

# Ohio University LGBT Center

## Public Relations Campaign Plan Caulfield PR

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April 22, 2014  
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Dear delfin,

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved with the LGBT Center services. We deeply appreciate the support and attention you have shown us while fulfilling this project. You helped make it a great experience. This has proven to be highly beneficial for us to combine our educational and professional skills to help further understand the LGBT Center and the wonderful service it provides to Ohio University and Athens, Ohio.

We were able to conduct research, develop a plan and finally provide suggestions to further the awareness of the LGBT Center in the Athens community. Through our research we have discovered that community members will respond best to events hosted by the LGBT Center. By finalizing our research, we have created a communications plan, which aims to better promote the LGBT Center to the Athens community outside of the university.

Please feel free to contact Caulfield PR should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Samantha Caulfield, *Account Executive*  
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## Executive Summary

The LGBT Center at Ohio University supports the university by creating an environment that is inclusive and supportive of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. They are the primary resource for support and education of Ohio University's LGBT students, faculty and staff and their allies, and the only center of its kind in the Athens area. The LGBT Center enlisted the help of Caulfield PR to further their goal of increasing outreach efforts within the community.

The following campaign was developed to further the mission of the LGBT Center to reach the target audience of LGBT Athens community members. Research efforts were focused mainly on determining community awareness and perceptions of the center; determining if there was a need for LGBT Center resources within the community; and to decide how to effectively communicate LGBT Center information.

Caulfield PR first analyzed the organization structure of the LGBT Center and its existing programs. Then, they identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Center to determine opportunities and threats that may impact the center in the future. Members of the community were surveyed online, and analysis of the respondents' answers shows that the Athens community could benefit from more LGBT services than are currently in place. The survey also suggested what types of Center-sponsored events and event locations would be particularly successful, as well as the most effective ways to market these events. Caulfield PR also investigated the LGBT Center strategies for community outreach at other universities similar to Ohio University to implement into the strategy at the OU LGBT Center.

Based on qualitative and quantitative research findings, Caulfield PR has determined how to strategically engage Athens residents and increase community involvement with the LGBT Center. Caulfield PR suggests a multi-faceted communication plan, founded on community-focused events and increased branding and promotion. By implementing the proposed strategy, the Ohio University LGBT Center can increase their community outreach efforts and increase participation at events, while ultimately extending their mission of creating an environment inclusive and supportive of all sexual orientation and gender identity or expression into the community.

# Situation Analysis

## Problem Statement

The Ohio University LGBT Center is a resource on campus that provides support and advocacy for students, faculty, and the community. The center currently faces challenges when trying to build a relationship with Athens community members. Through trial and error, they have found that most community members are not aware that the center can be a resource for more than just OU's campus. Some community members are not as willing to open up to the idea of the center's involvement in the community. The LGBT Center would like to brand themselves as a resource for the surrounding Athens community, therefore increasing overall awareness of the center. The LGBT Center wants to find and address the needs of the Athens community so that they can better serve them and effectively promote the events and services that the center offers to anyone that may need support in Athens, Ohio. How long has this been an issue?

## INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

### Mission Statement

According to the Ohio University LGBT Center Brochure, "The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center advances the diversity mission of Ohio University by creating a campus environment inclusive and supportive of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. We focus on the unique academic, cultural, and social needs of LGBT students, and strive to enhance these students' learning and engagement as well as increase their retention. Our broader influence emerges from providing resources, educational opportunities, and social justice initiatives to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members at Ohio University and beyond" (LGBT Center, 2014).

### History

The LGBT Center was first established as a quarter-time operation in 1998 as part of the Division of Student Affairs' commitment to a just and diverse community. The quarter-time program coordinator was a full-time member of the Department of Residence Life (now Residential Housing). The operation was first overseen by Laura Harrison (now the Director of Women's Center at Stanford University). Jenny Hall-Jones (now the Assistant Dean of Students at OU) served as the second coordinator. In Spring 2000, Mickey Hart became the third (and current) person responsible for the LGBT Center.

Through the effort of many, the LGBT Center became a full-time operation in Fall 2003. By Fall 2005, the staff size increased with the addition of a first graduate assistant. In the Fall 2007, the coordinator position was elevated to Director and the LGBT Center oversight was moved to the Office of the Provost as part of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (LGBT Center, 2014).

### Publics Served

The LGBT Center works to provide support for all Ohio University students, faculty, and staff, as well as the Athens community. While most of their efforts are focused on the LGBT community, they are aware that their straight allies and other non-LGBT people need their support and attention as well.

## Organizational Structure

Ohio University's LGBT Center is headed by Director Delfin Bautista. The Director works full time at the offices in Baker Center. The Center's tasks are then delegated to the student staff for internal operations. They are the ones who send emails, twitter and Facebook updates. The Program Coordinator, Sarah Tucker Jenkins is in charge of organizing events and program. Megan Villegas is the Graduate Assistant and is in charge of organizing the SpeakOut organizations and the partnership with PFlag. The Center is a part of Ohio University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The Office is directly under the University's Provost. The Vice Provost of Diversity and Inclusion is Shari Clarke.

The programs that the LGBT Center offers students include: A SafeZone training program that focuses on understanding the dynamics of gender and sexual orientation, Speakout! organizations that focus on campus outreach and an serve as a networking outlet for LGBT members, and speakers and discussion panels that are open to the public.

## Organization Performance

Ohio University was selected as one of the 100 Best LGBT Friendly Colleges and Universities by The Advocates' College Guide for LGBT Students (last published in 2006). Ohio University's selection was based on its positive environment, programs and services, and LGBT student coalitions (LGBT Center, 2014). Recent events that the LGBT Center has organized include:

National Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20, 2013)  
50-60 in attendance, A capella groups, pre- and post-event articles in The Post  
Held on Howard Green

Queer Bobcats Meet-and-Greet (Sept. 9, 2013)  
100 in attendance  
National Coming Out Day Rally (Oct. 11, 2013)  
Received criticism from some departments within the school due to conflict with homecoming weekend  
Held in Scripps Amphitheater  
Was followed by a lunchtime discussion  
Visits from relevant speakers on a variety of topics  
The more unique, the better the turnout

Co-sponsored a drag show with PFLAG (Oct. 9, 2013)  
Held in Nelsonville, Ohio

### Internal Communication

The LGBT Center maintains a staff of 10 people, made up of mostly graduate and undergraduate assistants. Internal communication is done primarily through email, phone calls and texting, or face-to-face.

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Reputation & Media

The Post covers most of the events that are organized by the LGBT Center. The most recent articles promoted a happy hour at Jackie-O's and the National Transgender Remembrance Day vigil.

The LGBT Center's Digital Archive compiles past media clippings mainly from The Athens News, The Athens Messenger, and The Post. There are hard copies of current media at the LGBT Center in Baker Center.

#### Website

The LGBT Center is has a high media presence on their website through Ohio University. There are many ways to get involved and to view upcoming events and to also stay in touch via email, Facebook, and Twitter. A sidebar has a live feed of recent tweets of the Center. There are many tabs that include a variety of information including, "Calendar," "Programs and Services," "Resources," and "Faces of Pride." There are many resources that encourage involvement in order to improve the Center and to get involved (LGBT Center, 2014).

#### Twitter

The Twitter handle is @OULGBTcenter and updates daily with news and events. They have 768 Tweets, 995 followers, and they are following 134 Twitter accounts. The LGBT Center Twitter account Tweets links to their "eNews," news articles, surveys, polls and to their Facebook account. Tweets are managed by their student staff.

#### Facebook

The Ohio University LGBT Center has 336 members. This is roughly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the followers via twitter, which is significantly less. The group mainly posts about upcoming events and social gatherings around the area. They also post links to articles about the LGBT community throughout Ohio and the world. They also post pictures and videos regarding Homecoming and LGBT Allies Expansion.

#### Target Audience

The LGBT center targets the LGBT community and supporters on and off campus. While much of the focus is on LGBT students, inclusive of those in the closet, out of the closet and somewhere in between, the Center also knows that straight allies and other non-LGBT people need support and attention as well. The LGBT Center can be a resource for everyone, not just those who identify with the LGBT Community. The Center's goal is to reach out to members of the community, not necessarily just those associated with Ohio University.

#### Competition

The LGBT Center at Ohio University does not have any conflicting groups or competing organizations. The consensus of Ohio University and the Athens community is generally positive and the Center has no obstructing competition.

#### Opposition

There is no official opposition specifically targeted at the LGBT Center. That said, the Center has received pushback from a number of other school offices due to scheduling conflicts during Homecoming week. There is also conflict between the LGBT Center and religious protestors outside baker every few months. Greek Life and the Athletic Department have been difficult to collaborate with in the past, but they are not actively opposed to the LGBT Center.

#### Supporters

A majority of students and university employees are supportive of the LGBT Center. The Women's Center and Residential Housing office are staunch supporters of the center and have been for many years. The organization PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is also openly supportive of the LGBT Center. A number of area business-

es are LGBTQ-friendly and indirectly support The Center. These businesses include doctor's offices, dentists, counseling services, and legal services.

#### Trends

The Center has been around officially for 16 years and measures its success by the level of awareness in the University and the community. Many successful staples have been under direct influence of the LGBT Center. In 2007, the university adopted the Non-Discrimination Policy and Gender-Neutral Housing was established. The university's health care policy also included helping the treatment of trans-sexual students.

#### Community Outreach

The LGBT Center offers SafeZone trainings throughout the year and Speakout! panel presentations that are free to the public each month.

#### SWOT Analysis

##### Strengths

- 16 years of experience with the Ohio University community
- Acquire many loyal supporters
  - Organize events each semester including meet and greets, craft days, speakers and film screenings
  - Provide educational and support resources
  - On-campus center provides a safe-zone for students
  - Welcoming and helpful staff
  - Alliances

##### Weaknesses

- Mostly targets Ohio University community
- Mostly undergraduate student-oriented
- Has trouble discerning the needs of the Athens community
- Low attendance at certain events
- Publicity of events
- Events only held on campus

##### Opportunities

- Stronger social media presence (more followers and likes)
- Graduate student and faculty, and staff outreach
- Improvement of relationship with Athens community
- Education in local schools
- Partnerships with local businesses
- Publicity of events
- Branding
- Easily accessible location
- The only center of it's kind in Athens

##### Threats

- Religious protesters
- Safety issues
- Ideological differences
- Unwillingness of some community members and organizations to implement LGBT or SafeZone education programs



## Research Goals & Objectives

### Research Goal 1:

Gain a clear understanding of community perceptions and awareness of the LGBT Center.

### Objectives:

Survey members of the community about what they think the LGBT Center offers to students and the community. Use the survey to measure what percentage of the Athens community is aware of the services the center offers, as well as gauge the perceptions of the LGBT Center.

Interview members of the Athens community to better understand perceptions and awareness.

### Research Goal 2:

Determine how the LGBT Center can improve perceptions and awareness of the center and their mission within the community.

### Objectives:

Use a survey to determine what events community members are most likely to attend - meet and greets, community service projects, speakers, happy hours, etc.

Research other universities' LGBT Centers' strategies to determine what type of marketing efforts would be most effective to promote LGBT center events and services based on a survey of Athens community members' media usage.

### Research Goal 3:

Determine how to best improve the LGBT Center's community outreach.

### Objectives:

Survey members of the Athens community to gain an understanding of how best to reach them through traditional and social mediums.

Utilize our research to determine how to best engage the community.

## Critical Analysis of LGBT Centers' Community Outreach

The following critical analysis compares the community outreach and resources of Ohio University's LGBT Center with other universities in the United States. Profiled below are the LGBT services offered at four universities: Texas A&M University, Purdue University, Miami University and the University of Dayton. We developed the strengths and weaknesses of each LGBT Center by researching two universities with a larger student body than Ohio University's and two that have a smaller student body. Our analysis of these programs will be used to further our research and implement a strategy to improve the LGBT Center of Ohio University's outreach to the Athens community.

### *Texas A&M University*

*Location: College Station, Texas*

*Undergraduate Population: 46,000*

*LGBT Climate Index: 3.5/5 Stars*

The screenshot shows the website for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at Texas A&M University. The header includes the text "OFFICES OF THE DEAN OF STUDENT LIFE" and "DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS" on the left, and the Texas A&M University logo on the right. A navigation menu below the header lists: Home, AGOSS, ADEP, GLBT, HP, NSFP, SAS, SCS, SLS, Student Media, and WRC. The main heading is "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center". On the left is a "Center Menu" with links to GLBT Home, Programs and Events, Meet the Staff, History, Educational Programs and Panels, Library, Organizations, Other Resources, Giving to the GLBT Resource Center, and Former Student Network. A search bar is located below the menu. The main content area features a photograph of a diverse group of students sitting outdoors. To the left of the photo is a text box that reads: "The GLBT Resource Center has been a part of the Offices of the Dean of Student Life since September 2007. Located in CAJIN HALL C103, it is a resource and referral center for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Aggies and their straight supporters. The Center educates all campus and community constituencies on GLBT issues through programming about sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, advocacy, leadership, and visibility. The GLBT Resource Center also collaborates with student organizations, campus departments, and local community organizations to provide students with access to resources, activities, and support services." Below the photo and text box, a caption states: "The center is open weekdays from 8:00am -5:00 pm with the exception of University holidays."

### LGBT Service(s):

The Texas A&M Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center was established in September of 2007. Originally known as Gay Student Services (GSS), the organization was officially recognized by Texas A&M University in 1985 after a lengthy court battle. The LGBT Community of Texas A&M has faced numerous challenges and opposition, and was ranked as the least LGBT friendly school in the U.S. by The Princeton Review in 2011 and 2012.

### Organization Resources:

Texas A&M's GLBT Center hosts weekly meetings for "GLBT Aggies" that provide an opportunity for members to socialize, learn about the history and current issues affecting members of the GLBT community, and organize outreach efforts within the Bryan-College Station area. They often go to dinner together after meetings.

The center's resource room is a place to find information about GLBT resources on and off-campus. The resource room's library contains an extensive collection of books, periodicals and media that can be utilized by Texas A&M students conducting research in the fields of

sexuality and gender studies. The staff is always available to answer questions about the local GLBT community, GLBT-related courses at the University and provide information about upcoming events and programs.

Speaking engagements are held almost weekly and are free to the public. Past speakers have included GLBT Activists and Educators, Public Administrators, Sexual Health and Health Care Educators. These events have been followed up with reception, film screenings, and occasionally free HIV/STI testing. TAMU GLBT is also affiliated with the Pride Community Center of College Station and partner with them to bring these speakers to campus.

Information about the center and the GLBT Aggies organization can be found through their social media platforms. The GLBT Aggies are very active on Facebook, posting almost daily. They are active on Twitter as well, and retweet other organizations' promotions for programs, as well engage with Student Health Services and the Women's Center.

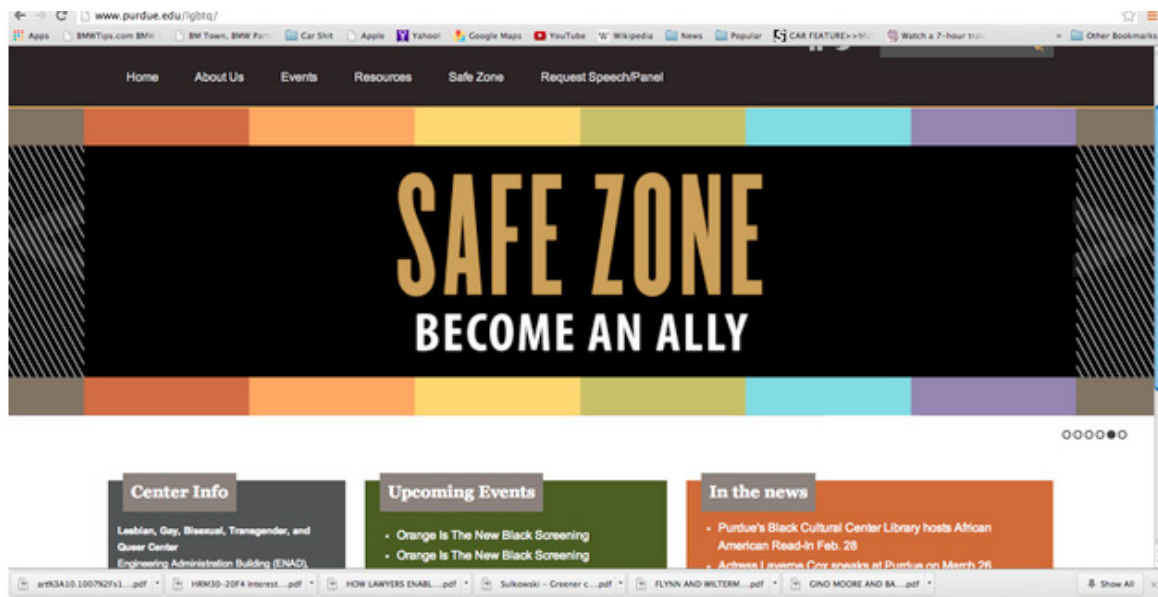
#### Community Outreach:

GLBT Aggies have participated in many activities designed to engage and educate citizens of the broader Bryan-College Station area about the GLBT community. The organization has participated in the Student Center Open House, The Big Event, the largest one-day, student-run service project in the nation in which 17,500 students participate, and the National Day of Silence. The center has occasionally set up a table in Academic Plaza, where they distribute information on upcoming activities. The center also provides the resource of Safe Zone training for LGBT allies.

The Center is responsible for multiple annual campus-wide educational programs/events including Coming Out Week, GLBT Awareness Week, GLBT Health Week, AIDS Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance. The Center also advises and partners with Texas A&M University Administrators on issues impacting the GLBT community.

Texas A&M's GLBT Center Community Outreach also extends to a GLBT Aggies Professional Network of alumni. The group is active on Facebook, posting around 3 times a month. They host a happy hour on the second Wednesday of each month at a university hall or an off-campus bar, as well as occasional socials and picnics.

Purdue University  
Location: West Lafayette, Indiana  
Undergraduate Population: 39,256  
LGBT Center Index: Not Listed



LGBT Service(s): The Purdue LGBT Center is presided over by the Purdue Division of Diversity and Inclusion. The Center is under the leadership of Lowell Kane.

Purdue's mission statement is more expansive and caters more to the community than OU LGBT Center's. It goes into more detail about aiding people of the community and how it goes about help LGBT community members.

The center has already pushed preferred name change forms through school legislature. Students and staff are able to have their preferred title on all school documents. It is recommended that

#### Organization Resources:

The Purdue LGBT Center has created a reporting system for bias and hate on campus. This resource is a place for students or faculty to submit information about their being harmed on campus, and can be used in conjunction with law enforcement to seek justice.

Purdue's LGBT Center Alumni Association provides for outreach by students and staff to alumni of Purdue for a helping hand or fundraising events. The Purdue Alumni Association also provides for endowments and scholarship contributions by alumni. Purdue has safe-zone training available to off campus individuals that is easily accessible on Purdue's home-page.

In addition to the LGBT Center, Purdue has several student organizations that promote equality on and off campus. The Purdue LGBT Student Alliance hosts open meetings and dinners every week in the Purdue Student Union building, in an effort to promote understanding throughout the student body. They are also tied to progressive greek organizations, including Delta Lambda Phi fraternity and Gamma Rho Lambda sorority. They have extensive connections with off campus LGBT resources including Pride Lafayette, Indiana Equality, and PFLAG.

## Community Outreach:

Purdue's LGBT Center's Twitter presence is average. They use Twitter more extensively to promote events. The Purdue LGBT Facebook page is underdeveloped seems to not be updated or replaced as it is in the old format of Facebook pages from several years ago.

Events include advocacy groups from across the country. (big-ticket national orgs may draw more community members than the campus-centric events/speaker the center brings in currently. The center has also local religious figures in events. Purdue's promotion of their activities is more thorough, utilizing Facebook, Twitter, Email, and their website.

## Miami University

Location: Oxford, Ohio

Undergraduate Population: 14,872

LGBT Center Index: 4.5/5 Stars

About Programs and Initiatives Resources Contact Us

Backpack to Briefcase  
Barahona Latino Resource Fund  
Center for Black Culture and Learning  
**GLBTQ Services**  
Leadership Opportunities  
"Let's Talk" Dialogues

Student Life • Office of Diversity Affairs • Programs and Initiatives • Personal Development • GLBTQ Services

### GLBTQ Services

The mission of GLBTQ Services is to make the Miami University community an open, safe, and inclusive environment for people of all sexualities and gender identities. We provide programming, support, and resources intended to raise awareness regarding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) issues. Through education and conversation, we endeavor to eliminate homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist attitudes and behaviors. As a unit of the Office of Diversity Affairs, GLBTQ Services assists the university in establishing an environment committed to diversity.

Drop by the office to chat, seek information, or just hang out. People of all gender identities and sexual orientations (heterosexual allies too) are welcome. No assumptions about your identity will be made.

### Diversity Affairs

Miami University's Office of Diversity Affairs is responsible for the development and implementation of programs, activities, and procedures designed to enhance the academic success, retention, and personal development of diverse student populations. ODA embodies a commitment to diversity/multiculturalism as expressed through ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic differences.

### Health and Wellness

#### Involvement and Recreation

- Armstrong Student Center
- Cliff Alexander Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Community Engagement and Service
- Residence Life
- Student Activities

#### Personal Development

## LGBT Service(s):

The mission of GLBTQ Services is to make the Miami University community an open, safe, and inclusive environment for people of all sexualities and gender identities. They provide programming, support, and resources intended to raise awareness regarding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) issues. Through education and conversation, they strive to eliminate homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist attitudes and behaviors. As a unit of the Office of Diversity Affairs, GLBTQ Services assists the university in establishing an environment committed to diversity. The office was founded in 2003.

## Organization Resources:

The Office of Diversity Affairs acts as students' "GLBTQ Center." The office is very similar to Ohio University's Center as it is a safe and unbiased location to chat, seek information, or just hang out. It is located in the university's student center.

However, they host numerous weekly "Let's Talk" discussions. Engaging in dialogue offers opportunities for students to discuss current issues and topics that can lead to further education and understanding, greater awareness, and heightened levels of sensitivity to difference. The "Let's Talk" dialogues are intended to assist students in discovering the values of participating in honest, open discussion on a broad range of intellectual, socially, and emotionally relevant topics. Dialogues are open to all students and are conducted

by trained facilitators. Dialogues usually range from one to two hours. These dialogues may include Safe Zone trainings or classroom lectures.

The LGBT Alumni, PFLAG, and the GLBTQ Services are active on Facebook. Their main method of communication with members is through email updates, their Twitter page, and their blog. As of this year their social media and communication has been stagnant.

#### Community Outreach:

LGBT resources and events at Miami include pride parades, galas, awareness week and a number of organizations. Miami also holds a yearly Lavender Graduation. Scheduled the day after graduation, the ceremony honors LGBTQ and allied graduates. In October 2011, gay and straight students joined forces for a Unite Miami rally to protest the planned appearance of members of the anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church on campus.

The Student Affairs office also host a yearly gay pride parade as well as Acceptance week. They also host their official 'Queer Prom'. Student Affairs teamed up with the University's Psychology Department (The Coming Out Project) to conduct research, intervention, and education to help families communicate and navigate the coming out process. It also paired with University of Cincinnati to host rallies against Hate Crimes.

LGBT organizations on campus are constantly seeking support with other groups such as the University's Hockey team. They hosted an awareness campaign to urge respect on and off the ice.

#### *University of Dayton*

*Location: Dayton, Ohio*

*Enrolled: 8,042*

*Other: Private, Catholic University*

*LGBT Center Index: Not Listed*



#### LGBT Service(s):

The University of Dayton supports a student organization called Spectrum. Spectrum is a peer-led group dedicated to providing a safe space for any and all gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual issues. The group is open to UD students, community members and UD's gay-straight alliance.

#### Organizational Resources:

Spectrum holds weekly meetings for all LGBT students and community members. The group encourages any and all participants and all opinions and statements made during meetings are confidential and respected. Spectrum also states that it is "a label-free organization and therefore no individual is required or will be requested to express their sexual orientation to any other member of the group." They do not seem to have a specified meeting place, as it is updated almost every meeting day.

Spectrum plans events in order to promote the awareness of the organization on campus and in the community. The group has planned events to celebrate National Coming Out Day and Pride Week that included food, stories and speeches made by those in the group. They also hosted a LGBT Short Film Festival in 2012. These events are promoted through Spectrum's Facebook and Twitter. Both of these social media sites appear to be used to communicate frequently, but not since the end of 2013. Spectrum does not currently have a website.

#### Community Outreach:

Spectrum does not have much of an overall presence in the community, as it is a peer-led group. Although their meetings and events are open to the community, they seem to have a problem reaching out.

The city of Dayton does have a LGBT Center (The Greater Dayton LGBT Center). They seem to do more community events. However, Spectrum does not appear to pair with them or use them as a sponsor to generate more community outreach.


#### Analysis:

After researching the LGBT Centers at four universities, we have come to the conclusion that Ohio University's LGBT Center is more developed than the centers at Texas A&M University, Miami University, and the University of Dayton. However, the LGBT Center at Purdue is more active online, on-campus and in the community than the center at Ohio University.

The Purdue LGBT Center website is more organized and user-friendly than Ohio University's. Also, Purdue more frequently posts to social media websites. The Purdue LGBT Center has a comparable Twitter presence to the OU LGBT Center but uses Twitter more extensively through posts and retweets to promote events and encourage engagement with followers.

Through our research, we have found that Purdue's LGBT Center website has a map of locations for unisex restrooms across campus. By providing these bathrooms for students and faculty, they accommodate the needs of many people in the campus community with a need for a unisex bathroom. They also make it easy for students to easily and confidentially find these bathrooms. This info could be easily added to the OU LGBT Center site.

Purdue also has a complete online resource for reporting bias and hate against LGBT individuals on campus. This resource is a place for students or faculty to submit information about their being harmed on campus, and can be used in conjunction with law enforcement to seek justice. A system similar to this could be utilized by the OU LGBT Center, either on the LGBT Center's site, or on the Ohio University student homepage. The resources in existence for students at Ohio University could easily be advertised off campus in the community. If the hate crimes reporting tool were to be included on OU's site, it could be advertised by local LGBT-friendly business and organizations such as Jackie O's and Casa Nueva.



The Purdue LGBT Center has been highly successful in providing SafeZone training to those in the community. This has been a shortcoming of the OU LGBT Center since its inception, so modeling the OU center's strategy around Purdue's would be beneficial for community outreach.

The Purdue center also has local religious figures participate in events on campus. A potential partnership could be formed along similar lines with First Presbyterian Church on Court Street. First Presbyterian is a Safe Zone certified location, and could be open to the idea of a partnership.

We have found that the LBGT Center at OU organizes more LGBT events on campus than Purdue. Purdue only has a few events scheduled so far this semester, whereas OU has most of their calendar filled in.

Our research shows that it would be beneficial for the LGBT Center at Ohio University to model their community outreach, social media strategy, and website after the LGBT Center at Purdue to become more user-friendly to the community and campus, and increase awareness of the center and center-sponsored events.



## Formative Research Report

The following report is a summary analysis of a formative research study of surveyed Athens community members based on their preferences and opinions in regards to the Ohio University LGBT Center. The LGBT Center will use the information found to determine how best to develop and implement strategies to improve community outreach in Athens.

31 Athens community members participated in the survey, most of which were students of Ohio University. Limited resources and methods of distribution made it difficult to find willing survey participants that were not associated with the university, despite our efforts. However, we have found interesting insights and implications from community members associated with the university that we believe can be used effectively by the OU LGBT Center in developing a successful community outreach plan.

*Question 1: "What is your age?"*

Our participants ranged from ages 18-22. Our oldest participant was 52 years old. From this we could assumed that the majority of our participants must have been students, as we had some troubles reaching out to community members not affiliated with the university.

*Question 2: "Please select one. I am associated with Ohio University as an employee or student."*

Our assumptions from the first question were confirmed here, as 28 of our 31 participants (90.32%) claimed to be students, and only three said they were not.

*Question 3: "Which part of the Athens community do you identify with?"*

Of our 31 participants, 28 (98.32%) were undergraduate students, one (3.23%) was a graduate student and two (6.45%) were non-students. Again, this confirmed our beliefs that the majority of responses we got were from students at Ohio University.

*Question 4: "Do you associate yourself with the LGBT community?"*

One participant elected to skip this question, leaving 30 responses. Of those remaining 30, 10 people (33.33%) said that they identify in some manner with the LGBT community. Conversely, 20 (66.67%) respondents indicated that they did not identify themselves with the LGBT community.

*Question 5: "Of the following media platform, please rank them from 1 to 5. 1 being use the most and 5 what you use the least."*

Of our 31 respondents, 13 (41.49%) said that Twitter was their most preferred media service. Facebook was a close second among respondents, with 12 (38.71%) favoring it as their primary media source. 5 (16.67%) people picked Instagram as their preferred media, a marked decrease from the double digits of the Facebook and Twitter supporters. A distant 4th are newspapers, with only 1 person (3.23%) preferring print to its digital counterparts. Not a single respondent selected radio as their primary media source, though it was most selected as the least preferred media by 12 (38.71) survey participants.

*Question 6: "The Athens community has a need for more LGBT services than are currently in place."*

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the above statement by selecting "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" from a multiple choice answer bank. One (3.23%) responded 'Strongly Agree.' The majority of respondents, 15 (48.39%) responded 'Agree.' 9 (29.03%) respondents answered 'Neutral'. Three people (9.68%) 'Disagreed' that Athens needs more LGBT services than it already has. And finally, three respondents (9.68) 'Strongly disagreed' with the statement.

*Question 7: "Which LGBT Center sponsored events would you be most likely to attend?"*

*Check all that apply."*

Out of our 31 respondents, 28 answered. 16 (57.14 percent) of respondents checked the Happy Hour event option. The second highest choices tied 53.7 percent of respondents answering that they would attend Speakers/Discussion Panels and a Pride Parade. This research is valuable because of the social implications of the community. They are comfortable in happy hour settings whether they are associated with the LGBT community or not. Respondents are attracted to a laid-back social event. The other two events are more vocational and outspoken. The respondents are interested in going to a location to learn more about a particular subject through discussion. They also support the idea of a pride parade. This research shows that the participants enjoy a relaxed social setting where they can learn and meet on their own time, but they also will actively support outspoken events to enhance the well-being of LGBT culture

*Question 8: "Please select one: I would be more likely to attend LGBT-sponsored events on: Weekends or Weekdays."*

16 respondents (55.17 percent) selected weekends while 13 respondents (44.83 percent) selected weekdays. This information is valuable because we can depict which days events selected in question 7 would be most successful in terms of attendance. The events must be implemented at a certain time that the highest attendance can be obtained. During the weekdays, the happy hour or panel discussions could be later in the evening (around 8-9:00). Longer events such as the pride parade would be on the weekends where many members of the community can contribute.

*Question 9: "How likely would you be to attend an LGBT-sponsored event on Ohio University campus? Off-campus?"*

The selected answers were ranked from Most Likely, Likely, Maybe, Unlikely, and Least Likely. 14 respondents or 48.28 percent of those respondents selected that they would likely attend an event on campus, while 13 or 44.83% selected 'Maybe' for off campus. This shows us that these respondents were more comfortable going to an event that was on campus. Since these respondents were mainly students, they would feel closer to their homes, friends, faculty and university—somewhere that is familiar. They might go attend off campus if it depends on the event and if they feel comfortable. However, the combined responses for "Likely" and "Maybe" attending LGBT Center events held off campus totaled 65.52 percent. These responses imply that respondents would be more likely to attend on-campus events, but more than half would also attend off-campus events.

*Question 10: "Do you believe that LGBT community members feel safe in Athens?"*

Most respondents (53.33 percent) said that they do believe that they feel safe in Athens, and 40 percent were neutral.

The final question of our survey asked only the LGBT community members participating in the survey if they felt safe living in the Athens community. None of the respondents felt unsafe, and 41.67 percent feel safe or very safe.

Upon analysis of our survey research, we have concluded that the members of the Athens community surveyed agree that the community could benefit from more LGBT services than are currently in place. The LGBT Center should focus its efforts on creating events that occur both on and off campus, to attract community attendance and provide an outlet for LGBT community members. Some events that our research shows would be particularly successful are happy hours, speakers/discussion panels and a pride parade. Our survey suggests that the best way to market these events to the Athens community would be through social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

## Communication Plan

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal 1: Enhance social media engagement with the Athens community.**

Objective: Increase social media following by gaining 50 likes on the OU LGBT Facebook page, and 50 more followers on Twitter by Fall Semester 2014.

Strategy 1: Utilize Facebook to reach out to the Athens community.

Tactics:

Person 1 will "like" and comment on other Athens community groups' pages on Facebook once a week.

Person 2 will create groups and event pages to reach out to Athens community members as needed throughout the year.

Strategy 2: Use Twitter to increase community awareness and engagement.

Tactics:

Person 1 will retweet and respond to three other community groups' tweets to encourage them to follow the OU LGBT Twitter page once each week.

Person 2 will follow 10 local Athens businesses' and community organizations' Twitter pages per month.

#### **Goal 2: Promote the LGBT Center and its events through social media.**

Objective: Create updates for each LGBT Center event that is promoted through the LGBT Facebook and Twitter accounts. Invite at least 200 people for every event with a targeted acceptance rate of 100 people.

Strategy: Raise awareness of events hosted by the LGBT center on social media.

Tactics:

Person 1 will use Adobe Illustrator to create eye-catching visuals/event logos to post to Facebook.

Person 2 will create a hashtag for every event and promote it through Twitter.

Person 3 will promote LGBT events on the Facebook and Twitter pages each day during the two weeks leading up to the event.

#### **Goal 3: Enhance community participation by increasing the amount of LGBT Center events that cater to needs of the Athens community.**

Objective: Hold one event per month that specifically targets the Athens community.

Strategy: Develop and implement community-targeted events such as happy hours, discussion panels/speakers and a pride parade.

Tactics:

Person 1 will contact Casa Nueva, Jackie O's, The Union, and other uptown locations to schedule community happy hours on the first Wednesday of each month.

Person 1 will also discuss discount rates of the happy hour and create promotional materials such as fliers and post them around popular locations in town.

Person 2 will contact a relevant speaker via email and telephone to host a discussion panel 1-2 times a month at an on-campus location such as the Front Room, Scripps Hall, or Baker Theater.

Person 3 will encourage attendees to move to an off-campus location together after on-campus events for a meet and greet via email, fliers, and social media posts.

Person 4 will plan a yearly Pride Parade to take place on Court Street each spring that is open to the public. They will contact Athens business owners for sponsorships and the Athens city council for approval. They will write a press release for local Athens newspapers. They will advertise the parade by posting fliers, interacting with business owners, posting Facebook messages, and contacting major clubs and associations via email.

#### **Goal 4: Improve the OU LGBT Center's branding strategy.**

Objective: Plan a specific event that takes place on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) that is hosted solely by the LGBT Center for Athens community members.

Strategy: Tailor the event to the community using new and attractive branding techniques.

Tactics:

Person 1 will create and display the OU LGBT logo clearly at all events on posters and marketing materials at the event.

Person 2 will order and distribute marketing materials at the event such as pens, pride ribbons, brochures, etc.

Person 3 will have tables representing the LGBT center on Court Street, Baker Center, the farmer's market and Athens Community Center at least one time per week. They will reserve the tables through Event Services in Baker Center.

Person 4 will plan and host at least one event per week that is clearly sponsored by the LGBT Center through the use of eye-catching promotional materials.

Message

*'Be Part of Something Real'*

Some of the barriers that prohibit community interaction with the LGBT center are

- 1) Not relevant to their needs (why should they care)
- 2) Unaware that the LGBT Center (and events) exist

In order to interact with these individuals and bring awareness to engage their active participation, there needs to be a sense of importance and urgency in the creative message. Individuals of the Athens community are simply unaware of events and don't care about participating because they are not members of the LGBT community. The creative message answers the question, "Why should I care about this?" The message urges the readers to become part of something and to engage in the constructive enhancement of the LGBT Center. The active command, "Become" suggests participation and urgency with the community and can easily be implemented in a social media campaign, and an off campus campaign. The creative message will help reach our social media goals by encouraging follows and likes. The realness of the message explains that the LGBT Center is something to be taken seriously, because they are helping many individuals throughout the community and campus. The Center has many great accomplishments and the message reiterates their importance. LGBT members' characteristics are described as loving, active and real. The message expresses the urgency or participation and social involvement in a concise manner.

Channels

The channels we will use to disseminate our message are social media platforms. Our goals and objectives call for a reform in the current use of LGBT's social media and seek to add more followers and likes in the future. Twitter will be our primary platform to disseminate the message, because our research concludes that our audience uses Twitter most often. The message will also be promoted through Facebook because 38.71% of our survey respondents said that they use it the most. We will also promote our message in a series of aesthetically pleasing Instagram posts that can be incorporated in both Twitter and Facebook posts. The message 'Become Part of Something Real' could be the LGBT Center's campaign. Social Media posts can incorporate #OUREAL and Instagram posts displaying actions of acceptance and love throughout the Athens Community.

## Timeline

We have created a proposed timeline in order to facilitate our tactics in order to complete our goals and objectives. The timeline starts in May of 2014 and ends by the end of the school year in 2015. Starting immediately will allow for the success of community involvement with the LGBT Center in Athens. Each tactic will either be every month or every two months unless it is a major event planned by the LGBT Center, such as the Pride Parade.

The social media coordinator for the LGBT Center needs to be involved on Facebook immediately and they need to stay up to date. Every week they should befriend, comment, like and share other Athens community group pages. They will also utilize Twitter by retweeting and responding to three other community groups' tweets to encourage followers once each week. They will follow 10 local Athens businesses' and community organizations' Twitter pages per month.

### Every month

- Create and display the OU LGBT logo clearly at all events on posters.
- Have materials ready for all events: pens, pride, ribbons, and brochures.
- Have tables representing the LGBT Center every week. Locate these tables on Court Street, Baker Center, the farmer's market and Athens Community Center.

With each event, they will reach out to Athens community members as needed throughout the year.

**Facebook:** Weekly Posts on community Organizations

**Twitter:** Weekly Interactions & follow 10 Athens Businesses' and community organizations'

- Create eye-catching visuals for the logo for the event
- Create a hashtag for the event
- Post each day two weeks prior to the event

#### *Event 1: Happy Hours*

Call Casa Nueva, Jackie O's, The Union to schedule community happy hours on the first Wednesday of each month. Also discuss discount rates and create fliers for the event.

#### *Social Media*

- Create eye-catching visuals for the logo for each event
- Create a hashtag for event
- Post each day two weeks prior to the event

### Every 2 months

#### Event 2: Guest Speaker

Contact a relevant speaker via email and telephone to host a discussion panel. Contact Front Room, Scripps Hall, and Baker Theater for availability.

Contact an off campus location and schedule a meet and greet after the discussion panel.

### *Social Media*

- Create eye-catching visuals for the logo for event
- Create a hashtag for each event
- Post each day two weeks prior to the event

### Spring

#### *Event 3: Pride Parade*

Contact business owners for sponsorships and the Athens city council for approval. Write a Press Release for local Athens Newspapers. Advertise parade by posting fliers, interacting with business owners, Facebook posts, and contacting clubs and associations via email.

### Social Media

- Create eye-catching visuals for the logo for event
- Create a hashtag for event
- Post each day 3 weeks prior to the event

## Budget Ideas

The cost to put on a Pride Parade: According to the Campus Involvement Center, it costs roughly \$2,500 to put on the Homecoming Parade. This includes paying for security, permits, and barricades. At this time, we believe that this event is too costly and the LGBT Center can focus on inexpensive ways to reach out to the community.

Description	Quantity	Cost
(Pride Parade)		(\$2,500)
Paper Fliers	500	\$25
Big Poster for Baker	1	\$80
Campaign Signs	20	\$50
Business Cards	100	\$25
Brochures	50	\$25
T-Shirts	100	\$500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$705</b>

**\*All prices are estimates from MinuteMan Press & Precision Imprint**

## Conclusion

The Ohio University LGBT Center wishes to engage the Athens community by increasing perceptions and awareness and improving their outreach efforts to the community. They are having difficulties in separating themselves from the student body and connecting with members outside of Ohio University. In order to gain a better understanding of the Athens community perceptions of the LGBT center we held an online survey. We linked our research with methodologies from other schools with LGBT friendly centers.

The major findings of our research were based on methods of communication (participation) and what specific events members would like to attend (awareness). The community communicates heavily with social media such as Facebook and Twitter and is interested in small events scattered throughout the community. Social media needs to actively inform the community of events that are put on by the LGBT Center. The main events were happy hours, speaker panels, and a pride parade. The Pride Parade was a more long term goal that should be used after a rapport has been built with the Athens community. The key to success with these events is consistency of the brand, repetition of forms of communication, and feasibility of active participation. Speaker Panels should encourage a meet-and-greet at an off campus location not only to enhance intimate participation but to also engage with the Athens Community as much as possible. People need to know where such events take place, large posters, active social media engagement, and constant interactivity with the community such as tabling will get the message to the community.

If implemented, these recommendations will assist the Ohio University LGBT Center in creating awareness and promotion of their organization, as well as enhance active participation. It will also allow for increased communication and engagement with community members and build a lasting relationship with prominent business owners of the Athens community.



## Appendix

### Personal Interview Protocol

For our qualitative research, we will be conducting 8-10 personal interviews for the LGBT Center. We will interview LGBT members of the Athens community to gain insight into community perceptions and awareness of the center and how to best address these needs in our campaign. These interviews will be held on campus or through Skype, email, or phone calls. We will allot one hour per interview to ask the following key questions:

#### Introduction:

Hello! Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research. We are Caulfield PR and we are working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center (LGBT Center) on Ohio University's campus as a part of our class project and we would really appreciate a few minutes of your time. As a part of the assignment we are trying to understand Athens community members' understanding of the LGBT center so that they can enhance community outreach. Your responses would be completely confidential, would become a part of aggregate data, and could not be linked to you. By answering these questions you're giving us permission to anonymously use your responses in our qualitative research project. Please be as thorough as you can in your answers. Thanks again!

#### Opening Question:

Have you ever heard of the Ohio University LGBT Center?

If yes, how did you originally find out about the center? What do you think they offer to students and the community?

If no, based on the name alone, what do you think they offer to students and the community?

#### Key Questions:

Do you currently have an outlet from which you receive LGBT related support/services?

If yes, what are these services?

Where do you usually receive these services from?

If no, what types of LGBT services do you think that you have a need for?

Thinking on the same lines, what types of LGBT services do you think that the community has a need for?

How would you gauge the support level for LGBT community in the Athens community?

Is there room for improvement?

Are there any places that you can think of where you, as an LGBT member, would feel most comfortable spending time in the community?

Would you be interested in attending Ohio University LGBT Center-sponsored events?

What types of events would you be most likely to come to?

Casual- Meet and greets, happy hours, socials, film screenings

More structured- support groups, lectures, organizations, educational events.

Any other (please specify)

What days and times would be most convenient for you to attend these events?

Where could these events take place that would make you most comfortable?

On campus vs. Off campus?

How would you like to be contacted about LGBT news and events?

Social media

Email

Telephone  
Mail

What social medias are you most active on, if any?

Do you enjoy hearing about community events through social media?

How likely are you to attend an event that you hear about through social media?

Do you utilize any groups/pages on social media?

Can you suggest some ways in which LGBT center could improve their outreach to the Athens community?

Conclusion:

Thank the interviewee for their participation in our research.

## Appendix (continued)

### SURVEY:

1. What is your age?
  
2. Please select one. I am associated with Ohio University as an employee or student
  - Yes
  - No
  
3. Which part of the Athens community do you identify with?
  - Undergraduate Student
  - Graduate Student
  - Faculty/Staff
  
4. Do you associate yourself with the LGBT community?
  - Yes
  - No
  
5. Of the following media platforms, please rank them from 1 to 6. 1 being what you use the most and 6 being what you use the least.
  - \_\_\_ Facebook
  - \_\_\_ Twitter
  - \_\_\_ Instagram
  - \_\_\_ Newspaper such as The Post or Athens Messenger
  - \_\_\_ TV
  - \_\_\_ Radio
  
6. The Athens community has a need for more LGBT services than are currently in place.
  - \_\_\_ Strongly Agree
  - \_\_\_ Agree
  - \_\_\_ Neutral
  - \_\_\_ Disagree
  - \_\_\_ Strongly Disagree
  
7. Which LGBT Center sponsored events would you be most likely to attend? Check all that apply.
  - \_\_\_ Happy Hour
  - \_\_\_ Speakers/Discussion Panels
  - \_\_\_ Support Group
  - \_\_\_ Concert
  - \_\_\_ Open House
  - \_\_\_ Community Service Event
  - \_\_\_ Pride Parade
  - \_\_\_ Other (Please specify)
  
8. How likely would you be to attend an LGBT-sponsored event on Ohio University's campus?  
Not likely   1   2   3   4   5   Very likely
  
9. How likely would you be to attend an LGBT-sponsored event that occurs off-campus?  
Not likely   1   2   3   4   5   Very likely

10. As an LGBT member, how safe do you feel in the Athens community?  
Not at all safe 1 2 3 4 5 Very safe

11. As a member of the Athens community, rate how safe you think other LGBT members feel:  
Not at all safe 1 2 3 4 5 Very safe

12. Please select one: I would be more likely to attend LGBT-sponsored events on:  
 Weekday Evenings  
 Weekend Evenings

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