

Worcester State University LGBTQ+ Advisory Group

Academic Year 2019-2020 Final Report

Submitted May 21, 2020

Committee Membership 2019-2020

Co-Chairs: Patrick Hare and Sarah Strout

Committee Members: Jeremy Andreatta, Elena Arranz, Dean Bowen, Tiana Carrasquillo, Laura Caswell, Julie Chaffee, Alexis Da Cunha, Leo DeCosta, Lucas Ferreira, Ryan Forsythe, Adrian Gage, Erica Gilman, Vicki Gruzynski, Charlotte Haller, Thomas Kelley, Kelly Laviolette, Jayne McGinn, Kristie McNamara, Susan Moore, Katey Palumbo, Kathleen Rogan, MaryLynn Saul, Randee Siegel, Elizabeth Siler, Kenny Smith, Henry Theriault, Sarah Valois.

Ex-Officio: Maria Isabel Gariepy.

Introduction

The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group morphed from the Gender Identity Enrollment Management subcommittee effective fall 2019, and its open and voluntary membership includes students, faculty and staff. Their mission is to advocate for the needs of the LGBTQ+ community and work towards a campus culture where members of the LGBTQ+ community are welcomed and respected. The Charge of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Group is to:

- ✓ Make recommendations to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion about policies, programs, and services for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff at WSU (Policy group);
- ✓ Identify and provide educational resources and programs supporting and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community (Education group);
- ✓ Collaborate with WSU offices, programs, and groups that address the needs of the LGBTQ+ community (Collaboration group).

The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group is currently structured in three subcommittees, as follows:

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Policy

As of spring 2020, effective fall 2020, the LGBTQ+ Advisory Group composition and commitment have been further defined, as follows:

Composition: The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group will have 2 co-chairs, and will be comprised of faculty, staff and students. The Director of Diversity, Inclusion, AAEO will serve as an ex-officio member.

Commitment: The committee will meet three times per semester, in addition to subcommittee meetings. Members are expected to attend all meetings, and serve for a minimum 2-year period.

Achievements/ New Initiatives or Activities

➤ The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group suggested and implemented a Chosen Name and Pronoun Policy applicable to students, faculty and staff in time for the fall 2019 semester. Messaging for the policy was implemented via web, email, and student success tables.

➤ The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group was instrumental in the launch of the WSU LGBTQ+ Resources web page highlighting services, policies, offices, curriculum, local and national resources, amongst others, of special interest to the extensive LGBTQ+ community and their allies.

➤ The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group redesigned the Safe Zone program from 2011. Training sessions were implemented for faculty, staff and students, including a session specifically for Resident Assistants in January 2020. A Safe Space train the trainer program was developed in fall 2019. The committee continues to refine the program delivery by strengthening the train the trainer manual and resources provided within. The group will begin train the trainer sessions in the 2020-2021 academic year.

- ✓ Presenters: Patrick Hare, Sarah Valois, and Sarah Strout, WSU; program is about 3-4 hours in length, and the content and length can be adapted depending on the audience's needs.
- ✓ One of the goals of this initiative is for Safe Spaces to be designated and updated across campus after individuals attend the training.

➤ Campus Space

As a result of the hard-work of the LGTBQ+ Alliance (the student group devoted to LGBTQ+ concerns), the LGBTQ+ Resource Center was officially opened in AY 2019-2020. The LGBTQ+ Resource Center is an on-campus, safe space dedicated to advocating for the needs of LGBTQ+ students and their allies. The resource room works with the LGBTQ+ Alliance to encourage understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ+ community members both on campus and within the larger community. The center is located in Student Affairs, room C-336. The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group looks forward to continuing collaborating with the LGBTQ+ Resource Center Staff and the LGTBQ+ Alliance to advance the involvement and agenda of our LGBTQ+ community on campus.

➤ LGTBQ+ Campus Audit

The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group has been developing a LGBTQ+ campus audit and survey utilizing the Campus Pride Index. The audit, which examines resources and policies relating to LGBTQ+ concerns will be completed by the committee, and the survey, which investigates satisfaction with LGBTQ+ resources will be sent to students, faculty and staff.

➤ Webinars and Presentations

The LGBTQ+ Advisory Group has collaborated with other groups on campus to host:

- ✓ A one-day conference on Transgender Issues,
- ✓ A webinar on LGBTQ+ policies,

- ✓ Arranging for Armenian transgender Olympic weight-lifting champion Mel Daluzyan and partner Lilit Lalayan (both currently residing in the Netherlands), as well as filmmaker Inna Sahakyan who is working on a documentary about Mel's struggles to visit WSU in fall 2020. Due to the global pandemic, this programming may only be possible in a remote environment. The committee continues to work to ensure it takes place.