

**Proposal for an MIT Office of LBGT Services staffed by
a full-time Assistant Dean of LBGT Services**

November 2004

draft draft draft draft draft draft

On behalf of the LBGT Issues Group, the following constitute the
Committee for this proposal:

- George Barbastathis, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering
- James Collins, Assistant Dean, Counseling and Support Services
- Lorna Gibson, Professor of Materials Sciences & Engineering
- Emily Meghan Morrow Howe, Coordinator, Program in Women's Studies
- Maryanne Kirkbride, Clinical Director for Campus Life, MIT Medical
- Thomas Robinson, Coordinator, Student Life Programs

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Executive Summary

This document proposes establishing an Office of Lesbian Bisexual Gay Transgender Services at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, run by a full-time Assistant Dean of LBGT Services. This Office would provide a comprehensive range of education, information, advocacy, and support services for lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LBGT) students, staff, and faculty as well outreach to the entire campus.

What the Proposal Entails:

- The creation of a fulltime Assistant Dean for LBGT Services.
- No new funding from the Institute for annual programming.
- A commitment from the LBGT Issues Group to help cultivate donors who can decrease the longer-term costs of this position.

Rationale:

- A fulltime Assistant Dean for LBGT services will:
 1. allow MIT through outreach activities to pro-actively address homophobic incidents and campus attitudes in service sectors that work with LBGT individuals (i.e. Housing, Emergency Medical Technicians, Campus Police.)
 2. coordinate and improve support for LBGT students recognizing national data for increased suicide risk for LBGT youth and young adults
 3. coordinate a sustained effort to work with other targeted-support communities i.e. students of Color, International Students, female students as well as with the general (non-lbgt) MIT community.
- The Institute already provides significant financial resources for OME, Disability Services and The International Students Office in recognition that these groups of students require specific support.
- Our campus significantly lags behind peer institutions which already have in place similar staff positions for LBGT services.

Present status of LBGT@MIT:

- The present all-volunteer staff for LBGT Services, while committed, can not hope to effectively address the needs of LBGT faculty, staff and students.
- The Institute does not ask faculty and staff of color, International administrators, or Employees with disabilities to volunteer their time to support students of these communities which has tacitly occurred with LBGT staff and faculty
- Staff turnover creates significant gaps in LBGT Services as new hires may not have LBGT Services in their position descriptions or skill sets.

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- Budget cuts, the recent departures of Rick Gresh and Travis Wright and the unavoidable time commitment conflicts between volunteers' time and other Institute duties have negatively impacted programs.

Outcomes of this proposal and for the MIT community:

- Recruitment and retention of LBGT and allied students, faculty and staff will almost certainly increase based upon the creation of a fulltime staff position and the increased visibility and outreach that position will entail.
- Targeted workplace with clear outcomes based on a regular assessment of the campus climate in terms of community attitudes towards LBGT issues and individuals, resulting in a more focused outreach activities and sensitivity training based on results.
- Increased support and outreach to at-risk LBGT students.
- Greatly improved outreach to Fraternities and Sororities, students of color, residence halls, international students, women's groups, and athletes--all populations that LBGT@MIT's medical and volunteer staff have identified as in particular need of support.

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Introduction: MIT and the LBGT Community

MIT, as an internationally acclaimed and recognized student-centered research institution, should prepare students for the challenges of living in an increasingly diverse world. At MIT, our efforts to address diversity issues include increasing understanding and acceptance of the diversity and true complexity of human sexuality and gender identity. Recently MIT expressed its commitment to fostering and maintaining such diversity by enacting a gender-identity non-discrimination clause (See Appendix I).

This document proposes establishing an Office of Lesbian Bisexual Gay Transgender Services at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, run by a full-time Assistant Dean of LBGT Services. This Office would provide a comprehensive range of education, information, advocacy, and support services for lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LBGT) students, staff, and faculty, and work to create and maintain an open, safe, and inclusive campus environment for LBGT people and their allies.

This office should be directed by a full-time professional staff member who is appropriately experienced and credentialed at the masters or doctoral level. Additional staff should include a full-appointment, full-year Graduate Assistant and adequate student support staff. The authors recommend that this office be an autonomous unit within the Division of Student Life Programs. Estimated total annual costs for the new staff member, including salaries and benefits, are \$65,000, depending on whether a masters or doctoral prepared Assistant Dean is hired. (See Appendix II).

The request for establishing a separate office follows several years of volunteer-basis and informal programming and support by a diverse group of faculty, staff and students. While that group has laid the foundation for the success of the office, and intends to continue our involvement, the needs of the LBGT community have outstripped their existing resources.

Currently, the Office of Student Life Programs supports a part-time Graduate Assistant whose purpose is to provide education, information, advocacy, and support services to LBGT students at MIT. The limitations

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and inadequacies of the current arrangement relate both to staffing with only a Graduate Assistant, consistency of efforts over many academic years, the absence of adequate funding for services and the ways in which a student-only focus is inadequate for working with the LBGT faculty and staff members of the MIT Community.

The programming, events, and support of the LBGT community are currently coordinated by volunteer faculty and staff members who donate their time (at work and after work) to the LBGT community, with the assistance of the Graduate Assistant who runs the Rainbow Lounge. While participation from staff and faculty volunteers is valued, and would be a key to any future program, the lack of sufficient and consistent (financial and time) devotion to LBGT@MIT has created a situation in which LBGT@MIT struggles to maintain basic programs and services.

LBGT@MIT requires a fulltime point person to keep the various pieces connected and functioning, to manage emerging needs or issues, and to identify and find solutions for services to be developed by Institute partners. Currently there is no appropriately resourced central office to turn to with questions about organizing LBGT-friendly events, to seek advice about coming out, to find out about Institute policies or precedents regarding LBGT issues, or to report homophobic incidents. People often feel unsure of where to turn when such issues and questions arise, and unsupported by the current loose volunteer network arrangement.

A couple years ago, there was some homophobic writings on the Mass Ave. bridge. LBGT students didn't say anything because it didn't dawn on them that they could.-an MIT staff member who works closely with LBGT students.

An additional result of not having an Office of LBGT Services on campus is that LBGT community members think that their safety and livelihood is not a priority of the Institute. A current junior transfer students comments:

I am really shocked that there is not a full-time LBGT staff member [at this university in contrast to my previous college]. It really says something to me about how much MIT cares about my mental health. When you come to college out of high school and have to deal with being gay in addition to all of the other issues of leaving

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home and being on your own, it's really hard. I know it would really make a difference in my life if MIT showed me some real commitment to helping me with these issues.

MIT Campus Climate: for LBGT students, staff, and faculty

The members of the MIT LBGT community and its allies are proposing this Office in the context of the (often unwelcoming and sometimes hostile) current climate on campus for LBGT people. In general, the MIT administration actively strives to be supportive of its various community members and to foster an atmosphere of openness, tolerance, and respect for diversity. President Vest's direct response to students regarding an incident involving racism is case in point. However, the way that this goal of diversity and openness actually functions in the everyday lives of LBGT faculty, staff, and students at MIT is often quite different. While the MIT non-discrimination clause prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, often the bias against LBGT individuals comes in the form of negative campus climate issues. For example, in recent months, people have torn or ripped down "You are Welcome Here" cards of several MIT staff and faculty members. One student noticed a homophobic slur had been scrawled right across the card. This semester, a staff member reported violent anti-gay graffiti to the Campus police and during the same time period, the office door of an LBGT faculty member's was defaced with an homophobic and degrading slur. While LBGT staff members volunteer to coordinate LBGT positive events such as Coming Out Week and the LBGT Photo Campaign, much remains to be improved upon in regards to the day to day lived experiences of LBGT MIT Community members at all levels.

In addition to such outward instances of homophobia, faculty and staff members frequently lament the fact that the campus climate can be unwelcoming to LBGT faculty and staff members, encouraging them to remain "in the closet" or not "out" about their sexual orientations. This climate issue is clearly pervasive and keeps faculty members from feeling free to be "out." Because of this, there are only two "out" LBGT faculty in the School of Engineering: statistics suggest that there must be more LBGT faculty in this group. A new faculty member comments on the

fact that the climate at MIT discourages faculty members from being "out" about their sexual orientation:

As a new faculty member, I am disturbed by my sense that senior faculty are afraid to acknowledge their sexuality in public. [The senior faculty members'] fear is not only harmful to them, but detrimental to students who need faculty support in dealing with issues of sexuality and identity. Having a permanent staff member responsible for outreach to LBGT members of the MIT community would be a step forward in creating a supportive atmosphere in which students and faculty could meet to address issues of common concern.-Assistant Professor Anthony Lioi, Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies

In addition to lacking "out" faculty role models, LBGT students don't have many upper level administrator role models because this segment of the population has so few LBGT administrators who are "out" to the students even though there are many who are actually LBGT in identity:

...There have been so many missed opportunities for senior administrators to be ["out" and] proud role models for students. It pains me tremendously because the students need and want role models-an "out" bisexual administrator, Michele Oshima, Director, Office of the Arts.

Students have expressed a deep sadness, also, at the lack of "out" staff members who work with and live in their on-campus Residences, indicating that this lack of role models greatly affects their levels of (dis)satisfaction with life at MIT.

I used to live in an on-campus Residence Hall and was very unhappy. There were many [House Fellows, Residential Life Staff, and Graduate Tutors] who worked there, who I knew were queer [from seeing them at the LBGT Issues Group], but not "out" due to their sense that the students they worked with would be alienated. How could I feel comfortable living in a place where even my advisors could not be themselves? As a result, I moved to an independant living group where I feel more safe. There really needs to be someone whose sole job is to educate kids on campus so that no one else is put in a position similar to to one I was in.- a junior LBGT MIT student.

Aside from lacking "out" role models, which results in negative self-image, there are other factors that can make the MIT campus climate

unwelcoming for students directly. Negative or ignorant attitudes towards fellow students are prevalent, especially in residential life situations where issues of sexuality are often the most urgent for both LBGT students who need safe and supportive housing, and non-LBGT students who have homophobic attitudes. Sometimes the prevailing norm in certain living groups is so homophobic that the students are willing to spell their feelings out concretely and directly to LBGT students. One staff member in Residential Life Services reports on an incident in a fraternity:

A [LBGT] pre-frosh wanted to pledge a fraternity. He came to campus over CPW and found one he really liked. He wrote the president to say that he was really interested in that fraternity and would like to pledge. He went on to say that he wanted to make sure that it wouldn't be an issue for him to pledge since he was gay. The president said that it wasn't a problem for him, but he should double check with the rest of the guys first to make sure. When he brought it up at the meeting, the frat took a vote and said they didn't want a gay brother.

Sometimes the homophobic attitudes of MIT community members comes across more subtly, still affecting LBGT students, though not as concretely, and still making them feel unwelcome at MIT.

This summer a trans[gendered] pre-frosh came to check out his new dorm. When he got to the front desk, the student workers gave him a hard time and wouldn't believe him when he said he was going to live there in the fall. Because he didn't look like the rest of the residents, he wasn't made to feel welcome. -an MIT Residential Life Staff Member.

Because they don't feel that it is safe or acceptable to be "out" on the MIT campus, many LBGT students who crave community are active in the metro boston LBGT community, instead of putting their energy towards working with the groups on campus. For many of them, it's not that they don't want to be active, but that they don't feel safe being out on MIT's campus. This is a great loss to the MIT community as a whole who would have benefited from their active participation and leadership involvement with Student Life Activities in general and MIT's various student LBGT groups in particular.

Finally, it is our hope that the LBGT Services administrator would be able to work with non-LBGT segments of the population in order to foster a more accepting campus climate. A straight student comments on the need for such a position at MIT:

...I do feel that the "straight" side of campus is still uncomfortable with issues of sexuality...In order to develop a safe and tolerant overall community at MIT I feel that the role of the [LBGT] community needs to include some form of outreach to the non-[LBGT] part of MIT. Knowing that it is against the MIT policy to discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity is quite different from being comfortable in communicating about these issues. I believe that a devoted staff member would be able to address this issue of comfort.

Rationale for an LBGT Services Office: the right thing to do

Continuing in the tradition of expanding MIT's non-discrimination clause, and fostering meaningful diversity at MIT, and in order to address and solve problems regarding attitudes towards non-traditional sexual orientation and gender identity in the MIT community, we have identified four key areas supporting the rationale for the creation of an LBGT Office. MIT students, staff, and faculty would benefit from:

1. Recruitment and Retention
2. Outreach and Awareness-raising
3. Health Promotion
4. Support of Individuals

1. Recruiting (and retaining) LBGT students, faculty, and staff: remaining competitive with peer institutions:

This year incoming graduate and undergraduate LBGT students (as well as LBGT faculty and staff) sought out the LBGT Community at MIT via e-mails to LBGT@MIT members, and by visiting the Rainbow Lounge during Campus Preview Weekend, Orientation and throughout the first semester in record numbers. These new students (as well as faculty and staff) have reported choosing MIT in part based on the welcoming attitude of the LBGT community. Recruiting the best possible people to the MIT student, staff, administrative, and faculty communities is an area in which MIT competes with other top tier schools. To remain competitive in this way, MIT must

sustain it's successful and supportive LBGT community. There is research to support the expectation that a highly visible and active LBGT office leads to an increase in recruitment and retention of LBGT students, staff, and faculty. (see references)

2. Outreach: creating and maintaining a safe space for LBGT MIT faculty, staff, and students:

The basic need for a dedicated full-time staff member for LBGT services is nowhere more obvious than in our outreach efforts to closeted individuals in need, students in unsupportive student or living groups, and to services and groups on campus who need to increase their sensitivity to LBGT issues and individuals.

Trying to reach the students who aren't in the loop is very difficult. There is no system in place for reaching out to them. The best way to reach them is by postering and having programs in their residences, but there is no one to coordinate this effort and to make sure it happens. -an administrator who volunteers her time for the LBGT community at MIT.

Outreach to closeted individuals in need: At this point, the only formal, public contact person for LBGT@MIT is the part-time graduate assistant, who changes from year to year. This creates a problem of consistency in outreach and access. For example, folks who e-mail the Graduate Assistant in the summer (when this position is closed and in the period between Graduate Assistants) may likely never get an answer to their inquiry. Because of the often-sensitive nature of LBGT inquiries, individuals may not get up the courage to re-address their question at a later date. This situation is just one example of the lost-opportunities created by having a high-turnover, part-time Graduate Assistant (along with a corps of always-changing faculty and staff volunteers) in charge of coordinating LBGT services and individual student support at MIT.

Outreach to students via student groups: While student groups conduct a fair share of the outreach efforts to students, they need significant additional support, not only individually, as LBGT individuals, but as group leaders trying to connect with an often hard-to-reach ("closeted") group of potential group members. An LBGT Services Assistant Dean would be able to respond to the cyclical needs of the

campus in terms of providing additional support and encouragement to LBGT student leaders and groups, who often change yearly.

Outreach to other MIT constituents, programs, and groups: Because LBGT@MIT is a volunteer-run network, it is difficult to maintain basic programs and services, let alone formulate strategies of outreach to other MIT populations and key people who need education and training such as House Managers, Graduate Resident Tutors, Athletic Coaches, Freshman Advisors, and TAs. The creation of this position would allow LBGT@MIT to work closely with many various MIT organizations and programs to begin conversations, workshops and other outreach activities to build a thoroughly and genuinely supportive community. Similarly, this position would also give us the necessary resources to more effectively reach out to other under-represented groups on campus; for example the Assistant Dean of LBGT Services could work with community members of Color to develop programming designed to foster dialogue and increase support for students at the intersection of both groups. The Assistant Dean would also work with service-oriented groups such as the Emergency Medical Technicians, Freshman Advising, and MIT Mental Health Services to ensure safe, sensitive, and appropriate care for LBGT recipients of services.

In terms of ensuring effective and sensitive outreach to LBGT students by the LBGT community and by MIT community members in general, the LBGT Services Assistant Dean would be given the charge of working with various communities from Residential Life Services to the Office of Minority Education to Human Resources, for example, to provide sensitivity training to its staff.

3. Health Promotion: mental and physical health services for the LBGT community:

Health care providers can lack knowledge, training, and resources to provide sensitive and quality care for LBGT youth. LBGT youth (and adults) can be fearful of being open about their sexuality with their providers, for fear of their (potentially-adverse) reactions. This double bind can negatively affect the health care received by LBGT individuals. Early detection of sexual orientation-specific mental, physical, and sexual health concerns can be better supported by MIT Mental and Physical Health Providers and Health Educators with the creation of this position. The LBGT Services Assistant Dean would be given the charge of working

with MIT Medical and Counseling and Support Services to provide sensitivity training to its staff.

4. LBGT individuals are at risk; Campus LBGT Offices offer support

Significant ignorance, intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and violence directed at LBGT people exists on American college campuses. The majority of incidents are not reported to officials, however such incidents inevitably contribute to a negative campus climate. We believe that an Assistant Dean of LBGT Services would have the time, funding, consistent commitment, and charge to work to tackle the troubling issues that affect LBGT individuals.

For example, there is a documented link between LBGT-status and suicide risk:

Numerous studies spanning the past quarter century have used varied designs and methods in multiple settings and have consistently demonstrated that sexual minority youth are among those most likely to report suicidality (suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts). - American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 46, No. 9, 1241-1257 (2003).

The Assistant Dean of LBGT Services would work with MIT Mental Health and Counseling and Support Services to coordinate LBGT Support groups at the faculty, staff, and student levels and to bring LBGT-specific sensitivity trainings to other programs on campus, such as the Freshman Advising Program and Residential Life Programs.

Homophobic harassment and discrimination, especially combined with inadequate social support, leading to low self-esteem, depression, poor academic performance, dropping out of school entirely, or transfer to another institution. We believe that a safe, supportive, affirming environment will improve LBGT student retention at MIT. Many directors of existing LBGT centers have anecdotal information from students that their educational careers and even their lives have been saved because they had a safe place to go and an understanding person with whom to speak.

LBGT@MIT Staffing: recent history and current status

Prior to 2002, before his promotion to Assistant Director of Student Life Programs, Rick Gresh was apparently in a position that had a designated 20% of his time dedicated to supervising the LBGT Graduate Assistant; overseeing the Rainbow Lounge space and programming; and coordinating the loose network of LBGT groups and committees at MIT, including the LBGT Issues Group, various subcommittees and task forces as well as five student groups. When Gresh was promoted, this 20% was dropped.

LBGT@MIT, however, continued with the volunteer efforts of Gresh and a handful of dedicated MIT community members, support staff assistance donated by Student Life Programs (SLP), and general support provided by the paid Graduate Assistant who worked with LBGT programs. Currently, however, there have been significant changes that jeopardize the gains LBGT programming has made over the past few years. These changes include: Gresh's departure from MIT, along with 3 other key members who run LBGT; the turn-over in the position of the Graduate Assistant for LBGT programs, and the decrease in MIT staff volunteer time. These changes point to the need for consistent centralized coordination for LBGT programs.

When Gresh left MIT in the summer of 2004, he divided the responsibilities of LBGT@MIT between Tom Robinson of SLP and James Collins of Counseling and Support Services (CSS). In the opening paragraph of his proposal for this new structure, Gresh asserted:

It is of prime importance that this be understood as an interim solution: James/Tom should work with the LBGT Issues Group to be sure that advocacy for on-going support be a key issue for this year.

On-going and consistent support is crucial. If, for any reason, James and/or Tom were unable to fulfill their volunteered commitment to LBGT programs, there is nothing guaranteeing the continuity of these programs which have proven to be effective resources for MIT LBGT students.

As mentioned, LBGT@MIT suffered an additional loss last year. Over the past few years, LBGT programs has benefited from the dedicated hard work of Travis Wright, the Graduate Assistant for LBGT@MIT. Over his three years with LBGT@MIT, Wright was able to work with Gresh to build an

infrastructure for LBGT programs and make significant progress in developing new programs and outreach. One successful and much-needed program initiated by Wright was a discussion group for students on the topic of "Spirituality and Sexuality," which was in high demand by the students and much loved by the attendees. Since the Graduate Assistantship is a yearly position, and there is no guarantee of him/her returning after one year, we cannot depend on GA position for the stability and continued growth of LBGT programs. In fact, the popular discussion series, "Sprituality and Sexuality" has discontinued in his absence as the new GA, Kathy Girod, has turned her attention to several more immediately pressing aspects of [LBGT@MIT](#). Ideally, the Assistant Dean would work with the Graduate Assistant to solve urgent matters as well as to plan for the longterm well-being of the LBGT community and the MIT Community in general.

Lastly, while LBGT@MIT has benefited tremendously from dedicated MIT staff who volunteer their time and energy, this year, however, several of the people who have contributed so generously in the past, have had to decrease their involvement for various reasons. Due to budget cuts, many volunteers have experienced demands from their supervisors for their full devotion to their paid positions at MIT. These staff members must then volunteer, after hours, for LBGT@mit in order to keep it running; while many have been able and willing to, many have not.

LBGT@MIT and the programs associated with it, serve an important role in providing support and resources to MIT's LBGT students. The current arrangement is proving to be too precarious. The continued operation of these programs, and the development of new programs and outreach require a committed staff person filling a full-time position dedicated to LBGT programming and issues.

Time Commitment: Coordinating LBGT Services at MIT

What follows are estimated time commitments of the current co-coordinators of LBGT@MIT. It is important to keep in mind that these estimates do not take into consideration unquantifiable time commitments such management of problems or crises that arise around programming/community issues, or the time needed for planning and

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developing new programs. These estimates do not take into account the handful of other LBGT staff and faculty members who, in fits and starts and with varying levels of commitment and energy, volunteer their time to put on programming, provide support and resources for students, create and maintain LBGT safe spaces on campus, and run the various committees that are related to the enhancement of life for the LBGT community at MIT.

Basic Maintenance and Coordination

12.5 hrs/week
PLUS 95 hours per year

Work with Graduate Assistant

2 hrs/week
PLUS 35 hrs per year

Support/Discussion Groups

2 hrs/week
PLUS 3 hours per year

"You are Welcome Here" Campaign

.5 hrs/week
PLUS 18 hours per year

Rainbow Lounge

2.5 hrs/week
PLUS 15 hours per year

LBGT Issues Group

.25 hrs/week
PLUS 2 hours per year

TOTAL

19.75 hrs/week PLUS 168 hours* per year on specific projects initiated by the community, and responses to situations related to students at risk.

* These additional hours tend to be concentrated at certain times during the year and around specific and discrete events/projects.

In addition to the work carried out by Robinson and Collins, there are several staff and faculty members who devote significant time to [LBGT@MIT](#). The following staff/faculty volunteer a substantial amount of time to keep up the broadly defined responsibilities associated with running [LBGT@MIT](#) committees, staffing the Rainbow Lounge, putting on programming, and providing student group support and advocacy for individual students: Chandra Mincher (Residential Life Programs), Michele Oshima (Office of the Arts), Emily Meghan Morrow Howe (Women's Studies), Laura Stuart (Center for Health Promotion and Wellness), Audra Bartz (Mental Health), and Jason Jacobsen (Course 9) all have formally

(volunteer) designated roles in LBGT from running committees to advising student groups. There are 8-10 other staff and faculty members who dedicate time to planning and leading the LBGT Student Leadership Retreat, working on the LBGT Issues Group Committees, and working with Students in need. While the new position would doubtlessly alleviate some of the burden of committed hours that staff and faculty donate to LBGT, their main role would be to coordinate and supplement these efforts and ensure that they could continue, in spite of ever-changing staff and faculty commitments.

Benchmarking LBGT Services: looking at our peer colleges and universities

According to the National Consortium of LBGT Resources in Higher Education (<http://www.lgbtcampus.org/>), there are more than 90 colleges and universities in the U.S. that have implemented LBGT services that include some form of staff support for LBGT programs. Additionally, many colleges and universities have more than one staff member, a community center, graduate assistants, and, in some cases, a hearty number of student workers. Appendix III is a sampling of some of MIT's peer institutions and other local institutions. As you will note, all of our peer institutions, with the exception of Harvard University, have at least one dedicated staff member for LBGT services.

Administrative Issues: the location, budget considerations, and reception of such a program

To best serve the LBGT community as a whole, focusing primarily on, but not limited to the student sector, we believe the Office of LBGT services should be located within the Office of Student Life, with a charge of supporting the entire MIT community. At MIT, there are several precedents of staffed offices which provide education, information, advocacy, and support services to a targeted population of students (with corresponding and secondary efforts to enrich the experiences of faculty and staff). Likewise, LBGT individuals are widely recognized as having special needs and/or a history of discrimination affecting potential for individual development.

Appendix II outlines the proposed budget, totalling \$82,000, for maintaining an Office of LBGT Services, with a full-time Assistant Dean of LBGT@MIT and LBGT Services more broadly.

Current experience does not suggest that institutions will lose funding from alumni as a result of establishing an LBGT center; on the contrary, many have received generous contributions from LBGT alumni. In general, we hope that MIT alumni in their overwhelming majority will be supportive of the creation of an LBGT office with a permanent staff member position, and that they will view their alma mater even more positively than they do now as a result of taking this step.

Definitions of Success Metrics: evaluation metrics

Establishing this Office would provide the necessary infrastructure for evaluation. These include:

- Correlate acceptance (or rejection) of MIT's offers to faculty, staff and students with LBGT related inquiries directed to the LBGT staff person.¹
- Track referrals to medical staff by the LBGT staff person and determine if the number of referrals increased after the hire.
- Verify the continuation of the present positive trend in increasing attendance of LBGT events, especially by students (e.g. the September retreat.)
- Assessment of general campus attitudes towards LBGT issues and people by working with Institutional Research Office to assess and incorporate appropriate "climate" questions into the existing surveys.

MIT Community Support of the proposed Office of LBGT Services

Several key members of the MIT community have expressed their support for the creation of an Office of LBGT Services at MIT. Their letters are contained in Appendix V.

¹ There is anecdotal evidence that interviewees who are not gay themselves inquire about MIT's LBGT policies. We conjecture that this is an indirect way to inquire about MIT's openness.

Conclusions: MIT and LBGT Services

MIT takes great pride in recognizing the research and educational assets a diverse community brings. That commitment to diversity has included necessary investments to level the playing field for communities subject to discrimination. This proposal outlines a conservative and measured approach to best help MIT fulfill its mission by recruiting and retaining the best and brightest students, staff and faculty.

In the long view, there is benefit to the Institute in programmatically addressing the issues facing our country and our world in terms of cultural pluralism. We see this Office as a first step in that regard, a collaborative foundation for full participation in our global community. As some colleges have worked to create cultural pluralism interest groups and centers, we hope to move forward to with other concerned constituencies to expand our capacity and increase our cultural competence.

Appendix I: Gender Identity Non-Discrimination Clause

After two years of work by the LBGT Issues group and a number of concerned allies and individuals, MIT has officially added gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. This is an exciting and much welcomed commitment from the Institute that will ensure that individuals at MIT will not be discriminated against because of their gender identity.

Though protection against gender expression was included in the LBGT Issue group's initial proposal, the Faculty decided that it should not be included in the nondiscrimination policy, indicating their belief that gender expression was inherently protected by other components of the clause.

Please see the updated web site, with the recent addition of the phrase "gender identity" for more information.

<http://web.mit.edu/referencepubs/nondiscrimination/>

Appendix II: Budget for the Office of LBGT Support

The table below indicates the sources of funding for LBGT@MIT. Roughly 40% of the annual funding for LBGT@MIT is derived from an Alumni donor. Some of the funds have been committed to fiscal year '05 to pay for limited renovations in the Rainbow Lounge as well to cover the increased cost of employing four student workers.

Current Funding

Student Life	\$17,800
John Kellett Annual (Alum) Gift	\$11,000
(Total	\$28,800)

Requested Funding

Assistant Dean of LBGT Salary + EBs	\$65,000 (pending salary survey)
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Appendix III: Benchmarking LBGT support at Peer Institutions

	Full-time Staff	Support Staff	Grad. Assist.	Resource Center	Student Staff
Brown	1	0	NA	yes	5
Cornell	1	0	0	yes	4
Duke	2	0	0	yes	8
Harvard	0	0	1	no	no
MIT	0	0	1	yes	no
Princeton Univ.	1	0	0	no	NA
Stanford Univ.	1	0	0	NA	yes
Tufts	1	NA	0	yes	yes
UC Berkley	1	0	NA	yes	yes
UCLA	1	NA	0	yes	yes
UPENN	2	0	0	yes	11

Appendix IV: Research citations relating LBGT status to suicidal acts or ideation

Russell, ST, Joyner K. Adolescent sexual orientation and suicide risk: Evidence from a national study. Am J. Public Health. 2001;91:1276-1281.

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Appendix V: Letters of Support from MIT Community Members:

- Lorna Gibson, Professor of Materials Sciences & Engineering, Chair of the Faculty
- **George Barbastathis Esther and Harold E. Edgerton Assistant Professor Department of Mechanical Engineering**
- Alan E. Siegel, Ed.D. Chief, Mental Health Service, MIT Medical

Dean Larry Benedict
Dean for Student Life
4-110

November 9, 2004

Dear Dean Benedict,

I am writing to express my support for the proposal for an MIT Office of LBGT Services, to be staffed by an Assistant Dean of LBGT Services. I have been involved with the LBGT Issues Group for the last year and have been impressed by the accomplishments of the LBGT community in supporting LBGT students, staff and faculty. The programming, events and support of the LBGT community are currently coordinated by staff who volunteer their time, with the assistance of a Graduate Assistant who runs the Rainbow Lounge. Apart from the Graduate Assistant, the staff who work to support the LBGT community do not have this activity as part of their job responsibilities and are not compensated for these efforts. The consensus of the LBGT Issues Group is that there should be a full-time staff person to support the LBGT community at MIT. The responsibilities of this individual would include:

- outreach: creating and maintaining a safe space for LBGT students, staff and faculty
- recruiting and retaining LBGT students, staff and faculty to MIT
- education of MIT community
- working with MIT Medical and Counseling and Support Services to provide sensitivity training to their staff
- coordinating LBGT Issues Group and related committees
- supervision of Graduate Assistant/Rainbow Lounge
- support for student group programming and events
- promotion and running of support/discussion groups
- advocacy for individual students
- leading the LBGT Student Leadership Retreat
- "You are Welcome Here" campaign
- maintaining lbgt email lists and website

I am strongly in favour of MIT supporting the proposal to establish an MIT Office of LBGT Services, to be staffed by an Assistant Dean of LBGT Services.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Gibson

MIT Office of LBGT Services Proposal

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November 15, 2004

Dean Larry Benedict Dean for Student
Life 4-110

Dear Dean Benedict:

I am writing in strong support of the proposal towards the establishment of an Office for LBGT Services staffed by an Assistant Dean in charge of LBGT affairs. I have only recently involved myself with our campus LBGT community. I came out in my professional environment as a gay man last spring, prompted by Prof. Lorna Gibson's inspired article in the *MIT Faculty Newsletter*. Before I came out, I had been aware that MIT as an institution is supportive of LBGT issues (e.g. the employment non-discrimination clause, the "you are welcome here" campaign). However, the combination of my status as junior faculty and the sparseness of senior faculty role models who are LBGT (especially in Engineering) had contributed to my reluctance to come out at MIT, except to close friends. The proposed Office and its active engagement in the community will likely reduce both the severity of the dilemma and the length of the coming out process in future cases. This is important for faculty and staff, and even more so for students who may be at an increased risk because of the combined academic pressures. Moreover, the proposed Office will

- • further improve the already open and accepting culture on campus;
- • reduce limited occurrences of homophobia via education, outreach and informed acceptance rather than policing;
- • coordinate more effectively events designed to increase awareness about LBGT health, culture, social and political acceptance, and other community issues;
- • reduce the conflicts in time commitment for colleagues who currently undertake these tasks as volunteers;
- • encourage LBGT and questioning students, staff and faculty to pursue their professional goals at MIT without perceiving conflicts with their personal identity; and
- • place MIT in a competitive position with respect to peer institutions to attract talented academic and staff professionals who happen to be LBGT.

For these reasons, I am strongly supportive of this proposal. I will be delighted to further discuss this with you or to provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

George Barbastathis, Esther and Harold E. Edgerton Assistant Professor
Department of Mechanical Engineering

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I wish to add my support to the effort to develop a new position to coordinate and support LGBT services on campus. Establishing this position would enhance the health of the community, and it would be an essential campus resource.

Thank you,

Alan E. Siegel, Ed.D.
Chief, Mental Health Service
MIT Medical
77 Massachusetts Avenue E23-368
Cambridge, Mass. 02139-4307
617-253-2916

Appendix VI: Sample Position Descriptions (2)

1. Program Coordinator, LGBT Resource Center, Eastern Michigan University.

Eastern Michigan University, a metropolitan university serving 24,000 students, seeks an experienced professional to serve as Program Coordinator for the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Resource Center within the department of McKenny Union and Campus Life. The coordinator will be responsible for the implementation of activities, programs and support services established to provide both academic and student life oriented assistance to the identified student populations as well as provide general administrative support to McKenny Union and Campus Life.

Required Qualifications: Knowledge and skills in program planning and administration, problem student advising, and educational leadership typically acquired through the completion of a Master's Degree in educational administration, college student personnel, guidance and counseling, social work, or related behavioral science.

A minimum of two years experience in higher education, student affairs programming, guidance and counseling, social work or a related field. Ability to apply comprehensive LGBT-inclusive knowledge of student development theory to educational programming and services. Experience providing advocacy, intervention, mentoring, information and referral to the LGBT community. Demonstrated knowledge of applicable laws, regulations, issues and concerns specific to the particular student population and groups served may be required. Desired Qualifications: Expertise in LGBT-related research and/or LGBT-focused academic work.

2. Director, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center, University of Colorado at Boulder

The director is a professional exempt, full-time, position, reporting to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Dean of Students. The salary range for the position is \$40,000-\$45,000.

Primary responsibilities include: providing leadership and supervision for the GLBT Resource Center (the Center) staff and volunteers; administration and management of the Center's organizational functions including budgeting, publications, grant writing for internal and external funding; implementation and update of the Center's strategic plan, goals and programming; serving as a liaison to university and community LBGT student, faculty and staff organizations; providing coordination of direct and indirect services on campus, providing appropriate campus referrals, resources and information; serving as a resource for students, staff and faculty; providing outreach to campus, community and particularly under-represented groups; educating the UCB community about GLBT issues; supporting and contributing to the goals and initiatives of the division of Student Affairs. The center is staffed by an administrative assistant and several student employees.

Qualifications:

Required:

- . Bachelor's degree
- . Experience, knowledge and support of GLBT issues
- . Strong interpersonal, oral and written communication skills
- . History of successful interaction with and support of people of color and other marginalized communities
- . Demonstrated organizational & supervisory skills
- . Current or previous experience working in a university setting.

Preferred:

- . Graduate degree
- . Experience working with GLBT groups/organizations
- . Knowledge of student development theory and demonstrated ability to recognize issues and make referrals to appropriate resources.
- . Fund-raising experience
- . Program coordination, budgets, education/training, and supervision experience.

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