

Report (AY19-20)
LGBTQ+ and Allies Faculty/Staff Affinity Group
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Background.

The original purpose of the group was to connect CNU employees to foster a more welcoming and respectful campus community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals and their allies. Its goal is to build on the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Council and programs such as Diversity Deep Dives and Safe Zone. Much of our work has been modeled after the formation of the Women's Collegiate Network (CWN), a similar Faculty/Staff Affinity Group. An invitation to join the group and attend an interesting meeting was shared in mid-November. The invitation led to a group with 70 individuals that now make up a confidential listserv for communication purposes. The listserv will be regularly updated with new members to ensure we capture new employees.

AY19-20 Activities. (Attendance is indicated in parentheses)

Interest Meeting, November 2019 (>30): This activity served as a meet and greet to connect interested individuals and to brainstorm a more formal purpose and vision for the group. An organization development exercise was used to brainstorm ideas for the group's purpose, intention statement, general activities, etc., and led to some great ideas. This information was used to formulate a draft of a purpose statement to be proposed at the group's next meeting.

Brown Bag Lunch, February 2020 (>15): A draft of the group's purpose statement was shared and discussed. At the conclusion of this meeting, the final purpose statement was formed.

“The LGBTQ+ and Allies Faculty/Staff Affinity Group is a community for all employees at Christopher Newport University who are dedicated to ensuring a more inclusive campus community that visibly welcomes, supports, and empowers individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.”

This statement is the start of the Affinity Group's Guiding Document that will ultimately provide guidance and direction for the group.

Brown Bag Lunch, April 2020 (>20): Given the pandemic and accompanying changes to all of our day-to-day work, this lunch was held to provide an opportunity to simply connect. During this virtual lunch meeting, a robust discussion surrounding the group and its future ensued. These discussions have led to the summer plans articulated below.

Summer Plans (2020).

Currently, a small group of individuals associated with the Affinity Group are working to administer a three-part plan to finalize the guiding document, to include development of an intention statement, and prioritize activities to meet the “welcome”, “supports”, and “empowers” aspect of the purpose statement. The planned approach is as follows:

- (1) Administer a short survey to the listserv to solicit individuals' definition of "welcome", "support", and "empower". This information will be used to draft an intention statement that further guides the organization to make decisions aligned with its purpose and declare a set of goals.
- (2) Focus groups will be held to share the draft of the intention statement to solicit feedback for refinement. In addition, the focus groups will generate activities and events to support the purpose and intention of the group.
- (3) The final intention statement will be shared with the group. At the same time, a second survey will be administered to prioritize the activities and events for the next year (AY20-21).

The plan is to publish the purpose and intention statement and share a tentative schedule of activities for the group at the start of the next academic year (AY20-21). In addition, to publicize the group, it will work with OCPR to create a page on CNU's external website, similar to the site for the Collegiate Women's Network (CWN).

I have been overwhelmed with the community's support for this group. There is a strong desire to build on the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Council and operationalize the University's commitment to "embrace[s] the full spectrum of human attributes, perspectives, and offers every member of the University the opportunity to become their best self."