

MISSION CHANGE: An overview

Background Information

- **GLBTQA** = Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Allied students
- The campus currently has a **10 hour/week** GLBTQA Advisor position
- In Spring of 2002, Heather Woods (GLBTQA Advisor at the time) resigned her position, feeling that she could not adequately do her job or provide necessary support with the time and resources allotted to the position.
- In Fall of 2002, a new advisor, Judah Dorrington, was hired. The position remains 10 hours/week.
- There is a VAST NEED for greater GLBTQA support on the Wellesley campus (See handout)

Year 1 (2003-2004 Academic Year)

SPECTRUM President: Robin Nelson '04

Multicultural Affairs Coordinator (MAC): Meera Mohan '05

Fall Semester 2003: Robin gathered information on the duties performed by the advisor, as well as needs of students, and tried for several months to schedule meetings with the Dean of Students in order to present this data. She was consistently turned down by the office, and told to meet with the Associate Dean instead. Frustrated, she contacted the MAC for assistance.

February 2004: After a series of homophobic incidents, Robin and Meera met with the Dean and Associate Dean of Students to present concerns about homophobia on campus, and the limitations of the Advisor position.

Request 1:

- Increased hours from 10 hours/week to 25 hours/week
- Benefits that accompany the above hours
- Unshared, confidential office space with a personal computer
- Personal phone line

Response:

- Students were informed of the Student Life hiring freeze, which prevented any additional benefit-holding positions (including Part-Time).

Request 2:

- Recognizing the hiring freeze, students requested signed agreement from Deans' Office, committing to increasing the position within a certain time (to be designated by the Deans) after the hiring freeze was lifted.

Response:

- Deans refused to make any such commitment.

MISSION CHANGE was created in March of 2004 to mobilize students for change. Many students jumped on board and began working for this change—a student petition was circulated, generating approximately 300 signatures.

Outcome:

- Administration’s promise of a laptop
- Administration’s promise of a “gay RD”

Year 2 (2004-2005 Academic Year)

SPECTRUM President: Elizabeth Herrera ‘05

Multicultural Affairs Coordinator (MAC): Ashleigh Georgia ‘05

Requests:

- Same as before.
 - MAC-OT and Spectrum identified the GLBTQA advisor issue as a priority immediately in the fall semester. Ashleigh, Elizabeth and Jamie Bernthal (CG President 04-05) met with administrators throughout the first semester, seeking the same requests as stated above. During this time, Elizabeth also personally called in and switched phone lines so that Judah could have a private line.
 - Beginning in November of 2004, MAC-OT collected statements from students and organizations concerning the tangible reasons why the GLBTQA community needed an advisor. These provided the **qualitative** data to complement the public quantitative data about the mental health and needs of the GLBTQA community.
 - These statements were presented to the Dean of Students in **December 2004**, at which point she promised to write a **statement** to the general community from the Dean’s office explaining where increasing the GLBTQA advisor’s hours lies in institutional priorities and what they are trying to do in the interim.
 - Ashleigh remained in weekly contact with the Dean; a statement was finally made in **late April 2005**.

Outcome:

- Statement from the Dean’s office.

Year 3 (2005 – 2006 Academic Year)

Two generations of student movements and leaders have brought to light the needs of the GLBTQA community. One year focused on logistical and technical needs, and the second has focused on emotional and health needs. There is little else that can be shown to our Administration—students must prove that this **must** be made a priority. If the Administration refuses to do so, we, as students will not allow the issue to be overshadowed by institutional memory.