

# CAL POLY

California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0208

Student Life & Leadership  
(805) 756-2476 • (805) 756-5836 fax

7 December 2011

Dear President Armstrong,

In keeping with the university's goal for inclusive excellence, we are writing formally to request that a Cal Poly LGBTQIA<sup>1</sup> Faculty and Staff Association be recognized on campus. As you may be aware, last year's Student Life external review (see attached) assessed services provided for Cal Poly LGBTQIA faculty, staff, and students, then recommended that a faculty and staff organization be established so as to better meet the needs of our community.

As outlined in our mission statement:

The LGBTQIA Faculty Staff Association will provide a safe and welcoming environment to empower, attract, and retain LGBTQIA faculty and staff. We aim to foster an inclusive campus climate, advocate for equitable policies, support the Pride Center, promote education on LGBTQIA issues, as well as offer professional development and social opportunities to faculty and staff. In so doing, our organization seeks to develop a much-needed sense of community among LGBTQIA staff and faculty at Cal Poly plus increase multicultural competency for our campus as a whole. Through outreach and advocacy we strive to become role models for LGBTQIA faculty, staff, and students, whom we recognize as vital aspects of our diverse Cal Poly campus.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or a designee to provide additional clarification, if need be. We would also appreciate a timely response so that we can move forward expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Erin Echols, Student Life & Leadership,  
Chair LGBTQIA Faculty Staff Association Interest Committee

**Interest Committee Members:**

Dr. Martin Bragg, Health and Counseling Services  
Melissa Bullock, Associated Students, Inc.  
Dr. Matthew Carlton, Statistics  
Osvaldo Del Valle, University Housing  
Suzanne Fritz, University Housing  
Dr. Julie Garcia, Psychology & Child Development  
Dr. Sarah Haag, Health and Counseling Services  
Dr. Brian Kennelly, Modern Languages and Literatures  
Charlotte Rinaldi, Career Services  
Ana Ybarra, Financial Aid

<sup>1</sup> An acronym for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning Intersex Ally.



In the spring of 2011, the Pride Center, as a part of the Student Life & Leadership Department, underwent an external review of programs, services, and climate based on the CAS model. Below are selected comments and recommendations that relate to the faculty and staff component of LGBTQIA services and climate at Cal Poly.

Comments from faculty and staff to the external review team during open sessions:

- Faculty stated that students feel frustrated by heterosexual classroom environments, in which lectures only provide heterosexual examples and case studies. Students share with faculty that it is harder to come out to Engineering, Science, and Agriculture faculty, as well as individual faculty in all departments.
- Faculty noted that LGBT faculty “come out selectively.” No LGBT faculty network exists, and it is hard to retain LGBT faculty on campus. Faculty do not use Facebook as much as students, and would be more likely to read an email newsletter.
- Staff commented extensively on campus climate, noting that same-sex couples cannot hold hands on campus (or off), and that they witness people pointing and laughing at same-sex couples. Staff noted that religious high schools funnel students to Cal Poly, and question the LGBT cultural competency of these students. Staff also noted students perceiving a gap between Social Justice activism and LGBT activism.

### External Review Recommendations:

The Review was conducted using the CAS review for LGBT programs. This review focuses on areas of LGBT services that should exist on campus.

**Need: Identification of and networking with role models and mentors.**

- **Current Service:** The Pride Center does not connect students with role models and staff/faculty mentors in a formal way.

**Need: Identification of courses with LGBT specific content especially at institutions with no LGBT studies or similar programs**

- **Current Service:** The Pride Center promotes the 1 course offered on LGBT Literature.

**Need: Creation within the institution of policies and procedures that promote and maintain a hospitable climate. Advocacy for the creation and maintenance of a campus climate that is free from harassment and violence**

- **Current:** Pride Center staff are not involved in formal campus-wide efforts to address policies and procedures. The Pride Center has the opportunity to work with individual departments to influence departmental policies and procedures.