

L G B T Q +
Culture Center

2016–2017 Annual Report



Photo credit: [Indiana Daily Student, February 9, 2017](#)

Executive Summary

Summarizing a year's worth of activities is always, for me, a challenging (albeit rewarding) experience. Often a particular event, issue, or encounter helps me to focus my thoughts, and this past year, the changing of our name from the GLBT Student Support Services Office to the LGBTQ+ Culture Center is certainly one such event. That change reflects what is happening in our larger culture, and it affects the way in which our mission is understood. We are not just an office where students come seeking support. We are a center where a culture can be discovered and, indeed, affirmed. (More about that in the Name Change section of this report.)

As I look back over the last 12 months, two separate events that bookended the month of March actually help to summarize and celebrate the work that we do. In early March, we collaborated with the African-American Dance Company, at the request of its renowned director, Iris Rosa, to host a program entitled ["Vogue: Underground to Viral."](#) The well-attended workshop was led by artist Cesar Valentino, a black gay man who teaches at the Alvin Alley Extension in New York City. At the end of March, we were invited by the Director of the IU Cinema to cosponsor a [lecture and film presentation](#) by Popo Fan, a young LGBT activist and filmmaker from Beijing. His work features the stories of Chinese parents as they learned to relate to their lesbian and gay children.

What was significant about these two events, in addition to the recognition of the queer contributions to the arts, is the fact that both events represent a growing consciousness of the way in which our multiple identities are recognized. People are not just male or female, black or white, gay or straight, Puerto Rican or Chinese. We are a combination of identities, all worthy of recognition. It is a privilege to share that truth in a university setting where students' identities are forming. Moreover, it is satisfying when various schools, departments, centers, offices, and individuals turn to our Center to assist in affirming those truths.

Doug Bauder

Goals

Three goals were set for the academic year:

1. **Establish a more inclusive image by creating a new name for the office.** We exceeded our expectations on this goal, enlisting the talents of a graduate student in Applied Health Science. Our Survey Assistant developed a survey in which more than 600 students, faculty, staff, and alumni participated. Four separate focus groups were also held. The most popular name was forwarded to James Wimbush, the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs, who shared it with Provost Lauren Robel. Within a few months, our recommendation was approved.
2. **Restructure our space to provide a more homelike atmosphere** for students to study and socialize and for groups to meet. We met our expectations on this goal. Our Office Supervisor headed up this project and utilized contributions from alumni to purchase new furniture after consulting with the University Architects. An open house was hosted to introduce students to this new space.
3. **Work with our first-ever graduate assistant (GA).** Here, again, our expectations were exceeded. During the course of the year, our new GA was able to extend our services in several key areas. She sponsored a monthly lunchtime speaker series on a variety of topics. She developed an Ally Training manual and provided training sessions for a number of university departments and groups. In addition, she facilitated training for the leaders of each of our support groups. Outreach programs were provided in conjunction with our Social Work Intern and Library Coordinators.

Name Change

One of the biggest changes for the LGBTQ+ Culture Center over the past year (and, in fact, the past two decades) is its very name. The Center's staff members reflected on feedback, questions, and concerns received about the name that had served the Center for 22 years: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Support Services. Many felt the name didn't adequately define the Center's services or communicate to the population it was created to reach. The decision to change the name was not made lightly; a massive survey effort, focus groups, and some difficult conversations took place before a decision was ultimately made.

Those who are interested in the survey's data can access the 32-page report [online](#). To summarize our methods and findings: our Survey Assistant and Office Supervisor collected more than 600 detailed [survey responses](#), hosted four focus groups, and analyzed survey data extensively. Then the Director and Office Supervisor proposed a final choice to the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs, the Provost, and the IU Naming Committee. The proposal was accepted, and [the new name was announced](#) in January of 2017. A flurry of activity followed: ordering new stationary, making changes to websites and social media accounts, and securing a new sign for the building. Staff members found themselves greeting callers by picking up the phone and saying, "GLB—um, LGBTQ Serv—um, Center ... how can I help you?" Overall, however, the transition was smooth, and over the spring semester, countless students communicated excitement and appreciation for the new name.

Will the current name last another 22 years? Perhaps—but perhaps not. Staff members fought to see the words "gay" and "lesbian" on the side of an official IU building two and a half decades ago, but time marched on, and the ways in which people defined themselves and identified their communities changed. So while we worked to choose a name that would stand the test of years, we will continue to listen to our students. And if, in another decade, a different name speaks to them, these conversations may be held again. One thing, however, remains the same, in any year and under any name: we are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere in which students can express themselves authentically, learn about queer history, and contemplate how to advocate for and create a brighter future for themselves and the generations that will follow.

Challenges

- Homophobia and transphobia continue to impact communities outside Bloomington and campuses beyond the IU system, and the Center receives a growing number of requests to assist individuals and organizations with programs or approaches to solving problems—everything from staff training to bathroom issues.
- Students, particularly those who identify as transgender and/or do not conform to societal gender norms, continue to face harassment from strangers, lack of support from parents, and misunderstanding from peers.
- There is a lack of information about the Bias Incident Response Team and its role in addressing issues of harassment on campus.
- More and more students are coming out before college and are seeking to know resources on the campuses to which they apply.
- Issues of alcohol and drug abuse affect LGBTQ+ students and cause concern for IU faculty and staff.
- We receive a large number of requests for staff training on LGBTQ+ issues.
- Our outstanding [LGBTQ+ Library](#) is underutilized.

Opportunities

- Consider ways in which we can utilize interested students to assist us in reaching out to communities beyond Bloomington in discussing LGBTQ+ issues.
- Develop more resources on transgender issues to utilize in educating the IU community about the complexity of gender identity and expression.
- Reach out to the Dean of Students for updates on the future of the Bias Incident Response Team and learn how our Center might be more involved in addressing harassment on campus.
- Collaborate with the staff in the Office of Admissions to provide incoming students with information on resources available through our center.
- Foster a closer relationship with OASIS, the student drug and alcohol abuse prevention organization, as it develops the Students in Recovery program, considering ways we can help reach out to LGBTQ+ students.
- While we respond to all requests for [Ally Training](#), a more institutional response may be valuable, especially in regard to transgender concerns.
- Work in conjunction with our established Library Committee to seek help from Wells Library staff in advertising our unique collection of books and films.

Implications

One of the wonderful things about working in the LGBTQ+ Culture Center is that all of us are always learning. That is one of the things we most enjoy about our work. Because there are so many colleagues on this campus (in both academia and student affairs) who care about LGBTQ+ issues, we always seem to have someone to whom we can turn for ideas, inspiration, assistance, or direction. Even as we face challenges in the year ahead, we are confident that amid any concerns that may arise, we will discover the best way in which we can serve our students.

Programs, Events, and Initiatives

Highlights from the 2016–2017 academic year:

- During the late summer and early weeks of the fall semester, the Center participated in eight resource fairs, including one for international students, resident assistants, students in the Jacobs School of Music, graduate students, and attendees at the [2016 Bloomington PRIDE Festival](#).
- Staff welcomed more than 1,300 incoming students with rainbow popsicles at the annual Culture Fest, snacks at our Welcome Week Block Party, and cool drinks and frozen treats at the Student Involvement Fair.
- The Director attended the annual retreat for students from La Casa at Bradford Woods to discuss our services and the history of the two organizations' strong ties as neighbors on campus.
- Staff met with student activists interested in continuing the [Elimination of Prejudice Week](#) project from the previous year.
- The Social Work Intern worked with La Casa and First Nations Educational and Cultural Center to create an altar for the annual [Día de los Muertos](#) celebration in November. This year's display featured photos and names of those lost in the Pulse Nightclub massacre months earlier, and the Center hosted program attendees, many of whom remarked that they were moved by the display.
- The Graduate Assistant coordinated a series of lunchtime brown bag presentations covering such topics as being out in the Black Church, the value of being honest as a queer athlete, and what it means to be an ally.
- Financial support was given for IU Bloomington students to attend the annual Harvey Milk Dinner at IUPUI.
- The Director served as a judge at the [IU World's Fare](#) sponsored by the Office of International Services.
- The Center worked in conjunction with a Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate student in sponsoring a busload of students who attended the Midwest BLGTA College Conference in Chicago in February. The Center provided funds for registration, lodging, and transportation.
- The Center collaborated with Union Board in bringing two transgender speakers, [Kate Bornstein](#) and Chris Mosier, to campus.
- The Center hosted [The Legacy Wall](#), an interactive display, in the lobby of the Indiana Memorial Union for two weeks. This traveling exhibit highlights the contributions of LGBTQ+ leaders from all walks of life. Union Board cosponsored the exhibit.
- On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Center hosted the [MLK Day Write-In](#), an event that provided students with materials and ideas for writing letters to their elected representatives. The Office Supervisor and Social Work Intern worked together to compile a list of writing tips and prompts, and more than forty letters were mailed from students to state and federal offices. The Director served, once again, as a facilitator for the [Unity Summit](#) on MLK Day.
- The Center hosted a breakfast for Ritch Savin-Williams, a visiting professor at the School of Informatics who was on campus to discuss the coming out process in the age of technology.
- Finally, we concluded the year with our first annual End-of-the-Year Bash. More than one hundred students gathered at the LGBTQ+ Center to eat, dance, and play lawn games, and graduating queer and ally students were recognized with rainbow honor cords.

Accomplishments

A few notable achievements from the year:

- An undergraduate student interning with the Bicentennial Committee interviewed the Director on the unique history of the GLBT Office/LGBTQ+ Culture Center as part of an oral history project. Because of this conversation, 20 scrapbooks outlining that history were donated to the IU Archives.
- Graduate students in the Jacobs School of Music met with the Director to discuss the possibility of staging a [benefit concert](#) to honor the victims of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando. The recital featured LGBTQ composers and singers. The event was held and highly praised by students and staff as well as the Dean of the School of Music.
- An IU Foundation staff member met with the Director to discuss the desire of an IU alumna to donate funds to serve LGBTQ students. The Director agreed to develop a proposal, recommending the provision of funds for student leadership training. These funds would allow students to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars that advocate for LGBTQ concerns. The donor was pleased with the concept, and two graduate students already benefitted from that fund in the spring of 2017.
- Center staff worked with colleagues, once again, to welcome new students to campus through the annual Culture Fest and Block Party during Welcome Week, held the week before class begins in the fall. Hundreds of students visited with Center staff, enjoyed rainbow popsicles, and learned about our services.
- A staff member in the Provost's office requested our participation in the inaugural [First Thursdays](#) project, celebrating the arts on campus. We were honored to be asked and set up a tent at which participants could make zines (small handmade magazines). Both Library Coordinators assisted visitors by demonstrating book-folding techniques, and the tent saw steady traffic during the entire event.
- A faculty member who is active in a local congregation wrote to thank the Center for a program it participated in at the faculty member's church the previous year, which led to that faith community choosing to be designated as a Reconciling (LGBTQ-friendly) Congregation.
- The IU President's office contacted us and requested that we host a luncheon for [Australian High Court Justice Michael Kirby](#) as he visited the campus. Justice Kirby met with and delighted a group of students. He spoke of growing up, coming out, and serving the government as an openly gay man.
- A staff member in the Department of Athletics contacted us about continuing the tradition of sponsoring the annual [Women's Basketball Pride Night](#) in the spring. The Center agreed to assist in hosting duties.
- Bloomington's mayor contacted the Director following the 2016 United States Presidential election regarding his pledge to continue to be supportive of a diverse community.
- A former counseling intern contacted us in response to acts of hatred following the Presidential election and informed us that she wanted to help support "the good work" that we do. A check for \$500 arrived in the Center a few days later.
- A faculty member called our Center seeking someone who could officiate at the wedding of a gay colleague. Medical and financial concerns demanded a quick response. The Director assisted in this request.

- The Director met with an alumnus from California who owns a home in Bloomington and wanted proceeds from the sale of that house, upon his death, to be distributed to our center. An agreement was developed in consultation with an IU Foundation staff member.
- The Director of the Cardinal Stage Company contacted the Center to request cosponsorship of an upcoming play featuring gay characters. The Center contributed and assisted with publicity.
- A large number of people from the campus and community attended the 15th annual [Pride Film Festival](#), which was originally a project of two students seeking support from our center. During the same weekend, students, administrators, and alumni mingled at the annual [GLBT Alumni Association Silent Auction](#) at Grazie Italian Eatery. The annual silent auction raises funds for the [GLBT Alumni Association Emergency Scholarship](#), which provides funds to students who are cut off from family support after coming out.
- The mother of an IU student who writes novels about LGBT youth wrote to say she would like to pass on the proceeds from the sale of her latest book to the Center. The Director responded with thanks.
- The Director served on a panel for a regional College Board Conference in Indianapolis, along with the Vice President for Enrollment Services, the Director of IUPUI's LGBTQ+ Center, and a local high school guidance counselor.
- In response to concerns among colleagues about the way in which diversity issues are reported in the *Indiana Daily Student*, the Director arranged for a meeting with *IDS* staff and culture center directors. A very productive conversation ensued.
- Culture center directors also agreed to assist the Vice President for Diversity in the College of Arts and Sciences by serving on a panel for an all-campus retreat for Academic Advisors and Career Counselors.
- We welcomed several high school students who identified themselves as queer to the Center during their Red Carpet Day visits. Admissions officers were especially grateful to utilize our staff during those visits.
- The IU Latino Faculty and Staff Council awarded the Director with its 2017 Staff Award, which was humbly and gratefully received.
- The Center provided buttons, business cards, and a rainbow flag to an alumni group hosting a [fundraiser in Chicago](#) in memory of Hannah Wilson, an IU student who was murdered in 2016. Hannah served as a volunteer for the Center in 2013. Monies collected will establish a fellowship that will provide financial support for future Center counseling interns.
- The Director participated in the NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Region IV-E Gender and Sexuality Knowledge Community webinar along with a colleague from the University of Illinois in Chicago.
- A graduate student who benefitted from a grant from the GLBT Alumni Association attended the Alumni Association's quarterly meeting to thank them for supporting six students who attended the AIDS Watch lobbying effort in Washington, DC.
- The Office Supervisor and Graduate Assistant attended the 2017 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education's annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The five-day trip allowed the two staff members to meet with and hear from colleagues from around the country, attend workshops, and gather ideas for programming in the coming academic year.
- The Director was invited to participate in an introductory meeting sponsored by Story Corps from National Public Radio. The Story Corps Mobile Unit will be in Bloomington for four weeks in the summer, and show producers sought diverse voices to tell their stories. The Director and his colleague at La Casa participated in an hourlong recording.

Facilities Use

The LGBTQ+ Culture Center building at 705 E. 7th St. enjoys frequent use throughout the year:

- The [LGBTQ+ Library](#) sees the most visitors of any location within the building. Students drop in for a quiet place to study on a daily basis, and many of the student groups supported by the Center meet in this room in the evenings.
- An underutilized conference room upstairs underwent a remodel in early fall of 2016. The room now features couches and stuffed chairs, two computer stations, a large table and rolling chairs, and craft supplies visitors can help themselves to. [Student groups](#) use this space in addition to the Library, and students also enjoy just hanging out between classes. The addition of the lounge offers students a choice of places to read or relax; the Library is often regarded as a quieter study space, while the lounge is generally seen as more of a social space.
- Positive Link provides free and confidential HIV testing at the Center, and testers see three to twelve visitors per week. In previous years, HIV testing took place in the upstairs conference room. Because the conference room was converted to a lounge, and HIV testing must happen in a private space, room 101 (Jamie's office) became the testing room every Thursday, with Jamie relocating for a few hours.
- The building is used to host events and receptions, including the annual Welcome Week block party, receptions for visiting speakers and artists, class presentations, sessions of the Queer Speakers Series brown bag lectures, and our end-of-year celebration.
- The [LGBTQ+ Counseling Intern](#) sees up to ten clients per week in the private counseling office upstairs. In the winter of 2016, the aging furniture was replaced with two comfortable stuffed chairs, which were greatly appreciated by both our Counseling Intern and clients.

Working in an old, converted house has advantages and disadvantages. The homey atmosphere of a former residence contributes to an ambiance of warmth and welcome. However, the aging structure offers some challenges; as the number of students who regularly utilize the building increases, we have to be creative in making the space fit our needs. For example, the counseling office upstairs is inaccessible to anyone who is unable to navigate the narrow spiral staircase. When an individual with limited mobility wishes to utilize the Center's counseling services, one of the professional staff members makes their personal office available for the hour-long session. The upstairs lounge is similarly inaccessible. While the building setup may not always seem ideal, staff members utilize creativity, flexibility, and thorough communication to ensure that our students are well served.

2016–2017 Personnel

Professional Staff

Doug Bauder, Director
Jamie Bartzel, Office Supervisor

Student Staff

Bryant Hayes, Office Assistant (Summer 2016–Summer 2017)
Sydney Ziegler, Office Assistant (Fall 2016–Summer 2017)
Kristin McWilliams, Library Coordinator (Summer 2016–Spring 2017)
Tessa Withorn, Library Coordinator (Summer–Fall 2016)
William McHenry, Library Coordinator (Spring 2017–Summer 2017)
Danielle Hernandez, Graduate Assistant (Fall 2016–Spring 2017)
Chris Owens, Survey Assistant (Fall 2016)

Student Interns

Cameron Kantner, Counseling Intern (Summer 2016–Spring 2017)
Emily Kidwell, Counseling Intern (Summer 2017)
Tevin Jackson, Social Work Intern (Fall 2016–Spring 2017)

LGBTQ+ Advisory Board Members

Nicholae Cline (Faculty)	Chris Owens (Student)
Barbara Dennis (Faculty)	Melanie Payne (Staff)
Craig Dethloff (Staff)	George Pinney (Faculty)
Alex Dowland (Student)	Jessica Proctor (Student)
Krista Glazewski (Faculty)	Mason Salcido (Student)
Paul Hafner (Staff)	Ryne Shadday (Alumni)
Tim Lemper (Faculty)	Rex Sprouse (Faculty)
Barry Magee (Staff)	Brad Stepp (Staff)
Thomas Nelson-Laird (Faculty)	Kiersten Thaxton (Student)
Shane O'Bannon (Student)	

Closing Thoughts

This year's annual report concludes with two stories that summarize our year—a midnight airport run and a dead possum. (May it never be said that our annual reports are dull.)

In the fall, we were privileged to bring to campus [Prof. Jane Ward](#), author of the controversial book *Not Gay*. The evening she was scheduled to arrive in Bloomington, I got a phone call that any travel arranger fears: because her flight was delayed, the prearranged car service would not be able to pick her up that night. As she had engagements planned for the following morning, an overnight stay in Indianapolis was less than ideal, and I didn't feel comfortable sending her careening through dark Indiana woods with an anonymous Uber driver. "Don't worry," I heard myself say. "I'll pick you up." I grabbed a large coffee, cued my high-energy Cher playlist, and headed up IN-37.

Prof. Ward's flight landed without incident, and as we made the trek back to Bloomington, we talked about the previous evening's presidential election results and campus climate in California and Indiana. We discussed childbirth and backyard chickens and unexpected career trajectories. And while it wasn't the way I'd envisioned spending my night, I was the lucky recipient of a soul-healing connection in the midst of a tumultuous and emotionally draining week.

Fast-forward to the spring. Perhaps lured by the Center's aura of welcoming, an ailing possum decided to make a narrow space beneath the building's foundation its final resting place. Once the weather began to warm, it made its presence known with a powerful stench. While our ever-reliable maintenance team quickly dealt with the animal, the overwhelming odor lingered. Two student groups were scheduled to meet that evening, but the building was unusable. I placed quick calls to our neighbors—La Casa and the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center—who agreed to lend us space that night, with only a few hours' notice.

This academic year has been shaped in large part by the bitter, contentious 2016 Presidential campaign and election. Students have entered the Center with concerns about human rights, future educational opportunities, and access to health care. "What do I do?" they ask. "How do I cope?" I answer that what gets us through difficult times is our community; indeed, community is the one thing we've always had and the only thing we know we'll have in the future. We cling to one another and stand up for each other. We gather in times of celebration and of mourning. We pick each other up from the airport in the middle of the night, and we rearrange our schedules and our spaces to accommodate each other.

Together, we move onward.

Jamie Bartzel