



# THE VOICE

June 2008

## *Messages from the Chairs*

Aloha Colleagues,  
By the time you read this newsletter, I imagine that you are enjoying what are hopefully slower summer months and that you are almost cleaned up from the business of the Spring term. I hope this message finds you each doing well.

I wanted to let you know that after some careful consideration and consultation with colleagues, I have made the decision to step down as Chair of the Commission for Social Justice Educators for the 2008-09 academic year. I had hoped to fulfill the three-year commitment of my term with-

out incident. However, an unexpected but significant organizational change at my previous institution last year led me to accept a new position as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo on January 1st. Subsequently, an unanticipated additional job assignment this past Spring (I am now serving as acting Athletic Director in addition to VCSEA) has proven to be rather challenging although certainly a wonderful opportunity to leverage some positive change. Rather than trying to manage all my responsibilities unsuccessfully and let the Commission and the

staff and students here at UH Hilo down, I felt it best to explore an alternative.

Kristi Lonardo, who was just recently elected as Chair-Elect, has very graciously and generously agreed to step in as Chair for 2008-09. During the year, we will decide whether I will step back into my role as Past Chair for 2009-2010, or whether I will resign and Kristi subsume my present term of office. Regardless, we will be sure to keep the Commission updated.

Please rest assured that we have a strong leadership team that has remained in

constant communication over the past year. Although we are still a relatively new Commission, we have vibrant, highly motivated, and extremely dedicated individuals involved. This change in leadership we strongly believe will result in no disruption in CSJE's work and actually should serve the Commission better.

As many of you know first hand, it is oftentimes a more difficult decision to say "no" than it is to say "yes" when it comes to professional duties. I believe the social justice field by its nature

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Greetings CSJE!

I hope this note finds you all settling into that post-commencement relaxing and regrouping time on your campuses! Here in New York City, we are settling back in after celebrating our commencement in Yankee Stadium for the first time! Only in New York...

I was already so fortunate to have been elected to the chair-elect position in January, and now I am excited to begin this chapter a bit earlier than expected. I have been a part of this commission since its inception several years ago, and I am honored to follow Luoluo as the chair. I would like to

thank Luoluo for all of her hard work as CSJE's chair-elect. Her knowledge of the field has been so useful for our young commission. Her boundless energy will be missed, but I am thankful that she will still remain an integral part of the CSJE leadership.

In addition to our day-long Directorate Body meeting, we had our first open business meeting, which was well attended and generated many new ideas for reaching out to you, our commission membership. Some ideas that were generated include webinars, a wiki site, and local meet-ups for

professionals and grad students within the commission to connect personally for great conversation. Keep on the lookout for these developments! Furthermore, we had a great social on Tuesday night to honor our annual award recipients, several who of which are featured in this newsletter.

Please be in contact with me (kristi.lonardo@nyu.edu) for any suggestions that you may have to keep our Commission moving forward. I wish you all the best in your respective corners of the world! Kristi



### “Just Us” or Justice?

by Joe Buehrle

I have discovered that the more I learn about other people; I, in fact, learn the most about myself.

Growing up in a predominantly white, conservative community, I attended a private school, and went on to a small private college. I could have pretty much been characterized as the poster boy do-gooder for all things conservative. Some youth act out negatively to get attention; I was the good boy to get attention. This became my identity, and like any good boy, I was good at being good. In my small high school I was captain of the soccer team, a class officer, voted Homecoming King by peers and Senior of the Year by teachers. I reaped great social rewards for my behavior. Additionally, my socialization to this “bubble world” was coated in moral and ethical language and norms. Being “good” meant I could meet rules and expectations for the sake of appearances, at the cost of genuine compassion.

I lived out my life through a certain vantage point, filtering life through the context of “me.” I knew how the world operated and what I had to do to be successful in it. “If only people had the self discipline to be more like me, the world would be a better place,” I thought. I knew the “right” way to do things and had successful outcomes to affirm my perspective.

I type this now and know many will be extremely triggered by the arrogance, pride, and contempt of this person described above. Yet, when you are “right” your beliefs and the value judgments you make off those beliefs jus-

tify your thoughts and actions. The last thing I would have described myself as, would have been elitist, arrogant, and privileged. Instead I lived with a false sense of connection between human value and meritocracy. I was so busy being “good” I never gained an ability to see, listen, or accept people unless they thought, acted, and looked like me. I even felt bad and pitied “those” people who just “did not get it” and “be good” like me.

My journey toward personal awareness of issues of power, oppression, diversity, and social justice consists of cycles of confusion, resistance, struggle, and growth. International travel, mentors, intergroup dialogue experiences, and social work classes initiated this growth cycle. This past fall I realized for the first time that every single identity I ascribe to gives me privilege. I am a white, male, married, Christian, athletic, temporarily able-bodied young adult, attending one of the top universities for my field. I have no target identities.

As my awareness of the benefits I receive from this unearned power and privilege grow, I attempt to move from a confusing sense of guilt toward action as an ally. While attending the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work I have been volunteering as a social justice workshop facilitator for The Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR).

When our group of about 40 IGR facilitators gets together, it is a beautiful thing. For me this is by far the most diverse group of people I have ever been around, diverse across race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, ability status, and age. Together we meet, challenge, grow our dialogue skills, build community with each other, and reflect on how the intersections of our multiple agent and/or target identities impact our social justice work. At our group gatherings, many speak of our IGR environment as being one of the few spaces people can fully express and be themselves, feel accepted, comfortable, and safe.

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attracts individuals who probably don’t do as good a job establishing and honoring boundaries in their work lives – oftentimes at the expense of their own balance and wellbeing. After all, the work of social justice is about improving the lives of individuals and of communities – how does one put a boundary on such things? I want to share that my fear in making this decision was that I would be judged as incapable or uncommitted; however, my fear in not making this decision was that I would fail in making any difference at all.

I thank you all for the honor and opportunity to have served the Commission in the capacity as Chair over this past year and regret that I was not able to do more. However, I will remain active in the Commission and on the Directorate Body, as social justice will continue to remain a strong personal and professional area of commitment.

In peace and respect,  
Luoluo Hong



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The more I engage the work of social justice I continually peel back layers of myself. For me this means layer upon layer of privilege; and I continue to struggle:

Privilege to be an ally when I feel like it, privilege to challenge myself to confront my identities because I want to, not because society forces this upon me. Further, I can then leave the 2-3 hour dialogue spaces I actively confront my privilege and go back out those doors into “my” comfort zone. Back into a society where all the benefits of my privilege slide back on like a warm comforting blanket. Checking off my professional social justice good deed for the day, I may go home, and watch NBC’s “The Office” and its nice white, male, heterosexual humor, which I find so amusing.

Am I losing the mission of social justice and replacing it with the stagnating appearance of “good deeds?” I have lived my life in two different worlds, raised as a model conservative pupil and now educated as a model liberal pupil.

Living at the intersection of this, I have started to notice something. In the inner circles of the liberal and conservative movements, language is different, but for me the conceptualization of needing to be “better” than someone else is the same. I have a new liberal, moral, and ethical “good boy” framework, which I find myself slipping into. In finding the truths and realities surrounding social justice, power, and privilege, I have found a new place to feed my ego. I am now the “good priv-

ileged boy” becoming an ally to social justice (where I can write an article in a social justice newsletter about my privilege and agent status), feel good about myself, and look down on the ignorant agents of injustice who “just don’t get it, who need to be more like me.”

How can I serve the greater good of social justice and not let this just become a front for serving myself and employ the very attitudes I have come to find so offensive? I feel I must not again make the mistake of valuing being “right” and doing “good deeds” for

*“How can I serve the greater good of social justice and not let this just become a front for serving myself and employ the very attitudes I have come to find so offensive?”*

the sake of my ego, especially now at the cost of genuine relationships and reconciliation.

In March of this year, I co-facilitated a four-week dialogue on race and ethnicity. Over the course of the dialogue, my co and I were so focused on the content that “we” felt the group needed to confront, we missed meeting people where they were at. White group participants became annoyed, agitated, and frustrated, resulting in disengagement. My initial reaction was frustration with them, their resistance, and from my lens, their overt unwillingness to accept their privilege

status. My ego would rather define this issue as a deficiency with the participants rather than reflect on my own role in the unproductive experience. I find this dynamic even greater when informally dialoguing with family and friends. As a social justice advocate, how do I maintain cultural humility in the effort to awaken a critical consciousness of social justice with dialogue participants, friends, family, co-workers, and myself?

May I not lose sight of the importance of self reflection, and a grateful attitude toward the social justice community I am a part of, their accountability, support, and challenging words, to remind me of the importance of continually engaging the process to push my learning edge, and value the discomfort I find there. In the future, when I find myself judging people, who to me “just don’t get it,” I hope to take a step back, listen, and meet them where they are at, - thank you to all those who have done this for me.

This is the challenge that I keep in mind for myself, and may we, as social justice educators not get caught “just” focused on “us” and miss opportunities to advance justice.

*Joe Buehrle is completing his Masters in Social Work at the University of Michigan and welcomes responses, feedback, and dialogue at [jbuehrle@umich.edu](mailto:jbuehrle@umich.edu).*

**We want to hear from YOU!**  
Send feedback or suggestions  
for the newsletter to  
Lisa Landreman at  
[llandreman@wisc.edu](mailto:llandreman@wisc.edu).



### Social Justice Advocacy Network

The Commission for Social Justice Educators is currently developing a list of professionals from around the nation who are committed to addressing Social Justice Issues. Our intention is to develop a list of professionals who serve as leaders and role models to others through their efforts to spread knowledge in the area of Social Justice. This list will serve as a resource to those seeking educators, presenters, researchers, and consultants who can serve as stewards and catalysts for change at their institution. We hope to add representatives to this list from around the nation and are currently looking for appropriate candidates. These individuals should embody all of the following:

- Work consistently to weaken and eliminate systems of oppression through educating others about the negative impact that indifference has on our society.
- Look to empower others by providing information and developing skills about current issues in the areas of Social Justice.
- Strive to be constant advocates on behalf of social justice and allies to members of social groups other than their own.

-Maintain a commitment to life-long learning and seek to constantly further their knowledge, education, and skill capacity in the areas of Social Justice.

-Recognize the ways in which their multiple social identities intersect, the effect of their privileged identities on others, and how their disadvantaged identities shape how they view and interact with the world.

-Display a passion for working toward positive change in the area of Social Justice in both the present and the future.

We recognize that each advocate will vary in their area of expertise. Our intention is to develop an extensive list of professionals who specialize in several different areas.

We are looking for individuals who are committed to working with any or all of the following:

- Students and student leaders
- Faculty and/or staff
- University administrators towards institutional-level change and policy development
- Community members

**For more information contact Jon Sexton:**  
[jonathan-sexton@uiowa.edu](mailto:jonathan-sexton@uiowa.edu)

### The Community Building Program:

#### Learning from the Community We Serve

by Ryan C. Holmes

What do you get when you take a faculty member anxious to teach students about global issues, a University Ministry administrator helping students to give service to a surrounding neighborhood, another administrator concerned with Off-Campus relationships between students and non-student neighbors, a handful of students, and a few neighbors concerned about their community of residence for at least the last 30 years? You get all of the necessary components to create incredible change through collaboration in its purest form. This past year was the first year of a new initiative named the Community Building Program at La Salle University. Though many of the components of the program were in existence prior to this year, all involved found a way to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The core goals of the program were to create and maintain relationships to include faculty, staff, students, and community members based in the University's mission; and moreover, encourage the students involved to have the messages learned throughout the process transcend the campus and breathe life to the world.

To bring this to fruition, the following components were combined:

- First Year Odyssey (FYO) "Meet the Neighbors"

This program had small group of non-student residents, in the adjacent community, come face-to-face with new students while all engaged in meaningful dialogue regarding community norms and standards. Through this effort, both students and neighbors were able to better understand their impact on the other in a setting that had not been available previously.

- Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N)

This program allowed students to directly aid elderly neighbors with household projects (i.e. house painting, gardening, neighborhood cleanup, etc.) that they would be unable to do alone. Through this, services were able to be administered directly to community residents in need.

- Leadership and Global Understanding (LGU 200)

This academic course allowed 4 students (each semester) to work with 2 neighbors during the academic year as both parties engaged each other in the process of identifying and fulfilling a project to better the neighborhood. In centering

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the combined energies on a project, students could, both directly and indirectly, teach neighbors more about the University and its students while neighbors could do the same for students in regards to the neighborhood.

- The final component, the Community Building Team, was a combination of University administrators and faculty, off-campus students, and neighborhood block captains and committeepersons assembled to discuss and evaluate the University's commitment to the neighborhood while educating neighbors on University resources. Additionally, the team was also charged with developing reporting guidelines to city agencies, in regards to quality of life issues, as the complete University community saw a need.

In its first year, the Community Building Program has shown that anything can happen if individuals continue to believe. Though it faced its struggles, its successes were great enough to have it be continued in the upcoming academic year. It also shows that it takes a total University commitment (i.e. Dean of Students Office and Provost's Office) to help this sort of program leave the ground. The first line of La Salle University's Affirmation states: "I choose to member of the La Salle University community." Social Justice says the La Salle University community extends beyond walls.

*Ryan C. Holmes, Director for Off-Campus Communities, collaborated with Louise Gugliano, Associate Director of University Ministry and Service, and Marjorie Allen, PhD., Chair of the Integrative Studies Department, on this program at LaSalle University. This program was won the 2008 CSJE Outstanding Collaboration Award.*

## Rewriting History

*by Megan Richardson*

An ancient African proverb reads, "Until the lion has his historian, the hunter will always be the hero." As a history student, I find this proverb fascinating because it suggests that the story of our past sprouts from the perspective of the victor. Now a young adult, I recognize the validity of the proverb and wonder when our society will begin to see the other side of the story.

As I attempt to understand myself through the workings of society, I realize that many parts of my individuality are a product of structure. I find this frustrating because I want to help others and uplift injustice but I am not sure how I can as a member of the majority. Throughout my childhood and young adult life, I saw systems of oppression as a result of individual action that I did not participate in. As a result, I failed to realize the true impact of my actions and rarely evaluated how I could impart change in my life or enhance my surrounding community. I now recognize the stereotypes and social norms that exist within my own belief system and must work actively to erase them in my life. Alongside my renewed sense of self, I also want to share knowledge with significant people in my life, my sources of inspiration, to expand their minds to a plethora of awareness.

My academic studies echo a common quest to discover the intersection of structure and agency in my life. Shaped by political, social, and economic conditions of the past, decisions that I make today appear dependent upon social norms and popular beliefs. Actions are often determined by the cyclical patterns of years past, making the future predictable at times. As I continue to identify the roles I play as a free agent in our society, I often question if historical processes repeat themselves. Or do we, as individuals, repeat history?

To suggest that everything in our lives is easily predictable oversimplifies the daily choices and decisions that we make as humankind. Just as we must prove our individuality unique from the social identities that we belong, it is also important that we appreciate the complex intricacies of our ongoing society. Living in a world often split into a black and white dichotomy, I now know to acknowledge the gray that dares to stand between. Notwithstanding, we can also learn from our mistakes and take cues from the past.

As a member of the agent group for most of my distinguishing characteristics, I realize that I often take privilege for granted. It is my hope that as I continue to develop and grow as a female, a peer, a sibling, and a leader, I can learn to recognize times of social injustice and stand up for what I believe in. My individual development rests on my ability to achieve knowledge through academic resources and supplemental studies, as well as engage in discourse with others. Moreover, my capacity to share insight and provide perspective to others as a positive influence that will hopefully empower and inspire.

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In order to live purposely and joyfully, I think you need to open yourself on to others. Whether or not the foundation of formal education is possible, learning is a life-long process. By exploring variation and engaging in a diverse lifestyle, individuals gain the capacity to understand and acknowledge the power of difference. If I impart one person with a sense of efficacy and knowledge, I can achieve change, and my purpose resounds. By conversing in dialogue I hope to share insight to a world of power in exchange for a wealth of knowledge that will one day teach others to understand the consequences of their actions, as I continue to re-examine mine.

In many social identities I am the majority, labeled by some

members of society as the victor. Yet the story I hope to unfold is not one of conquest or glory. Instead, my story beckons to question normalcy. While I continue to expand my horizons I also hope to engage in meaningful dialogue, value cultural difference, and encourage mutual respect in a safe environment. Throughout my story I will fight to preserve the cultural integrity of others, hold myself according to high standards, and respect those efforts made in times of failure. Whether my story can withstand the tall tales of time remains unknown, nevertheless, the effort continues.

*Megan Richardson has recently graduated from the University of Michigan with her B.A. in history and served as an undergraduate intergroup dialogue facilitator.*

## **LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index: Using Technology to Find a Gay-Friendly College**

*by Shane L. Windmeyer, M.S., Ed.*

### **Introduction**

*“It was great to have my first college fair be one where I could ask important questions about myself as someone from the LGBT community. This type of college fair was also very important for me as I have two moms – I want to be at a college where I can feel comfortable about my family.”*

--Isabel Galupo, a high school senior from Towson, Maryland, after attending a 2007 college fair hosted by Campus Pride, a national nonprofit group for LGBT students and campus organizations.

It is true, even straight youth are looking for gay-friendly colleges. The complexity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues transcends the question of “who’s gay or who’s not gay?” Students like Isabel come from diverse families and social networks. They want to go to college where their families are safe, welcome – and even celebrated.

Some colleges and universities have

realized that embracing diversity related to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression creates a positive impact for all students. It is not a surprise that youth today are by far more open-minded to LGBT issues than those over the age of 35. Despite this, over ninety percent of LGBT youth report being harassed or assaulted due to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression even before college (GLSEN, 2006). When a young adult arrives on a college campus, there is no guarantee that there are LGBT protections to provide a safe, welcoming, learning environment in which they can learn and grow. Only 600 four-year colleges and universities (out of nearly 2500) prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and approximately sixty campuses have explicit protections inclusive of transgender people (Campus Pride, 2007). Overall, Campus Pride estimates that half of all colleges have an active LGBT and / or ally student group or organization that is working to create positive change.

So how do students like Isabel sort through the many colleges and universities to determine which will

best meet her LGBT-friendly needs? How do colleges reach out to gay and straight students and their families? A new online initiative called the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index ([www.campusclimateindex.org](http://www.campusclimateindex.org)), can assist students in determining how safe, welcoming, and supportive U.S. colleges and universities are.

### **The Concept**

Everyone has seen and heard of college guidebooks, expensive texts written by “professional organizations” that claim to know what is important for higher education. Some are good. Some are bad. Skeptics have reason to wonder whether they contain accurate information or are simply marketing tools. For LGBT youth, there are only two such publications to date. Colleges have yet to find an effective way to reach this population – until now.

The concept behind the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index was to create an option outside of the thickly bound, high gloss, often no-substance college guidebooks. It was to utilize

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technology to make an online interface that would create visibility for an often-invisible college population – LGBT and ally people. In addition, the online tool could be also used to support campuses in improving their LGBT campus life and help to shape the campuses' educational experiences to be more inclusive, welcoming, and respectful of LGBT people and allies.

In development since 2001, the Index was developed by a Campus Pride team of researchers, including Dr. Brett Genny Beemyn, Dr. Susan R. Rankin, and Shane L. Windmeyer. The Index was built on the philosophy that every student has the right to a safe learning environment where they can learn, live, and grow academically and socially. As a result, campuses have the power and responsibility to enact policies, programs, and practices that work to enhance the campus climate for all students -- including LGBT and ally students. In addition to this philosophy, the team relied on a decade of LGBT campus climate research by Rankin, as well as a host of national LGBT best practices and standards. It is important to note that the Index does not assess attitudes or perceptions; instead, it looks specifically at LGBT policies, programs, and practices.

Substantial testing and sampling of the Index was administered at higher education conferences and with individuals on campuses across the country. The key was to utilize the web to develop a dynamic tool that would reach out to the LGBT population and to develop a fair evaluation of four-year colleges of all types and sizes as it pertains to LGBT issues. After testing, the Index tool was narrowed down to 56 self-assessment questions, which correspond to eight different LGBT-Friendly factors. The factors are:

- LGBT Policy Inclusion
- LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment
- LGBT Student Life
- LGBT Academic Life
- LGBT Housing
- LGBT Campus Safety
- LGBT Counseling & Health
- LGBT Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Questions were ultimately weighted to compensate for size and type of institution as well as to add value to specific components of LGBT campus life. The backend database

instantly compiles the assessment, generates a confidential report, and provides output scores based on the responses. Results are immediate and provide the college or university with a national benchmark to assess their LGBT policies, programs, and practices.

### *How it Works – For Campus Officials*

The first step for a college or university to participate in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index is to complete the online assessment tool. The Index allows only one designated campus official that can speak legally on behalf of the college or university to complete the assessment for the campus. The individual goes online and creates their campus account. Campus Pride encourages a team approach to completing the Index, comprised of student leaders, faculty, administrators, and staff. The individuals involved should be the most credible, diverse population of LGBT and ally people who would either know the answers or be responsible to find accurate answers. The Index does not rely on multiple reports, assumptions, or opinions.

Once the campus official compiles responses, the individual goes online to a private login area and completes the assessment for each of the eight LGBT-Friendly factors, making online notes and saving responses at the end. The official may save, change responses, and return to their campus profile at any time, until hitting the final confirmation to submit the assessment for the college or university.

The assessment is then scored and approved by the online administrator. The campus official receives an email invitation to view the confidential report for the campus and can view a special private profile page summarizing the findings with a link to print the full 14-18 page report. The report lists detailed scores from the assessment and also suggests recommendations and readings to create a safer, more welcoming campus for LGBT and ally people. The report is confidential, to be viewed by the campus only. Assessment responses can be updated annually to measure progress year to year.

The final step is for the campus official to determine if the college or university wants to be visible on the Index to potentially reach out to future LGBT and ally students. By clicking a box, the campus can choose to “opt in” or “opt out” of the online database. A choice to “opt in” creates a

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public profile page for the campus automatically. The profile page sample is available to preview from the private log in area and consists of the name of campus, demographic information, and general star ratings from one to five stars. Should the campus prefer its profile not be available to the public, a choice to “opt out” allows the campus to have access to the confidential report without the profile being visible to the public. All campuses participating in the Index are acknowledged for their commitment to LGBT and ally people and can choose to “opt in” or “opt out” at any time.

### ***How it Works – For Prospective Students & Families***

The MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube generation expect readily accessible resources at the click of the button. Finding a gay-friendly campus is effortless with the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index. Youth can search several campus profiles and compare what each has to offer. If a particular college or university is appealing, prospective students click the “My Bookbag” feature and the profile is stored in the student’s “book bag.” All campuses in the book bag receive referrals with contact information, so they may follow-up with prospective students.

The quickest way for prospective students to search is by using the “Campus Search” feature. Users can complete a detailed search by region, size, type of institution, tuition cost, and even by star ratings. On the front page of the Index, a section titled “Spotlight” showcases different campuses with photos. Campuses that score three, four, or five stars are featured in a separate “Honor Roll” listing. Campuses may add personal quotes, photos, for users to learn more about LGBT campus life at their institution.

Finally, LGBT and ally youth and their families have a reliable, up-to-date resource to help in finding the right college. The dynamic technology of the Index makes it easy to navigate and the various campus profiles provide a tailored look at LGBT campus life. Some LGBT and ally

faculty and staff have even commented that they plan on using the Index as a tool to choose their next job in higher education.

### ***Conclusion***

Since launching in September of 2007, the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index has grown from profiling 30 to over 150 colleges and universities across the United States. Plans are underway to release an upgrade to allow non-residential campuses and community colleges to participate in the Index. The expectation is that the Index will continue to grow as more colleges learn about the value and benefits.

By using the web, as well as profile pages and features reminiscent of popular search engines, the Index is not only attractive to today’s younger generation, but it also provides a way to reach out to what has often been an untapped population in college admissions – LGBT people. To date, the Index has made over 880 referrals of prospective students and families, and it is beginning to gain increased national visibility in coordination with the Campus Pride College Admission Fairs. There have been over 32,000 unique site visitors, an average of 5,550 per month.

For students like Isabel who have two moms, the Index provides the most up-to-date information regarding campuses’ LGBT policies, programs, and practices. It is a highly reliable online resource to find an LGBT friendly campus that is right for her. And that is what’s most important to remember.

### ***References***

“From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America.” Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2006.

“Campus Facts to Know.” Campus Pride, 2007.

*Shane Windmeyer serves as the Executive Director to Campus Pride, a non-profit organization working to create a safer LGBT learning environment at colleges and universities. Campus Pride is the recipient of the 2008 CSJE Innovative Response Award.*

## **☒ Mark Your Calendars!**

**Tools for Social Justice Conference – Kansas City, MO November 15-18**

**ACPA Convention: Power to Imagine • Courage to Act, Metro DC March 28-1**





### **Social Justice from the Perspective of a Graduate Student and a New Professional**

*By Jane Duffy and Darris Means*

Fresh out of graduate school, I was ready to attend some higher education conferences. One conference that caught my attention was the Annual Tools for Social Justice Conference sponsored by ACPA. After being approved to attend the conference, I used my professional development funds to pay for the conference, flight, and hotel. Then, it was time to attend the conference, so I packed my bags and business cards. I went to the conference expecting to know a lot about social justice; however, I learned more than I expected during the three day conference. I realized that I entered the conference with a misconception about social justice. Before, I always considered social justice to be the same as multiculturalism and diversity. I quickly learned that social justice goes beyond those concepts. So what is social justice?

Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and is a movement working towards a socially just world. It may help to think of social justice as how society manifests human rights in peoples' everyday lives. What determines how advantages and disadvantages are distributed in society? How does your social group membership affect your experiences? Asking yourself questions such as these is a critical step in becoming more self-aware about social justice.

Social justice education focuses on resources that individuals and communities may utilize to facilitate personal and social change. Social justice educators believe in the transformation of educational institutions and practices by understanding intergroup relations. Viewing society through the lenses of education, advocacy, and oppression can be useful tools when examining marginalization, powerlessness, violence, and discriminatory structures.

Social justice is not political correctness. Social justice is not merely sensitivity training or speech codes; it is investigating how power and privilege shape our world today. Social justice is educating ourselves and others about how systems of oppression create inequity within society and our educational system. Social justice is something that incorporates attention to fairness and equity across the broad spectrum of sociological dimensions not limited to

ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, and sexual orientation.

Why should student affairs professionals be interested? Any educational setting is touched by issues relating to social justice. Understanding the affects of educators on student learning is vital, and educators cannot teach under the assumption that "equal" means "same." Exploring culture, language and values will assist student affairs professionals and college students alike to question ethnocentric frameworks. Being critically conscious and supporting thought-out experiences, retreats, trainings, and conversations will help college students to think about these critical issues as well.

*This article was adapted and previously published in the Eighth Vector, an electronic publication of the Standing Committee for Graduate Students and New Professionals.*

*Darris Means is the Assistant Director of Student Life and Leadership Development at Elon University.*

### **How can you learn more about social justice?**

**The author suggests the following resources:**

- Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, New York: Continuum.
- Goodman, D. (2001). *Promoting diversity and social justice : educating people from privileged groups*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications Inc.
- Miller, D. (1999). *Principles of social justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Washington, Rev. J. (2007). *Social justice in higher education: From awareness to action*. NASPA Leadership Exchange.
- <http://www.diverseeducation.com/>
- [www.diversityweb.org](http://www.diversityweb.org)
- [www.edchange.org](http://www.edchange.org)
- [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)
- Institute for Social Ally Development: <http://myacpa.org/pd/isja/index.cfm>
- National Association of Student Affairs Professionals: [www.nasap.net](http://www.nasap.net)
- National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: <http://www.ncore.ou.edu/>
- Social Justice Training Institute: <http://siti.org/>
- Tools for Social Justice Conference
- White Privilege Conference: <http://www.uccs.edu/~wpc/>



### **Institute for Social Justice Ally Development**

*Submitted by Brian Arao, Vice Chair for Programs*

Developing social justice allies is a critical component of movements towards social justice at our colleges and universities, as well as our societies in general. How can we better engage our students in their identities of dominance in order to become more committed and effective allies?

ACPA and the Commission for Social Justice Educators invite you to join us as we address this important question at the Institute for Social Justice Ally Development in Student Affairs, to be held June 25-27, 2008 in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Institute was created to meet one of the most frequently cited interests of the Commission's membership, and will feature a structured, sequenced curriculum designed and guided by the institute faculty: Ellen Broido (Bowling Green State University), Nancy Evans (Iowa State University), Robert Reason (Penn State University), and Penny Rice (Iowa State University).

Institute participants will gain:

- \* Foundational knowledge regarding definitions and theories of social justice ally development;
- \* Specific knowledge of ally development with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability and religion;
- \* Strategies for engaging students in social justice activities in general and with respect to the five areas mentioned above;
- \* Practice designing experiences that foster social justice ally development in various functional areas of student affairs
- \* Opportunities to network and develop self-care and self-survival skills.

For more information and to register online to attend the institute, please visit our web site at:  
<http://www.myacpa.org/pd/isja/index.cfm>

### **Commission for Social Justice Educators Award 2008 Award Recipients**

*Submitted by Samanta Lopez, Awards Chairperson*

#### **Commitment to Social Justice Education**

*This award honors a department, campus, ACPA committee or commission that has shown a commitment to social justice education and development, training, or programming.*

The Elon Academy is a college preparatory academic enrichment program out of Elon University in North Carolina. This academy, received the Commitment to Social Justice Education Award for their extensive and on-going work with under-represented and under-prepared high school students and their families. As a tool to combat some of the injustices in our society, the Elon Academy empowers and educates around the concepts of community and educational equity. This program provides its participants and their families with tools and knowledge that create support systems and academic avenues of success. The Elon Academy has gone above and beyond the social justice call by "leveling the playing field" for all students, while addressing the achievement gap that still exists today.

#### **Outstanding Social Justice Collaboration**

*This award recognizes outstanding collaborative efforts between campus groups/offices/organizations, campus and community groups or committees/commissions of ACPA and/or other national associations. This award recognizes creative initiative taking in a collaborative partnership that addresses an issue of social justice on their campus or in their community, in a progressive and positive manner.*

Ryan C. Holmes, Director of Off-Campus Communities at LaSalle University was recognized with the Outstanding Social Justice Collaboration Award for his progressive and positive initiative to bridge two communities together that were vital for the success of the University and town. LaSalle University is a predominately white institution located in the heart of a predominately African American community, both entities at times suffered from miscommunication and misunderstanding. Therefore, Mr. Holmes work diligently and endlessly with the University faculty, the Provost's office, students, and community agencies to respond to this urban-university problem that was disconnecting the overall community.



### Awards Continued

To find a healthy solution to this dilemma, Mr. Holmes's collaboration created a structure dialogue initiative series where faculty, students, and community residents engaged in challenging conversations that exposed the concerns of both communities and promoted short and long term resolutions. Mr. Holmes' efforts and partnerships continue to strengthen the relationship between both communities.

### Outstanding Social Justice Teacher, Trainer, or Mentor

*This award recognizes an individual who is personally committed to social justice education and/or activism and is an outstanding teacher, trainer or mentor to other professionals or students in the area of social activism. This award is different than the Voices of Inclusion Medallion which is given by the larger umbrella of ACPA and recognizes folks who have shown leadership over five years on broader initiatives of diversity and multiculturalism on their campuses.*

Bernie Liang, Resource Specialist at the University of Washington Tacoma, received the Outstanding Social Justice Teacher, Trainer, or Mentor Award due to his countless service, teaching and mentoring around issues of diversity and social justice. Every year, many organizations off and on-campus has reached out to Mr. Liang to empower and educate the student/staff body on multicultural issues, awareness, and competence. Mr. Liang advises several multicultural organizations on campus, and most importantly spear-headed the development of a 60 members group recognized as the "Concerned Students for Social Justice". His hard work, limitless energy, and willingness has open doors for impactful collaboration nationally. Mr. Liang has collaborated with

Willamette University, Oregon State University, ACPA/NASPA and many other change agents (individuals and Institutions). In addition, Mr. Liang has extended his educator role through his written work. Currently, he has authored a chapter in upcoming book title Colors of the Rainbow: LGBT Folks of Color in the Academy. Mr. Liang is one of those individuals that leave a social justice footprint wherever he goes.

### Innovative Response, Social Justice

*This award recognizes innovative educational, developmental or social action response taken to an issue of social justice on campus, in the community or globally. This award is intended to recognize recent events which have been implemented within the 12 months prior to convention (usually April-March).*

Campus Pride, a national non-profit organization that works endlessly to build future LGBT and ally student leaders and campus groups, as well as safer, more LGBT-friendly college and universities. For their on-going and efficient response to the increasing demand for tools and resources to support campuses in assessing LGBT-Friendly policies, programs and practices, Campus Pride received the Innovative Response, Social Justice Award for their innovative and progressive online educational initiative launched in September 2007 entitled the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index. This initiative is the only resource of its kind has grown from 30 colleges and universities to over 140 campuses to date. The LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index is changing the future of LGBT campus life and allows campuses to recruit what has been often an "invisible minority" and fulfill the educational goal that "every student has the right to a safe learning environment where they can learn, live and grow academically and socially."

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Self reflections  
New insights or learning

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