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10-6-2008

## Minutes, 10/6/2008

The Commission for Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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**Minutes**  
**Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People**  
**October 6, 2008**

**Time:** 12:00 PM

**Place:** Hodges Library, Room 605

**Present:** Melissa Bartsch, Toby Boulet, Donna Braquet, Alan Chesney, Amy Davidson, James DeVita, Ben Doty, Lars Dzikus, Tiffany Hedges, Julian Hendrix, Joel Kramer, Erik Leander, Julie Lynch, Sibyl Marshall, Becky Morgan, Jenny Moshak, Dustin Nelson, Marva Rudolph, Lynn Sacco, Renee Smith, Michelle Stauffer, Meshia Thomas, Roger Weaver, Ed White, Pia Wood

**Call to Order:** 12:00 PM

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

**A) Welcome**

The minutes for September 8th, 2008 were approved at 12:02 PM.

**B) Awards Committee**

There will only be one award this year, though the 'parameters' of the award are not yet determined.

**C) Communications Committee**

The 'Out on Campus' event was very successful with an estimated turnout of about 90 people. The Communications Committee intends to hold a similar event during the spring semester.

On October 16th, the Committee is hosting the authors of *Courting Equality*, a book about the marriage equity movement in Massachusetts. At 1 PM, there will be a reception for the authors followed by a presentation and discussion of the History Project, an effort to document the GLBT community in Boston. At 7 PM, there will be a presentation, reading, and discussion of *Courting Equality*.

**D) Development Committee**

The Development Committee seeks to meet with development people and discuss the plans of the various Commission committees.

#### **D) The Equity Committee**

The Equity Committee met and agreed upon the following goals for this year:

- 1) Continue to work towards the establishment of benefits for faculty and staff.
- 2) Determine ways to collect data about faculty recruitment and how peer institutions go about doing this.
- 3) Place stronger emphasis on the Safe Zone project and capitalize on what appears to be broad support among the faculty.
- 4) Continue discussion with Alumni Affairs about setting up affinities, tracking down LGBT alumni, and establishing alumni events around LGBT themes and issues.
- 5) Examine housing policies, particularly as it concerns domestic partners not attending UTK as students and same sex couples legally wed in other countries.
- 6) Determine if student/faculty/staff health insurance policies provide coverage for medical issues of concern to transgender people.
- 7) Provide strong encouragement for the inclusion of questions about LGBT issues in student surveys conducted by other offices and organizations on campus.
- 8) Identify business who maintain contracts with UTK and determine the extent to which they provide domestic partner benefits.
- 9) Determine extent of domestic partner benefits provided by major employers in the region.

#### **E) Resource Center Committee**

The Resource Center Committee will meet later to select a chair.

#### **F) Chair's Report**

The candidates for the position of chancellor were interviewed and Dr. Hoemann made an attempt to engage them on the subject of domestic partner benefits. Based on the responses he received, Dr. Hoemann found that Ellen Wartella seemed the most engaged with LGBT issues. However, none of the candidates raised the matter on their own.

A preliminary draft report for the Safe Zone Task Force has been prepared, though Dr. Hoemann has not yet seen it. Tiffany Hedges has drafted up a facilitator's manual based on Safe Zone programs at other universities and printed out post cards that are available for anyone who wishes to identify their office as a 'Safe Zone.'

#### **G) Other Business**

Amy Davidson noted that the Lambda Student Union has grown considerably this year and that first-year students have expressed a strong interest in courses with LGBT content. This month, Lambda will also be hosting a workshop for students about being out on campus. On October 23rd, they will also host an issues panel concerning the upcoming election.

Melissa Bartsch announced that Zeta Phi Beta has invited LGBT staff and faculty members to discuss life both inside and outside the closet on October 29th. They are especially interested in having a presentation by an African-American male.

Roger Weaver asked everyone to submit any trivia they know about regarding the LGBT community that can be used for future activities hosted by the committee.

Lars Dzikus reported that, at the UT-Florida game, several individuals wearing a shirt with the text 'Gaytor Hater' were displayed on the jumbotron. Jenny Moshak said she would look into the matter.

**Adjournment:** 12:45