

LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Caucus

General Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2022, 9am

Meeting called to order by President Sophia Ziegler at 9:03 a.m.

- I. Hellos and Welcomes!
 - a. A tough time politically, but it's great to be in the community today
- II. The Disability Faculty & Staff Caucus, Amber K Gerace
 - a. Introducing the Disability Caucus to us! Four founding members have been working through the fall semester to get this group off the ground and supply some much-needed representation
 - b. The first informational meeting will be held on Friday, March 25 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom – please contact Amber via email (amberkg@lsu.edu) for the Zoom link
 - c. The DFSC seeks to represent and provide support for the disabled community on campus, including mental and physical disabilities
 - i. Promoting awareness about disability concerns, advocating on behalf of the community, and act as a representative for disabled faculty, staff and graduate students to bring issues to the university administration
 - d. Open floor for questions:
 - i. **Sophie:** has the DFCS finalized all paperwork?
Amber: Not complete, but well on the road to “official” status
 - ii. **Sophie:** Can you share details about the first meeting?
Amber: Leadership overview, what to expect from the caucus, seeking executive officer applications, answering questions and soliciting suggestions for action items
- III. Jane Cassidy, Interim Vice President for the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX
 - a. Update on the physical campus space: There is a room available in the basement of Coates that is being considered. Dr. Cassidy does not have ownership of the space yet and is waiting on a cost estimate to outfit the space with furniture or any other updates needed.
 - i. Gender-neutral bathroom near the space
 - ii. Safety concerns: we currently do not have the ability to staff the space and monitor activities. There has been some discussion about moving the DEI office to that same space to allow for monitoring in the space, but there is no assurance that this will happen
 - iii. At present, there's no finalized space selection until these other pieces like staffing can be finalized. Sophie has inquired about whether the university could supply funding for this role, but no indication as to whether this could happen.
 - b. Open floor for questions/comments:
 - i. **Sophie:** the discussions of space largely come from the previous Roadmap to Diversity work and student feedback (as well as faculty/staff feedback) shows the need for a safe, physical space especially for our community members who

are not publicly out.

Dr. Cassidy: There is next to no dissention for this project, and the university is aware that it is needed. However, until the safety piece can be finalized, the university is unwilling to move forward with designating a space so that it would best for all users.

- ii. **Alexandra:** has there been an effort to see what our peer institutions are doing re: physical space? I can connect you with folks from my previous institution in Tennessee regarding their space process.

Dr. Cassidy: That would be great. I have talked to a few folks about what they've done, but additional information would be very helpful. If this is something that the caucus could take on, and compile information into a report, that would be very helpful for moving this process forward. If we could get information from 4-5 campuses you feel are doing this correctly, that would be helpful.

Alexandra: I do feel like it would be helpful from an administrative standpoint if you or someone who supports you in your office could either ask or supply some questions regarding the logistical questions.

Dr. Cassidy: I will connect with some of my SEC folks and with Summer and Dr. Luz about how to best reach out to other institutions.

Michael Bibler: When Chris Barrett and I originally reached out to folks a few years ago, there was a bit of apprehension from the folks we contacted i.e. who are you and why are you asking? It may be helpful for us to at least CC you on email communications to add more gravity to the request.

Dr. Cassidy: These are valid points and concerns, so thank you.

Sophie: We can pull together some folks on our end to help with this information gathering.

- iii. Dr. Cassidy (closing remarks): we will work to get the space, funding, and security in order and continue to provide more updates as we progress.
- c. Updates on DEI Office from Dr. Cassidy: We are very close to finalizing the reorganization of our unit. I am hoping we can announce it shortly, but I do think you all will be happy with how diversity is represented. There will be finding for new positions. The OMA will service all our affinity groups on campus and we are expecting to bring on more staff and operational help.

Additionally, I am very certain that the request to transition the Women's Center to the Center for Gender Equity will go through. There was some trepidation last year especially with ongoing politics re: Title IX, but I feel certain that when I put this request through after the legislative session in May or June, it will be approved.

We will be bringing on an Assistant Director to support Summer as well as an additional graduate student to oversee the LGBTQ+ Project.

We also plan to bring on a group that will specifically support and recruit students from underrepresented groups to the university. This group will work with Enrollment Management, Study Abroad, Geaux Center, etc. to better support the academic

experiences for these students starting in their first year.

This will involve a cohesive strategy where we partner with the caucuses and our units in the Office of DEI and we have prepared some solid metrics to ensure that this initiative is successful.

IV. Mental Health Working Group Report, Leah Duncan

- a. Working to get more LGBTQ+ mental health services on board with LSU First
- b. We have met with one previous provider to learn why they left the LSU First plan: low pay, overwhelmed with requests, and ultimately a financial loss for their practice.
- c. We have compiled a list of providers we would like to see covered as well as a list of current providers who are affirming or at least community friendly.
- d. Clint Bordelon: our focus has primarily been on the LSU First plan, and we have not dived into the options with the Blue Cross offering from the university.

If there is anyone who is interested in working with the group, please reach out. There are a lot of complications with LSU's process, so the fact-finding portion of our work is taking longer than originally anticipated.

V. Open Floor/General Discussion

- a. Alexandra: there is an updated survey for seeking caucus endorsed businesses and organizations. You can access the form here: https://lsu.formstack.com/forms/lgbtq_faculty_staff_caucus_recommended_local_businesses.

Once we gather more suggestions, we will include this information on the caucus website as a resource for folks. Depending on the number of submissions we receive, there may be an opportunity for more project-based work in this vein. Please contact Alexandra at achias7@lsu.edu if you would like to get involved.

- b. Alex Torres: information was sent via email to the caucus regarding our upcoming speakers (one is today in the Student Union). Hoping to see some folks there, either in person or on Zoom!
- c. Summer Steib: There will not be a super robust calendar for Women's History month programming due to both the Mardi Gras and spring break holidays, but we are hosting a few programs. I will send all details via email!

We're also presenting the "What I Wore" exhibit and are currently accepting submissions from survivors of SA. Submissions can be either the actual clothing they were wearing or a representation. This is a great opportunity to center survivors and their stories, and we now have a digital submission option for anyone to submit their story.

- d. Michelle Carter, OMA: Planning our Lavendar graduation for the spring and we are also planning our Trans day of Celebration. We're planning a clothing swap as well, so please look for communications from Savannah Maddox regarding those details.
- e. Dr. Luz Randolph: We are launching a campaign called "I Woke Up Like This" to capture the experiences of minority students on campus so that we can share those experiences and encourage more discussions of intersectionality on campus.

We are also putting out special messaging for the upcoming “Day of Giving”.

- f. Clint Bordelon: if the caucus could help with the funding for some lavender graduation cords for our students, I think it would be a great way to support our student community.

VI. Pleasantries and Goodbyes

Meeting adjourned by Sophie Ziegler at 10:01 a.m.