



## **GLBT Task Force Recommendations : An Overview**



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# Overview

- A report regarding the campus climate towards GLBT faculty and staff populations was formally requested by Dr. William Destler (Winter Quarter, 2011).
  - The request was based on feedback from two previous climate studies which cited concerns about experiences of GLBT populations within the work force.
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- The Task Force regarding the Climate Study for GLBT issues was charged to study data and summarize it in a report. The data was to be based on:
  - Completion of appropriate assessment, research, benchmarking, & best practices.
  - In the end, the reporting process included data from:
    - 6 focus groups, a campus wide survey of faculty/staff, and 93 research (benchmark/best practices) citations.
- The Task Force mission (and Task Force composition) was later expanded to include GLBT students.



# Findings

- 40 page report was generated, with 17 recommendations which fell within four general categories:
  1. Organizational structure and governance;
  2. Curriculum (development of a GLBT minor or concentration);
  3. Policy review and implementation; and
  4. Education and development of administrators, leaders, and managers/supervisors.
  - Some recommendations required further investigation and auditing.
  - Some recommendations were specific proposals for change.
- General feedback suggests that the RIT climate for the GLBT populations is generally positive.
  - Data demonstrated some isolated incidents of noticeable homophobia.
  - Most dynamics focused around a climate of heterosexism (failing to identify GLBT populations as significant or contributing populations).

# Examples related to *Organizational Structure and Governance*

1	Incorporate and integrate GLBT populations into The Framework for Inclusive Excellence.
2	Establish a GLBT faculty/staff advisory committee that will advise the President, RIT administration, and Human Resources regarding GLBT related issues on campus.
11	Establish a full-time, permanent professional director for the GLBT Center (with competitive salary and benefits), and with appropriate staff support positions.
17	Design and establish a strategy to identify, assess, and recruit prominent GLBT leaders for the Board of Trustees, for representation at all levels.



# In summary

- Strengths

1. RIT has created a GLBT Center with a (temporary) Director position.
2. RIT has a history of supporting its GLBT student organizations.
3. The number of gay students coming to college each year appears to be more advanced developmentally, but with needs nevertheless (anecdotal).
4. The GLBT Climate Study report can open doors of dialogue.
5. RIT has a number of gay-friendly statements and policies regarding gay marriage (as related to employee benefits) and Domestic Partnerships. The upcoming Student Health survey (by The American College Health Association) will provide data regarding the GLBT population (size, descriptive data, and some aspects of quality of life).
7. The Fall 2014-15 version of the RIT Employee and Engagement Climate Study, (contracted through Avatar HR Solutions) will for the first time ask employees to self-identify their sexual orientation and gender identity.

# In summary

- Areas of Opportunity

1. The total number of GLBT and Questioning students and faculty/staff on campus is unknown, because they differ developmentally:
  - Being out, coming out, experimenting, and being in denial all involve a different set of developmental needs and responses.
2. Surveying methods have prevented any effective data gathering regarding the number or quality of life for this population
3. Changing laws regarding the civil rights of the GLBT populations can lead to unexpected shifts in social acceptance and policy determination for students, faculty, or staff.
4. Professional staff (and thus, services and programs) remain temporary at best.

