

UC Riverside

LGBTIQQA Theme Hall Proposal

Submitted March 2004

Goal/Purpose:

- ❑ To enable lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and questioning students and their allies to create an intentional living community that affirms the cultural experiences of LGBTIQQA people.
- ❑ To provide opportunities among residents for building bridges around sexual orientation, gender identity, and other cultural communities.
- ❑ To build awareness of LGBTIQQA lives both on- and off-campus.

When inviting students to apply to live in the hall, the following will be taken into consideration:

- ❑ The hall will be open to any student sensitive to the concerns of LGBTIQQA people and who wishes to create a positive living environment in conjunction with that community.
- ❑ All sexual orientations and gender identities will be welcomed in the hall.
- ❑ Knowledge of LGBTIQQA issues is not required, but residents will be expected to expand their understanding of these issues through interpersonal communication and group programming.

Programming:

1. Monthly discussion groups on current LGBTIQQA issues and concerns, led by a volunteer peer Outreach Coordinator. These discussions will allow students to critically examine their lives in relation to various social, academic, political, and cultural climates.
2. Weekly-updated passive bulletin boards listing LGBTIQQA-related events on- and off-campus, as well as passive displays related to specific themes, e.g. Black History Month, Semana de las Mujeres, National Coming Out Day, API Awareness Month, Sexual Violence Awareness Month, Pride Week, Hate Free Week, etc.
3. Monthly large-scale programming connected to speakers, films, and programs developed by the Program Coordinator (PC) with the LGBT Resources Center, Allies, and queer student groups. These events should be open to the Residence Hall communities of Pentland Hills, A-I, and Lothian.
4. To create a sense of hall community, monthly small scale programming that targets those residing in the hall. While programming that targets the entire resident population is beneficial to all students who seek to partake in it, the hall itself might not have the opportunity to develop a strong sense of community if all

programs implemented in the hall are large. Therefore, smaller community-building programs will be offered by the Resident Advisor (RA) on a monthly basis, or more often if possible.

5. Special events organized in honor of LGBTIQQA-related programs such as National Coming Out Day, LGBT History Month, National Transgender Day of Remembrance, National Freedom to Marry Day, National Day of Silence, and Pride Week. These events should also be open to the Residence Hall communities of Pentland Hills, A-I, and Lothian
6. Allies training organized and supported by the Hall, in conjunction with the LGBTRC, available to the communities of Pentland Hills, A-I, and Lothian.

Budget: \$3,500 annually

1. Programming food and supplies: \$1,500
2. Programming speakers and films: \$1,500
3. Advertising: \$500

Marketing

Avid marketing to reach and fill the hall with a population that desires to live there is a must, due to the possible negative impacts associated with placing students in the Theme Hall who do not request to be placed there.

A student's desire to live in the Theme Hall will be determined by simply asking them if they would be interested in living in an LGBTIQQA Theme Hall.

The LGBTRC and the student groups associated with the center (such as Queer Alliance) have current ties to high school and community youth organizations and could use those ties to target these specific populations to market the Theme Hall.

Discover UCR days and BearFacts orientation are large events with a great deal of potential exposure for both housing services and the LGBTRC. Most of the attendees at these events are entering UCR students. These events can be utilized for Outreach activities to increase awareness of and determine interest in the Hall by both LGBTIQQ students and their allies.

Marketing materials and brochures for the hall will be available at these events and will also be given to any returning students, in the event that they will be returning to the residence halls.

In future years, following the implementation of the Theme Hall, Housing will include a full description of this hall in a manner similar to the other theme halls in

the housing brochure. Additional marketing will continue as a joint effort between Housing, the LGBTRC and student groups. This effort will occur at, but will not be limited to, Discover UCR days and BearFacts.

During the Implementation year, much extra attention will need to be given to marketing to ensure that the hall is filled. Students involved in clubs at the LGBTRC will assist in tabling at Discover UCR days and at BearFacts. At these events, materials made collaboratively with Housing and the student groups associated with the LGBTRC will be provided as a part of tabling. There will also be interest forms that prospective students can fill out so they can be contacted later if they do not immediately commit to the hall. These forms will include a place for students to indicate if they would like to be contacted with or without discretion, and whether they would like to be contacted by email or by phone.

Ideally the hall would be located in a Phase 1 Pentland Hills building. However, it might be more realistic to use one of the Phase 2 units because they house fewer students and will be easier to fill during the implementation year. In the event that the hall is not filled following BearFacts, students associated with the LGBTRC will assist housing staff in making phone calls and pursuing other recruitment efforts. However every effort will be made by housing and the aforementioned student groups to complete recruitment prior to the completion of BearFacts.

Staff: Resident Advisor, Program Coordinator, and two volunteer peer Outreach Coordinators (currently called Hall Mentors) trained with the assistance of the LGBT Resource Center to provide information on LGBTIQQA resources beyond housing (e.g. student groups, rap groups, LGBTRC services, etc). All staff will be members of the Allies program.

Affiliations: The Theme Hall will have a strong relationship with the LGBT Resource Center, the LGBT Studies Minor, and the Allies program. The hall will strive to build relationships with other student centers, such as African Student Programs, Asian Pacific Student Programs, Chicano Student Programs, Native American Student Programs, Women's Resource Center, Hillel, GSA, ASPB and ASUCR.

Facilities: Pentland Hills

Special Considerations:

1. LGBT and Ally theme halls exist successfully at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, and UC Irvine. UC Santa Barbara will open a new "Rainbow House" theme hall in 2004-2005. In 1993, UCR acted as a pioneer for the UC LGBTIQQA population by opening the first Resource Center for that community on any California college campus. UCR can continue to be a national leader in Housing

by providing LGBTIQQA housing on its campus.

2. In order to be fully inclusive of all students, the hall will allow gender-neutral roommate pairing. This policy is crucial, due to the fact that the current pairing practices used by Housing Services may run counter to the new UC nondiscrimination policy that, as of January 1, 2004, includes gender identity (See attached copy of policy).

Transgender, genderqueer, and gender questioning students, as well as others, may feel uncomfortable when they are asked to select a gender identity, and are then forced into a pairing situation based on the premise that matching perceived genders within a room is the ideal. To alleviate this situation, we request that housing application forms include the option of selecting trans and genderqueer identities, and that these students be placed either in single rooms, or with each other if they so desire.

Ideally, the gender identification section of the application form for the Theme Hall would include: Man, Woman, TG/TS/IS/GQ (Transgender, Transexual, Intersex, Genderqueer). This inclusion would allow students with non-traditional gender identities the opportunity to live in a safe environment that supports and validates their identities.

The current Housing policy requiring same-gender pairing in the residence halls does not follow an existing written mandate. This policy is only in place because of tradition and the way Housing Services currently views gender. The current policy excludes those students whose definition of gender diverges from that of Housing Services. People in the LGBTIQQA Theme Hall will therefore have the option of being paired based on gender, or being paired without considering gender.

The University Of California Office of the President has stated that it only works on issues regarding management and finance of housing programs and that the administration on each campus defines its own policies regarding housing, specifically policies such as this referring to gender pairing. The current Non-Discrimination policy, revised January 1, 2004 for the University of California regarding student-related matters includes protection from discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

We suggest that Housing implement a policy consistent with the UC nondiscrimination statement, by allowing gender-neutral pairing in the theme hall. By being proactive rather than reactive, Housing can avoid the need of complying in mid-year.

3. It is possible that the larger visible presence of the LGBTIQQA community in a single hall could make the hall a target for hate and bias incidents. Currently,

LGBTIQQA students (and those perceived to be) are targets of hate and bias incidents throughout the residence halls. The fact that these students are not concentrated in one location has not prevented them from becoming targets. The presence of a theme hall would provide a support system for residents, as well as greater access to resources and peers who have a genuine understanding of the issues of hate and bias that students face.

It should be noted that hate and bias issues have not been presented as significant challenges for other UC LGBTIQQA Theme Halls.

4. Individuals may face concerns regarding personal safety due to a connection with the theme hall. To mitigate this, the residents of the halls will be actively and consistently made aware of the resources of the campus escort service. In addition, it may be necessary to hire additional Community Service Officers to patrol the Pentland Hills complex.
5. The presence of an LGBTIQQA Theme Hall on campus does not eliminate the need for continued support by residence life of LGBTIQQA students in all residence halls who are undergoing the process of “coming out”. It is assumed that residents who choose to live in an LGBTIQQA Theme Hall will, to varying degrees, already be “out” to themselves and others as LGBTIQQA, and so the population with the greatest need for coming out support services will be located throughout other halls. This does not, however, preclude the need for these services in an LGBTIQQA Theme Hall. The process of coming out is complicated and ongoing, and support services must be present throughout all residence halls. The presence of an LGBTIQQA Theme Hall does will not serve as a substitute for an LGBTIQQA-friendly atmosphere throughout the residence halls. The presence of such an atmosphere is necessary for LGBTIQQA students to live in a safe and welcoming environment.
6. As in the past, all Housing student staff (e.g. RA’s and PC’s) should attend mandatory summer training on LGBT concerns in Housing and how to provide a safe space for all residents, including LGBTIQQA residents. Until Housing only recruits student staff who would be members of the Allies program, signing an Allies contract is still optional following additional Allies training. However, only members of the Allies program should be considered for positions within the LGBTIQQA theme hall.

While the LGBTIQQA Theme Hall strives to create a safe and welcoming living environment for LGBTIQQA students, it should by no means be the only space in the residence halls that does so. We hope that the future student staff selection process will make being an Ally a minimum professional requirement for all future RA’s and PC’s.

It is imperative that the living space of all UCR residents be a safe one. For LGBTIQQA residents, the presence of RA's trained as Allies, who can provide a safe and confidential environment, is vital to the creation of that overall safe space throughout the residence halls.

[This proposal is available online at <http://out.ucr.edu/themehall.html>]

Lead authors:

Clare Gmur, Donovan Jones, Bryon Nuttall
Students for the Equality of Queers (SEQs)