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March 15, 2006

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We submit for your review the enclosed Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) Focus Groups Report.

A subcommittee of The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues (CACGISOI) conducted a series of recorded UCSD focus groups and gathered a range of LGBT experiences at UCSD into a report. The report includes direct quotes from participants, observations and a conclusion with brief list of recommendations.

Before his departure, Chancellor Robert Dynes agreed in 1999 to conduct a formal UCSD LGBT climate survey. Based on our findings, CACGISOI continues to support conducting a campus-wide UCSD LGBT climate survey.

We look forward to discussing the results of the report with you and continuing to serve the Chancellors Office in any projects or inquiries regarding gender identity and sexual orientation issues that support our mission.

Respectfully,

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**Chancellor's Advisory Committee
On Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues**

LGBT FOCUS GROUPS REPORT

April 2003

Submitted January 2006

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OVERVIEW

In 1999, the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues (CACLGBTI) requested that Robert Dynes, then Chancellor of UCSD, conduct a climate survey regarding LGBT issues on campus and at the medical centers. While CAC was informed that there would be a campus-wide survey that would cover the concerns of the LGBT community, such a survey was never conducted. Although various departments have conducted internal climate surveys that may include one or two LGBT-oriented questions, a formal or comprehensive survey of LGBT experiences has never been completed.

In March and April of 2003, CAC, then renamed the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues (CACGISOI), created a sub-committee to ascertain the LGBT community experience on campus and at the medical centers. (See Appendix I) CACGISOI members who participated at various times throughout the project include, Sarah Archibald, Debbie Blake, Francesco Carusi, James Forcier, David Norris, Daphne Pleasant, Shaun Travers and Jon Welch. CACGISOI members then developed TEN LGBT focus group categories. During the scheduled sessions, the focus groups each met for approximately two hours with a moderator, note-taker and a tape-recorder. Participants shared personal LGBT experiences from the perspective of a staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate student, transgender/intersex individual and/or person of color at UCSD. Focus groups were held on campus, at SIO and at the UCSD Medical Center in Hillcrest. A final focus group was scheduled at a non-UCSD location for "closeted" individuals, who would be more comfortable discussing these issues off campus.

Given delays in transcription and changing committee membership during 2003-2005, formal completion and submission of the report was delayed. Now complete, the report is a summary of information gathered during the 2002-2003 academic year via the focus groups. The report documents a broad set of experiences, views, observations and comments, and clearly demonstrates the need for a comprehensive campus-wide LGBT climate survey.

1. Focus Group: UCSD Staff

Data collected: 04/08/03

Participants within the focus group devoted to staff LGBT issues and experiences were first asked, "***What is the campus climate like for LGBT staff here at UCSD?***". The question elicited a broad range of comments. Several individuals stressed that the environment within humanities and the social sciences is much more LGBT friendly than in the hard sciences departments. However, the general consensus of the group was that we are in a "don't ask/don't tell" environment. A member observed that there

seems to be a lack of appreciation for diversity at UCSD, which includes the discussion of LGBTI issues at the Diversity Council. Others commented:

“I think the climate in humanities and the social sciences is better than that in engineering and the hard sciences.”

“My experience has been very positive. Certainly, I work in the library and the libraries tend to be more traditionally accepting. At least my area is generally good.”

“My slant on this is that it’s actually very heterosexist here....it’s just that heterosexuality is the standard.”

“Last year I won the diversity award primarily based on LGBT issues. The leadership of my office, which includes the MSO and faculty, does not support me. I had to push the issue to get the chair to address it. The response I received was ‘I guess it’s a good thing that someone from this department could win that kind of an award.’ It was kind of an awkward response...”

Some participants felt that LGBT staff members are treated subtly differently than their heterosexual counterparts. One commented that Individuals with children seem to be more likely to be permitted to leave early or are provided accommodations due to their children. Another commented that certain social celebrations lead to “invisible privileges for heterosexual staff, such as baby and wedding showers.”

A discussion took place around the support from faculty and the administration on campus. Several individuals noted that they felt for the size of our campus, we have very few “out” faculty. The group sensed that there are people in places of power who are gay but are not out and are not visible. Questions came up as to why this was the case.

- Are people in leadership roles on campus unsupportive?
- Does faculty feel that achieving tenure would be in jeopardy if they came out?
- Is this due to the environment on campus and the lack of support from executive management?
- How can UCSD make individuals in leadership roles feel comfortable about coming out so they can be mentors for other LGBT staff?

A few participants in the group also commented about the positive aspects of having the LGBT Resource Center at UCSD.

“If I look at where we have been, and where we are headed I think we are definitely taking steps in a positive direction. I remember this campus before we had the Center. It took a lot of hard work from numerous individuals to convince the administration it was the right thing to do.”

“I think the LGBTI Center here is great. I would have to say that it has been probably one of the most positive things really, the establishment of the Center.”

“The Center has helped make the climate on campus more comfortable and has made a world of difference.”

In sum, participants in the staff focus group seemed to have an overall positive feeling about being LGBT in their UCSD work environments, unless they worked in departments within the hard sciences, where there seems to be less tolerance. They also expressed concerns about being treated “differently” than their heterosexual co-workers in some areas. Finally, participants in this group praised the LGBT center on campus as helping to provide a more comfortable climate on campus.

2. Focus Group: UCSD Faculty

Data collected: 03/19/03

Focus group note-takers and participants initially expressed disappointment that they all had expected to see more faculty members present for the faculty focus group. The only faculty members present were those from departments within the divisions of social sciences and arts and humanities. The fact that there was no representation from other departments, especially the hard sciences, e.g., Physics or Chemistry/Biochemistry was noted and discussed by the group.

Discussion amongst the participants is outlined in the following three sub-sections.

2.1 Faculty: Their Own Experience

Overall, faculty from the social sciences and humanities had very positive experiences in coming out; they stated that they were comfortable both in being out and in teaching. They tended to classify their departments as “mostly left-leaning”, “very accepting,” especially in Literature. One participant in the hard sciences was just coming out, and so far had a positive experience. Several people expressed that “a supportive boss helps.”

“I have a very supportive laboratory director, which has made all the difference.”

“Well I know a couple of tenured track professors in my department who are very openly out, and to my knowledge, they’ve never experienced any problems.”

Participants had “heard” of other LGBT people having negative experiences, but had not experienced negative experiences themselves.

“Well my experience has been overwhelmingly positive. I was a graduate student here. And now I’m doing a post-doctoral fellowship. I’m in the second year of that. And, I have never experienced any overt homophobia or anything like that.”

A faculty member from a laboratory setting also had a positive experience, but had experienced “naiveté or ignorance” in some colleagues regarding issues of gender or sexual orientation. Participants felt that LGBT faculty tend to be supported or tolerated in their activism, but in general people at UCSD are not educated or informed about current LGBT issues. One noted that the words “intersex” and “transgender” were met with questions or complete ignorance.

There was discussion and speculation that it is much more difficult and sometimes very problematic to be out in the hard science departments. One participant noted that a few faculty members from these departments are known to be out, and a few others are known to be closeted.

2.2 Faculty: Perceptions of Students within the UCSD Climate

According to several participants, LGBT students and students in general seemed to appreciate human sexuality courses taught without homophobia. A participant noted that in the classroom, “topics related to sexuality do come up, and students seem to feel free to approach me about sexuality topics.” The participant also remarked that while some professors/instructors may not handle sexuality topics comfortably, LGBT students are “happy” when they find role models in the classroom.

A few focus group members had observed some students calling someone/something “gay.” On the other hand, one participant felt that sometimes students felt pressured to fit in and conform to liberal beliefs, which may run contrary to the way they’ve been raised. Regarding graduate students, participants commented that LGBT graduate students seem to have more to lose by coming out, especially in the hard sciences.

“I had several comments from students who took the class and said, it was so nice to have a totally non-homophobic presentation. I would say close to 10 students out of 300 who are gay, came and said thank you.”

“Graduate students tell me that being out would be death in my department. Absolutely death. Now we do have one grad student who is out and because of his personal circumstances, he does pretty well. He happens to be supervised with somebody who could care less because his work is really good. I wonder what would happen to him if he was just a so-so graduate student, but he’s a star. I’ve heard from students in our committee that, in other departments when we looked at admissions stuff, it was interesting, in communications, people would see a reference to lifestyle and they’d find the applicant more interesting. But, in Physics, that would be the kiss of death...”

2.3 LGBT Faculty: Climate Experience

Participants commented that overall, UCSD faculty and staff seem to be very accepting of LGBT staff and faculty. The comfort level continues to increase as more students and staff come out. However, there has been little change in the overall “out” population of faculty. To the group, it appears that there are *not* a lot of attempts to recruit and retain LGBT faculty. Participants noted that research and Queer studies was not retained, which left the participants feeling that these areas of study were/are not deemed important or valued by the University or departments.

“The incident I’m speaking about was someone who was actually teaching gay lesbian bisexual related material, and there was some feeling that there was not support from the university as a whole.”

“I think it’s very significant that we don’t know a lot of queers in biology and physics.”

“And when I was speaking to this new associate professor in biology, he told me that he was aware of a few of them in engineering, but they expressly forbid him to even bring it up.”

In summary, participants in the faculty focus group were disappointed with the faculty attendance of this session. They felt that there was more tolerance and that it was easier to be “out” in humanities and social science departments, than in the hard sciences. But, that more education and information would be helpful throughout UCSD. They noted that students appreciate a straightforward approach to teaching LGBT topics/issues, and that LGBT students will seek out faculty who appear supportive. The group would like to see more support for LGBT or Queer studies and more effort to recruit and retain LGBT faculty.

3. Focus Group: UCSD People of Color

Data collected: 04/03/03

The group agreed that LGBT issues become magnified when race and homophobia are combined. One person commented:

“It’s not anything you can put your finger on, but you know, you get in the elevator and everybody moves over there. So yeah, I think there’s something definitely to minority status coupled with being gay that can make campus life, or anywhere else, a little more difficult.”

Participants had observed students who are not of color making jokes about students who are, inferring that the only reason they were accepted to UCSD was because of their status as “a person of color”. Participants noted that there is “not a critical mass of students, staff, or faculty who are of color.”

A participant felt that sometimes people who had hiring authority based decisions on comfort levels, and that some people are less comfortable if the person is gay and/or a person of color, thus placing LGBT people of color at a distinct disadvantage.

Some areas of campus were viewed as better than others. For example, Student Affairs was cited as a positive area:

“I think for me, because I do work in a division of student affairs, that it has a lot of gay people, and because we work with students directly, and we’re always dealing with diversity and multicultural training, and so forth, it’s always an issue at the forefront within people I work with.”

However, there are still subtle forms of discomfort:

“I have colleagues who don’t want to know about my personal life, so they don’t ask me. So, that’s a form of, as well, of saying, I don’t want to hear about it, I don’t want to know, I don’t care, you know, about, it’s just a lesser form, a lesser degree of that, kind of making you invisible.”

Department unevenness was discussed, with arts and humanities being portrayed as better than the hard sciences:

“And you would imagine, it’s the most accepting in the arts & humanities and social sciences, and that’s very true.”

Some very unfortunate things have been said about LGBT people, for example:

“We don’t want to hear about ‘you people’ and your problems, basically that kind of stuff. People may be afraid to address color or LGBT issues even well-meaning people, don’t want to use the wrong minority term or the wrong gay term. So as a result, they interact with you less because they just don’t want to make a mistake, and don’t want to be accused of something.”

Some participants felt that they had to choose a particular group with whom to identify, and that within each group, their color or LGBT identity isn’t accepted or it causes discomfort. For example, it may be hard to feel comfortable as a gay in the Black Staff Association versus a person of color in some LGBT groups. A participant observed that *“I feel racism within the gay community as well.”* Some have had very good experiences working as an LGBT individual within groups of color. Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/Chicana de Atlan (MEChA) was given as an example:

"I have had a really good experience, because first of all, the people that I've met are very open minded, and instead of me having to introduce myself, they made the effort and said, we want you to do a workshop on being Chicana and being a lesbian. I think what maybe had to do with it is that MEChA is lead almost entirely by women. But it also has to do a little bit with the fact that I'm a woman and I'm gay, and it's not as threatening. ...sometimes it is easier in minority culture to be a gay woman than it is being a gay man."

Diversity workshops on race don't always include LGBT issues. One person commented about an HR diversity workshop:

"If there hadn't been three queers, including myself, in the workshop participating, the word 'gay' never would have been brought up."

One person commented that academic departments and materials are not always current:

"I just can't stand how the Psychology department in their Psych 163 course, Abnormal Psychology, has a textbook that still goes by the reading that they go through gender identity making, and if I get any disorders like homosexuality, they still consider that abnormal psychology. We shouldn't be using that book anymore."

Safety is an issue for LGBT people and additionally for people of color due to racism. One person commented:

"I know there are times when I've been on campus late, I'll be walking to my car, I'll be walking to the parking lot, and sometimes I ask myself, do people wonder why I am in this parking lot? Instead of just thinking to myself, I'm just walking to my car. Or the perception is you can't be a student or a faculty, so you must be a staff person or maintenance, somebody that's not supposed to be here."

There are students of color here who don't identify as students of color. Many have been raised in majority culture and aren't seeking or participating in race affiliated things. One person commented:

"But then there's part of me, when I think of my place on campus, my role on campus, or my contribution, I don't want it to be because of the color or the orientation, I just want to be just like everybody else and contributing as me, and not as what I'm looking like or what I'm wearing. So I find myself torn in that whole thing."

**4. Focus Group: UCSD Scripps Institute of Oceanography (SIO)
Data collected: 03/25/03**

At the SIO focus group, only one participant attended (straight/gay friendly), along with the two focus group note takers. The small group expressed disappointment that there were no LGBT staff, students, or faculty present.

The SIO participant expressed that SIO tends to be a relaxed, liberal environment where diversity is openly embraced.

“If you could be out anywhere on this campus, you could be out here...I work with a great group of people, and I’ve never seen anybody being outwardly homophobic.”

There’s an underlying atmosphere of open-mindedness at SIO, so that people feel free to express themselves.

“It’s an interesting mixture here of relaxed people and the hard sciences, which tends to be a lot more conservative.”

At SIO, there is a deep “respect for the science.” Therefore, diversity, culture, and language are not considered barriers or distractions to research and discovery.

5. Focus Group: UCSD Medical Center, Hillcrest Faculty and Staff

Data collected: 04/21/03

As with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, there are issues specific to certain other locations at UCSD. A focus group conducted at the Medical Center in Hillcrest brought up a number of salient issues related both to the actual physical location and issues related to the School of Medicine and teaching.

When asked, **“What is the climate like for LGBT people here?”** Issues were expressed that related to variability and area within the Medical Center:

“I think the climate is variable. I think it depends on how, how out you are. I think it depends on what field you’re in. For me, I’m in the HIV field, so in a way, being gay is not an issue. But certainly if you’re in surgery, I think that’s a big difference.”

“I think its variable due to department and your position. And also depending also sometimes on your cultural and religious background.”

Queried further regarding the climate at the Medical Center, the group focused on connecting with the local area:

“The biggest issue that I’ve heard is I think more regards with people who are gay are that most of them who do come for medical care here are HIV positive. So from that standpoint HIV then equated to gay perhaps becomes maybe perceived that way.

When asked about the training and education, the responses surrounded curriculum fusion issues:

“I think what you’re alluding to is the idea of curriculum fusion. Where it’s not added in, but becomes a part of. So there’s no one course on it, but every course has a piece somewhere where it makes sense, where there should be something already, so it becomes throughout both through classroom and internships, where education becomes something that you are familiar with throughout.”

When asked what specifically could be done, people came up with a number of ideas, including diversity programs and people in position which focus on diversity:

“I personally think they need to restart the diversity program here that I don’t think deals well with LGBT issues when it was in existence. There is no program in existence at the UCSD Medical Center now, except for a workshop on sensitivity training.”

“If you have a resource, an association or a person, or something, just like in [the Director of the UCSD LGBT Resource Center’s] experience, those things happen because you have someone to go to, to help them set it up, and to keep it going when they are gone.”

6. Focus Group: UCSD “Closeted” Individuals (interested in meeting off-campus)

Data Collected: 03/29/03

During the initial planning phases for this focus group study, the committee was aware of a significant number of people at UCSD who are closeted in the workplace, or are uncomfortable discussing issues related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity in a work environment. For some it was due to the perceived climate of intolerance.

A focus group was scheduled during the afternoon at a non-UCSD site. This focus group was advertised through similar methods as the other focus groups, including targeted contacts to individuals who the committee was aware of who “fit” into the category of this focus group.

The facilitator and the note takers were the only people to attend this meeting.

Two reasons appeared to be most realistic, given the personal knowledge of the individuals that had been invited:

- 1) There is fear of being outed; even an off-site meeting is risky.
- 2) There is a perception that this focus group report will make no difference.

7. Focus Group: UCSD Transgender and Intersex Issues

Data collected: 03/11/03

For the purpose of this report, the following terms are defined as followed:

Transgender people may be described as individuals whose gender identity differs from the social expectations for the physical sex in which they were born.

Intersexuality may be described as variations in reproductive and sexual anatomy. That is, intersex people are born with chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered standard for either male or female.

The discussion began with participants expressing frustration and concern about the low number of “single stall” or unisex bathrooms on campus and the issues surrounding using gender specific bathrooms. They collectively agreed that even though someone might be able to “pass” as the other gender, attempts to use the other restroom may create a dangerous or hostile situation. “It is a safety issue—an issue of not wanting to make others feel uncomfortable or threatened and of not wanting to feel threatened as well.” One participant said that on several occasions when they had used the women’s restroom, they had been accused of being in the wrong restroom and asked to leave.

Participants expressed that their concerns went beyond using an appropriate bathroom. They concurred that raising awareness about transgender and intersex issues and people was needed throughout the campus community. They also agreed that there are very few “out” transgendered people on campus.

“It is difficult to claim transgender identity or non-conforming gender expression because of the stigma attached to it.”

Bringing education and awareness to this issue was in expressed in these views.

“People might become more aware of the language they use, how people might not look stereotypically male or female, etc. Many people don’t even know what transgender means. They have either never heard of it or think it is just people in drag or transsexuals.”

“If people do not feel UCSD is safe, they may not want to come to this campus.”

“There probably are not as many out transgender people at UCSD because of the general conservative nature of the city and because LGBT issues are not well addressed on campus.”

“The Transgender community can often pass as straight and they may be so heteronormative that they cannot break out of the box.”

Others commented that:

“It really takes a lot out of a person.”

“You’re constantly having to defend your identity and who you are.”

During the focus group a participant related a specific example of what they considered the “conformity expectations” of UCSD for an event associated with the UCSD Billion Dollar fund raising Millennium Campaign

“An e-mail was sent to invite students, detailing appropriate dress which was very gender specific (women were to wear skirts or pantsuits). I know that some invitees were uncomfortable with the options which caused discomfort both in terms of possibly having to wear uncomfortable clothes or choosing to wear non-traditional clothes and thus not fitting in....The choice for a woman to wear a tux is not the same as a man and in this community it’s not automatically a safe thing to do.”

Participants felt that misunderstanding and lack of information about transgendered and intersex individuals and issues can be found throughout UCSD and even within the LGBT community itself. As stated by a participant, “There is considerable transphobia, and education even for LGBT individuals on this issue is needed.”

Interviewees also expressed disappointment with the Diversity Council’s lack of attention to transgendered and intersex issues.

In summary, the participants in the transgender and intersex focus group spoke about the need for more unisex bathrooms, more education and awareness for the entire campus and more attention to transgender/intersex issues within the Diversity Council.

8. Focus Group: People interested in HIV and health issues

Data collected: 04/10/03

One of the focus groups for this report focused on issues related to health, and specifically targeted individuals who may have experiences with HIV. The overall

responses indicated an extreme lack of understanding of LGBT health related issues, although there have been a few positive experiences.

When asked, "**What is the campus climate like for LGBT people?**" in relation to HIV and health related issues, there was a broad range of experiences:

"The care that I thought that UCSD medical center provided was phenomenal. I didn't run into any homophobia, anything at all, which um, I, you know, I just thought I would share that."

"One employee had to go into the emergency room for something. He was accused of being HIV positive. They actually put it in his medical record. He asked to have it taken out. Physician never responded, so he had trouble changing that document. It went to the director of the hospital, but nothing came out of it policy wise. What can go in the medical record, what's appropriate?"

Participants discussed the connection of gay issues to HIV. Regarding resources for people in the LGBT community, one participant spoke of responding to a general address that was set up a number of years ago around LGBT issues for employees.

"There are pockets of hostility for our community, and I think those pockets are even hotter when you bring the issue of HIV/AIDS."

"I had had a verbal and a written promise that my job was going to become full-time, but that didn't happen, they got rid of me about three weeks after, this particular conversation [revealing my HIV status]"

"I consider myself a relatively healthy person. And somebody that's not different from most people on campus, but I find that being gay and being ill, whether I'm ill or not, if I'm out a couple of days, and immediately want to tie any kind of... you know speculation..."

And there seemed to be no centralized information with which employees felt comfortable.

"But, when there is the opportunity arises and something acute happens, this institution is so large and has so many resources, but where do you go? I was sitting there trying to brainstorm. Benefits? Workers Comp? How do you tap into them? And then, are there any repercussions if someone sees you going into them? Do you get on a list? What about confidentiality? How well are these resources protecting the rights of people?"

"I'm not pleased with the resources on campus... There are not support groups for lesbian identified people. I've looked into cancer support groups amongst the UCSD groups; there are none specifically for lesbians. I feel like they are not

addressing the issues as far as the LGBT individuals. And there's definitely an assumption of heterosexuality."

"As a person, with an illness, I don't know, I can't seem to find an answer to what my obligations are to my supervisor."

In summary, the focus group on Health and HIV issues brought forward the variability of how LGBT people experience care around HIV and LGBT health issues, the overall heterosexism at the institution that disrupts the ability for LGBT to receive accommodation for their specific health related needs, and the need for a centralized information and support system for all employees around health issues on campus

9. Focus Group: UCSD Graduate Students

Data collected: 4/14/03

When participants were asked to comment on the climate on campus for LGBT graduate students, the answers indicated that experiences were mixed. One participant commented that:

"It's better in some departments than in others. For example, if you're in Theater and Dance or Anthropology or Communication, it might be cool that you're LGBT affiliated. In fact, when I've seen faculty look at applications and people have something that made them different, that seemed to bubble up and it was seen as a good thing to bring to the department. Whereas, in perhaps other places like Engineering or the hard sciences, I've seen a different reaction."

The reputation of certain faculty for being "open" drew one participant to specifically apply to work with a particular mentor.

"When I came here, I was hoping he would pick me, and I was lucky he did. If he hadn't, I don't know... You know, I was hoping there was someone else I could find also, but it was clear early on that there wasn't someone else who I could have worked with."

Another participant commented:

"If I hadn't found my advisor in college through a transfer, I don't really think there's any one else I could have gone to."

Being open about sexuality was viewed by participant as a possible asset in departments, such as Theater and Dance, "which is viewed as having an affiliation with the LGBT community culture/issues". Whereas in Engineering or the hard sciences being openly gay could be a "liability", in an environment predominantly comprised of

men. “But when your whole graduate program is dependent upon the faculty’s input on you”, their attitudes and values can affect equity in treatment.

One participant related that a faculty member in the hard sciences would make offensive comments, sometimes in front of large groups and students, leaving everyone speechless.

“In pockets of campus, and in our department in particular, people, whether it’s gender insensitivity... because we have a lot of problems with faculty with gender insensitive comments too, but they just don’t [care] about what they say and what that impact is on other people....I think everyone just didn’t know what to say. One other member of the class, who’s a good friend of mine later on agreed with me how messed up it was. She’s also one of two women of the 40 of us.”

Sometimes difference in treatment LGBT students and others was more subtle.

“And then, there was another more subtle... But I was going to say, a similar example which is even more subtle, which happened a lot also. There’s another professor that she and I had, who would just kind of ignore us, not answer our questions or not answer them very quickly, and we were never really clear if that was because said professor was a particle physicist... we both were pretty sure it was because she was a woman and I was queer.”

One participant suggested that more education and information should be available for graduate students, especially in the hard sciences.

“Maybe at the department level there’s not enough to come out and overtly address these questions, but certainly at OGSR, at their orientation, even though [the UCSD LGBT Center] does what [it] does, what I’m hearing you say is there ought to be a component to say, this is what’s appropriate, this is what’s not, and if you are having problems, here’s is how to deal with it.”

Participants felt that the UCSD LGBT Center had much to offer but was geared more towards undergraduate students than graduates. They went on to say that LGBT graduate students rarely organized to meet and the result was “often a feeling of isolation for the LGBT person.”

In summary, the experiences of LGBT graduate students at UCSD are mixed, depending on whether they are in departments within the humanities and social sciences or the hard sciences. Participants suggested more information be available through OGSR about LGBT resources on campus, with specific information on how to deal with LGBT issues arising in the classroom, lab or other graduate student working environments. Participants also mentioned that it was often difficult to “self-organize” get-togethers for a variety of reasons and suggested that the UCSD LGBT Center on campus assist by collaborating with OGSR to create LGBT graduate student gatherings.

10. Focus Group: UCSD Undergraduate Students

Data collected: 04/07/03

One of the focus groups for this report focused on issues related to concerns and issues specifically related to undergraduate students.

Participants were asked, **"What is the campus climate like for LGBT undergrad students here at UCSD?"**, which elicited a range of experiences:

"Guys especially toss around the word "gay" in general conversations using it like the term stupid or different. It makes me feel a bit uncomfortable."

"Skits at orientation incorporated a gay roommate which I thought was very cool."

"I think the climate here is generally not hostile. People who are truly homophobic are 1 in 100 if not 1 in 1000. Gay people need to feel comfortable. We need to continue to incorporate things like the gay roommate in orientations, Out and Proud Week, Day of Silence and other things that open your eyes."

"If I had to describe my experience at UCSD as a whole I would describe it as not necessarily friendly, but passive-aggressive. During Day of Silence I was handing out flyers. There was a giant rainbow behind us... its hard to describe the facial expressions, but they'd roll their eyes and make exasperated noises and have really rude attitudes... What are you doing here? We don't want to hear about this...."

"I think the LGBTI Center here is great. I haven't been going to it that much, but it's great to know that it is here..."

A couple participants discussed curriculum at UCSD relating to LGBT community. One commented:

"At the Resource Center, they have a paper that says Queer classes. And when I was enrolling in my classes, I actually went to it to see if there is anything I can take. I actually ended up taking Critical Gender Studies 100, and I'm taking it right now. And that class seems really good because there are least four movies that relate to the LGBT community."

Some of the undergraduate students indicated that when they used campus housing, but that being matched with compatible roommates was a problem.

"The only problem is that in my suite all these girls have pictures of men up on the wall. It's cute but it's just too much...after I came out, a suitemate I bonded

with at the beginning of the year drifted apart from me... I am the still the same person I was before I came out. I can't deal with it anymore. ”

“I'm not completely out in my suite (because I found out from my RA that one of my suitemates came to her and said, “I hope none of my suitemates are gay because the problems that would cause”.) I have heard him talking and he is very homophobic... That keeps me from coming out.”

“I ended up hating Revelle because I don't know who is responsible for matching up people with different roommates and suite members, but they made a horrid, horrid mistake... I had actually come out the latter part of my senior year and completely out to my parents. When I got into my suite I slipped right back into the closet... I felt very uncomfortable there.”

“When I lived on campus at Warren I had two situations which I'd consider “hate crimes”. Someone wrote “Dyke” in the dust on my car, and then someone put a really inappropriate catalogue in my mailbox - it had sex toy stuff in it, and it was in an envelope, not mailed but just placed in my box.... I suspected one of my roommates because I had confided in her about my confusing feelings and then we had a falling out.” I just kept quiet because I was embarrassed and not out yet at all and the Dean at the time said there was no room in any other apartments...I just counted the days until the end of the school year.”

In summary, LGBT participants in the undergraduate student focus group felt their experiences on campus were generally positive, with some experiencing situations of subtle or overt homophobia, especially in on-campus housing. They praised the LGBT Center for providing a “safe-haven” and some had utilized its services and participated in LGBT Center sponsored events. Participants also stated that they enjoyed courses with LGBT themes and topics and sought them out when enrolling for classes. Because many of the participants live or have lived on campus, the group spent a significant amount of time discussing on-campus housing issues; the need for better roommate matching and the possibility of having LGBT oriented housing at UCSD.

11. Summary and Recommendations

As stated in the Executive Summary of this report, it has taken considerable time to complete this report. Nevertheless, this report contains some valuable information and insight into the campus. For one thing, there is unevenness in the acceptance of LGBT people and in the comfort level of LGBT people to come out in the different campus areas. The areas of Student Affairs, the two divisions social sciences and arts and humanities, and SIO seem to rate high in the acceptance of LGBTs. However, in the hard sciences, being LGBT is viewed as a certain “kiss of death.” One of the most positive things on campus for LGBT people seems to be the LGBT Resource Center.

The report generates a need for specific changes. The following are recommendations for action and change:

- A. Conduct a formal LGBT UCSD Climate survey, as requested in 1999 by Chancellor Dynes.
- B. Ensure that the Diversity Council is versed in LGBT issues and that these issues are addressed and discussed. CACGISOI applauds the current recommendation that one of the CACGISOI co-chairs (or designee) be included as a member of the campus Diversity Council.
- C. Re-implement a course in Queer Studies.
- D. Create unisex bathrooms whenever possible in future and renovated buildings.
- E. Create a space for LGBT-oriented housing for UCSD students.
- F. Ensure that the Human Resources diversity workshop includes LGBT issues.
- G. Determine what textbook is currently used for Psychology course 136 on abnormal psychology. Review the text for its references to homosexuality and how it is addressed. As necessary, confer with the department chair about replacing the textbook with current information. (See page 9.)

12. APPENDIX

CACGISO Focus Groups for LGBT People at UCSD

Thanks so much for doing these groups. Here is brief outline of how they should run. Feel free to deviate as necessary to increase the effectiveness of the focus group.

Agenda (about one and a half hours for the entire process)

1. Welcome
2. Review of goal of the focus group
3. Review of ground rules
4. Introductions
5. Questions and answers
6. Wrap up and Thank You

Goal of this Focus group

To provide information to the University regarding the UCSD climate for LGBT people.

Introductions

- First introduce yourself as facilitator, not directly associated with CACGISO working group responsible for the campus climate report, but familiar with the language and issues around LGBT issues.
- Next, have the note takers introduce themselves, and mention the audiotape
 - Not identifying specific people, just the thoughts provided.
 - Audiotape destroyed after transcription completed.
- If participants want to share written comments rather than to the group we'd be happy to receive anything on paper (provided) or subsequently in email to stravers@ucsd.edu
- Finally, have the participants introduce themselves, so they know each other

Confidentiality

This is being taped, but names will not be included in the final report, only general descriptors (i.e. undergraduate student of color)

Ground Rules

- *Be honest*, the CACGISO needs your thoughts and ideas, even if you think UCSD won't like to hear what you have to say. Your feedback is important. Climate reports in the past have made significant impact in several areas including policy and administration.
- Allow people to finish their thoughts and try not to interrupt
- Respect that others' UCSD experience may be very different from yours

- Have fun, this is your chance to talk openly and freely, and the hoped for outcome is to create change at UCSD!

Facilitating the Session

Ask the questions. Then, facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time.

1. What is the campus climate like for LGBT people (or specific target group... i.e., undergraduates, faculty, etc.)
 - a. Specific personal stories
 - b. Second hand stories
 - c. General observations
 - d. Things in writing print
 - e. In classrooms/labs/clinics, etc?
 - f. Outside of work/academic space?
2. What would you change about the campus climate?
 - a. In classrooms/labs/clinics, etc?
 - b. Outside of work/academic space?
3. Are there any other issues you want to cover that have not been addressed??

Ensure even participation. If one or two people are dominating the group, then call on others. Consider using a round- table approach, going in one direction around the table, giving each person a minute to answer the question. If the domination persists, note it to the group and ask for ideas about how the participation can be increased.

Closing the session - Tell members that they are awesome, thank them for coming, and adjourn the meeting. Don't forget to collect any written comments in the envelope provided. Thank yourself!