

March 15, 2004

## Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues

Present: Roy Badger; Todd Biedermann; John Blaszczyk; Roberta Hanus; Gloria Kopke (Co-Chair); John McCaw (Co-Chair); Jeffrey Merrick; Steve Miller; Debbie Renard; Ellen Semran; Pat Villarreal (in lieu of Anthony Hightower).

Excused: Yves Lapierre

The meeting began at 3:00 pm in Holton 341.

1. The minutes of the February 16, 2004 meeting were approved.

2. The Domestic Partnership Policy is not yet available on the UWM website, though we expect it to be soon. The DPP will be included among the Selected Academic and Administrative Policies (SAAPs). In order to access this section, go to the UWM mainpage, click on "Faculty/Staff" on the bottom left side, then click on the "Secretary of the University" link on the Policies page, then scroll down and click on the "Selective Academic and Administrative Policies" link. (Or just click on or type in the SAAP URL: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin\\_policies/index.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin_policies/index.html).)

3. Gloria distributed an incomplete report on the Committee's investigation of restroom graffiti. The report is incomplete because, though all men's rooms have been inspected, several women's rooms still need to be looked at. Assignments were made to complete the investigation; Gloria will send the final report along to Anthony Hightower for action.

4. Jeffrey and Debbie will meet sometime in the near future in order to review and evaluate the data from the Campus Climate Survey.

5. The Committee continued to discuss various aspects of gender identity/expression. This discussion focused on the December 1, 2004 memo in which Monica Rimai (Interim Vice Chancellor and Chief Legal Counsel) provides Sona Andrews (Vice Provost) with reasons for rejecting the Advisory Committee's request to have gender identity/expression included as a legally protected group at UWM. As Jeffrey noted in February, the three main Points in the memo are: (1) the perceived confusion in the terminology of gender identity/expression; (2) the absence of legal precedence which would guide the inclusion of gender identity/expression into University policy; (3) the fear of a "slippery slope" whereby other currently unprotected groups might seek legal protection and redress.

In response to the memo, the Committee decided to send a response to Monica Rimai via Sona Andrews, in which we address the Legal Counsel's more tangible concerns. The response will be supported with documentation that should help to dispel both confusion regarding terminology and misunderstandings regarding legal precedent.

To address Point #1, the Committee examined several documents in which the issue of terminology is addressed, including the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition's "Workplace Fairness for Colleges and Universities." (See [www.gpac.org](http://www.gpac.org). Click "colleges and workplace" link.) In its response to the December memo, the Committee will use Gender PAC's recommended phrasing:

"...prohibit discrimination based on an individual's real or perceived gender expression, identity, or characteristics...." (1)

To address Point #2, the Committee examined documents specifying colleges and other workplaces (including Fortune 500 companies) that currently prohibit discrimination against people on the basis of gender identity/expression. The examples from this material will be incorporated into the Committee's response, and some of this material will in fact be sent along with the response as proof that UWM is capable of developing and implementing a viable policy of non-discrimination in this regard.

In order to address Point #3, the Committee will argue that the benefits, including legal benefits, of having a policy of non-discrimination specific to gender identity/expression far outweigh the perceived liabilities. In effect, we will maintain, the liabilities of not having a specified policy of non-discrimination are far worse than the liabilities of having such a policy.

Other aspects of the discussion helped to put our response to the memo, as well as future tasks and goals, into perspective. Roberta observed that the issues and concerns regarding gender identity and expression are inextricably linked with issues and concerns regarding same-sex marriage (and, as a result, the anti-same-sex marriage movement). Ellen observed that GPAC and GLSEN have people who are willing and able to conduct trainings and workshops for the workplace and for the classroom.

6. Announcements: Ellen announced that the Ally Program ([www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/sa/Ally/get\\_involved.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/sa/Ally/get_involved.htm)) will hold 3 or 4 workshops in April; she will send out an e-mail with more specific information. John B. announced that planning for Pridefest is under way, and Pridefest is seeking service support, donations, and other contributions from the LGBT Community.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Kopke (Co-Chair)

John McCaw (Co-Chair)