



*Committee on Issues of Sexual  
Orientation & Gender Identity*

## 2012 - 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

### Introduction

The President's Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity is charged to (a) advise the President on matters pertaining to issues of sexual and/or affectional orientation as they pertain to USF faculty, staff, and students, and (b) evaluate and monitor the university environment for problems and issues related to these matters.

The concerns of the Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (**CISOGI**) are based on the continuing burdens of prejudice and discrimination that people of different sexual orientations and gender identities experience in society, including the workplace and academic settings such as the university. It is CISOGI's goal to assist the President in bringing equity and fairness to all members of the LGBT community in order to maximize their talents and their contributions to the university, which bring value to the educational outcomes of USF, and are consistent with USF's commitment to diversity and inclusion as indicated in the USF Statement on Diversity.

USF has made steady and significant progress in creating a positive climate for LGBT employees and students by including sexual orientation in the USF faculty and staff personnel rules in 2004, then to the diversity and nondiscrimination policies in 2005, and in 2010, offering domestic partner benefits to all qualified employees. In 2012, as a result of a recommendation of this committee, the university added gender identity and expression to the university's nondiscrimination policy. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the administration to value diversity within our USF campuses and will continue to support all activities that seek to achieve the goal of inclusion and equity.

There have been a number of LGBT efforts that have occurred across our USF system this year, and as a result, we now see a more positive working environment evolving for the campus LGBT community. The continued collaboration and planning among CISOGI, the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO), USF Alumni Association, Office of Multicultural Affairs, PRIDE Alliance, Safe Zone Ally Training Program, Pride Awareness Committee (USF Polytechnic), Gay Straight Alliance (USF St. Petersburg), the USF GLBT and Allied Medical Student Association, the USF Women's Status Committee, the USF Title IX Committee, and several community organizations/partnerships have contributed to these results.

## **2012 – 2013 CISOGI Goals and Accomplishments**

During the 2012-2013 academic year, CISOGI met monthly to assess progress on key goals, plan events, and address new issues as needed. We were especially pleased to have regular representation at these meetings from the PRIDE Alliance, the GLBT and Allied Medical Student Association, the GLBT Pre-Med Society, and other interested groups. We have also maintained our “virtual” presence and outreach through updates to our web site – <http://www.usflgbt.org> – and establishment of a Facebook page for CISOGI. Additionally, at the end of this year, we have just begun a virtual presence for graduate students university-wide in the form of a Facebook page intended to connect LGBT graduate students across colleges. Many thanks to Sociology PhD student, Mary Catherine Whitlock, for making this happen.

### **I. Key goals**

- A. Expand the USF non-discrimination policy to include gender identity and expression.
- B. Make employees who are parents (employee’s receiving “family” insurance coverage) eligible for the university’s domestic partner stipend program.
- C. Make resources/mental health services available to students who are in crises related to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
- D. Partner to bring a nationally-recognized LGBT speaker to USF, for future partnership and fundraising for LGBT Alumni Scholarship.
- E. Continue fundraising efforts for the USF LGBT Endowed Scholarship Fund:
  - 1. offer four awards in 2013
  - 2. continue to increase endowment
  - 3. Apply for matching State funds
- F. Develop a cross-discipline LGBT studies initiative through a certificate program or minor.
- G. Host 9<sup>th</sup> Annual GALA event in collaboration with campus partners.
- H. Obtain funding to establish an LGBT Resource Center and hire a full-time staff member within the Office of Multicultural Affairs to oversee its activities.

**A. Expand the non-discrimination policy to include gender identity and expression  
Status: Completed.**

We extend thanks and appreciation to the university administration for adding gender identity and expression to the university’s nondiscrimination policy in 2012. This is a huge step forward and signals to all our constituents that USF is a welcoming and diverse community that encourages all faculty, staff, and students to thrive and succeed.

**B. Make employees who are parents (employee’s receiving “family” insurance coverage) eligible for the university’s domestic partner stipend program.  
Status: Completed but with continuing issues to monitor.**

In March, the Committee was notified that Human Resources would amend the policy of eligibility for the domestic partner stipend such that it is available to employees regardless of whether they register for individual or family insurance, effectively including parents in the

stipend's eligibility. Further, after discussions with Sandi Lovins, Vice President of Administrative Services, the processing of the stipend was amended in two ways to make the process of receiving the stipend more respectful in the recognition of same sex relationships and to bring processing into parity with the requirements for married couples with regard to dissolution of relationships. We commend the university administration for creating a more inclusive stipend program, and especially Sandi Lovins for her dedication to improving the stipend program. We want to go on record, however, as noting that the current stipend program is still only available to employees whose partner is unemployed. Also stipend programs are still recognized as income and, hence, taxed as such. These features of the current program continue to create an inequity between employees whose relationships are recognized by the state and those who are not. Pending US Supreme Court decisions may play a role in each of these continued inequities. **We recommend** the university continue to work toward equity of insurance options for employees whose relationships are not recognized by the state.

**C. Make resources/mental health services available to students who are in crises related to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.**

**Status: Ongoing**

The Student Medical Center, under the direction of Dr. Joe Puccio, has made great strides in beginning to provide medical services for LGBT students on campus. They are to be commended for this effort and we look forward to observing new services as they are made available through the student health center. Their efforts are hampered by a lack of mental health counseling resources made available for LGBT students. **Attached to this report are two items by USF student researchers** in support of this issue: (1) an honors undergraduate thesis by a USF student that addresses health disparities for LGBT populations on this campus; and (2) an undergraduate thesis powerpoint presentation on accommodation issues for Trans\* students. The Counseling Center has no dedicated staff who are trained in working with LGBT students. **We recommend** the university obtain funding for a specialist in counseling services for LGBT students in the USF Counseling Center.

**D. Partner to bring a nationally-recognized LGBT speaker to USF, for future partnership and fundraising for LGBT Alumni Scholarship.**

**Status: Completed but Ongoing.**

This year two nationally- recognized speakers came to USF to speak on LGBT issues. The USF Library brought Robert Taylor, high-ranking openly gay priest in the Episcopal Church, to speak on "Faith and the LGBT Community," and this committee brought Allyson Robinson, Executive Director of OutServe-SLDN, to speak at our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual GALA event (which we discuss in detail below). We continue to seek opportunities and partnerships with other groups to identify a nationally-recognized LGBT speaker to bring to USF.

**E. Continue fundraising efforts for the USF LGBT Endowed Scholarship Fund:**

- 1. Offer four awards in 2013**
- 2. Continue to increase the endowment**
- 3. Apply for matching State funds**

**Status: Complete...and Ongoing!**

At the Spring GALA in April 2013, we awarded scholarships to four students, totaling \$4000, meeting our goal for the year. Applications for the scholarships increased to 37 this year, indicating that awareness of these scholarships is increasing among our student body. Further, **the scholarship endowment is now above \$117,000 in total.** Further, Karen Berkman has been successful in obtaining **two deferred gifts to the scholarship fund in the amounts of \$100,000 and \$500,000.** Fundraising efforts continue, with Mr. Bowen and Mr. Glaser, active local philanthropists, offering to host events in the near future.

**F. Develop a cross-discipline LGBT studies initiative through a certificate program or minor.**

**Status: Ongoing**

There has been some confusion about this initiative in past reports. The committee does not have the purview to make curricular decisions that affect academic units. Hence, this item has only been an issue to monitor, not one the committee can act upon. We will continue to monitor this issue for future progress. Although none has been accomplished this year, we are hopeful that progress will be made in 2013-2014, as the issue has been stalled resulting from too few faculty in the Women's and Gender Studies Department (WGS) to offer introductory courses. We are pleased that WGS has been granted funding for and made (1) Assistant Professor and (1) Instructor hire this year. We hope these new additions will allow for the appropriate curriculum to begin offering a sexualities certificate at either the undergraduate or graduate levels or both.

**G. Host 9<sup>th</sup> Annual GALA event in collaboration with campus partners.**

**Status: Completed**

See details below under **II. Events.** We continue to pursue corporate/community sponsors and partnerships with other USF organizations that advocate for diversity and inclusion. The annual GALA is our way of celebrating those efforts together, and reaching out to the USF System and Tampa Bay communities.

**H. Obtain funding to establish an LGBT Resource Center and hire a full-time staff member within the Office of Multicultural Affairs to oversee its activities.**

**Status: Ongoing**

In support of USF's student success initiatives and in order to support the work of this committee and create continuity of LGBT resource tracking and implementation, **we again recommend** the administration fund an LGBTQIA student resource center. Attached to this report are: (1) **a proposal for the funding and organization of an LGBT student resource center,** and (2) **two recent research publications from USF faculty member Dr. Maralee Mayberry,** in support of the importance of supportive resources for LGBT student empowerment. (See "Gay/Straight Alliances" and "Challenging the Sounds of Silence" attached.) Although Dr. Mayberry's work focuses on high school gay/straight alliances, her work clearly shows the importance of resources for students in terms of empowerment, inclusion, and academic success. Further, **we recommend initiating a campus climate survey** for LGBT student issues to assess the climate among students.

## II. Events:

- ✓ CISOGI attended and sponsored an information table at the 2012-2013 **new faculty orientation** on August 9, 2012.
- ✓ On February 26, CISOGI sponsored a meet and greet for faculty and staff to reenergize faculty and staff on campus and to meet newer or recently arriving employees. The event was successful in generating new committee participants from various units around the university.
- ✓ CISOGI members attended the 10<sup>th</sup> **Annual USF Diversity Summit** on April 9, 2013.
- ✓ On April 26, CISOGI sponsored a meet and greet for graduate students university-wide to kick off a new initiative to create a virtual and in-person group to support LGBT graduate students across the university. Graduate students are a unique constituency of the university as most work intensively in their specific department and can have difficulty connecting to LGBT graduate students across disciplines. We hope this new group will create an outlet for graduate students across the university to connect and form community.
- ✓ On April 18, 2013 CISOGI, the USF Alumni Association, and our partners hosted the **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring GALA**, with special guest speaker **Allyson Robinson, Executive Director of OutServe-SLDN**; opening remarks were provided by **Associate Provost Dr. Graham Tobin**; LGBT Scholarships were awarded by William Warmke, former award recipient and incoming Student Body President.
  - **More than seventy-five people** from the USF System and the Tampa Bay community attended, including a large contingent of students.
  - Four **Pride Awards** were presented: *faculty award*, Dr. Joan Kaywell; *student award*, Paula Taylor-Greathouse; *staff award*, Dr. Christie Rinck, Academic Advisor, College of Arts & Sciences; *administration award*, Sandi Lovins, Vice President, Administrative Services.
  - Four \$1000 **LGBT Alumni Scholarships** were awarded to USF students.
  - USF Alumna Dr. Leslie Kille provided musical accompaniment during the reception.
  - **Corporate sponsor Coca-Cola** provided soft drinks for the reception.

## III. Additional Progress and Developments

A. **Veterans and ROTC student outreach:** As a result of the rousing response we received from the comments of our GALA speaker, the committee has undertaken a new initiative to pursue outreach to USF LGBT veterans and ROTC students. In the wake of the end of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy toward service members, we were inspired to host speaker Allyson Robinson, Executive Director of OutServe-SLDN, who spoke about the need for LGBT organizations to begin reaching out to military-affiliated organizations, rather than to

simply wait for those organizations to become more LGBT-friendly. As a result, committee member Bob Spatig invited Shawn Hicks, Director of Information and Decision Support (and military veteran), to begin an outreach initiative with USF's veterans and ROTC organizations to begin investigating if there are issues that need addressing and in hopes of beginning a new partnership with such programs.

**B. Map of Single-User Restroom Facilities for Transgender Constituents:** As a result of issues that arose during 2011 questioning USF's responsiveness to transgender inclusion in accommodations, CISOGI has been working throughout the year with Facilities Planning and the Transgender Student Union to create a map of the single-user restroom facilities on campus to accommodate the needs of transgender students, faculty and staff. The map is intended to make available electronically information about campus accommodations so that constituents looking for such information can find it readily online. We have published a map currently on our social media and continue to work toward perfecting the details of all campus buildings.

**C. Additions to the USF Library's LGBT and Women's History Initiative:**

While the USF Library's LGBT and Women's History Initiative has been in existence for several years, it continues to grow. This year we accepted donations from Equality Florida, the premier statewide advocacy organization on LGBT issues; the manuscripts of fiction writer Alex Sanchez; Bill Garrison, Dean of the Library; and we hope to soon house the entire history of the National Center for Lesbian Rights-St. Petersburg office.

#### **IV. Committee Recommendations for 2013-2014**

- Obtain funding to establish an LGBTQIA Resource Center and hire a full-time staff member within the Office of Multicultural Affairs to oversee its activities.
- Obtain funding for a specialist in counseling services for LGBT students in the USF Counseling Center.
- Partner to bring a nationally recognized LGBT speaker to USF, for future partnership and fundraising for LGBT Alumni Scholarship.
- Continue to work with the USF Alumni Association to increase the endowment of the LGBT Alumni Scholarship, and offer at least \$4000 in awards in 2014.
- Monitor the potential development a cross-discipline LGBT studies initiative through a certificate program or minor.
- Host our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual GALA event in collaboration with campus partners.

In closing, CISOGI wishes to express gratitude to President Genshaft, Provost Wilcox, Vice Provost Dwayne Smith, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (and Dr. Aziz Talbani), the USF Alumni Association, the PRIDE Alliance, Safe Zone Program, the USF Libraries, and Dr. Ted Williams and the DEO staff for working to achieve CISOGI's overall goal to create a welcoming campus climate for LGBT employees and students at USF.

Submitted By:

*Sara L. Crawley*

5/6/2013

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Sara L. Crawley, Ph.D., CISOGI Chair

Date

Attachments:

- (1) USF honors undergraduate thesis on health disparities for LGBT populations on this campus;
- (2) undergraduate thesis powerpoint presentation on accommodation issues for Trans\* students;
- (3) proposal for the funding and organization of an LGBTQIA student resource center;
- (4) Mayberry, "Gay/Straight Alliances"; and
- (5) Mayberry et al., "Challenging the Sounds of Silence."