

NDSU LGBTQ PROGRAMS

July 18, 2012

Dear NDSU Safe Zone Ally,

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to providing a safe and inclusive campus community for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning students, faculty and staff. When we held our first Safe Zone Ally Training in May 2001, our expectations were quite modest – we hoped to gradually spread the word and get a few key leaders from across the campus to agree to be Allies. However, over the past 11 years, the program has continued to grow in support and visibility by:

- Reaching thousands of students, faculty and staff who have attended trainings;
- Expanded Safe Zone Ally Training to include four different modules:
 - Becoming a Safe Zone Ally
 - Transgender 101: Understanding Gender Identity and Expression
 - Safe Zone at Work
 - Becoming an UPstander;
- Created an online training program through Blackboard (you can find it in your “Organizations” tab);
- Created LGBTQ Dakota Campus Alliance, through a grant from the PFund Foundation, to expand Safe Zone training and resources to regional colleges and universities;
- Sponsored campus LGBTQ programs such as Coming Out Week, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Kate Bornstein lecture, etc.;
- Sponsored community LGBTQ programs such as FM Pride and the annual LGBT Film Festival;
- Developed Lavender Graduation to recognize the academic accomplishments of local college graduates, in partnership with MSUM, Concordia College, MState, and the FM Pride Collective;
- Offer support groups for transgender students, students who are just coming out, and more;
- Developed “Introduction to LGBTQ Studies” in cooperation with Women and Gender Studies program, an undergraduate course offered in Spring 2011 and 2012;
- Development of a Gender Neutral Restroom campus map;
- Achieved an overall 4-Star rating as an LGBT-Friendly Campus from Campus Pride.

Our training program and materials have become models for other institutions seeking to develop similar programs and our trainers have been invited to speak at several institutions across the region. We have even received requests for information about our program from universities as far away as New York and Arizona.

As the Safe Zone program at NDSU continues to evolve, so do the needs of our LGBTQ campus community members. We have outgrown the original intent of this program – to educate about sexual orientation/gender identity and to develop a safe and supportive network of Allies for individuals who

identify as LGBTQ. Therefore, I am pleased to announce some exciting new changes to our existing program.

We will be transitioning many of the programs and services that have currently been offered under the Safe Zone name to a new program area, **LGBTQ Programs**. Newly designated resource space for LGBTQ student and faculty/staff groups has been identified in the Equity and Diversity Center and will be available at the start of the Fall 2012 Semester. **LGBTQ Programs** will remain under my direction with support from a graduate assistant who will continue to develop and present Safe Zone Ally Training sessions. We believe that this change will better reflect the needs of our campus as well as the level of support programs and services that we have already been providing.

Throughout the summer, the Safe Zone website will be modified to reflect these changes. All the resources and information currently available on our website will remain available to those wishing to find them; however, many of these items will be migrated over to our new **LGBTQ Programs** website (www.ndsu.edu/lgbtq). The Safe Zone website (www.ndsu.edu/safezone) will remain active and will continue to offer an up-to-date list of Safe Zone Allies, schedule of training opportunities, and information about the Safe Zone training module available on Blackboard.

Allies will find that **LGBTQ Programs** will launch new opportunities this fall for networking and professional development focused around the ways in which we can all work to become more active and resourceful Allies. These opportunities will be posted on the LGBTQ Programs website. Examples will include discussion groups organized for:

- Faculty interested in sharing ideas and resources to create safe and inclusive classrooms, incorporating this area of diversity into course learning objectives, addressing homophobic comments from students, etc.;
- Staff interested in creating inclusive student work places and leadership/co-curricular programs;
- Students who wish to be more active as Allies or to create safe and inclusive student organizations;
- Opportunities for all Allies to get more involved in the Safe Zone program.

As Safe Zone Allies, it is important to us that we keep you all updated on advancements related to this program area. We are very appreciative for all that you do to create safe and welcoming and hope that we can continue to count on your support as we move forward with these new developments.

LGBTQ Programs is coordinating with NDSU Alumni to connect with LGBT Alum. In addition to our new Facebook page (NDSU LGBTQIA Alumni), we are pleased to announce two new Homecoming 2012 events:

- A reception for all LGBT alumni and their families and partners, current LGBT students who are 21 and older, and supportive Allies. The event will take place on Friday, October 5 from 5-7pm in the Stoker Room at the Hotel Donaldson in downtown Fargo.
- A reception in the Equity and Diversity Center immediately following the Homecoming Parade on Saturday, October 6.

Check back on the **LGBTQ Programs** website for further details.

We have been working with Publication Services to develop an exciting new poster campaign that will be launched this fall. Focused around the theme that “Our Pride Runs Campuswide,” this campaign features students, faculty, staff and administrators who are Allies for our LGBTQ community.

Thank you for responding to our spring survey of all Safe Zone Allies. After 11 years of conducting training sessions, it was imperative that we provide all of our Allies with the opportunity to choose to remain on our list. The online Ally list has been updated with the results of that survey and the results are posted at: http://www.ndsu.edu/safezone/allies/list_of_current_allies/. As you will recall from that survey, Allies were asked to indicate their willingness to continue to serve as a Safe Zone Ally and as a Transgender Ally. Based on those responses, Allies will find “SZA” and/or “TGA” listed after their names and you will find static-cling stickers included in this letter to reflect your new designation on that list. All Allies are, again, encouraged to subscribe to our Safe Zone listserv; directions are available under the FAQ link on the website. If you are not sure if you are subscribed to this listserv, please look for an email to come from me on June 1 to confirm all who are currently subscribed. If you do not receive this message, you are not on our listserv – this is our primary form of communication with all Allies about events and opportunities available to you.

Finally, the FM Pride Celebration is scheduled for August 10-12. As a sponsor again this year, we will host a table at Pride in the Park on Saturday, August 11. I will also be working to organize a group of Allies to march in the Pride Parade on Sunday, August 12. If you are interested in being part of this fun weekend, representing NDSU, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or recommendations for the **LGBTQ Programs** or the Safe Zone Ally Program areas, please do not hesitate to contact me at Kara.Gravley-Stack@ndsu.edu or at 231.7091.

Once more, thank you for serving as a Safe Zone Ally at NDSU.

Sincerely,

Kara Gravley-Stack
Director of Diversity Initiatives
Coordinator of LGBTQ Programs
Division of Equity, Diversity and Global Outreach