

November 1, 2011

Dr. James L. Raper, President
Alliance for LGBT Equity at UAB
Office of Community Care
UAB Campus - CCB 245, zip 2050
1530 3rd Avenue, South
Birmingham, AL 35294-1150

Dear Dr. Raper:

Your letter to President Garrison, dated February 19, 2011, was forwarded to my office for review. An ad hoc subcommittee of the UAB Diversity Council was asked to review the issues included in the letter and make recommendations to the full council. The ad hoc subcommittee made recommendations (see attached) and they were discussed by the full council. The vice president for equity and diversity then met with the president regarding the recommendations after which they were placed on the agenda of the president's cabinet. Dr. Jose Fernandez, at Dr. Louis Dale's invitation, presented the recommendations to the cabinet. Dr. Fernandez made a presentation on these issues to the cabinet. After his presentation and the cabinet's consideration of the recommendations, it was determined that the following list of issues needed to be resolved and individual cabinet members were assigned the task of reviewing and making recommendations:

- a. Review and revise existing policies to advance an environment that is free of all types of harassment and discrimination.
- b. Perform a comprehensive review of successful LGBT resource offices and centers at similar universities to create a feasible plan to form an LGBT Resource Office at UAB.
- c. Support the Safe Zone Program by an integration of resources and communication with the OVPED and UAB Human Resources.
- d. Capitalize on social and mass media to disseminate a video clip that will include issues pertinent to the LGBT community and relevant staff, faculty and students showing the video as part of diversity training and orientation materials.
- e. Deliver a message by administrators regarding UAB's position as it relates to support of LGBT students, faculty and staff and zero tolerance for harassment.

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- f. Add links to the OVPED webpage that will provide information about the resources and services available to the LGBT community at UAB and the greater Birmingham community and other institutions.
- g. Encourage the administration to consider as part of the educational approach to inclusiveness, a book related to LGBT diversity as the campus book to be discussed as part of the college freshmen campaign.
- h. Perform a comprehensive review of all benefit options and policies to ensure overall parity within the LGBT community at UAB.
- i. In response to broad student requests, create a subcommittee on LGBT issues within the Diversity Council to monitor outcomes and ensure that the entire scope of possibilities in promoting a safe work environment for LGBT students, faculty and staff are examined.

The following is an update on these issues:

- a. Review and revise existing policies to advance an environment that is free of all types of harassment and discrimination.
 - UAB has long-standing policies and practices to ensure a harassment and discrimination free environment for our faculty, staff and students. To strengthen our commitment in this area we have revised the Equal Opportunity Policy to become The Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy. In addition to the federally defined classes of discrimination, this revised policy provides that UAB prohibits, and will not tolerate discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. **We expect to have this revised policy released this fall.**
- b. Perform a comprehensive review of successful LGBT resource offices and centers at similar universities to create a feasible plan to form an LGBT Resource Office at UAB.
 - Dr. Suzanne Austin, Vice Provost for Student and Faculty Success, and HR Chief Alesia Jones have been assigned to look at the feasibility of a Diversity Resource Office at UAB.
- c. Support the Safe Zone Program by an integration of resources and communication with the OVPED and UAB Human Resources.
 - The Safe Zone Program was featured in the June 2011, Equity and Diversity Magazine.
 - The director of Safe Zone is a UAB Diversity Awareness Education (DAE) instructor.
- d. Capitalize on social and mass media to disseminate a video clip that will include issues pertinent to the LGBT community and relevant staff, faculty and students showing the video as part of diversity training and orientation materials.
 - Ms. Dale Turnbough, Director of Media Relations, has been assigned this task.

- e. Deliver a message by administrators regarding UAB's position as it relates to support of LGBT students, faculty and staff and zero tolerance for harassment.
 - President Carol Garrison has placed a voice message on the Equity and Diversity website underscoring support for LGBT students, faculty and staff.
"...we draw strength, wisdom and purpose from an array of backgrounds and perspectives, ethnicities, nationalities and faiths coming together to achieve individual dreams and our collective vision for an even better UAB, a better Birmingham and better world...The LGBT community is an integral part of that robust diversity..."
- f. Add links to the OVPED webpage that will provide information about the resources and services available to the LGBT community at UAB and the greater Birmingham community and other institutions.
 - The UAB Alliance for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allies (LGBTAA) <http://www.uab.edu/alliance/index.html> - link has been added to the Equity and Diversity website.
- g. Encourage the administration to consider as part of the educational approach to inclusiveness, a book related to LGBT diversity as the campus book to be discussed as part of the college freshmen campaign.
 - Any person at UAB may nominate a book for discussion. A committee of faculty, staff and students reviews the nominated books and recommends three to the president. The president meets with Dr. Marilyn Kurata, chair of the book selection committee, prior to making her decision.
- h. Perform a comprehensive review of all benefit options and policies to ensure overall parity within the LGBT community at UAB,
 - With the recent State approval that our voluntary life and voluntary AD&D plans can recognize sponsored dependents, all UAB benefit plans (with the exception of flexible spending accounts due to IRS regulations) are available to sponsored dependents and/or the children of sponsored dependents. This includes medical, dental, vision and educational assistance.
 - All HR policies that define allowances for spouse and/or children have been modified to include sponsored dependents and children of sponsored dependents. These policies include sick leave, sick leave donation, FMLA, nepotism, and bereavement.
- i. In response to broad student requests, create a subcommittee on LGBT issues within the Diversity Council to monitor outcomes and ensure that the entire scope of possibilities in promoting a safe work environment for LGBT students, faculty and staff are examined.
 - The Diversity Council has been re-organized to work through standing subcommittees. One is a subcommittee on LGBT issues. This subcommittee will monitor outcomes and review the scope of possibilities in promoting a safe work environment for LGBT students, faculty and staff.

I believe that the current activities and strides made to this point, as well as, the aforementioned attainable future goals greatly enhance and demonstrate UAB's core value of equity and diversity for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louis Dale".

Louis Dale, Ph.D.

Vice President for Equity and Diversity

LD/dj

c: President Carol Garrison
Elizabeth Casswell