

LGBT FSA Areas of Focus for advocacy

Some things to understand about these priorities:

First off, this is not a list of everything that could or should be done. There is a lot of work to do in this area-so much so, that we've felt the need to prioritize. So our focus has been on work that helps create conditions of basic safety for queer faculty and staff across the university. The reasoning has been that other work to create a welcoming environment can't move forward unless and until we have this.

These priorities have been informed by a lot of things: data gathered by ourselves and other agencies on campus (most of this is linked from our [updates page](#)), conversations and meetings with other FSA leaders and groups, and interactions with and reports from individual members. This list has grown and evolved over time-we hope it will continue to do so.

We think it's also important to note that some of these are systemic changes that have the potential to improve working conditions for ALL faculty and staff. This is what happens when you address the concerns of minority groups-treatment for everyone improves.

The ordering here is not significant. All three of these things are components of safety, and they all reinforce one another.

Training

DEI training efforts to date have been either uniform and shallow, or in-depth but scattershot. We think the university desperately needs uniform, in-depth DEI training that gives participants a solid foundation for understanding topics like transmisia, pronoun use, deadnaming, etc. This is especially vital for those who supervise or evaluate others, as it's in those relationships where LGBTQIA faculty and staff are most vulnerable. We see this as a first step in creating accountability. What we've seen is that it's very difficult to hold staff accountable for discriminatory behavior that they haven't been adequately trained to recognize. It's important that this training be required, as the people who need it are often the least inclined to seek it out. Ideally, this would include DEI training for other minority groups as well, such as race issues.

Active Monitoring

Currently, the university only collects data on workplace climate in ways that are either so broad they can't be traced to specific problem areas (such as the climate surveys), or that are individual but only happen when the staff member is already in distress or has chosen to leave (exit interviews and grievances). We need better mechanisms to pro-actively monitor the health of our campus workplace climates. These efforts need to capture data about how employees experience working conditions that are both pro-active and targeted

enough that they allow for intervention when a problem is registered. This is likely not a single mechanism or initiative, but would be comprised of multiple interlocking mechanisms, such as [360 reviews](#) or “[stay](#)” [interviews](#). The idea is to collect data at the point where we might actually be able to do something to retain the employee.

Revised Grievance and Complaint Procedures

Formal grievance and complaint procedures often represent the last resort for minority faculty and staff experiencing discrimination or harassment. There’s substantial risk and stress associated with using these procedures, so much so that staff will often leave rather than invoke them. When staff do use them, what we’ve seen is that they often don’t work. The reasons why are so complex that we spent a substantial amount of time writing a [five-page whitepaper](#) that lays them all out. This is totally unacceptable. If staff take the considerable risk of using these mechanisms, then they need to do a good job of actually addressing the issue raised.