SSW TBLG DEAN’S MATTERS INITIATIVE
YEAR IN REVIEW
Submitted by
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Mike Wolf, Shannon Bacon and Samantha Wellman
MSW Candidates and Initiative Work Study
SEPTEMBER 2012-MAY 2013

Leigh A. Robertson, LMSW is the faculty advisor, with consultation and support from Associate Dean Michael Spencer and Elizabeth (Betsy) Voshel, Field Director and Clinical Faculty. MSW candidates, Samantha Wellman, Shannon Bacon, Mike Wolf MSW were the student work study coordinators.

History

In September 2002, President Mary Sue Coleman met with representatives of the Queer Visibility Caucus and created a task force to research the campus climate for TBLG Faculty, staff and students. The TBLG Report with recommendations was released by the Office of the Provost.

SSW Dean Paula Meares Allen formed the Dean’s TBLG Advisory Task Group. The charge to the Task Group was the following:

Reviewing the Provost’s TBLG Report and priorities within SSW

Review all materials from and representing the SSW to ensure proper inclusion of the TBLG Community and TBLG issues

Campus wide TBLG groups included in new student orientation and Doctoral seminar materials.

Seek out and secure field placements for those wishing to work with TBLG communities

Provide training for field instructors regarding TBLG issues and communities.

Provide faculty and staff support in furthering their learning and skills regarding TBLG issues.
Offer formal and informal presentations and educational opportunities regarding TBLG issues and concerns for the SSW community

In 2007, the SSW TBLG Task Force update recommended the creation of a SSW TBLG Matters committee.

Goals:

To provide students faculty and staff with tools and basic knowledge related to the TBLG communities and other minority groups based on categories of sexual and gender identity.

To educate about gender identity, gender expression, and the realities of life for transgender people.

To focus on those who are often invisible inside the TBLG movement: transgender, gender variant youth, TBLG workers, TBLG people of color.

Since 2007, the TBLG Dean Matter’s Initiative with faculty and student leadership, continues to offer programming and advocacy to meet these primary goals. Programming has included Out in Field workshops, Transgender Day of Remembrance events and speakers, small group discussion groups for TBLG student affinity groups, Teach Ins about local, state, and federal legislation about TBLG people, ally trainings and mini conferences for students and faculty.
This Year in Review highlights the Initiative’s work from September 2012-August 2013.

Calendar of Events

National Coming Out Day events:

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

History
National coming out day was founded on October 11, 1988 to mark the anniversary of a groundbreaking 1987 march on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

Campus Support
- The Spectrum Center
  - Gender Explorers — Support group for students exploring gender identity
  - Transform — Trans identified students and allies
  - Bisexual — Bisexual students and allies
  - Aces — Asexual students and allies

Upcoming GLBTQIA Events
- 10/8 - 6-8pm Free Rapid HIV Testing (Spectrum Center)
- 10/9 - 6:30pm “Yo Soy...” Perspectives on Queer Latinidad Photo Gallery Showing and Panel Discussion (Michigan Union Arts Lounge)
- 10/9-10/11 - 10am-2pm OUTbreak Bake Sale & Info Fair (SPH Lobby)
- 10/10 - 8-9:30pm “Coming Out As...” Dialogue Event (Michigan Union Wolverine Room)
- 10/11 - 4-6pm Opening Reception for LGBT Exhibit at the Bentley Museum
- 10/12 - 12-1pm Campus Coming Out Rally (Central Campus Diag)
- 10/21 - 10am-4pm Ally Training (Spectrum Center) Register Online at: http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/programs/allies
Transgender Day of Remembrance
Featuring Carrie Davis, MSW

November 15, 2012
SSWB, Room B760
12:15 — 1:30

Lunch Provided

Carrie Davis, MSW, is Director of Community Services at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City. She is a community organizer, advocate, and educator working with healthcare providers, schools, and government agencies to address LGBT concerns at the national, state, and local levels. She has received numerous awards for her work. Carrie joined the Hunter College School of Social Work as Adjunct Lecturer and has taught there since 2007.
On November 15, 2012, the Dean’s Initiative collaborated with Spectrum Center to host transgender Social Worker and activist Carrie Davis for a lunch-hour presentation at the School of Social Work. Davis is Director of Community Services at the LGBT Community Center in New York City and has received numerous awards for her work as a community organizer, advocate, and educator. She currently serves as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hunter College School of Social Work. Lunch was provided for all attendees. A total of 40 people attended this event.

**Evaluation Results** (N=14)

![Evaluation Results Graph]

- **Speaker Quality**: 10 Excellent, 2 Good, 2 Fair, 0 Poor
- **Program Content**: 12 Excellent, 2 Good, 0 Fair, 0 Poor
- **Meeting Site**: 8 Excellent, 4 Good, 2 Fair, 0 Poor

- **Was sufficient time provided for the presentation?**
  - Yes: 13, No: 1

- **Did the program cover the topics you expected?**
  - Yes: 14

- **Was the program beneficial to you?**
  - Yes: 14
Comments & Suggestions for future discussion

Excellent choice for a guest speaker. Possibly make event longer, more presenters, centered around legislative issue locally or nationally, panel. Would like a broader context forum inclusive of post/pre op issues. Custody of children, divorce issues. A panel to share personal experiences; advocacy efforts in other states

Reflection from a recent graduate:

“During my time here at the SSW, I have truly begun an unsuspected journey of self-discovery. This journey has increased my self-awareness and provoked me to widen my scope of understanding of others as well. I have taken several courses that have challenged my ideas and thoughts, but until I took the SW 707 LGBTQ course, I never challenged my own identity or questioned what being an ally truly meant. I am ashamed to admit that I never put much thought into heterosexual privilege, until Laura Saunders forced me to question everything around me. Her class also led me to attend Carrie Davis’ presentation during Transgender Awareness week which was sponsored by the Dean’s Initiative on TBLG Matters. This presentation gave me the opportunity to see some of the struggles of the transgender community. I never would have known about how difficult choosing a restroom may be for someone or that carrying condoms could incriminate and endanger someone. With my new sense of awareness, I can become a strong ally and take it upon myself to educate others. SSW and the LGBTQI community have not only assisted in pushing me beyond the barriers that I, myself and society have implemented, but to question those barriers and ask how I can be an effective ambassador for change.” Nicole Korte, MSW
“Gender Inclusive Bathroom Campaign: “Peeing in Peace”

YOU SAY,

PORCELAIN THRONE

WE SAY,

SAFE SPACE

IT’S NOT JUST SEMANTICS, IT’S A REVOLUTION

JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION ON GENDER-INCLUSIVE RESTROOMS IN THE SSW
MONDAY, MARCH 11 at 12PM
In the SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ECC

SPONSORED BY
THE DEAN’S INITIATIVE ON TBLG MATTERS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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On March 11th, 2013 the Dean’s Initiative hosted a teach-in about the importance of multi-stall gender inclusive restrooms. This teach-in is part of an ongoing effort to educate and bring awareness to the School on the importance of safe bathroom spaces for transgender and gender nonconforming folks. We designed creative posters to spark interest in the issue of gender inclusive bathrooms among the SSW community, tabled at the SSW and distributed information about gender inclusive bathrooms, and worked with SSW administration and facilities staff to explore potential options for gender inclusive restrooms.

The Teach In offered people the opportunity to critically think about the broader impact of gendered bathroom spaces. It fostered a conversation with members of the school of social work community around transgender issues and offered everyone the opportunity to think critically about bathroom space. Cameron Breither, a Higher Education graduate intern from Spectrum Center, discussed other efforts around campus related to gender inclusive bathroom, in particular, a phone application with a map of all the gender inclusive bathrooms on campus. At this event we were able to provide a forum for students, staff and faculty to dialogue about the personal and political issues regarding bathroom spaces in the School of Social Work.

Social Work Education for Competent, Socially Just Practice with LGBTQ People: Opportunities and Challenges
March 22, 2013

This training, led by Michael Woodford, was well attended by faculty and students and there was a mutual resolve to continue working with the SSW to offer TBLGQIA competent social just practice.

Shelley Craig, MSW, PhD, is Assistant Professor with the Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. Her research is grounded in 20 years of community practice and addresses health and mental health
and the impact of the service delivery system on sexual minority populations as well as preparing social workers for competent practice. Recent projects have tested targeted interventions for sexual minority youth, examined the influence of the media on resiliency and identity, and studied the efficacy of a health promotion program for minority youth involved with the juvenile justice system. She is currently conducting the cross-national study, *Social Work Speaks Out: A Study of the Experiences and Readiness to Practice of Social Work Students*.

**Adrienne Dessel**, MSW, PhD, LMSW, is Associate Director of the Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, and Lecturer with the School of Social Work, University of Michigan. She has 20 plus years of experience providing clinical and community-based services to diverse client populations and organizations. Her research focuses on attitudes and prejudice reduction, and intergroup dialogue as a method of prejudice intervention and community building, including in regard to sexual orientation. She has written about LGBTQ issues and religion in social work. She is currently co-editing (with Dr. Rebecca Bolen) an invited book on the topic, *Conservative Christianity and Sexual Orientation in Social Work: Privilege, Oppression, and the Pursuit of Human Rights*, CSWE Press.

**Sara Fitzgerald**, BA, is a second year MSW student at the University of Michigan. She is specializing in interpersonal practice and mental health. Currently completing a field placement at University of Michigan’s Counseling and Psychological Services, she provides individual and group therapy to students. After graduation she plans to work with LGBTQ identified individuals in individual and group therapy and become a certified sex therapist. Since entering the School of Social Work, she has been a member of the Queer Social Work Alliance.

**Lorraine Gutierrez**, MSW, PhD, LMSW, is Professor with the School of Social Work and Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan. Her teaching and scholarship focus on multicultural and community organization practice and methods for multicultural education in higher education. She brings to her work community-based practice and research in multiethnic communities in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit, and Seattle. Current projects include identifying methods for multicultural community-based research and practice, multicultural education for social work practice, and identifying effective methods for learning about social justice. She has also studied social work faculty’s support for multicultural education. Her contributions to undergraduate education have been recognized by the Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship.
Lori Messinger, MA, MSW, PhD, is Professor and Director of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Dr. Messinger's research addresses social work practice with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations; comprehensive community planning processes; cultural competence in social work education and practice; and organizational change processes, especially in higher education institutions. She has published widely in social work, social psychology, and higher education journals. She co-authored (with Dr. Deana Morrow), Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression in Social Work Practice: Working with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People, Columbia University Press (2006).

Leigh Robertson, MA, LMSW, ACSW, is Field Liaison and Lecturer with the School of Social Work, University of Michigan. Previously, she worked as a medical social worker and community-based social worker in the mental health and domestic violence fields. She served as Director of Cleveland’s Lesbian and Gay Community Center in the early 1990s. She has a long history of providing anti-heterosexism workshops to social workers and allied professions. In 2010, the Office of Field Instruction made a commitment to provide and maintain a "Safe Zone" for TBLGQIA students where social work values are modeled. Leigh was appointed the OFI’s Out in the Field liaison working with her field faculty team to provide students an open space for dialogue about managing disclosure in field placement. She has provided Out in the Field trainings to over 120 field instructors. In 2011, Leigh was appointed by the Dean to work with MSW students to lead the Dean’s TBLG Matters Initiative.

Laura Sanders, MSW, LMSW, is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Social Work. In addition to working as a private therapist, consultant, and community organizer in Ann Arbor and surrounding communities, she teaches interpersonal practice courses at the School of Social Work. As a member of, and ally to, the local TBLG community, she has been an activist on personal, political and professional fronts. From her work as the co-director of what now is the University’s Spectrum Center as the “Lesbian Advocate” in the mid-80s, to pioneering foster parenting and adoption for TLBLG families, and currently teaching the LGBT specific course at the School, she has devoted her life to activism and education within the community.

Michael Woodford, MSW, PhD, is Assistant Professor with the School of Social Work, University of Michigan. His research addresses the health and wellbeing of sexual minorities in the context of oppression and discrimination, and sexual prejudice and social inclusion of LGBT people. Much of Dr. Woodford’s current research examines the relationship between campus climate, including sexual orientation microaggressions, and the wellbeing of sexual minority college students. His other research interests include the nature of heterosexist attitudes, including among social work students and faculty, as well as the predictors of support for LGBT civil rights.
On April 11, 2013, members of the Dean’s Initiative presented at the NASW Conference in Lansing, Michigan. The presentation focused on the School of Social Work’s Out in Field Initiative. Leigh Robertson provided a background and overview of the initiative, and students shared about their personal experiences in field placement and the value of the initiative. The presenters also provided participants with an overview of current TBLGQ legislative issues and challenges, introductory terminology, models of TBLG identity development, and a scale for levels of attitude toward TBLGQ people. Participants were highly engaged in this process, and the presentation was very interactive.
The Dean's Initiative co-sponsored an LGBTQ Ally Bystander Intervention Workshop with Queer Social Work Alliance and the Spectrum Center on May 14. This interactive and action-oriented workshop helped participants enhance their confidence and motivation to act as an ally. Participants learned about various skills for intervening in a bystander situation. 6 Social Work students participated in the training, which was led by trained student facilitators (two of whom were also social work students).