

**PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A  
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER,  
QUESTIONING AND ALLY (LGBTQA)  
RESOURCE CENTER AT IUP**

Submitted on behalf of  
Pride Alliance & the University GLBT Commission

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Submitted to: Dr. Tony Atwater, President  
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## **I. Background**

IUP has had an active, vocal contingent of LGBTQA – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and ally – students and employees for at least two decades. A recognized student organization, formerly BiGALA and now Pride Alliance, has been present at IUP on and off since the 1980's and has been particularly visible in the last ten years. During the 2008-2009 Academic Year, Pride Alliance's GLBT Resource Center Committee met biweekly and attracted more than 45 students. This committee brought together students from a broad spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities with the shared goal of working toward the creation of an LGBT Resource Center at IUP. Pride Alliance currently (2009-2010 Academic Year) has an active membership of approximately 50 students and a LGBT Resource Center remains one of their primary goals.

The University GLBT Commission (formerly the University Commission on GLBT Issues) has existed since 1997 and its predecessor - The Task Force on GLB Issues – was appointed by Interim IUP President Charles Fuget in 1992. The Commission serves as the umbrella organization for the GLBT work done on IUP's campus. Commission members – who include faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students - work closely with the community organization, Indiana Cares Campaign to End Homophobia (ICC) and with Pride Alliance; an officer of Pride has a seat on the Commission and the Pride advisor has typically been a Commission member. In addition to sponsoring educational programs on campus (such as an annual Six O'Clock Series program each October), the Commission serves as an advisory body to the Offices of the President and Social Equity. Representatives from the GLBT Commission participate in Admission Expos and have noticed an increasingly positive response from potential students and their parents. The most visible program within the Commission, The Safe Zone, completed its tenth year on campus in 2009. More than 400 employees and graduate students have dedicated a full day to become Safe Zone members. In fact, IUP's Safe Zone Program is considered a model within the PASSHE system. IUP Safe Zone Committee members Dr. Rita Drapkin and Ms. Malinda Cowles presented a training session on GLBT topics to PASSHE Human Resource and Social Equity Directors in September 2009 and they will be offering a Safe Zone Train-the-Trainers program for all PASSHE campuses at the Dixon Center in Harrisburg in March 2010.

Despite the presence of these organizations at IUP, and the level of commitment and passion which they embody, recent campus research reveals that intolerance and harassment on our campus continue to exist toward those who do not conform to the gender expression and sexual orientation embraced by the dominant culture. A campus climate study conducted at IUP in 2007 suggests that although the campus climate has improved since 1992 – the last time that the climate for these populations was assessed – hostility, discrimination, and more subtle forms of heterosexism toward GLBT persons remain common (Heasley, Schnarrs, Biconik, Mabry, Mueller & Crane, 2009).

## **II. Rationale**

The reality is that it is still acceptable, and in many places – such as most of Pennsylvania – it is legal, to discriminate against LGBT individuals. With few exceptions, LGBT individuals can be

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fired from their jobs, evicted from their residences, kept from their loved ones in hospitals, and excluded from basic rights such as marriage. Because GLBT individuals are not protected by federal laws, with the exception of the new Hates Crimes Bill, most states and institutions are fearful of going beyond what is offered by the federal government, thus leaving this segment of our population unprotected. The combination of this lack of legal protection with the cultural stigma toward those who do not identify with the dominant sexual orientation and/or gender identity results in an invisible and often fearful population. This makes it difficult to produce numbers to justify our needs since GLBT persons are not included in most statistics. For example, we do not know what percentage of our campus population is GLBT. Some of the statistics, however, that do exist are stunning: lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are up to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers and are three times more likely to miss school in the past month because of feeling unsafe (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). A national survey of 6,209 middle and high school students found that nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students (86.2%) experienced harassment at school in the past year and three-fifths (60.8%) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2007). Closer to home, 17% of the Pennsylvania middle and high school students surveyed were verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation and 18% for their gender expression (Kosciw, Diaz, Fischer, & Stojanovic, 2006). These are some of the students who come to IUP.

Two-thirds of the IUP campus community that was surveyed in 2007 – including students and employees, heterosexual as well as gay, lesbian and bisexual – indicated that it was important or very important for IUP to have a GLBT Resource Center (Heasley et al., 2009). Similar to the African-American Cultural Center, or Women's Centers that exist on many campuses, an LGBTQA Resource Center would provide a central location on campus for existing programs and a physical, safe space for students to connect with others who identify as LGBTQA. Studies show that students' experience of their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedron, 1999; Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

National surveys have shown an increase in LGBT Centers on campuses - up from 60 in 2000 to 136 in 2009 (Rankin, 2009). The existence of a GLBT Resource Center is not new within PASSHE. Kutztown University has had a full-time Center with paid staff since February 2005. A smaller Center exists at Slippery Rock University and there are plans for a Center to open in 2010 at East Stroudsburg University. One of the major constraints on the GLBT work on IUP's campus is the lack of dedicated resources. This work – a cornerstone of the University's commitment to diversity – has always been left to the volunteerism of employees and students. There are no dedicated employee or student positions and the only office space provided, but not guaranteed, is to Pride Alliance in the Co-op. While the GLBT Commission has typically received some funding through either the Office of the President or the Office of Social Equity, the varying amount and uncertainty of its being available has made advance planning extremely difficult. For example, during the current academic year (2009-2010) the funds were not provided until more than halfway through the fall semester.

This proposal represents more than a yearlong collaboration between Pride Alliance and the University GLBT Commission, including a trip to State College to tour the LGTBTA Student Resource Center at Penn State University. As noted previously, Pride Alliance attracted many students during the 2008-2009 Academic Year primarily due to their investment in seeing a

GLBT Resource Center at IUP. Then Pride president, Jay Harter, chaired Pride's LGBT Resource Center Committee and three students – Sarah Fritz, Ayanda Masilela, and Amberlee Taylor – drafted an initial proposal for a Center. On November 17, 2008, student leaders from Pride Alliance presented a summary proposal to the members of the Student Government Association (SGA) at the SGA general meeting. The SGA immediately and excitedly voted to officially support the creation of a GLBT resource center on IUP campus. Between March and July of 2009, representatives of Pride Alliance and the University Commission held four mini-retreats – 3 hour meetings – during which we grappled with our vision of a GLBT Center at IUP. These meetings were coordinated by Dr. John Mueller and the first two meetings were facilitated by Dr. Susan Boser. To assist us in this process, we researched the formation of similar Centers across the state and around the country. We dialogued with other groups on our campus who have similar interests. We also took into consideration the data collected in the 2007 IUP Campus Climate study and a brief email survey sent to IUP Safe Zone members in the spring of 2009. In short, this proposal is the result of a thoughtful, collaborative, and well-researched process.

## **II. Mission**

The mission of the LGBTQA Center will be to provide resources, advocacy and expertise regarding issues of sexual orientation and gender identity to individuals and the greater IUP community. Our primary target audience will be students, followed by employees (faculty, staff, and administrators), alumni, and the Indiana community. The Center will seek to address historical, current and foreseeable issues through education, outreach and activism particularly to underrepresented sexual and gender minorities. In sum, the Center will foster healthy ideas of sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity on the IUP campus.

## **III. Goals**

The LGBTQA Center would share and substantially contribute to the overall goals and strategic plan of the University: Academic Excellence; Student Development and Success; Civic Engagement; Marketing and Promotion; Enrollment Management; Continuous Improvement; Resource Development; and Safety and Security. In the next section, we provide examples of Center objectives that would serve to carry out the Center's mission while seeking to fulfill the University's goals.

### **1. University Goal: Academic Excellence**

#### *LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

- 1. In order to attract and retain diverse faculty and academic support staff, collaborate with HR and all university departments by providing information, as requested, about campus and community climate for GLBT individuals*
- 2. Create new and help modify existing diversity training for employee orientations*
- 3. Provide expertise, consultation, and resources to faculty and staff*
- 4. Seek to increase positive GLBT visibility in Liberal Studies curriculum*
- 5. Assist faculty in refining course content for classes related to sexual orientation and gender studies, upon request*
- 6. Assist faculty in establishing new courses related to GLBT content*
- 7. Assist faculty and students in creating a minor in GLBT and/or Gender Studies*
- 8. Celebrate and disseminate GLBT related research generated at IUP*

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9. *Help develop library holdings on GLBT topics*
2. University Goal: Student Development and Success  
*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*
  1. *Provide a library within the Center for researching/reviewing GLBT-related materials such as books, media and databases*
  2. *Provide computers so that students can access online resources, e.g., journal databases, and comfortably research GLBT topics in a safe setting*
  3. *Catalog Center collection with Stapleton Library's database*
  4. *Create a GLBTQA peer mentoring program*
  5. *Provide a visible GLBT presence at student orientation and Welcome Week*
  6. *Provide a lavender graduation ceremony for GLBT students*
  7. *Work with IUP Career Development Center to assist students in finding major-related internships/jobs that are GLBT-affirmative*
  8. *Work closely with Pride Alliance and other LGBTQA students*
  9. *Work with the Office of Housing and Residence Life to provide options for students to be housed in keeping with their gender identity/expression*
  10. *Work with Office of Housing and Residence Life to provide gender-neutral/single occupancy restroom facilities in campus housing*
  11. *Work with the Office of Housing and Residence Life to provide training to all levels of OHRL and Housekeeping staff on LGBT issues and concerns*
  12. *Co-sponsor, with heterosexual allies, community building events such as dances and programming*
3. University Goal: Civic Engagement  
*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*
  1. *Contribute to a culture that prepares students to live in a diverse, global community*
  2. *Create a sense of welcome and openness to everyone who seeks to use the Center*
  3. *Create an active, public face for the LGBTQA community that will provide visible support thereby decreasing isolation and fear*
  4. *Work with Pride Alliance and the Safe Zone to organize and maintain a standing list of speakers (students and employees) for panels related to GLBT issues for a range of audiences, e.g., classes, Safe Zone Orientations, HR-sponsored trainings*
  5. *Co-sponsor educational and social events on campus with other departments, Centers, student groups and organizations*
  6. *Invite/sponsor GLBT-affirmative performers and lecturers to campus*
  7. *Work with Pride Alliance and GLBT Commission on annual events such as National Coming Out Week and participation in Homecoming*
  8. *Collaborate with the newly formed PASSHE LGBTQIA Consortium*
  9. *Work closely with other PA LGBT Centers, e.g., Kutztown University and Penn State University*
  10. *Network and collaborate with off-campus organizations in Indiana (e.g. Indiana Cares Campaign to End Homophobia, PFLAG), Pittsburgh, and statewide*

4. University Goal: Marketing and Promotion

*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

1. *Implement a website, blog, and Facebook group to provide visibility for all GLBT related events on campus and in the community*
2. *Publicize events on IUP's Central Calendar and through IUP Daily*

5. University Goal: Enrollment management

*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

1. *Work with national organizations (e.g., Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, GLSEN) as well as state organizations (e.g. PASSHE LGBTQIA Consortium) to recruit students seeking a GLBT-affirmative campus.*
2. *Collaborate with Office of Admissions by attending Admission Expos and providing information, as requested, about GLBT resources on campus*
3. *Centralize communication among the various groups on campus serving the GLBT populations*
4. *Provide social networking opportunities for GLBTQA students*
5. *Work with Alumni Affairs to create an IUP GLBT alumni group in order to provide networking opportunities for current students and graduates*
6. *Seek alumni to serve as mentors for IUP students and graduates*
7. *Network with other GLBT alumni groups*
8. *Establish an online privacy-protected discussion forum*
9. *Work with Career Development Center to provide resources for graduating students and alumni, e.g., career planning and life management*
10. *Create Center orientation to describe services of Center to various entities on campus*

6. University Goal: Continuous Improvement

*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

1. *Systemically evaluate Center's activities*
2. *Publicly recognize the GLBT related service and support activities of IUP employees*
3. *Assist with policy development as it pertains to the GLBT populations on campus*

7. University Goal: Resource Development

*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

1. *Seek donations from LGBTQIA alumni*
2. *Compile list of existing GLBT scholarships and internships and provide information to students*
3. *Create a scholarships for IUP students*
4. *Seek grant opportunities to support the work of the Resource Center*
5. *Work with the PASSHE LGBTQIA Consortium to share resources within PASSHE*

8. University Goal: Safety and Security

*LGBTQA Supporting Objectives:*

1. *Work closely with The Counseling Center in reaching out to GLBT students*
2. *Publicize local, regional and national hotlines for GLBT individuals*

3. *Maintain lists of professionals/agencies with expertise in working with GLBT individuals*
4. *Work with the Safe Zone and Pride Alliance to provide individuals trained to offer support and referrals*
5. *Provide referrals to affirming services on and off campus including legal, religious and counseling*
6. *Offer to help navigate potential situations between individuals and the administration*
7. *Speak on behalf of the GLBT campus community to advocate for specific actions and provide proactive responses to crises*

#### **IV. Structure**

The LGBTQA Resource Center would be part of the Division of Student Affairs. It would be staffed by: a full-time Director with at least a master's degree in a human service field (e.g., counseling, sociology, student affairs, social work); a part-time, 9-10 month clerical professional; at least one student worker; and a graduate assistant. Volunteers could be drawn from Pride Alliance, Safe Zone, Men's Awareness Project (MAP), students in human service fields, as well as Honors and Greek organizations. Internships and practicum placements could be developed as well. A representative from the Center would serve on the GLBT Commission and an Advisory Board for the Center would be developed. The Center would collaborate with all GLBT groups on campus without encompassing or having oversight over those groups.

The LGBTQA Resource Center should be located in an area that is conducive to its goals. It should be a literal 'safe space', one that is specifically designated to address the needs of the GLBT populations. This means that the physical space needs to simultaneously provide accessibility, visibility and privacy. Students need to be able to access the Center without feeling threatened or put on display. In addition to the Resource Center Director and Staff, the Center would potentially provide office space for the GLBT groups on campus, i.e., Pride Alliance, University GLBT Commission and the Safe Zone. It is important that the physical space promotes socializing, networking, and sharing of information among LGBTQA individuals and groups while maintaining a sense of welcome to all members of the IUP community. Also envisioned within the Center are: a common meeting room for organizations; a lounge for students and employees; library/resources shelved in the office or lounge areas; storage space for the GLBT organizations; computer space for students (who are more comfortable researching sensitive topics there than in other labs on campus); a multipurpose room; and access to unisex bathrooms. In order to make the Center accessible for students, it should be near residential and dining areas.

**V. Budget**

• Full-time Director (SCUPA 2) w/benefits	\$61,600.00
• Secretary (20 hrs/week) w/benefits	\$32,000.00
• Student Worker (10 hrs/week per 15 week semester x \$7.25/hr)	\$ 1,087.50
• Graduate Assistant (if in state)	\$ 16,500.00
• Travel	\$ 1,500.00
• Supplies and resources	\$13,550.00
• <u>Consultants/speakers</u>	<u>\$ 3,500.00</u>

Total Funding Requested (see attachment for further breakdown) \$129,737.50

**VI. Conclusion**

As IUP’s enrollment increases, so does the diversity within the university community. This brings unique challenges to the campus, including the administration. While it is likely that creating an LGBTQA Center on campus will be met with controversy and regarded as giving in to ‘special interests’ by some, it is as likely that it will be greeted with enthusiasm and delight by many others. As noted earlier, the 2007 IUP Campus Climate Survey documented hostility and discrimination toward GLBT individuals at IUP. The same survey found that two-thirds of the respondents indicated that it was important or very important for IUP to have a GLBT Resource Center. Pride Alliance and the IUP GLBT Commission have made this proposal a priority over the past 18 months because we strongly believe that an LGBT Resource Center is what is needed to improve the quality of life at IUP for LGBTQ people and our allies.

Historically, there have generally been warm relations between various levels of IUP administration and those involved in the GLBT work on our campus. There persists, however, a paucity of resources – both human and material – to meet the needs of this part of our community. Declarations of support, without adequate resources, are appreciated but not sufficient. Despite our passion and commitment, none of us (students, faculty, staff or administrators) has had the dedicated time to truly represent the LGBTQA populations on our campus. If IUP is serious about its commitment to recruiting and retaining high-quality students and employees from diverse backgrounds then it is time for IUP to take its place with other forward-thinking institutions of higher education, including some within PASSHE, and provide this needed resource to the campus community. It would mean a lot to the students who have worked long and hard on this project to see a Center on IUP’s campus before they graduate or, as alumni, to have a Center to visit.

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<b>Budget</b>		
<b><u>Personnel</u></b>		
Secretary	20 hours per week employment	\$ 20,000.00
Student Worker	10 hours/ week per 15 week semester x \$7.25/hr	\$ 1,087.50
Grad Asst (if in state)		\$ 16,500.00
Full time employee SCUPA 2		\$ 43,600.00
<b><u>Fringe Benefits</u></b>		
SCUPA 2		\$ 18,000.00
Secretary		\$ 12,000.00
<b><u>Travel</u></b>		
Student and Professional		\$ 1,500.00
<b><u>Equipment</u></b>		
<b><u>Supplies</u></b>		
Office Supplies		\$ 2,500.00
Printing		\$ 1,000.00
Computer		\$ 8,000.00
Printer		\$ 250.00
Fax		\$ 200.00
Mail		\$ 200.00
Phone		\$ 400.00
Resources		\$ 1,000.00
<b><u>Consultants/Contracts</u></b>		
Speaker	per speaker	\$ 3,500.00
		<b>Total</b>
		\$ 129,737.50

## References

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Step 2: Trip to Penn State's LGBT Resource Center – Malinda Cowles, Dr. Rita Drapkin, Margaret Hammond, Jay Harter, Dr. John Mueller, and Reverend Joan Sabatino. Thanks to Allison Subasic, Director of the LGBT Resource Center at Penn State.

Step 3: Collaborative meetings to clarify vision of IUP LGBT Center – Dr. Lynne Alvine, Malinda Cowles, Dr. Chauna Craig, Dr. Rita Drapkin, Sarah Fritz, Marlen Harrison, Jay Harter, Jamie Lesch, Dr. John Mueller, Reverend Joan Sabatino, Amberlee Taylor, and Mark Wolfe. Thanks to Dr. Susan Boser for her facilitation of two mini-retreats.

Step 4: Writing final proposal – Dr. Rita Drapkin, with assistance from: Dr. Lynne Alvine, Malinda Cowles, Sarah Fritz, Dr. Beth Mabry, and Dr. John Mueller