Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Queer Ally Commission

(GLBTQAC)

Report to the Campus Change Team

May 7, 2012

Introduction: As of January, 2012 the GLBTQA Advisory Commission to the GLBT Services Office was officially approved as a campus-wide commission, abandoning the “advisory” role to a single office. The transition to a campus-wide commission has forced anticipated changes in mission, vision, goals and membership. Thus far, the former co-chairs have remained in their positions, anticipating membership recruitment, and a new constitution and by-laws. Thus far, we have approved the following mission statement:

Mission Statement: We are committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and enriching climate for the UMD GLBTQA community, one that enables GLBTQA students, faculty, and staff to thrive intellectually, socially, and emotionally at the university and in surrounding communities. We strive to accomplish this through education, advocacy, collaborative planning with other university and community groups, and outreach and support to members of the UMD GLBTQA community. This includes planning social events to bring members of the GLBTQA community and others together.

Review of the Goals for 2011-2012

Note: See attached memo from our commission to the Campus Change Team dated December 2, 2011

Goal 2, Step 2: Implement effective, measurable process to recruit, retain, and support diverse students, faculty and staff

A. Housing: The Commission supports continuation of the multicultural living community in housing. The commission recommends an internal assessment of housing spaces and policies to make them accessible to students who identify as transgender. Presently UMD is unable to do so with gender-specific (male/female) housing and facilities as the only options.

The commission would like to receive updates about housing options, and understand how we can be of assistance in making on-campus residential options accessible to all students, regardless of their gender.

B. Recruitment and Retention Report: We continue to encourage the University to recognize that it is an impossibility to track retention on an invisible population that has not been given any option to self-identify on admissions applications or most internal surveys. These options should be made available.

GLBT Services has minimal ability to recruit new students due to time restraints and travel expectations. There is one GLBT Services Director and a student employee 10 hours per week during the academic year. Tentative plans for May and June are in progress to visit with Gay Straight Alliances prior to the
end of the school year; UMD will table at the annual Twin Cities Pride Festival on University Row during the two-day festival in the park.

Further, data about the successful recruitment and retention of GLBT students, faculty and staff are not available. Options for self-disclosure of this information should be available to help inform policy. By not collecting data, GLBT people continue to remain and invisible population.

Currently, GLBT people are included in the University’s non-discrimination policy as well as the state of Minnesota. The federal government has yet to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) which would provide protections to people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. UMD could capitalize on its own non-discrimination status by inviting applications from GLBT people for employment opportunities. Attached: Map of Anti-discrimination laws.

**Goal 2, Step 3:** Update, implement, and rigorously enforce all policies and procedures that advance cultural diversity and social justice.

**B. Physical Environment**

a. Inclusive visual images: The Queer and Allied Students Union (QASU) requested to add the “A” for Ally in their multicultural center banner. This item is being accomplished by the Office of Cultural Diversity and will meet deadline.

b. --

c. Increase gender neutral restrooms: The GLBTQA Commission supports the recent changes and encourages increased attention to making changes to the standards governing construction projects (old and new) to be explicit in our expectations for gender neutral restrooms on campus. Additionally, it is important to add the visuals on campus that communicate where restrooms are located, as well as other services such as lactation rooms. Anecdotal information suggests education is needed on campus regarding gender-neutral restrooms and why they are beneficial. Several faculty and students have overhead insensitive comments about recent signage changes.

**Goal 2, Step 6:** Integrate cultural diversity, cultural competence, and social justice topics into the curriculum and campus life, using an enhanced liberal education theme on cultural diversity as a core of this effort (May 2013)

**A. Consider new minors:** GLBT Studies is listed in this action item. The GLBTQA Commission wrote a letter to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts earlier in the academic year to recommend ongoing support of the current “Introduction to GLBT Studies” course, in addition to adding more courses to this minor. The campus already has several faculty members who could teach new courses. The charge to design a GLBT Studies minor must come from Academic Affairs in the coming year. The introductory course is housed in the Cultural Studies Program, of the Sociology/Anthropology Department if the campus hopes to achieve this by May, 2013.
Date: December 2, 2011

To: Campus Change Team

From: GLBTQA Commission
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Re: Status report from GLBTQA Change Team

The GLBTQA Commission met on November 11, 2011 to discuss our participation in implementing goal 2 of the strategic plan.

Our group is committed to participating in creating and sustaining a multicultural housing option (step 2A). We understand that Susana Pelayo-Woodward is heading up this work and will contact her regarding GLBTQA participation and/or other options.

We discussed step 2B extensively. We encourage analysis of recruitment, retention and graduation rates for underrepresented groups, but we do encourage recognition of the fact that this is ineffective for GLBTQ populations. There is currently no way for GLBTQ persons to formally self-identify for recruitment, retention or graduation rate documentation.

GLBT Services is planning recruitment/outreach efforts through GLBTQ community and high school organizations. GLBT Services has already received funding for this purpose.

Though our commission is not directly involved in academic matters, we will write a letter to the UMD Dean of the College of Liberal Arts recommending continued support for the Intro to GLBT Studies course (step 6).