

## *History of Asking for an LGBT Center at UCSD*

### **From the 1992 Report**

What LGBA really needs is a resource center for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Analogous to a Women's Resource Center, LGBA needs a decent office space with a paid staff member to adequately meet the needs of its members and the student body at large. The present LGBA office is located in UCSD's Old Student Center on the second floor directly next to the bathrooms. To enter the LGBA office, one must cross an extremely exposed walkway that passes over an area of high student traffic. Entering the LGBA office confidentially is, thereby, nearly impossible, making it harder for those uncomfortable with being totally out on campus to approach LGBA. The office itself holds a desk and couch and can comfortably hold only about five people. LGBA needs a better space from which to function, a space that can function as a workplace and a relaxation area. It should also be a "safe" space so that all LGB students, especially those still uncomfortable with their sexuality, can still feel comfortable coming to the LGBA office. A paid staff person is also desperately needed to help deal with the administrative and bureaucratic workload that is now addressed by LGBA members. It would also be extremely convenient to coordinate Psychological Services with the LGBA office to make counseling and support sessions more accessible for students. It should be noted here that although UCSD has a Women's Resource Center, it is currently the only UC campus that does not have a paid staff member there. Thus, acquiring a paid staff member for LGBA will be doubly difficult. Also worth mentioning is that while LGBA has a poor office space, it at least has an office. None of the other LGB organizations mentioned in this report (LGBFSA, LGBGA, GALL) has even that much.

Regarding the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on LGB Issues, there isn't one. There are committees for affirmative action and other minority student groups and concerns, but there is no advisory committee dealing with LGB concerns. Formation of such a committee must be one of the first steps in achieving some of the bigger goals, such as the LGB Resource Center and domestic partnerships.

### **From the 1995 Report**

#### **LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL CENTER**

UCSD currently does not have a LGB center. This committee believes such a center could greatly benefit the campus. A center could provide a safe space for the LGB community to meet and study as well as provide programming and resources for the entire campus. The presence of such a center reaffirms the University's commitment to diversity and can help the University community become aware of the real presence of the LGB members who often remain invisible. Particularly for students who are questioning their sexuality or dealing with the difficult process of coming out, the presence of a visible center with trained staff could make a critical impact. It should be noted that at this time many other UC campuses have funded LGB centers including: Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Riverside, Los Angeles, and Irvine. These

centers provide a wide variety of programming, meeting space, information and a wealth of resources for the LGB community members and campus organizations.

UCSD should follow the lead of other campuses and establish a LGB center. A formal proposal and recommendation for the establishment of a LGB center at UCSD will be forthcoming from this committee and LGB organizations on campus.

### **From the 1997 Report**

#### **1. XIII. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LGBT RESOURCE CENTER**

Many groups and individual's on campus have identified the need for a free standing LGBT Resource Center at UCSD. A letter with most of the following information was sent to Chancellor Dynes on March 28th and a formal request to establish a center at UCSD. (Please see [Appendix](#).)

There is a great need for a safe, on-campus location where members of the campus community can locate resources and meet concerning issues of gender and sexual orientation. CACLGBTI has tried to address some of these issues by producing informational brochures, forming a speakers bureau and sponsoring programming events. However, the best of the CACLGBTI's efforts remain inadequate compared to the visibility and consistency a resource center would provide. The committee cannot maintain the level of activity necessary to meet the needs of the UCSD community. The establishment of a staffed resource center would provide valuable services in the following areas:

1. **Safe space.** This is the most important function a resource center can fulfill. The CACLGBTI has collected many personal accounts of people, especially students, feeling isolated and fearful due to the lack of a place to get information and support. Members of the campus community need the safe environment that a LGBT center would provide - especially those individuals who are grappling for the first time with their sexual identity. For this reason alone, the establishment of a center at UCSD is imperative.
2. **Resources.** Currently there is no single location on campus where resources related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues can be distributed. The CACLGBTI has tried to address this need by publishing brochures and distributing them in the libraries, through Human Resources, and the campus resource centers. Nevertheless, many people still report a dearth of information and an inability to locate campus and community resources. A LGBT Resource Center could house a dedicated library of materials for the campus community at large, including books, videos and magazines.
3. **Visibility.** Unlike many ethnic minorities, sexual minorities are often invisible. People struggle, because they may know few if any other gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals. Visibility is an important part of making the campus a more safe and supportive environment for everyone. If located in a central place a Center could increase visibility in a positive way and improve the overall climate at UCSD.
4. **Support of Student Organizations.** Despite strong student support, the LGB organizations at UCSD have struggled to maintain continuity. Student LGBT organizations at other campuses have encountered similar difficulties. A Resource Center could provide continuity with its resources and staff presence. Evidence shows that these organizations thrive where campus resource centers have been established.
5. **Campus and Community Outreach.** The presence of a Resource Center would foster outreach to existing campus organizations as well to the greater San Diego community. The CACLGBTI has made efforts to do this but has been hampered by both visibility and continuity. Permanent staff is necessary to meet this goal.
6. **Programming.** A campus resource center would organize educational and academic programming events regarding issues of sexual orientation and related climate issues.

Currently, the CACLGBTI sponsors occasional campus events. A center could provide a home for regular programming events and speakers. These kind of events would stimulate and enrich intellectual life on campus and in the community as a whole.

7. **Mentors.** A Center is a place where students, staff, and faculty can work together to provide support and mentoring. Other UC resource Centers have formal mentorship and leadership programs, peer counselor programs, and speaker's bureaus run by the Centers.

Many of the issues discussed in the CACLGBTI's 1995 Climate Report could be alleviated by the establishment of a LGBT Resource Center on campus. The experience of other campuses that have established staffed resources provide evidence for this assumption. Currently, the following UC campuses have LGBT Centers : Riverside, Davis, Irvine, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, and Los Angeles. (Please see the [Appendix](#).) Most of these Centers have funded staff or are in the process of getting additional staff. It is clear these centers provide support and education for people of all sexual orientations and improve the campus climate. For these reasons the UCLGBTI has also made the establishment of campus resource centers a statewide priority. Also, Nancy Loevinger and Edwina Welch, (Directors of the Women's and Cross Cultural Centers respectively), have expressed their support of a LGBT Center to complement their Centers in addressing diversity issues at UCSD.

Members of the committee has met with representative of the student organization (LGBA), the Directors at other UC Centers including Davis, Los Angeles, Riverside and Irvine and we have collected information regarding the staff and space requirements of such centers. A recent survey of student needs at UCSD contained many direct references to the need for a center, as well as requests for safe space and central location of LGBT resources.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- The Chancellor should appoint a steering committee to establish a LGBT Resource Center. This committee will identify the resources necessary to support a center, including space, staffing, and other operational requirements.