

October 6, 2003

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); Yves LaPierre; John McCaw (Co-Chair); Steve Miller; Debbie Renard; Ellen Semran

Excused: Anthony Hightower; Jeff Merrick

The meeting began at 2:00 pm.

1. The Committee discussed the possibility of creating a flyer as part of a proposed, Committee-sponsored, university-wide educational campaign in response to the University's upcoming drive supporting the United Way's yearly on-campus campaign. Discussion involved the viability of creating paper flyers versus using e-mail and the internet in order to communicate the Committee's dissatisfaction with the United Way's support for the Boy Scouts of America. (The United Way's support for an organization that openly discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual identity is, in essence, support for the discrimination itself. The United Way's practice contradicts its own code of non-discrimination, and UWM's affiliation with the United Way—either directly or via SECC—goes against UWM's stated policies against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.)

2. The Committee discussed the idea and some strategies for enabling recipients of the flyers to register dissatisfaction with the UWM/United Way/Boy Scout connection. For paper flyers, this process may involve the insertion of a reply form to be filled out and remitted to an appropriate administrative office on campus. In this way, as with other strategies discussed, members of the University community may express their reasons for withholding contributions to the University campaign, and these responses would be noticed and possibly even recorded by a University office with a significant role in the campaign. The creation of some kind of response form would, of course, depend upon the Committee's ability to develop and distribute informational flyers to begin with.

3. The discussion of the Committee's possible educational campaign regarding the UWM/United Way/Boy Scouts connection led to a discussion of how to procure resources in order to create and distribute flyers or other informational media. John B. volunteered to ask some community organizations for monies to fund the flyers, and Gloria offered to contact Sona Andrews in order to discuss the possibility of securing funds for expenses such as paper, printing, etc. In the meantime, Steve offered to explore the possibility of setting up a publicly accessible webpage that expresses the Committee's position and that may be used to collect responses from members of the University community against the UWM/United Way/Boy Scout connection.

4. John B. raised a couple of concerns regarding campus climate for LGBT. One concern stems from a series of incidents in Cunningham Hall, where the School of Nursing is located. In brief, the incident involved the disappearance of LGBT materials from areas in the building where informational media (on cultural events, etc.) have traditionally been made available. It was discovered that LGBT materials were being discarded, though other materials remained available. John spoke about the incident with the Building Manager about this, but the conversation yielded little in terms of results. Indeed, soon after the talk, the table and all

informational media were removed, leaving no official voice in the building for campus and community information. Gloria offered to help John B. draft a letter on this incident to be sent from the committee.

The second concern relates to the discriminatory practices of campus-sanctioned blood drives, specifically the blood drives staged by the Red Cross. The Committee discussed the nature of the policies and procedures, both stated and implied by the Red Cross and other organizations, regarding the admissibility of blood donors who have engaged in same-sex activities.

5. The Committee discussed the status of the Domestic Partnership Policy; it is making its way through the various levels of University decision-making groups, and there should be some news on the University's approval of the Policy within the next few months.

6. Gloria reminded the Committee that Sona was invited to come to the November 10th meeting.

7. The Committee continued an ongoing discussion of its goals for this academic year. There was little time to discuss this in detail, but a few ideas were mentioned, including an innovative idea that Roberta will elaborate on during the November meeting.

8. Ellen reminded the Committee meeting that the Ally Program was underway and going strong.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Kopke (Co-Chair)

John McCaw (Co-Chair)