CLGBTE Minutes
Harrisburg Meeting
May 12, 2013

Chancellor Chat: Dr. Mukund Kulkarni

• Dr. Kulkarni warmly welcomed members of the commission and was very receptive to having a discussion.
• When asked what steps he is taking to increase diversity amongst faculty, Dr. Kulkarni responded that faculty and individuals in influential positions are usually people who are at the bottom and work their way up. Human Resources is helping him pay attention to those hires as they are the “change agents.”
• He responded to the question of whether or not there are clear resources of LGBT staff by noting that Donna Howard, the Assistant Director, Student Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg is the person who officially fills that role. George Boudreau, Associate Professor of History and Humanities at Penn State Harrisburg, also fills that role on a voluntary professional basis.
• There are over 4,000 students at PSU Harrisburg; 2,000 of them are online students.
• Ideally, there is no need for the LGBT Equity Commission. His staff help him to make informed decisions and they have an active, strong diversity and Educational Equity Committee. They all review climate assessments and make decisions from that.
• Commission member Marie Lindhorst, a former employee at the PSU Harrisburg campus who did not feel comfortable revealing her sexual orientation publicly during the time she worked there, asked Dr. Kulkarni if he could be explicit in his support for LGBT Equity by naming it, or using that terminology in discussions of diversity. She also wondered if he might consider an ALLY space in their housing units.

Campus Climate Discussion: Harrisburg Diversity and Educational Equity Committee

• Barbara Hundertmark & Dorothy Guy from PSU Harrisburg HR both presented remarks and were present for Q&A.
• There was a sense that people at Harrisburg didn’t know where to go for resources, or who was designated as point person for LGBT concerns.
• Sense that campus leadership is supportive, not proactive; need leadership to be more explicit.
• Sense that resources for LGBT need to “come out,” especially for people at campuses including Harrisburg, so that people know that local and university resources are available.
  o Allison Subasic pointed out that there are many resources in Harrisburg area—MCC church, affirming counselors, etc.
  o Campus needs someone to collect those resources, make list available to students, staff and faculty; designated person for LGBT issues would help coordinate.
  o Additional resources from LGBTA Center at UP are not well known or utilized at campus—e.g., leadership retreats, scholarships, programs on campuses, emergency help money, etc.
- Need more visibility for Support Network and Commission at campuses; e.g., funding from Commission to send students to conferences.

- Several folks mentioned need for student group space generally and specifically a safe LGBT space, like a resource center.

- The climate survey that was done at Harrisburg was not extensively discussed. The numbers of LGBT folk are not clear, with some inconsistent data in the report.

- HR folks stated clear support for Harrisburg faculty/staff involvement on the commissions; if there are any issues, folks should contact Dorothy Guy in PSU Harrisburg HR office.

**Student Discussions: Capitol Alliance**

**Jason:** Students have no idea where to go for LGBT-related questions on campus—not even student affairs. Does not recall a moment in student orientation when services were mentioned. Other students have asked him if professors will give him bad grades for being gay.

**Christian** (Secretary of Capitol Alliance): Was previously a student at the Scranton Campus. It is a much better climate at PSU Harrisburg.

**Trevor:** Trevor is a freshman. It’s good so far.

**Christian:** There is a lack of openly gay faculty on campus—faculty support could be beefed up. There are a lot of allies; however, he does receive comments and catcalls on campus. He would go to a specific staff member if there was one on campus.

**Jason Fluke**, a former student and past award recipient for the LGBT Student Outstanding Service Award, may be a good option as he is now in Alumni Development at PSU Harrisburg.

**Christian:** Would like to see an LGBTQI resource center as part of campus expansion.