
STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE LGBT RESOURCE CENTER

*For next five years in the life of our Center, from 2008 through 2013
Building the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community at UCSD*



Updated draft for the UCSD LGBT Advisory Board
January 25, 2008

The strategic plan of the University of California, San Diego Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center articulates a vision for a future that is in constant motion. Therefore, the mechanistic methods and models of strategic planning that assume fixed circumstances that can be adequately predicted are inappropriate.

The methods for developing the strategic plan were multi-fold. The first evolved out of deep, significant conversations among the professional staff of the LGBT Resource Center over the course of the summer and early fall of 2006. A second method was a process of appreciative inquiry that the entire LGBT Resource Center Advisory Board engaged in during the winter of 2007. Over the summer of 2007, significant review and writing of the strategic plan revealed a need for further articulation of some of the specific ideas. In addition, the changing nature of the role of Advisory Board members needed to be discussed. In fall of 2007, a retreat was held that further attended to the relationships of the Advisory Board members, and concurrently more clearly articulated the directions for the next five years.

Our community and our values

This strategic plan communicates the values of the community of people that *are* the Center. As we have moved into a new space, it has been simple to assume that our physical structure is our Center. However, as our methods of developing this plan revealed, the Center is much more than a building. It is a community that centers itself around LGBT issues on the UCSD campus. Often, but not always, the physical structure is the focus of that community. However, the community happens wherever our community finds itself, be that at the Center, on campus or in online spaces.

This document describes opportunities based on the values of our community. The opportunities as envisioned in the document may not be the opportunities that five years hence were taken. The evaluation of success in meeting this strategic plan should be answering the question “Did we live our values?” It should not be “Did we do everything we planned to do?” However, specific metrics of success are provided, as well as a timeline to achieve our concrete goals. With that in mind, the following document serves as a way of understanding a moment in time, and an imagined future of the community of people who created it.

Introduction

The UCSD LGBT Resource Center has experienced a significant amount of growth and change throughout its history at UCSD. This strategic plan reflects the current stability of the 1) physical space, 2) professional staff and 3) current funding.

The plan itself is categorized in a specific way. First the background is discussed which brought us to this strategic plan. Then, elements of the process of developing the plan are discussed. Raw data from our shared peak experiences with the Center are presented from the Advisory Board retreat. More synthesized information is shared as we articulate our possible future. The most designed elements are the programs and activities that will encourage our communities to live its values in the next five years. A table succinctly summarizes the five year plan, the metrics for success, and the major steps necessary to live our values.

Mission

The LGBT Resource Center at UCSD is a diverse, open and public space for all members of the University community to explore issues relating to sexual and gender identities, practices and politics. It develops student leadership, builds workplace equity, promotes academic research, and provides resources. The Center challenges existing definitions of variant genders and sexualities by engaging in community building on- and off-campus. This Center sustains and develops visibility, sense of community, and knowledge of diverse queer people. (Adopted October 7, 2001)

Process

The LGBT Resource Center Advisory Board engaged in a process of Appreciative Inquiry on Saturday, February 10th, 2007. The document represents a collective vision for the future, based on the peak experiences of our past. It attempts to innovatively address the issues of our community through an intentional focus of bridging the *best of what is* to the *best of what can be* for all members of the UCSD LGBT community.

Diversity

The make-up of the Advisory Board for that day is relevant to understanding the diversity represented. Faculty, staff, students and alumni were involved. Over half of the people in the room were students. Community members who have been on the campus for over 25 years were in the room. Community members that came out and started to frequent the Center in the last six months were in the room. Full time staff and undergraduate intern staff from current and prior years were in the room. Members of our named identity groups (that is, the L's, the G's, the B's, and the T's) were in the room, as well as those who are our allies, and those who are fluid in, around and between those identity labels. Members of many ethnic and racial heritages were in the room, as well as people

born in the United States, and those whose backgrounds are from other countries. The make-up of the Advisory Board for that day cut a cross-section of our community that at its best brings to the table all who are a part of who we want to be.

Advisory Board

During the summer of 2007, it was discovered that the values articulated in the draft of the strategic plans up to that time were not congruent with the board culture that had been established through the quarterly Advisory Board meetings. The winter 2007 retreat had been a significant departure away from the style and culture of Advisory Board meetings up to that point. The subsequent spring and fall 2007 meetings were confusing for many members as structures and conversations came in line with the values articulated.

At the fall 2007 retreat, a number of discoveries and actions were articulated by the Board member present:

DISCOVERIES

- Roles unclear
- Pros & Cons of different kinds of meeting styles
- Usual campus roles may or may not translate to role on the board
- Opportunities for personal growth & empowerment of members
- Appreciation of actual participation on board
- Empowerment does not mean disempowerment of others
- Still enthusiasm for purpose of group
- Board becoming more self aware of changes in culture
- Actively challenging the “script”
- All contributing in an equal way
- Operating under a set of assumptions
- We are a family (as opposed to a committee), and should interact as such (dysfunction and all!)

ACTIONS

- Do more Ambassador training
- Define “getting things done”
- Build relationship conducive to letting each other know whether someone is not participating enough to participating too much
- Develop structure to empower individuals
- Create process to be inclusive (input & info) of folks not able to attend any particular meeting
- Being more self-aware
- Make change and fluidity a part of Advisory Board culture
- Make clear the goals of Advisory Board meetings *especially in exercises or activity
- Setting the “stage” – reminder of how we work (discoveries)
- Name assumptions (assumed scripts)
- Explore if Advisory Board wants a Charge/Mission Statement
- Continue rediscovering why we want to work the way we do *labeling our own intentions

Inquiry

Below are the unfiltered experiences of the community that came together to discuss our past. The themes below were derived from the shared answers to these questions:

- Think back to a peak experience that you have had with the LGBT Resource Center. Tell a story about that time. What happened? What were you doing? What were others doing? What contributed to the success of that experience? Tell the story giving some detail.
- Without being modest, what did you value most about yourself in this experience?
- If you had three wishes that would ensure more peak experiences like the ones you described, what would they be?

Themes from “Honoring The Best Of What Is”:

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|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| • Journey | • Teamwork | • Transfer students | • Empowerment!!! |
| • Community | • Community – | • Home | • Out on campus! |
| • Space/Place | helping each other | • Family | Visible |
| • Courage | across boundaries | • Pride | • Accepting |
| • Broader | of jobs or student | • Connections | community =) |
| Spectrum | status | -Speakers Bureau | • Central–“hub” |
| • Mistakes + | • Education – | -QPOC | idea / community |
| Learning | beyond the | -Q-Camp | presence / having |
| | classroom | -Rainbow Grad | a community to |
| | • Dialogue | -faculty/ | connect with |
| | • Leadership | students/staff | • Finding the buried |
| | • Family is Key! – | bridges | treasure |
| | Being embraced – | | |
| | people with | | |
| | different | | |
| | experiences | | |
| | • Open to diversity | | |
| | + change | | |
| | • Networking | | |
| | between faculty, | | |
| | staff, and students | | |
| | • Reminding | | |
| | ourselves of what | | |
| | we’re here to do | | |

Imagine

After sharing peak experiences and developing the themes across those peak experiences, the Advisory Board imagined a future by answering these questions:

Imagine that you have been asleep for five years, and when you awake, you look around and see that the LGBT Resource Center has made incredible progress. In these five years the growth in community and program development has been tremendous. The Center is so successful that it has been announced that the Center will receive a national award for outstanding, phenomenal community and program development. As a result, you have been asked to be interviewed by “The Advocate.”

You agree to be interviewed. Imagine that the interviewer asks what the UCSD LGBT community is like. How does community happen? How does the community sustain itself? What programmatic elements are involved? What do people do in community? What does being in the UCSD LGBT communities feel like? What is happening on a daily basis at the LGBT Resource Center?

The community imagined many futures. Most significant was the reality that every future was possible, but the focus of the community, through the representative Advisory Board present that day, had to narrow possible futures to those which most represented the values of what we do and what we can do.

Innovate

Getting from our peak experiences of the past at the LGBT Resource Center to the possible future takes much innovation. Four provocative propositions were articulated by the Advisory Board at the winter 2007 retreat, and are represented below.

- We create an interdisciplinary academic program relating to Queer Studies
- We envision a Post- Baccalaureate Program
- The LGBT RC creates a progressive learning culture and community which integrates and radiates its/our ideals
- The LGBTRC community will facilitate the informal interaction guidance, and transmission/sharing of LGBT culture among all members of the community

The final two propositions were further articulated into more distinct, concrete actions at the fall 2007 retreat.

Imagine these provocative propositions as clear articulations of the most cherished values of the LGBT Resource Center. Living these values may look like some of the concrete statements above, or may look entirely different in five years. However, the evaluation of living these values can be done by examining the deeper intention embedded within them.

“Values are the link between emotions and behavior, the connection between what we feel and what we do... With everything changing around us we need something unchanging... to hang on to... Values are our moral navigational devices” ~ James Champ, 1995

The values below are the collected words and sentiments of a broad cross-section of our community, as brought forward by the professional staff at a summer planning session.

- We value immediate connection with our community in terms of making them feel welcome
- We value service, and serving, listening, living in community, and relating to folks like family
- We challenge our community to look at itself, to grow; we challenge the UCSD community to be aware of who we are
- We value difference, and acknowledge and value people for who they are
- We value our community in organization; we value the coming together of people in community
- We create multiple opportunities for dialogue and interaction
- We value struggle, and all of the messiness that come along with working through our issues, identity, intersectionality of identities, and engaging in the discourse of that struggle
- We value the struggle of multiple identities and fuller exploration of ourselves
- We value our history and our interconnectedness across generations of LGBT identified people
- We value creating the opportunity for ownership in our community, for taking responsibility for themselves and their own power, empowering themselves and making our community richer for it.
- We value education, learning and the creation of knowledge about ourselves and our community
- We value loving our bodies, honoring ourselves as sexual beings by being sexually healthy and sexually positive

Implement

Over the next five years, there will be ample opportunities to live our values and achieve our visions. The opportunities may reflect the provocative propositions above, or may look quite different. However, the end result of the five years should be significant achievements that reflect the values of the community that is the Center.

The table below represents major milestones that can serve as metrics for achieving our shared future.

Summer 07	Graduate Intern from LGBT Campus Consortium
Fall 07	Add Sunday student staff - 2 people
	Encourage undergraduate/graduate participation in LGBT academic life – encourage spring LGBT studies course

Winter 08	Document efficacy of LGBT RC in supporting the academic mission of the institution – what do we do and how do we do it? National College and University recruitment conference targeted at LGBT high school students
Spring 08	Explore grant possibilities for post-baccalaureate programs Begin formal relationships for outreach to high school students – work with QPOC to complete high school conference Begin teaching and LGBT Studies out of the LGBT Resource Center annually
Summer 08	Develop mechanism for evaluating and measuring our success in affecting LGBT community and culture at UCSD
Fall 08	Add Historian intern/Add Anti-sexism intern Plan and implement targeted community building efforts grounded in our transgender community
Spring 09	LGBT-appropriate housing for undergraduates and transfer students - where are we at? Have we achieved gender neutral housing/LGBT appropriate housing for incoming and returning students?
Summer 09	Strengthening LGBT RC as a learning space – evaluating two years of teaching LGBT courses Examine the opportunities for post-baccalaureate work at the LGBT Resource Center
Fall 09	Celebrate our 10 year anniversary Explore the idea of increasing full time staff Examine our name and mission – are we who we say we are?
Winter 10	Provide more concrete resources to our community – online/written/library/media Assess initiatives related to transmitting LGBT culture Continue discussion of name of Center and mission
Spring 10	Reconfigure and re-structure the front office and lobby area; general remodeling Assess efforts to build community and sense of identity with our transgender community Begin broader community dialogue on Center's name and mission
Summer 10	Devise a curriculum/certification to become a higher education LGBT Center staff person – assess summer Consortium intern experience Comprehensive Program Review using CAS or other appropriate standards for the LGBT Resource Center
Fall 10	Plan LGBT History Tour for spring break Finalize discussions on name and mission
Winter 11	Finalize all elements of post baccalaureate program LGBT History Tour over spring break
Spring 11	Formal, consistent tour model of LGBT RC with San Diego high schools

Summer 11	Review all advertising and marketing promotional items for LGBT Resource Center
	Start five year strategic planning process
Fall 11	Begin post baccalaureate position at LGBT Resource Center
Winter 12	Advisory Board Retreat to develop new strategic plan
Spring 12	Present new strategic plan to community for review

Conclusion

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego has distinguished itself in many ways. It is the largest of its kind in the nation, physically larger than at any other public institution. Its intern program is second to none in the nation. Three full-time, professional staff are available to only a handful of colleges in the nation. And its Advisory Board is a broad cross-section that truly is connected to the Center. These together combine into a powerful community that can create an incredible future

This strategic plan articulates the values of the organization that will guide it for the next five years. It provides concrete measures for achieving success, bridging the best of what is to the best of what can be. However, as comfortable as the table of implementation is for measuring success, it can also be a prison. It may chain us to an imagined future that is no longer tenable. We must remain fluid, because the future is in dynamic flux. The true success in the life of the Center will be the continued ability to stay focused on our mission while navigating a future in constant motion. Only by constantly building the lesbian gay bisexual transgender community can we achieve our best.

“If not this, what? If not now, when? If not you, who?” – Dee Hock