Committee faced a number of challenges that, unfortunately, prohibited us from making as much progress as we had hoped and anticipated this year. After the first full Advisory Committee meeting, we followed up with absentees and discovered that some members had opted to step down from their participation, with the most common explanation involving workload issues within their departments. We decided we needed to replace these members and developed a list of potential new members, including two individuals (Arlene Istar Lev and Punkin Clay Stephens) who made valuable contributions to one of the 2009-10 sub-committees and whom we felt would be essential to include as members of the larger Advisory Committee.
Letters of invitation went out from Provost Phillips and Vice President Bouchard to the following faculty/staff: Joanne Kaufman from Sociology, Robert Miller from Social Welfare, Arlene Istar Lev from Social Welfare, Kevin Tyle from Earth Science, Barbara Rio from Social Welfare, Richard Ingles from Development, Agostino Futia from Development, Deborah LaFond, Libraries, Jesus Alonso-Regalado, Libraries and Punkin Clay Stephens from Public Health. Of these, we received acceptances from Joanne Kaufman, Arlene Lev, Kevin Tyle, Barbara Rio, Agostino Futia and Punkin Stephens. In addition to having to replace a number of members, we also had difficulty recruiting members to step up and take on the role of Chair for the three sub-committees. The Committee co-chairs personally called people to request they take this on and were turned down by a number of members. Finally, three members graciously agreed to take on the role of sub-committee chair: Joanne Kaufman, as a new member, Courtney D’Alliard, and Beth Conrad. These issues and the need for recruitment caused the Committee to have a slow start and resulted in a significant delay during which the sub-committees were unable to do their work.

The next sections of this Report consist of summaries from each of the three subcommittees of the work accomplished, work yet to be completed, and any additional recommendations. The Report closes with a brief summary and recommendations for future work of the LGBTQI Concerns Advisory Committee.
Language and Policy Subcommittee Summary

Based on the 2010 LGBTQI Advisory Committee Report, this subcommittee’s charge was to work toward the following:

1. Examine and recommend changes to the language in University statements, policies, and forms.
2. Check for language consistency across different parts of the University website once we have some updates.

The subcommittee focused this year on the first charge, since decisions about changes in language need to be made before consistency can be ensured. The subcommittee met four times throughout the academic year (11/10/10, 12/3/10, 2/3/11, and 3/3/11) in addition to the full committee meetings. Progress was made in three main areas, which are detailed below.

1. **Reviewing and updating materials from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.**

   *Fall 2010:* When we initially began reviewing materials from the former Office of Discrimination and Affirmative Action, we were working with older documents because the new materials were not yet available on the ODI website (and are still not as of 7/12/11). We initially drafted a document proposing specific language changes, but discovered that the materials we had were obsolete. After contacting Dr. Tamra Minor at ODI, Joanne Kaufman obtained copies of the new mission statement and brochures. While Dr. Minor encouraged us not to make any recommendations at that point because a new committee would be convened that would update the diversity materials, the LGBTQI Advisory Committee strongly recommended that the subcommittee look at being proactive rather than reactive and offer our suggestions so that they may be considered by the new committee as they update ODI materials. This process will hopefully be aided by having one of our members, Carol Stenger, represented on the new President’s Council on Diversity that held its first meeting in May of this year.

   *Spring 2011:* We reviewed the new documents from ODI and proposed several recommendations regarding the language on the mission brochure and the discrimination brochure. Please see Appendix A for the e-mail sent to Dr. Minor, and Appendix B for the specific recommendations linked to the brochures. On 5/13/11, Dr. Minor called Joanne Kaufman to thank her for our recommendations and to state that they will implement all of our recommendations on the website. When they update their brochures, they will implement most of the recommendations. The two recommendations that they will not incorporate on the brochures are the addition of the Governor’s Executive Order on Gender Identity and Expression and the City of Albany ordinance on the same issue. Dr. Minor stated that because there were many different executive orders and ordinances that applied for all types of diversity, it was not feasible to list them on the brochures, due to space limitations. However, she stated that they would list all of them on the website. She also informed us that once their new website is posted (should be this summer), we should review it again and let her know if we have any other recommendations.
Accomplishment: Submitting Language Recommendations to ODI that will be implemented.

Next Steps: The fall 2011 subcommittee will need to follow up on the website and any new brochures to confirm that our changes are implemented and to make new recommendations as appropriate.

2. Making a recommendation to CAFFECoR for “Principles for a Just Community”

Fall 2010: When our subcommittee first met in the fall, we learned that the “Principles for a Just Community” (PJC) statement would likely be removed from all University documents. At that point, we tabled the issue until we were able to confirm information about the University’s plans.

Spring 2011: Randall Craig followed up with the University Senate and learned the history of what happened with the PJC. The University Senate approved a bill in May 2010 calling for the removal of the PJC from the “Community Rights and Responsibilities” statement and the Undergraduate Bulletin because the statement was dated and conflicted with part of the University’s statement on the “Community Rights and Responsibilities.” The President vetoed this bill in August 2010, stating that the Senate should do one of the following: eliminate the language contradictions, modify the PJC, or eliminate the PJC from all University documents. Currently, the Senate subcommittee CAFFECoR (which originally sponsored the bill) is the subcommittee responsible to follow up on this issue. Based on the recommendation of the full advisory committee, our subcommittee decided to be proactive and drafted a short memo addressed to CAFFECoR stating our support for the core principles of the PJC, the importance of updating the statement rather than removing it, and offering our help in updating this statement. See Appendix C for the most recent draft of this statement. Dana Peterson is finalizing any changes on the memo and will submit it to CAFFECoR for their consideration as they re-convene in Fall 2011.

Accomplishment: Following up on the status of “Principles for a Just Community” and contacting the relevant people to keep this alive.

Next Steps: The fall 2011 subcommittee will need to follow up with CAFFECoR at the start of the semester (or before) to reiterate our plan to assist in updating this document. Then, we may need to work directly with them on drafting a new document. This process will hopefully be aided by having one of our own members, Jay Oddi, as a member of this Senate committee.

3. Review and recommendations regarding language on University forms.

Fall 2010: Drawing on the Campus Pride’s 2010 State of Higher Education and other sources, Jay Oddi drafted an initial document detailing the issues with University forms in various areas (e.g., MyUAlbany, Blackboard Learning System (BLS), housing, applications) (see Appendix D in separate document). This is a very large and complicated task because the university has direct control only over certain forms, while others are populated based on information coming from broader sources (Common Application for Admission).

Spring 2011: We reviewed our initial document, followed up on specific issues, and planned recommendations for future work. First, Jay Oddi followed up on the vote to broaden the gender categories for the Common Application for Admission. Jay learned that the proposed changes
were voted down, but this is an area that we should follow up on in the future. Partnering with other universities in voicing our support for broadening the gender categories would help make a stronger case, so this should be explored. Second, Dana Peterson arranged to have Chris Haile, the University’s Chief Information Officer, attend the March meeting of our full committee, to directly address our questions about several types of University forms. This meeting provided a more detailed understanding of the constraining issues with the current University systems (e.g., PeopleSoft (PS), Common Application) that essentially populate all University forms in various offices. Chris Haile is willing to work with us and requested that we provide her office with a more concrete list of key short- and long-term changes, with rationale, that we would like to see considered by Information Technology, in conjunction with other relevant offices such as the Registrar and Human Resources. These recommendations include:

A. Devising a way to load preferred name (or legal name if preferred name is not present) into BLS and MyUAlbany for class rosters. Ms. Haile seemed to think that this was possible, but we will explore it more fully when our list of recommendations is provided to her office.

B. Proposing additional options for gender identity and expression (i.e., aside from Male/Female/unknown, the current options in PS) that do not require customizations to PeopleSoft for the short term. Ms. Haile described two possible ways to do this: using the student group function (used for EOP, Disability etc.) and some sort of “opt-in” system similar to the NY-Alert. These will be further explored.

C. Long-term recommendations for PeopleSoft, for their next major PS update which may come in 2013 or 2014. Our subcommittee will try to link with other universities for support to make a strong case, with justification for recommendations. The document that Jay Oddi drafted has several ideas that will be incorporated.

D. Policies and guidelines about who should be able to access information regarding gender identity. Jay Oddi has drafted some general guidelines that can be elaborated.

Joanne Kaufman and Dana Peterson are committed to doing some additional work on developing these recommendations for Chris Haile over the summer, in consultation with Jay.

Accomplishment: Getting clarification from outside groups and the University on how to approach the issues related to University forms.

Next Steps: The subcommittee will continue its work over the summer and in the fall should move quickly on recommendations in the areas A, B, and D above, so changes can be implemented that will have some positive impact for students in the next year. The long-term recommendations will likely come after we have addressed the short-term issues, but the subcommittee needs to draft the appropriate language and then present to the full advisory committee in the fall so that we can move forward.
Training and Academic Affairs Subcommittee Summary

Based on the 2010 LGBTQI Advisory Committee Report, the subcommittee’s charge was to work toward the following:

1. Form an LGBTQI Faculty and Staff Speaker’s Bureau.
2. Establish Project Outreach which would implement new efforts to grow the number of UAlbany LGBTQI allies.
3. Include LGBTQI sensitivity training in all instructor orientations.
4. Train classified employees and other University staff.

Our subcommittee met four times this year in addition to the full Advisory Committee meetings.

Most of the ground that was gained by this committee was on a conceptual basis, as a few barriers arose. For example, with regard to our charge to include sensitivity training in all instructor orientations, we discovered that there is no longer a formal orientation for new faculty. This apparently changed when Dr. Susan Herbst was Officer in Charge. As a result, the subcommittee discussed other ways we might be able to get this information out to faculty. We discussed the possibility of having sub-committee members make individual contacts with Departments to reach faculty and staff about training resources as well as curriculum infusion.

Our subcommittee was able to identify areas in which a Speaker’s Bureau could provide different levels of awareness training; however, we are still in the process of finding faculty and staff willing to form such a bureau. We contacted staff in the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL), and they expressed interest in having us provide FAQs as well as offer an online or in-person training on LGBTQI issues in the classroom for faculty and students using ITLAL resources. We are currently collaborating with the Web/FAQs subcommittee on the development of the FAQs. These LGBTQI classroom resources would not be mandatory, but once established would continually be available to faculty and student teachers utilizing ITLAL. Through this program, instructors could also request a consultant on this topic, and we could have a faculty spotlight event.

We want to make note of a number of new resources and training opportunities that took place during 2010-11, as well as provide an update on continuing programs. First, Arlene Lev in the School of Social Welfare, a member of this sub-committee, developed and unveiled the SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Project. This interdisciplinary project is designed to enhance the clinical skills of graduate students working with LGBTQ individuals. This year there were a number of well-attended trainings offered that were attended by students, faculty and staff as well as community members. This included a full day training entitled “Clinical Skill Training: Working with the LGBTQ Community.” The SOGI Project was recently awarded a grant of $10,000 from SUNY which will be used for faculty development, curriculum enhancement, continued training opportunities, and the development of a speaker’s bureau.

Second, Sue Faerman met with Tine Reimers, Special Assistant to the Provost for Faculty and Program Development, to discuss adding an LGBTQI sensitivity training for faculty members as part of the Tenure Trek faculty training sessions that Tine develops. Sue Faerman, Tine Reimers,
Carol Stenger and Nancy Belowich-Negron met to develop this program. It was entitled "Making Sense of the LGBTQ Soup: Diversity is More than Just Black and White." This was presented on April 4, 2011 with Carol Stenger and Nancy Belowich-Negron as facilitators. Two faculty members attended. We plan to offer this again in the future.

Third, we continued to offer Safe Space training for allies. This program is in its second year and is presented by Nancy Belowich-Negron and Carey Jean Soijka. This year, seven sessions were offered with approximately 10 to 20 participants in each session. Most of the participants were professional staff members, although there were students and faculty in attendance as well.

Fourth, Carol Stenger coordinated a number of LGBTQI-related activities in her role. She offered four class sessions on working with LGBTQ students for Resident Assistants as part of their training course ECPY 302. Project SHAPE: Sexual Health and Peer Education members and Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program members were trained as part of their training courses, ECPY 311 and ECPY 400, respectively. Project SHAPE offered 21 educational programs for the University community on LGBTQ topics during this past academic year. In addition, the University Counseling Center continued to offer its LGBTQ support group led by Dr. Heidi Wright.

Fifth, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is in the process of developing a new model for diversity training at UAlbany. A small group of faculty and staff participated in a “train the trainer” workshop in spring 2011 in which LGBT identities were mentioned, albeit briefly. Two of this sub-committee’s members, D. Ekow King and Nancy Belowich-Negron, participated in this training. The idea is that this group of trainers will facilitate trainings for faculty and staff beginning in the fall semester.

Next Steps:
There is clearly much more work to be done in the area of training and academic affairs. The following is a brief list of avenues currently being pursued or still in progress by the subcommittee: In attempting to reach out to faculty about curriculum infusion of queer issues and becoming an ally, we discussed developing different levels of awareness training, contacting department chairs to request an opportunity to speak briefly at a department meeting, working on the advertisement of Safe Space training opportunities as well as offering and advertising a faculty-specific Safe Space training, advertising University LGBTQ resources, developing training specifically for curriculum infusion, and offering departmental brown bag lunch talks. We also will continue to connect with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion regarding their new diversity training program to ensure that programs are inclusive of LGBTQ diversity and to offer our assistance as needed.
Web Presence and FAQs Subcommittee Summary

The Web Presence & FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) Subcommittee was created by the 2010-11 Advisory Committee to pursue the following two main initiatives and related tasks:

1. Develop a relocated and expanded LGBTQI webpage
2. Develop and distribute FAQ sheets about LGBTQI-sensitive issues

The subcommittee approached the webpage as the clearinghouse for information to meet the needs of multiple audiences: students (graduate or undergraduate), faculty, staff, and prospective students. Previously, the main webpage warehousing and publicizing issues and resources related to the UAlbany LGBTQI community was hosted as a sub-page, http://www.albany.edu/studentaffairs/lgbt/, through the Division of Student Success (formerly Student Affairs), and, as such, principally addressed student and prospective student audiences. The URL has been updated to http://www.albany.edu/lgbt and is represented as a service of the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center. A link to this new location exists on the University A-Z directory (http://www.albany.edu/sitemap.php) and is titled LGBTIAP (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Ally Pansexual) Life.

Recent changes made to the LGBTIAP Life site (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt) include:

- Edited HTML coding to include keywords. The site contained no keywords in the HTML coding; thus, users were not presented with this page upon searching for ‘GLBT’ or ‘LGBT’ from the University search engine. Keywords ‘LGBT,’ ‘LGBTQ,’ and ‘LGBTIAP’ have been added. The Committee felt that the acronym ‘GLBT’ should also be included for users accustomed to that terminology; this was added to the page’s coding.
- Updated Advisory Committee page (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/committee.shtml). As the larger Advisory Committee was in its second year, this page was updated to reflect the current committee composition.
- Added Safe Space logo to Safe Space Allies page (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/allies.shtml). Since the Safe Space logo is the primary identifier of an ally, this logo was added to increase students’ awareness of how to identify an ally.
- Updated inconsistent language. The term ‘Safe Zone’ on http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/ally.shtml was changed to ‘Safe Space’ to fall in line with other references on the site and the Safe Space sticker/logo.
- Added Safe Space training link to Allies page (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/ally.shtml). Since those looking to identify an ally may be interested in becoming an ally, a link was provided for the user to obtain information about Safe Space training opportunities.
Additional recommendations for changes to the LBGTQIAP Life page (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt) site include:

- **Add a more visible definitions link** (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/definitions.shtml). The Committee felt that the link to the definition of various identities/orientations (e.g., Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) in the home page’s opening paragraph was not easily visible, yet the definitions are important to make available and should appear in the left menu bar.

- **Add position/title to the Safe Space list of allies who have completed training** (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/docs/safespaceallies.xls). Student members of the subcommittee suggested the inclusion of each ally’s title or role within the unit to allow students to navigate to the correct person per unit.

- **Add a link to the Gay & Lesbian Issues Faculty Experts page** (http://www.albany.edu/news/experts/7130.php). We anticipate this link to be ready for inclusion once the Training subcommittee has obtained comprehensive information reflecting campus-wide expertise on this topic.

- **Add an On-Campus Housing link to left bar menu.** Since prospective students may visit the site as they consider attending UAlbany, mention of gender-neutral housing opportunities and accommodation is important. Ideally, the link will take the user to a section of Residential Life’s web site with relevant information.

- **Add Gamma Rho Lambda to LGBTQ Student Organizations page.** Recently established on the UAlbany campus, Gamma Rho Lambda (lesbian sorority) is another student organization option for students and should appear on the LGBTQ Student Organizations page. (http://www.albany.edu/lgbt/organizations.shtml).

- **Add presence of Lavender Graduation.** In its second year, the Lavender Graduation ceremony has become a valued tradition, yet is not referenced on the LGBT Life site.

- **Add RedDot to the site.** To support future editing by a “non-chie,” the site should be usable with the RedDot content management system.

- **Finally, the Subcommittee recommends the addition of a link on the LBGTQIAP Life site for more information on the LGBT academic minor.** At this time, there is no web presence for this minor.

Recommendations for changes to the Student Success website (http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess) are as follows:

- **Edit ‘Associated Areas in Student Success’** (http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess/departments.shtml). A “redirect” is in place for the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center link that briefly displays the previous LGBT site (http://www.albany.edu/studentaffairs/lgbt/) then automatically loads the correct and current page, http://www.albany.edu/lgbt. The Subcommittee recommends updating the link to remove the redirect and link directly to the correct page.
Recommendations for changes to the Student Association site (http://www.albany.edu/studentassociation) are as follows:

- Add downtown Albany resources and events. The Office of Gender and Sexuality Concerns page (http://www.albany.edu/studentassociation/executive_gender.shtml) within the Student Association site should be edited to include downtown resources such as the Pride Center and In Our Own Voices, as well as local LGBTQ events.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

In addition to web site improvements, the Web Presence & FAQs Subcommittee was charged with the creation of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for three audiences: faculty, staff, and students. The Subcommittee recommends that all teaching staff receive these in the form of "fact sheets" or “FAQ” handouts—both electronic and print—at the start of each semester. At the first full Advisory Committee meeting in Fall 2011, the sub-committee will bring for discussion and solicit ideas from other Committee members about how these could be distributed.

The sub-committee developed the following questions that should be included in such a document:

For students:
- Is there an LGBTQ student group on campus?
- What community resources exist in the Capital District?
  - Answer should include: Pride Center, In Our Own Voices, Capital Pride Singers, TransLegal Services, Choices Counseling, Our Brother’s Keeper, Empire State Pride Agenda (Pride Festival), Albany Bombers (gay hockey team).
- How do I legally change my name in NYS or on campus?
- What constitutes a hate crime and what protections are afforded to me?
- How do I show support to a friend who has come out to me?
- What do I do if I witness or personally experience discrimination on campus?
- Are sexual orientation and gender identity included in the University’s non-discrimination policy?

For faculty/staff: (these should cover Foundation employees as well)
- Is there a LGBTQI faculty/staff social group on campus?
- Does UAlbany offer domestic partner benefits?
- Does UAlbany offer transgender-related health plans/coverage?
- What are the tax implications of adding my partner to my health insurance?
- What provisions exist for partners in the optional retirement plan (ORP)?
- My supervisor is not an ally. Is there someone I can talk to?
- What community resources exist in the Capital District?
  - Answer should include: Albany Bombers (gay hockey team), Pride Center, In Our Own Voices, and Capital Pride Singers. TransLegal Services, Choices Counseling, Our Brother’s Keeper, Empire State Pride Agenda (Pride Festival)
o What protections (via unions, perhaps?) might be afforded to me if I decide to transition or come out?
o How do I find someone to speak to my office, group, or class about LGBTQ issues?
o What do I do if I witness or personally experience discrimination on campus?
o Are sexual orientation and gender identity included in the University’s non-discrimination policy?

We will also be working on development of a FAQ sheet to address questions that teaching faculty often have in working with LGBTQ students in their classes. We will collaborate with members of the Training sub-committee in developing this document which will include, for example, tips for helping a student transition most comfortably in the classroom setting.

**Future Work to Be Done**

The Web Presence and FAQs Subcommittee will continue its work pertaining to the inclusion of LGBTQI-related information on University web sites as well as in the creation of additional frequently asked questions. The faculty/staff members of the Subcommittee will continue to research existing FAQs at other institutions, particularly Ithaca College, as well as to research and develop such topics as partner benefits and subsequent tax implications. Subcommittee student members will compile FAQs representing the student perspective. All committee members will research answers and identify resources for all questions.
Going Forward

Despite a slow start, the UAlbany Advisory Committee on LGBTQI Concerns completed or moved forward on a number of important tasks on our list of priorities, as well as set a tentative agenda for next year’s Committee to “hit the ground running.” The Committee’s accomplishments for the 2010-11 academic year include the following:

- Made recommendations to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for language changes to the office’s mission statement and brochure
- Drafted a memo to be sent to CAFFECoR to encourage revision of Principles of Just Community and offer the Committee’s assistance in revision
- Drafted a working document regarding language changes to be recommended to various University forms
- Met with Chief Information Officer Chris Haile to begin discussions of making changes to various electronic information stores
- Met with the Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) to plan for implementing LGBTQI-related training and resources for classroom instructors
- Developed FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) sheets for students and for faculty/staff
- Implemented changes to the LGBTQIAP Life web page
- Reviewed other relevant University website and developed list of recommended changes
- Student Housing has also received phone calls with inquiries and accolades from prospective students who appreciate the housing assistance offered to transgender students and who are eager to attend UAlbany because of this.

We would also like to briefly recap a number of additional activities that occurred outside of the Advisory Committee that demonstrate positive movement toward an inclusive campus environment for LGBTQI students, staff, and faculty:

- The SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Project in the School of Social Welfare offered numerous trainings to social work students and community members on clinical issues impacting the LGBTQ community. The School of Social Welfare received the 2011 Departmental Diversity Lavender Award because of the work of the SOGI Project. SOGI also received a $10,000 grant from the Office of Diversity and Educational Equity for EXPLORATIONS IN DIVERSITY & ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE to work collaboratively with other departments and organizations providing university-wide programming on LGBTQ issues.
- LGBTQI issues were included in the diversity training offered through the Tenure Trek program, in trainings for Resident Assistants, through Project SHAPE, and through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- The Safe Space program trained more University personnel to become allies.
- The University Counseling Center continues to hold LGBTQ support groups.
- The 3rd Annual Lavender Graduation was held.
- The newly-formed LGBTQI Faculty/Staff Association had a social and planning gathering and elected officers.
The Student Association Office of Gender and Sexuality Concerns, along with the LGBT Resource Center and a number of other groups, sponsored a number of events in response to the suicide of Rutgers’s student Tyler Clemente, which included having a number of student groups set up exhibits on related issues and having many student groups come together to paint supportive messages of hope to the LGBTQ community on the Lecture Center Concourse windows. They also had a well-attended candle-lighting ceremony and speeches on October 20th and held an impactful ceremony for Trans Day of Remembrance on November 11th, during which a number of faculty, staff and students read the names and brief accounts of transgender persons who had been victims of violence.

The Theatre Department held a production of a new play entitled “Dear Harvey,” based on the life of Harvey Milk, a UAlbany alum who was an openly gay city supervisor in San Francisco and was murdered in 1978.

Project SHAPE sponsored two openly gay speakers in their theme weeks: Doug Weiss, the keynote speaker for the annual “World AIDS Week” in December, and Chad Goller Sojourner, in a one man autobiographical performance entitled “Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy” as the keynote for “Body Image and Eating Awareness Week” in April. Mr. Sojourner’s performance discusses issues of class, race, sexual orientation and identity.

Finally, the Advisory Committee through its subcommittees also developed a series of recommendations that can guide the initial work for 2011-12, including the following:

- At the beginning of the fall semester, send memo to CAFFECoR regarding revising or replacing Principles of a Just Community; possibly work with CAFFECoR on revision
- Meet with Chris Haile and other IT representatives, representatives from the Registrar’s Office, and other relevant offices to discuss changes to recording of such items as gender identity in the University’s management information systems
- Connect with other Universities to recommend to PeopleSoft permanent changes that will allow more options for gender expression
- Work with appropriate University offices on rules regarding access to specific information such as gender and racial identity
- Propose a pilot program for expansion of gender-neutral housing opportunities to any student interested, rather than on a case-by-case solely for transgender students (a great step forward in itself), perhaps within the 500-bed complex opening in Fall 2012
- Recruit faculty and staff for the Speaker’s Bureau
- Work with ITLAL to implement training for classroom instructors
- Meet with department heads to offer training to faculty and staff and to distribute FAQs
- Recommend additional changes to the LGBTQIAP Life web page and also changes to the Student Success and Student Association web pages
- Continue to catalogue social, professional, and academic endeavors across our campus, including but not limited to events, trainings, and courses, that further our collective efforts to improve the UAlbany climate for LGBTQI students, faculty, and staff
We began the year with the heart-breaking story prominent in national and international news of the completed suicide of Rutgers University student Tyler Clemente due to bullying based on his sexual orientation. This horrendous event underscored the importance of the work of this Advisory Committee and makes our work all the more poignant. The Advisory Committee is made up of enthusiastic and dedicated members who are committed to seeing our work to fruition. Although we did not make as much progress this year toward our collective goals as we had hoped, we believe we have an effective structure in place to make great strides in 2011-2012, and we welcome the opportunity to continue our work in the next year.
Appendix A: E-mail to Dr. Minor, ODI

May 3, 2011

To: Dr. Tamra Minor, Office of Diversity and Inclusion

From: Joanne M. Kaufman, Chair, Language and Policy Sub-committee of the LGBTQI Advisory Committee

RE: Recommendations to Office of Diversity and Inclusion for upcoming revisions to the university diversity mission statement and discrimination statement.

Dr. Tamra Minor, Director Office of Diversity and Inclusion

I spoke to you briefly back in December about the work of the Language and Policy Sub-committee of the LGBTQI Advisory Committee in examining university documents and proposing recommendations for future documents based on the LGBTQI Advisory Committee’s report from May 2010. Over this past year, our committee examined current university statements with the goal of working to make these statements broadly inclusive of the university committee while specifically addressing the concerns and representation of the LGBTQI community. We understand the Office of Diversity and Inclusion updated both the mission statements and discrimination statements over the past year and is further seeking to work with a university level committee to continue work in this area. Our goal is to be supportive of the work of ODI and offer recommendations that would address LGBTQI concerns. Towards this goal, we reviewed the current updated brochures from ODI on the mission statement and discrimination and came up with some recommendations for future revisions (or new incarnations) of these brochures and statements.

1. In general, we are very pleased with the new more holistic mission statement.

2. We would like to see greater recognition of the state and local laws and directives since these are more progressive than current federal laws. The current mission brochure (and discrimination brochure) mentions the New York State Human Rights Law and all applicable state non-discrimination laws. We would like to see more detail on the state and local level such as:
   • Cuomo’s Executive Order 2 continuing Paterson’s Executive Order 33 on gender identity and expression
   • City of Albany Ordinance 18.61.03 including gender identity and expression

3. For the discrimination brochure and statements, we would like to see a listing of
   • “gender identity, gender expression, and marital or domestic partner status”

   These should be in addition to the current listing of sex, sexual orientation, and other protected statuses. We recognize that federal law does not recognize these, but the state and local laws and executive orders do recognize them. We understand that this may also require
consulting with the university’s legal counsel. We are happy to assist ODI in following up on this issue.

4. Finally, we would like to see the university take a stronger stand in going beyond federal, state, and local laws. We would recommend considering some type of statement such as: “The University actively promotes a climate of tolerance and will vigorously address all discrimination.”

I am attaching a more detailed summary of how these changes could be implemented if your office will be revising the current brochures. But, these recommendations could also be used for whatever newer statements/brochures that ODI is working on. Our goal is to be supportive of the great work done by the ODI in embracing a more holistic view of diversity. We wish to offer assistance in clarifying and expanding the recognition of LGBTQI communities. Please let me know if you have any questions. I would also be happy to meet with you to discuss this in more detail. We greatly appreciate your current and past efforts to be inclusive of the LGBTQI communities.
Appendix B: Specific Recommendation to ODI on Two Brochures
LGBTQI Advisory Committee: Language and Policy Subcommittee (Spring 2011)
This document includes proposed revisions to materials from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to increase coverage of more progressive state and local laws and to add broader recognition of LGBTQI communities.

1. Mission Brochure:
- The holistic mission statement reads very well.
- We propose changes to the last bullet point in the second column.

- Under Column 2, Bullet point 4, changes at line 9 and forward:
  - Propose inserting new text in bold: “…The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and all applicable federal non-discrimination laws.” End the fourth bullet point here.
  - Propose inserting 5th bullet point editing the original last 3 lines to: “Oversight of, and support of the University’s compliance efforts in accordance with New York State Human Rights Law, Cuomo’s Executive Order 2 continuing Paterson’s Executive Order 33 on gender identity and expression, City of Albany Ordinance 18.61.03 including gender identity and expression, and all applicable state executive orders and directives and state and local non-discrimination laws.”
  - Note: We recognize that a governor’s executive orders expire when a person leaves office unless the new governor continues them. Paterson also issued a directive for NYS agencies to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states (and upheld in court). We suspect this may still require some editing and consultation with legal counsel (Janet Thayer)
2. Discrimination Brochure:
- Proposing changes to parts of both columns.

According to Federal and State non-discrimination laws, it is illegal to discriminate in any aspect of employment, including:
- Hiring and firing;
- Compensation, assignment, or classification of employees;
- Transfer, promotion, layoff, or recall;
- Job advertisements;
- Recruitment;
- Testing;
- Use of company facilities;
- Training and apprenticeship programs;
- Fringe benefits;
- Pay, retirement plans, and disability leave.

Employment discrimination is an action or behavior that results in negative or different treatment of an individual based upon any protected status, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, or protected veteran status. Harassment is a form of discrimination and violates University policy when:
- The offensive conduct explicitly or implicitly becomes a term or condition of employment or participation in a University course, program or activity; or
- The conduct creates an environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

The law prohibits not only intentional discrimination, but also practices that have a discriminatory effect.

- Column 1, first paragraph, changes starting line 5:
  - Propose adding new text in bold “…in compliance with State, Federal, and local…”
  - Propose adding a new sentence to the end of the paragraph: “Furthermore, the University actively promotes a climate of tolerance and will vigorously address all discrimination.”

- Column 1, second paragraph, changes starting line 6:
  - Propose adding new text in bold “…sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, age, marital or domestic partner status…”

- Column 2, last bullet point, changes starting line 6:
  - Propose adding new text in bold “…orientation, gender expression, gender identity, national origin, language or origin, individuals with disabilities, veteran status, genetics, marriage or domestic partner status, parental status, and socio-economic status.”

Final Note: Our goal is to be supportive of the great work done by the ODI in embracing a more holistic view of diversity. We wish to offer assistance in clarifying and expanding the recognition of LGBTQI communities.
Appendix C: Draft of Memo to CAFFECoR

Professor Haldar & CAFFECoR Members:

Thank you for reviewing our request to modify the Principles of a Just Community (PJC). We understand that your committee has resolved to draft legislation that removes the PJC from all University documents because its content is outdated. We agree with this assessment of the document, as that conclusion is what prompted our initial request for a revision to the PJC, and we fully support your ongoing efforts to draft a new document to replace PJC.

As you do so, we want to voice our belief that the concepts of equality, liberty, respect, and individual dignity, which are described as fundamental and “central to a free university,” should not lose their place of prominence when deciding what language will replace the PJC. Indeed, because the diverse group whose concerns we represent is united by these principles, we have a vested interest in their continued emphasis at the University.

To that end, we would like to offer input on the contents of the next iteration of the PJC. We hope that by volunteering our assistance during its creation, the interests of the University’s LGBTQIA community members will be sufficiently addressed in the new statement.

Respectfully,
Dana Peterson and Carol Stenger, Co-Chairs
University Advisory Committee on LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered, Queer) Concerns
Appendix D: Draft Summary for Gender Identity-Inclusive Language

Note: This is a working document of issues and ideas for recommendations regarding inclusive language. The Language and Policy Subcommittee will continue to work with this draft and will also use portions of this document in a memo to CIO Chris Haile and persons from other relevant offices (e.g., Registrar) explaining reasons behind our recommendations for changes to language on various University forms in the UAlbany management information system. Portions of this document and questions posed herein were also part of the discussion held with Chris Haile in the March 2011 Advisory Committee meeting.

Overall

“A famous monk once said: 'I don't always know what the right thing to do is, my Lord, but I think the fact that I want to please you pleases you’"

Before beginning, it is important to note that the complexity of the concepts of gender identity/expression and the diversity inherent among those persons who are affected by this issue make “pleasing everyone” an extraordinarily difficult, if not altogether impossible, feat. Properly-worded forms and questions, while important, are merely examples of and not substitutions for a truly inclusive campus. The following recommendations are based on the motivation to maximize inclusivity but are tempered by consideration of the present circumstances.

Based on the LGBTQI Concerns Advisory Committee’s 2010 report, along with recommendations from Campus Pride’s 2010 State of Higher Education and various other sources, the following practices related to gender identity/expression-inclusive language on University forms and questionnaires are recommended for consideration to the LGBTQI Concerns Advisory Committee:

- To the extent possible, whenever gender information is collected by the institution to service its mandated reporting obligations to stakeholders (e.g., SUNY System Administration, federal aid programs, IPEDS data) and the collecting of those data prohibit use of any descriptor besides “male/female,” the explanation for the exclusion of other choices should be presented on the data collection form/site (or in accompanying instructions/appendices) along with those data’s intended use.

- Unless there is a legal or medical reason to do so, the institution should not publish questionnaires or collect data on respondents’ biological sex (except in the case of IRB-approved research).

- The Committee’s 2010 Report states that it is possible for Blackboard to load “Preferred” rather than “Legal” name from PeopleSoft. Since it is possible to do it, Preferred Name (if given) should appear on all class rosters, Blackboard lists, and other information generated by the Student Services units. Legal Name should be released only when mandated by regulation. Student ID number (“EMPLID”) should be the preferred lookup method in PeopleSoft/Blackboard systems. Several other questions should be
explored: a) If Preferred Name is not given by a student, then the Committee should ascertain if Legal Name auto-populates those fields; b) if Preferred Name is entered after the start of the semester, will it update Blackboard lists; and c) can Preferred Name be used on SUNYCards (or is it already used?)

- Minimize the number of forms on campus that collect gender data; encourage unit heads to seek justification for gender questions on questionnaires or forms, especially when no other demographic data are collected on the same form.

- Establish a “uniform gender question bank” for standard use on institutional forms that use gender identity in their analysis of services and programs. The question bank should be tiered, and forms/questionnaire designers can choose which set best suits their needs. Considerations should include mutual exclusivity (if required for data reporting), currency with previously reported data, and the familiarity of respondents with the terms presented. For basic data collection, it is recommended that units adhere to one of the following three options (based on the uses of the data and the needs of the units).

  Option 1: Gender: __________________
  Option 2: Gender: Male: _____  Female: _____  Self Identify (Specify): _____
  Option 3: Gender: Male: _____  Female: _____  Transgender*: _____

Option 1 and Option 2 are appropriate on forms that allow for free-response entries. Option 1 is the most inclusive (and therefore preferred), but the most unfriendly to data entry and analysis, and it has the potential to disrupt any mutual exclusivity requirements in later data reporting. Option 2 corrects for the mutual exclusivity issue (in the case of M/F) but also allows a place for students who are gender nonconforming to self-identify. The word “self-identify” is used rather than “transgender” in Option 2 because that prompt seemed to maximize the inclusivity of the form; users of the data can later code the responses based on the unit’s needs.

Option 3 is appropriate on forms where free responses are not allowed or impractical. In this case, “Transgender*” is preferred. The “*” is present because, as space permits, accompanying instructions should include words to the effect of: This is used as an umbrella term for gender identities different from Male/Female or the one assigned at birth. Covered identities include, but are not limited to, trans men, trans women, gender queer, third gender, and Two Spirit. (Obviously this can be abbreviated or expanded as appropriate, but should be balanced with the needs of the form users).¹

¹ One question for the Advisory Committee to consider is whether another term is preferred here. An aversion to the word, “Other” prevented its presentation in this document, but has been used at other institutions. The version presented here (with or without the definitions) is also popular on forms requesting gender but is, obviously, open to debate.
Other Issues Addressed in the 2010 Report

Common Application for Undergraduate College Admission

In the Summer of 2010, the organization that produces the Common Application conducted a nonbinding survey of its member institutions to find out if voluntary questions regarding gender identity should be added to the form in response to concerns raised by institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and Dartmouth University. The results of that survey were split, and so the matter will be taken up by the Board of Directors of the Common Application in January 2011 for a vote. [Update: The Board of Directors voted not to include such questions at this time.]

From the August 12, 2010, edition of Inside Higher Ed:

“The current Common Application simply gives two choices -- male or female -- on gender. Common Application officials have stressed that they will continue to ask that question, and to specify that applicants should check the box consistent with their birth certificates. That’s because colleges use some of the demographic data collected to meet federal reporting requirements, and single-sex institutions need to know that applicants are eligible for admission…

…On the issue of gender identity, the Common Application is considering options that would explain why the male/female question must be asked consistent with federal reporting requirements, but which would then go on to tell applicants that if there is a word that better describes their identity beyond male or female, they are welcome to add that.”

It is from this article that the recommendation came to include an explanation for the omission of more inclusive questions because of restrictive reporting guidelines.

The essential conflict is between the reporting obligation of the institutions (which is beyond the control of the Common Application or the institutions themselves) and the eventual secondary use of that data – to gauge and adjust a particular institution’s inclusivity on certain dimensions, in this case gender identity and expression.

The primary mission of the Common Application is to expand access to college through the availability of a form accepted at over 400 institutions, but it seems that the position of the Common Application organization is that changing the application may actually restrict access. If one alters the form such that the data collected are “useless” for institutional reporting obligations, some institutions may opt-out of its use.

Regardless, one expects that if the Common Application changes are approved for the Spring 2012/Fall 2012 admissions “season”, the admissions office will find itself with an influx of gender identity data not previously collected; one wonders about the preparation SUNY and other institutions are undertaking in the event those data are available.
A course of action proposed to the full Advisory Committee, to then recommend to the Provost and VPSS is:

- Immediately generate and send a letter to the board members of the Common Application, under the signature of President Philip and other appropriate administrators and faculty members, advocating that they reconsider the inclusive language proposal that was voted down in January 2011
- Open a dialogue with the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, the Office of Admissions, and UAD informing them (if not already known) of a possible coming change to the CA and urging for preparations to accommodate the handling and security of those data.

Other Admissions Applications

As the Committee’s 2010 Report notes, the SUNY Application is generated by System Administration. The Freshman Supplemental Form for UAlbany is also generated by System Administration; the student seems to have the option to fill this form out or follow the directions on the UAlbany website that essentially present the same essay topics and requests for recommendations.

The SUNY Application is the document onto which the student checks Male or Female; the Supplemental Form requests the Applicant ID (generated by SUNY once the application is submitted) which is undoubtedly tied to the vital information captured by the SUNY Application. Unfortunately, much like the SUNY Application, changing the Supplemental Form seems to be out of UAlbany’s direct control.

The “Transfer Part II” Online Application, which is generated by UAlbany for its transfer students, asks for Gender/Sex with Male/Female checkboxes. This seems to be a redundant question; transfer students are required to fill out Part I (which is either the Common Application or the SUNY Application, both of which also have M/F check boxes).

One question for Admissions is to determine what fields in PeopleSoft or other systems these responses populate, as the 2010 Committee Report indicates that the “Sex” fields in PeopleSoft are populated by the Part I applications. Perhaps there are latent standard fields that are not used in mandated reporting but are nevertheless indexed by PeopleSoft and are unaffected by the updates that prevent customization.

A course of action proposed to the full committee, to then recommend to the Provost and VPSS is:

- Generate and send a letter to the institutions that use the standard Supplemental Form for SUNY, advocating the inclusion of voluntary questions about gender identity and expression.
- Open a dialog with Transfer Admissions, asking them
  o the rationale behind the redundant sex question in Transfer Part II
to identify the fields in PeopleSoft which it populates, if different from the
demographic data that is “untouchable”
o if they are used for reporting purposes, then change online forms to reflect the
rationale behind the M/F choice and “get out ahead” of the Common Application
by creating/converting data fields to hold text submitted by applicants to further
explain their gender identity or expression (start with Transfer Part II)

- Where possible on the affected forms, include the explanation of the reasons why only
M/F fields are collected on the applications.
  - Generate and send a letter to System Administration to do the same on the forms
controlled by SUNY

Housing Applications

The sole use for collecting sex data is to house males with males and females with females. The
sex of newly-admitted students is auto-populated by PeopleSoft into the electronic housing
application (completed in MyUAlbany). This field is not changeable by the student on the
application. The applications are reviewed and then students are assigned individually to each
room by the staff of Residential Life.

The system used to track housing assignments and the PeopleSoft system are separate but upload
once a week; changes in housing are sent to PeopleSoft but it is unknown what data are
transmitted from PeopleSoft (if any). Previous systems did not download sex from PeopleSoft
regularly; rather, it was hand-entered from the housing application itself and was updatable by
virtually anyone on the Residential Life professional staff. This essentially meant that the sex in
PeopleSoft and the sex in the housing system could be mismatched, but the students would be
housed by the sex by which they had been identified in the housing system.

The compounding factor this academic year is that returning students will be using an
online sign-up process (not just application). How the sex/gender field will populate in sign-
up screens (whether by PeopleSoft or by the HMS) will impact the accessibility of housing
for gender nonconforming students.

Housing Applications are, like all PeopleSoft applications, managed by UAD.

Much like the predicament of the Common Application, inclusive forms are contingent upon
data use. Rooms on campus, like their occupants, are coded M/F. Occupant and room codes must
match (except in the case of standalone single occupancy rooms) for successful assignment.

The Committee’s 2010 Report outlines the process that gender-nonconforming students would
go through to seek appropriate, comfortable housing. To avail themselves of the process, these
students can self-identify through the “comments” section of the application or call Holly
Barker-Flynn directly.

Given the limitations of PeopleSoft and housing policies, the direct contact made to every self-
identified student, and the fact that whatever data collected are not used for reporting but rather
successful matching of person to assignment, the data constraints necessary for accurate
report generation do not apply. Residential Life can and should use open-ended responses on housing applications for students to elaborate on their gender identity/expression.

Student applicants could be prompted by a question such as, “Does the sex indicated in the application accurately reflect your gender identity/expression?” (perhaps with an embedded link in case a student is not familiar with those terms), and if the answer is “no,” a free response question would be triggered. Doing so may also increase the confidentiality of that field if it is sent only to Holly Barker-Flynn or some other appropriate person and not included with the rest of the application data.

A course of action proposed to the full Advisory Committee, to then recommend to the Provost and VPSS is:

- Where possible, convert or add a section to the Housing Application that includes a free response gender identity/expression question, the contents of which is made available only to Holly Barker-Flynn or to certain specified personnel

Finally…

The University of Vermont newspaper reported that the University of Michigan had developed and begun using a successful “fix” for PeopleSoft to make its data recording system more inclusive of transgender students. U of M, which uses banner, allows students not only to specify a legal name but also a preferred pronoun that appears on all rosters.

No further information was available (after an exhaustive search) on the nature of U of M’s “fix,” but an email inquiry was sent to the head of their Applications Development unit, which has yet to be answered.

Link to the story: http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/?Page=News&storyID=14419