

Proposal for a Gender & Sexuality Center at Hendrix College

Overview

This proposal requests institutional funding to support the continuity, coordination, and enrichment of gender and sexuality related campus initiatives. In particular, we request budget allocations to hire a Director to serve as the head of co-curricular programming, a programming budget, and funding to construct a space where students can meet and safely discuss gender and sexuality.

The 'Gender & Sexuality Center' would *provide education and structure around gender and sexuality issues, and specifically around issues of sexual assault, sexual and gender minorities, and sexual health*, all of which students, staff and faculty have identified as currently lacking.

The Center Director's duties would be to:

- Provide strategic oversight and coordination of existing gender and sexuality initiatives such as Orientation Programming; peer-support groups (such as MyLine); student organizations such as UNITY, SAGE (formerly the Feminist Club and SEXplorations), and the Hendrix Health Squad.
- Develop additional campus programming related to gender and sexuality issues.
- Provide training (RAs, staff, faculty, students, etc.) for programs such as the ACS program "Safe Zones" and on handling gender and sexually-based violations of campus policy.
- Assist in shaping campus policies (such as discrimination and sexual assault policies).
- Offer informative/educational resources.
- Support students, faculty, and staff when they face gender and sexuality issues on campus.
- Work with the College administration to address gender and sexuality concerns among faculty and staff (such as those identified in the HERI data).
- Connect to the community and bring knowledge about available resources from the wider central Arkansas community onto campus. This could include coordinating transportation to and from those institutions and offering sustained civic engagement relationships with local organizations.
- Encourage accountability between smaller existing student groups—inspiring groups to stay active and provide support for their events.
- Potentially (as appropriate based on the degree of the Director) offer two courses a year in these areas (such as Intro. to Gender Studies or a section of The Engaged Citizen) and help to coordinate academic programs (potentially including Gender Studies and majors related to sexuality and queer studies).
- Be a resource for marketing or publicizing any future gender or sexuality related changes to the campus.
- Develop and manage of a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender¹, and queer (LGBTQ) students (as UNITY has recently requested).

In addition to the Director's salary, a small programming budget would facilitate these needs. Conversations are underway about the Center's location, ideally as an integrated complement to the MISS office in the SLTC or Counseling Services.

Gender and Sexuality at Comparable Institutions

Having a Gender & Sexuality Center will both bring Hendrix in line with comparable institutions' handling of these issues and distinguish us among our regional peers.

By creating a Gender & Sexuality Center, Hendrix would move closer to the median level of programming within the Associated Colleges of the South, where at minimum gender and sexuality issues are handled more systematically under a "multicultural affairs" umbrella. Three ACS institutions (Rollins College, Washington & Lee University, and University of Richmond) have some kind of women's, gender, and/or sexual minority Center. University of Richmond's Common Ground, particularly its Associate Director for LGBTQ Campus Life, and programming under the Dean for Women's Education and Development, offer a full range of programming in these areas with approximately five full-time staff members dedicated to these issues. At Rollins there is a faculty member who directs the Lucy Cross Center for Women and Their Allies, with three graduate student assistants as staff. In the fall of 2011 Washington & Lee opened its GLBTQ Resource Center, and it has several people in the Counseling Center as well as an Associate Dean of Students for Diversity and Inclusion that run gender and sexuality programming. In addition, other ACS schools offer significantly improved resources and programming on gender and sexuality through staff members who have at least part of their job description focused on gender and sexuality, such as Davidson College's Health Educator.

Hendrix has an opportunity to distinguish itself among the small liberal arts colleges to which our admitted students commonly cross-apply. None of these have a women's or LGBTQ Center or a staff person whose role it is to coordinate gender and sexuality resources and programming.

However, a plurality of similarly-resourcedⁱⁱ small liberal arts colleges nationwide have a women's or LGBTQ Center or a staff person whose role it is to coordinate gender and sexuality resources. Colleges without any of these generally have an actual department of women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies whose budgets frequently cover this type of programming including a full-time staff member who coordinates programming.

In our research on other institutions in the ACS, our competition schools, and similarly endowed schools, we found that institutions without a dedicated women's or LGBTQ Centers or staff often still have active faculty-staff-student coalitions addressing sexual assault and intimate partner violence concerns that can easily be found via their website. Schools with dedicated women's or LGBTQ Centers and staff are, in this sample, disproportionately located in the Northeast. If we intend to compete for students from this region, we should consider matching our programs to those offered by similarly resourced schools such as Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, and Connecticut College, all of which have active gender and sexuality Centers and/or dedicated staff.

Rationale and Background

By institutionalizing the support that Hendrix College has sought to offer to all students, staff, and faculty regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, we will make visible much of what we do and provide significantly better service to the campus. Students have expressed a desire for increased programming and knowledge about these issues, and a Gender & Sexuality Center would consistently provide that.

Across the nation, sexual assault issues have garnered significant attention, particularly with damaging cases at Pennsylvania State University, Amherst College, and University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Recognizing that nearly one in five female students are sexually victimized during their college yearsⁱⁱⁱ, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan collaborated to better outline colleges' obligations and students' rights in this area. The resulting "Dear Colleague" letter from the Dept. of Education's Office on Civil Rights^{iv} outlines a number of responsibilities that Hendrix has in this area beyond handling complaints; in order to be fully compliant, Hendrix will need to institutionalize more effective training and education about sexual harassment, assault, and health. Hendrix student organizations, Student Affairs, and Counseling Services have provided programming on gender and sexuality that has been well attended and offers an important foundation for the full organization, coordination, and implementation of training and education on these issues.

In a survey conducted for the Fall 2012 sociological methods course, which about 1/3 of the student body responded to, many students indicated that they were unaware of campus policies relating to gender and sexual issues. Several students have also described a lack of support felt by those who experienced sexual assault or faced gender or sexuality-based discrimination or prejudice. The survey revealed that most students feel comfortable reporting cases of sexual assault to Dean Wiltgen and Counseling Services, but there is a need to expand this comfort to Residential Life and others who may be "first responders." A Center Director could provide the training necessary to create a more supportive and prepared community. In small, insular communities, like that found at Hendrix College, reporting of gender and sexuality issues can be especially tricky and students have a false sense of security. Additionally, student organizing on these issues needs careful monitoring, and the existence of a safe space for people to discuss issues of gender and sexuality should not be dependent on student leaders who graduate within four years.

Although Hendrix College believes itself to be a welcoming campus for LGBTQ students, like most college campuses norms of heterosexuality and binary gender conformity are pronounced^v. This reality means that LGBTQ people's sense of belonging is dependent on their access to identified resources (professional staff, programs, and physical spaces) that provide freedom and strategic distance from those norms and threats that otherwise restrict their full inclusion in the community. Consequently, many colleges have advanced their commitment to supporting LGBTQ people by providing *staff* to oversee the coordination of LGBTQ programs, *programming* budgets, and physical *space*. By fostering an empowered LGBTQ community, a well-conceived Gender & Sexuality Center strengthens the intellectual and social aspects of the larger university community by making more *visible* the needs, experiences, and contributions of all students. The review facilitated by the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index^{vi} reveals Hendrix College's relative lack of coordination and oversight of LGBTQ programs, organizations, and information. Hendrix College's low score of 2.5 out of 5 on this index is largely due to its lack of formal and permanent LGBTQ programming and transgender-inclusive resources and policy. In order to score higher and ultimately serve the existing and potential student population better, Hendrix must develop a Center to institutionalize the support that Hendrix offers.

Campus enthusiasm for the types of programming that a Gender & Sexuality Center would provide can be seen in the support for programming offered by the Coalition on Gender &

Sexuality, this proposal's originators. In particular, they are organizing Sexual Assault Awareness Week, which will take place the last week in March 2013 at Hendrix. The week's programming includes a men's march against sexual violence, a "consent is sexy" informational event, several forums/town halls focused on these issues, and a national leader joining us from Men Can Stop Rape for both a speaking event and training. Student sponsors for these events include SAGE; Hendrix Health Squad; Martin, Galloway, Veasey, and Raney Hall Councils; the Sociology/Anthropology Club; and the Hendrix chapter of NAPAWF. The week is also financially supported by Counseling Services, the VP/Dean Wiltgen's Office, Gender Studies, Student Activities, and Residential Life. Community organizations involved include the Women's Shelter of Central Arkansas, Conway Police Department, and Planned Parenthood. The week is intended to draw attention to campus support for institutionalizing this kind of programming through a Gender & Sexuality Center at Hendrix College.

Mission Statement, Funding, and Position details

Mission Statement

The Center will provide a safe space for the entire Hendrix community to engage in open conversations, to access and publicize resources, and to facilitate education about gender identity (including masculinity and femininity), sexual health, and the diversity of sexual identities on campus and in a global setting; to support and encourage relevant activities and organizations in the Hendrix community; and to create and foster ties between the Hendrix community and local organizations with similar goals.

Staffing and Space

In order to increase the coordination of gender and sexuality programming and resources, the primary need at Hendrix is to have a full-time dedicated staff member. The Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center will have, at minimum, a master's degree in gender and sexuality studies, student affairs, health education, or related field. Preference will be given to candidates who have had experience working with these kinds of issues at other colleges and universities. The salary for the Director position would be a minimum of \$35,000. If the person teaches for the Gender Studies program and holds a PhD, compensation would need to be adjusted accordingly (i.e. \$50,000 per year).

There should also be funding for at least one student worker at 8-10 hours per week. There is also the potential for the office to attain intern/practicum students through University of Central Arkansas' College Student Personnel Services and Administration master's program. Students seeking practicum hours require no funding.

The Center would be linked to the Counseling Services and Multicultural and International Student Services offices. Directly reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs office, the office would be located either in the Student Life and Technology Center or near Counseling Services.

Potential for Financial Support

There are a few organizations that offer grants for this type of work such as the Gill, Ford, and Arcus Foundations that the Development Office could solicit. Members of the Coalition who created this proposal can assist in these efforts. Additionally, several faculty and staff members believe there are members of the queer community, including alumni, in Arkansas who are looking to give financial gifts to such efforts. These individuals are unlikely to give to other campus initiatives.

Since much of the current programming costs are currently covered by various student organizations, the Center would continue to foster collaborations with those groups, and could be partially supported by the student activities fee. Some institutions have even created an additional student fee to cover the financial needs of their gender/sexuality Centers.

Yearly Budget Request Summary

Director Position Yearly salary: \$35,000

Director Position Health & Other Benefits (calculated at approximately 25% of salary to include FICA and a low CREF contribution): \$8,750

Programming Budget: \$10,000

Student worker budget: \$1500

Current funding for some of the programming is already found in current budgets of related campus offices for about \$4,000.

The lifetime establishment of a Gender & Sexuality Center at Hendrix College would require approximately a \$1,000,000 endowment.

Benefits of a Gender & Sexuality Center

This proposal does two things 1) incorporates the best practices of high-functioning and mature gender and LGBTQ programs on other campuses and 2) builds on existing strengths at Hendrix College in general. These emphases led to a vision of a Gender & Sexuality Center that will:

- Provide a vibrant array of resources, support, and programming on gender and sexuality, centered on the needs of students and student organizations;
- Contribute in broad and visible ways to the social and academic life of the campus;
- Improve retention of students who face gender or sexuality issues;
- Model the value of civic engagement on- and off-campus, through vigorous advocacy for students and policies, and by fostering sustained civic engagement opportunities through Odyssey and Career Services;
- Train students, faculty, and staff to better provide peer-support and safe spaces for discussing and addressing these issues;
- Integrate with the structure and programming of existing diversity initiatives on campus, with particular attention to the “intersectional” nature of identity; and
- Monitor and achieve continued compliance with federal gender and sexuality educational policies.

Beyond these manifest benefits to students and the institution of having more solidified programming and resources in the areas of sexual health, sexuality, and gender, this Center would offer additional latent benefits to Hendrix College:

- Much of the existing programming and resources on gender and sexuality are offered by overwhelmed staff and faculty, for whom this is a large burden beyond their other teaching, service, and professional development requirements. Providing a paid staff person to run this programming would significantly free up the time of the Director of Counseling Services, the Director of Student Activities, the staff in the MISS office, faculty who work on gender and sexuality issues, etc.
- Hendrix College has already made a name for itself in the areas of inclusivity around gender and sexuality with the addition of gender neutral housing and having been an early Arkansas adopter of adding “sexual orientation” to the Non-Discrimination Statement. Obviously, committing the additional resources outlined in this proposal will help Hendrix to deliver on the promise of its policy. Doing so will also distinguish Hendrix as regional leader when it comes to gender and LGBTQ issues, especially given the mid-South’s economic and political climate, which impede many schools from taking such steps.
- Our observations of other institutions suggest that opening a Gender & Sexuality Center offers a unique way to foster connections with alumni; many schools seem to be treating advocacy on campus as a way to deepen the relationship between alumni and the institution. These connections could allow Development to solicit general donations as well as gender and sexuality focused gifts to the college.
- Hendrix’s recruitment efforts would also benefit from having the resources we propose. It would increase our score on the LGBT Friendly Campus Climate Index, thus increasing the likelihood for those students to choose Hendrix^{vii}. Additionally, potential students interested in gender issues and parents who seek a campus with greater resources and programming on sexual health and sexual assault prevention will be attracted by this Center.

Respectfully Submitted by the Leaders of the Coalition on Gender and Sexuality at Hendrix (COGS)

Dr. Lisa Leitz, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Dr. Mary Anne Seibert, Director of Counseling Services
Tonya Hale, Director of Student Activities
Dr. Toni Jaudon, Assistant Professor of English
Dr. Sasha Pfau, Assistant Professor of History
Holly Nelson, North Side Area Coordinator for Residence Life
Julie Wagner, '13 COGS Student Coordinator
Kitty Barlow, '14 President of SAGE (Students Advocating Gender Equality)
Mary Austin Tisdale, '14 COGS Advocacy Leader
Madelyn Whitley, '14 Secretary for COGS
Linh Chuong, '13 President of the Hendrix Chapter of the National Asian Pacific
American Women’s Forum
David Allan, '14 COGS Advocacy Leader
Delaney Roberts, '13 President of Unity

ⁱ Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to someone whose self-identification or expression challenges traditional notions of “male” and “female.” This includes transsexuals (MTF, FTM), crossdressers, drag queens and kings, genderqueers, and other gender-diverse identities.

ⁱⁱ Dr. Jaudon obtained data on endowment size from the National Association of College and University Business Officers’ report on Endowment Market Value (FY 2011). On this list, Hendrix ranks 300th (out of 839 U.S. colleges and universities) in total endowment funds. She identified all of the coeducational small (fewer than 3,000 students) liberal arts colleges ranked between 200 and 350, obtained total enrollment figures from each college’s website, and then calculated the endowment dollars per student available at each institution. From this list, she selected the twelve institutions whose endowments per student most closely matched Hendrix’s (six above, six below). These institutions are: Skidmore College, Kenyon College, Connecticut College, Kalamazoo College, Lycoming College, Washington College, College of Wooster, St. John’s College, Franklin & Marshall College, Bates College, Dickinson College, and Hanover College.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the summary of existing statistics in the “Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence Background, Summary, and Fast Facts” available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/fact_sheet_sexual_violence.pdf.

^{iv} The full letter can be found here:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/dear_colleague_sexual_violence.pdf.

^v Rankin, S., Weber, G. Blumenfeld, W., Frazer, S. (2010). *State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender People*. Charlotte, NC: Campus Pride. Grant, J., Mottet, L., and Tanis, J. (2011). *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

^{vi} One can access Hendrix’s score card via a free and no-password login:

<http://www.campusprideindex.org/details/premium.aspx?ID=278>.

^{vii} In the past year we have been aware of transgender prospective students who have chosen other colleges over Hendrix due to its lack of transgender institutional support, which this Center can provide.