

LGBT Resource Center  
UC Irvine  
External Assessment Report  
9/4/18 FINAL  
Reviewer: Dr. Sumun L. Pendakur, Ed.D.

## Introduction

The landscape of higher education has shifted in dramatic ways over the last 25 years. The broad federal and state divestment from the public good of education, the turn toward privatization and neoliberal reform, and the ever broader goals of today's system of higher education represent significant challenges. As observed in the past few years alone, higher education is also at a critical turning point in supporting various marginalized populations. The national landscape regarding diversity and inclusion issues in American colleges and universities has intensified, with protests calling for intentional and real change to better serve minoritized and marginalized people in our institutions of higher learning. People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning or otherwise marginalized by sexual orientation (LGBQ+) or who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming or who experience marginalization around gender identity (TGNC) are underrepresented and marginalized students, and with their own intersectional identities, are an integral part of those calling for change broadly. As a result, meeting the needs of today's LGBTQ+ students includes equipping campuses with LGBTQ+ centers that work for and are supported in providing a range of options that include: adequate staffing; a depth and breadth of programming; gender inclusive restrooms and living arrangements; curricular offerings that speak to gender and sexuality beyond the binary; the presence of faculty and staff who reflect gender and sexual diversity; and policies and procedures that foster an inclusive campus climate.

This document captures the major findings, challenges, and opportunities I gathered from my full day in April 2018 spent engaging with the UCI community. I am full of gratitude for those who took the time to attend focus groups and share their thoughts, experiences, hopes, and wishes during my visit. I am also deeply appreciative of all those who completed the survey (which reflected the same questions posed during the day-long visit). The combination of data provided rich material to provide recommendations to guide and support the LGBT Resource Center's work in the years to come.

## External Assessment Report:

### Framework and Data Collection

The following document outlines at the request of the University of California, Irvine (UCI), a report written by Sumun L. Pendakur, Ed.D., which provides an assessment of the UCI Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center (LGBTRC) organizational performance along with strategic recommendations that will position the center to meet future challenges. As the external reviewer, I met with a variety of stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, and campus administrators, over a day-long campus site visit. In addition, a survey was sent out to students, faculty, and staff with the identical questions asked during the in-person stakeholder focus groups. There were 34 responses received to the survey, from undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty.

The following eight questions guided the data collection in both the focus groups and the survey, as well as the subsequent analysis:

- Who is currently best served by the programming model of the LGBTRC?
- What gaps exist?
- How do you perceive the professional staff of the LGBTRC?
- How do the staff composition and identity background(s) impact practice or service?
- Is the range, breadth, and depth of programming enough, too little, too much, etc.?
- What does the LGBTRC do well?
- What could be improved?
- What is the perception of the visibility and strategic direction of the LGBTRC by critical stakeholders and partners?

In addition, two questions were asked for background, to get a sense of respondent knowledge and frequency of interaction with the LGBTRC staff and resources:

- Approximately how many times have you interacted with any of the staff members from the LGBTRC in the last 6 months?
- Approximately how many LGBTRC events have you attended or participated in over the last 6 months?

The in-person focus groups consisted of the following:

Student Affairs Leadership (Rameen Talesh and Sherwynn Umali)  
LGBTRC Student Staff and Volunteers  
LGBTRC Professional Staff  
QTPOC students  
Campus Partners  
Faculty

The 34 survey responses, when disaggregated, consisted of:

Faculty: 3  
Staff: 21  
Graduate Student: 2  
Undergraduate Student: 8

## **Themed Findings:**

The following section will detail key and overarching findings (represented in multiple stakeholder responses) for the following areas:

Perception

Communication

Programming

Gaps

Challenges (To be specific, I will highlight some challenges that the UCI LGBTRC faces that are not unique, but rather, shared across many LGBT Resource Centers. This is not done to minimize what the UCI Center faces. Conversely, I offer these reflections to locate the UCI Center as part of a larger national trend -- a trend that creates particular tensions for LGBT Resource Centers.)

Internal Conflict

### *Perception:*

“They are wonderful and generous individuals who are incredibly student-centered. They also seemed to be overburdened with programming and take on the weight of the world with their students.” - Staff member quote

The above quote exemplifies some of the push-pull occurring in the UCI LGBTRC. The professional staff members of the LGBTRC are deeply committed practitioners who are highly mission and purpose-driven. They are stretched to meet the needs of the broader campus, especially in terms of trainings and committee work, but also to meet the evergrowing needs across student populations through both programming and direct services/advising/crisis counseling. From staff, there was a deep appreciation for the work of the center staff, but also a lingering feeling that it was sometimes difficult to collaborate because of how stretched the staff is. There have also been symbolic and real consequences for not hiring a woman, particularly a woman of color. As one student stated (repeated by others throughout the day): “Ash is great, but it’s still weird to have a white person replace a femme, POC body.” The space and staffing is perceived by many students as male dominated and White, although the professional staff and student staff attempt to speak to the breadth of identities through programming. However, students not seeing themselves reflected in the professional staff was a theme repeated throughout all of the data. This perception barrier has created roadblocks for the director and an overflow for the assistant director and program coordinator. Individually, many (students, staff, and others) spoke highly of the director, assistant director, and program coordinator, and their knowledge, passion, cultural competence, and experience. However, an overarching collective opinion is that there is uneven distribution of labor,

especially in relation to QTPOC work and not enough support for women-identifying students.

### *Communication*

“The Center is family. The LGBTRC is more than the sum of its parts.” - Student quote

The above quote is reflective of how much value so many respondents find in the LGBTRC -- as a space to commune, learn, challenge and be challenged, feel safe and welcome, and grow. However, a recurring theme across stakeholder and constituent groups was the desire to know more about what the LGBTRC was doing, how the work was tied to the Center’s values and learning outcomes, how others can be involved, and how the Center’s work connects to the broader goals of Student Life and Leadership. Focus group participants and respondents wanted more communication about upcoming events, milestones and achievements, and strategic directions. Related to perception issues of being spread too thin and being overly focused on increasingly identity-specific programming, there was a desire from many to understand how the LGBTRC both served the population(s) it is tasked with serving, as well as how the staff of the LGBTRC are resourcing and informing the broader campus community on improving climate for sexual and gender minoritized communities.

### *Programming*

“The center has to be a catalyst, but programs every day are not sustainable. Sometimes less is more.” - Staff member quote

Every stakeholder group I spoke with (as well as many of the survey respondents) were impressed with (and at times, overwhelmed by) the range, depth, and breadth of programming offered by the LGBTRC. However, a few opportunity areas emerged. Graduate student respondents mentioned feeling disconnected from the Center and from LGBT life on campus, as they have different problems than undergraduate students, along with different social needs. Because much of the programming is held inside the Center, there was a feeling by a number of stakeholders that the programs serve the same students and may not be reaching others. The question was raised of how does the LGBTRC sustain its ability to serve ever more finely defined groups of people? Many felt that the expansion of programs along identity-based lines will continue to grow unchecked to the detriment of the staff (from a stress and mental health perspective). And it is critical to examine the fear underlying the constant programming. The underlying fear is that student survival is at risk; that if there is no community created because of a lack of specific programs, that UCI will lose students. However, this is an untenable situation that is not reasonable for students, and most certainly not reasonable for the health and well-being of the staff. A number of stakeholders pointed to the need for building capacity, possibly reconceptualizing the work based on function or learning outcomes to better understand programmatic impact in order to make strategic choices, and finding alternative ways to validate students’ existences without adding more programs and events.

### *Gaps*

“The larger institution is more of a business than an educational institution, and they care more about reputation than about protecting staff. Resources and funding don’t show up until there is a campus tragedy.” - Staff member quote

Students, staff, and faculty all pointed to the need for additional financial resources and space for the LGBTRC. There is a recognition, even from those who are critical, that the staff attempt to make space for all and are stretched thin. In addition, specific gaps were raised in relation to how othering occurs inside the space. Pointed concerns raised included experiences of misogyny, microaggressions, and racism, specifically anti-Blackness. There is also a feeling and a perception that while the Irvine Queers student organization is well-served, La Familia (LaFa), Queer and Asian (Q&A), and the Black Queer Collective (BQC) are not as well-served in terms of resource allocation or spotlighted “big” events (such as Prom). This again reflects some of the feedback in the programming section, regarding the perception that those who regularly frequent the Center are well-served, but those in Queer student of color organizations, less so.

### *Shared Challenges across LGBTRCs*

The following represent thoughts raised by stakeholders that are shared concerns for those in LGBTRC work across the nation. Again, these are not included to minimize the specificity of experiences of the staff at the UCI LGBTRC, but rather, to locate those experiences in a national conundrum that creates tremendous pressure for those engaged in LGBTRC work.

Staff size is small, so opportunities for diversity are limited, unless target identities are prioritized for hiring. Even then, expectations cannot be made that all interests are represented.

The space sometimes seems as if it is geared towards those who already have a grasp on identity and lingo. Some felt that students (and others) may be intimidated to enter the space or the programs because they may feel afraid to make a mistake or offend someone by accident (ie. unintended misgendering through incorrect pronoun usage) or not being mindful of an issue they are not aware of yet.

Communicating what is truly happening and what is needed in a large, highly decentralized environment is difficult.

Returning each year to wrestling with a name change, as the adding letters model is insufficient (and unwieldy). But the challenge exists to create a name that is inclusive for all, yet still meaningful, and that will not be outdated in two years.

Staff try to meet students where they are, especially in the realm of students wanting the

particulars of their (evolving) identities to be recognized and honored. However, this creates a herculean task for the staff, as there are limits on how much programming one center can do to meet the needs of all within the bounds of a community.

More support from administration, Student Affairs leadership, and colleagues is called for. How does the staff engage in self-care when they feel like putting down any of balls they are juggling might result in harm to students? It is easy to simply say, "That's not your job/that's not your problem," but most called to this work do so for deeply held personal and political reasons. How does Student Affairs leadership partner with Center staff to help them better structure their work such that they can engage with integrity, clarity, AND self-care?

### *Internal Conflict*

Professional staff indicated that there is confusing overlap between roles and not enough clarity of direction. At the same time, the assistant director and program coordinator should be able to better help students (including student staff) manage their expectations and understanding of the director's role. Because of student lack of trust (stemming in part from the release of the former program coordinator and the hiring of the current program coordinator), students go to the assistant director or the program coordinator - from a crisis standpoint and from an availability standpoint. However, what pathways exist to heal relationships with the director? How is work distributed equitably, in a way that acknowledges the extra burdens staff of color are carrying without increasing the alienation of the director? How do the assistant director and program coordinator find a balance between supporting students through preservation of relationships, but not let students think that the director is no longer a source of support?

The following two quotes also exemplify some of the tensions in the physical space. When asked who is best served by the programming model of the Center, QTPOC students answered in the following ways, offering both critique and contradiction:

"When White folks are in the space, I have to carefully monitor what I say so that they don't totally discredit what I say. Self-preservation comes off as distant or resistant. Anything I say has to be monitored through a white lens, because they might view it as an attack. The center is supposed to be a haven, but we still have to do that because White people are at the event. Even in the space I have to perform and it is exhausting."

"The way I navigate the space, I really care about this space, and I don't want any petty drama. I acknowledge all of my identities and where my privilege lies. I know which programs I'm allowed to attend and which ones I can speak in, and which ones I can listen in. I've never had a situation where i feel like i can't speak. I've never felt ashamed for having an opinion."

Again, and in addition, a number of student respondents/participants (including student

staff) stated that "...missing a feminine-identified person means certain topics don't get addressed."

### **Recommendations and Opportunities:**

The following represent my recommendations, as well as areas of opportunity I identified through stakeholder conversations and analyzing survey responses.

Students want more and more programming that speaks to the specificity of their identities. But is that sustainable? With a limited staff and budget (as well as student facing demands and campus facing demands)? Does the center have the permission from SLL leadership to scale back? Or modeling of strategic programming to re-focus programming based on function or learning outcomes? Strategic communication is necessary, especially when additional resources are not forthcoming. You can only stretch so far – plus, staff members are carrying the psychological load of case and crisis management ("our students might die"). The work of the LGBTRC is critical and complex and the current Center staff is providing many successful programs and services with limited resources. Assessment and evaluation of programs and services is an important step the Center needs to implement more thoroughly. While student learning outcomes guide many programs and some assessment data is collected (in addition to attendance data), there is a missed opportunity in terms of translating that data into materials that inform the campus. Reporting on the programs and their valuable impact will position the Center to present their role on campus in a data driven manner. Given the range, breadth, and depth of programming, this is also critical to making decisions about effectiveness and when and where to cut unnecessary programs. This is also an opportunity for Student Life and Leadership as a whole. How does leadership in the broader structure facilitate a strategic direction for units, including the use of learning outcomes, data reporting, and prioritization of resources for SLL units?

Some additional concrete recommendations include:

Move Center-based events into other spaces, such as the Cross-Cultural Center, the Women's Center, or the CBCRR, so that students are building capacity, community, and resilience in multiple spaces. This is also a way to bring in and involved those who are not walking into the LGBTRC currently.

Integrate the Volunqueers earlier in the year and use the Monday meetings to blend education, as well as process-focused training/skill building. For example, data is collected at many LGBTRC programs and events, but is not entered and analyzed (using Qualtrics or Survey Monkey) to generate shareable reports or actionable findings.

Better define and resource the Staff and Faculty Pride Collective so that they have specific goals and can possibly take some of the responsibility for campus-wide capacity building and training off the shoulders of LGBTRC staff.

Consider building a programming model that focuses more on depth than breadth, community care and connections between seemingly disconnected identities, and building resilience and coping skills. Servicing and representing every identity is neither possible, nor the goal.

Finally, the identity issues playing out in the LGBTRC are difficult – across staff and between staff and students. Healing and building work with an external mediator/staff development coach needs to be done with the pro-staff.

**Limitations:**

As a reviewer, I bring subjectivity, expertise and experience to the table that contributes to and shapes my own observations and understandings of the LGBTRC, its relationship to and service of UCI, and ultimately, these observations, conclusions and recommendations. I hope that my experience enhanced this report, but I also recognize the possibility that my experiences have left me with blind spots or otherwise inadequately prepared me to adequately describe what I have seen and heard. In addition, any visit is bounded by the constraints of time, and yields just a snapshot of a place at a moment in time.

**Short bio and contact information:**

Dr. Sumun Pendakur, Ed.D., is the Chief Learning Officer and Director of the USC Equity Institutes at the USC Race and Equity Center, dedicated to advancing racial justice in higher education and other sectors. Prior to this position, Sumi held roles as the Assistant Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion at Harvey Mudd College and as the Director for USC Asian Pacific American Student Services. Sumi is a consultant, speaker, and facilitator, helping campuses, non-profits, and other organizations build capacity for cultural competence, social justice, and equitable practices. She is a scholarpractitioner, whose research interests and publications focus on Critical Race Theory, Asian American and Pacific Islander students, change agents, and institutional transformation. She has had the pleasure of serving on the external review teams for the Queer Resource Center of the Claremont Colleges (2015) and for the UCLA LGBT Campus Resource Center (2016).

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LGBTRC Professional Staff Responses, Rationale & Action Items  
9/28/2018  
Davidian Bishop, DeeJay Brown, Ash Preston

## Introduction:

Dear UCI Campus Community, Friends & Family of the UCI LGBT Resource Center,

As a department and with the help of the Dean of Students and Student Life and Leadership, we procured a highly sought-after professional in academic circles to conduct an external review of the UCI LGBT Resource Center. The reviewer came to our center, met with our staff, students, faculty, and larger UCI community. They engaged our stakeholders via interviews and solicited feedback through surveys. The goal was to learn how we are perceived, strengths, weaknesses, and what areas require improvement and change. The goals have been to improve our services, efficiencies, and to be transparent with the communities we serve. Through this process we hope to continue improve and to foster trust with those that are invested in supporting LGBTQ + people, issues, climate, and our department here at UCI.

The LGBTRC professional staff has spent much of the 2018 Summer Quarter analyzing the External Review. The LGBTRC has utilized the External Review to strategically plan and center the recommendations and issues that were raised. The LGBTRC has and will use that data as a guide to revamp the work that the LGBTRC does. The LGBTRC has broken down the external review into statements, themes and issues.

Below are action items, rationales, and ways we may require support to succeed for each of the issues. The LGBTRC may not necessarily have clear or direct action items for some of these as they may be philosophical or rhetorical items to reflect on, but the LGBTRC professional staff has spent significant time engaging on each the issues raised. The LGBTRC seeks to have ongoing conversations with community partners and some of these goals may be aspirational.

Our commitment is to attend to every issue, even those outside of our purview by engaging with key stakeholders, campus partners and leadership as necessary to actualize the issues raised in this document.

After reviewing the document, we were able to identify different areas to reflect on. We have extrapolated key quotes, then proceeded to develop rationale & action items for each item listed. Some of these items are similar in theme. We address this by saying “see also” and directing the reader to appropriate/relevant content and solutions.

### ISSUE 1

They also seemed to be overburdened with programming and take on the weight of the world with their students.” - Staff member quote

As a small team with accountability to the larger campus of more than 35,000 students, staff, and faculty, we agree there is a constant struggle to keep up with the demands and requests from across the campus. This includes request and support for the School of Law, School of Medicine, and UCI Medical Center.

One way to reduce that burden is to share some of the responsibility for serving our LGBTQ populations. In terms of shifting our model and sharing responsibility outside of Center, the LGBTRC professional staff will engage in dialogue and ask Human Resources and various campus departments that do diversity work to be more engaged and take responsibility for trainings centering around LGBTQ+ cultural competency. This is critical, as a staff of 3 FTE cannot be solely responsible for the education and trainings of a campus of this size. Like issues of disability, race, etc. all entities on campus must be prepared to support LGBTQ+ identities.

Another way to reduce the burden is to reduce the scope of work we provide. In addition to sharing the burden for training the campus by utilizing other departments, the LGBTRC professional staff will reduce the work we have always provided to the larger campus. This will allow us to re-center the focus on the students that the LGBTRC serves. This will help us to create balance, improve our workload, and improve the sense our community is expressing in this external review that we are consistently being overburdened.

Additionally, the LGBTRC professional staff will reduce its scope by shifting its current Safe Zone model, moving to consultation roles for campus partners, and we will ask all UCI community affiliates to share the responsibility for meeting the needs of all of LGBTQ students.

One of the things that takes an inordinate amount of our time are various presentations:

- Safe Zones - Instead of doing so many for individual groups and departments, we will shift to holding a larger capacity Safe Zone presentation each quarter and groups can sign up for these larger Safe Zones instead of our historical model of going out to smaller groups and departments to provide Safe Zone presentations.
- Specialized Trainings: Customized/Specialized trainings around the intersection of LGBTQ+ students and the work of a specific group/department will only be considered:
  - If the vast majority of said department staff have undergone one of the Safe Zone trainings that are held quarterly.
  - We want to consult when possible to help individual departments build their own knowledge base and capacity for serving LGBTQ+ community in their respective area. If a consultation with that department proves insufficient for them to manage their own trainings, we can negotiate additional / supplementary advanced trainings after they attend the main Safe Zone training.
- LGBT Resource Center general presentations on the services we provide - We get asked to do many of these. It may be possible to create a video and/or train our volunteers, student interns, or liaisons to other departments on the services we offer. For our small professional staff, not having to do this basic education on services we provide every week would dramatically free up our limited human resources. Even having departments and groups that want this information to have a quick conversation with

our team, then provide the information to their own constituency is a better solution and time-saver than us going out for presentations that are an hour or less on our services. Most of what we present on is available on our website and informational flyers.

As a department we are always looking for ways to save time and improve services. These are some of our responses to this prompt, but we will continue to ideate, innovate and economize. It should be mentioned that another realistic important solution to consider is to increase the size of our staff to meet the growing needs of the campus as reflected in this report. This solution would require support and buy-in from the campus and leadership.

## Issue 2

“They are stretched to meet the needs of the broader campus, especially in terms of trainings and committee work, but also to meet the ever- growing needs across student populations through both programming and direct services/advising/crisis counseling.”

Committee involvements have been reviewed, and at this juncture, it is critical to sit upon a variety of committees because of the importance of Queer and Transgender Advocacy. When we are not at the table for important committees then the voices of the LGBTQ community are often neglected entirely. In other words, we need to be there to “queer the space”. In the future, we will be more discerning and review the possible importance of time by taking on any new committees that might move us away from other priorities and commitments. We will focus only on connecting to and being a part of the most vital committees in the interest of saving valuable time that could be used elsewhere.

In this document and in dialogues with colleagues we know we are perceived to be very involved in committee and other campus activities, but our peers and community do not always know what we specifically do and our many campus affiliations. In an effort to be more transparent, committee involvement will be shared and documented to the UCI community (via monthly newsletter, Quarterly report/ infographics / etc.) This will help us to be better able articulate the work, milestones and critical events that the LGBT Resource Center is working on to campus constituencies to better inform and work towards transparency.

We will always need to respond to calls from our campus and community. Doing so takes time and impacts day to day programs and efforts. We are striving to achieve a balance. Pro Staff are aware that situations and priorities in our work shift on a day-to-day basis. We aspire to meet each of those challenges while understanding that programming and direct services, advising, and counseling by being reflective and proactive and is an ongoing challenge both at UCI and at most LGBTRC's across the country.

## Issue 3

“but also a lingering feeling that it was sometimes difficult to collaborate because of how stretched the staff is”.

The center is taking immediate action to reduce the volumes of programs we offer. We are also working on new strategies to roll out over the next several quarters to reduce our current broad scope of work to something more sustainable. In the next full year, we will look at ways to possibly completely re-envision long term strategic planning for even more efficiencies to meet the needs of the campus. Our largest focus has been on internal programs of the LGBTRC. This report has pointed out that we are also needed by the larger campus. While we still plan on prioritizing the LGBTQ+ population we also intend to do some capacity building so that we can meet the increasing demands on us without having to increase the 3 professional staff workloads which are at capacity.

We plan to increase capacity through collaboration with other groups and departments across the campus. This collaboration could include, but is not limited to Student Life and Leadership (SLL) as well as other Student Affairs, campus partners, and community agencies. Here are some ways we can do this:

- Incorporate SLL and other relevant departments/areas into the programming that already exists (ex: supporting the undocumented population with the Dreamer Center, or CARE for issues related to Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence).
- Invite SLL departments and other campus departments and groups to our programs. Examples of programs they could attend include our Stay Woke Series, Queer Talks, and Late Nights when appropriate. This will help them in their own ally development so they can better attend to LGBTQ+ folks in their areas. This intersectional approach and dialogues will serve us all in learning and in building capacity.
- Invite Campus Organizations and Volunteer Programs (COVP) to meet with Queer Orgs to help them develop their leadership and grow their organizations.
- Engage in on-going dialogues with campus partners and departments to find out what they are planning to meet the needs of their own queer and trans students. The LGBTRC cannot be everything to everyone. Students need support beyond our center and in every space, they engage. We can facilitate conversations and create spaces that help departments inventory their current methods and resources. This model will shift and spread the responsibility to all departments and help build the capacity across campus that the LGBTRC is unable to with just 3 FTE.
- We will continue to work on responding to this external review and treat it as a living document. This means we will be working to realign our priorities and determining what we can and cannot do. This may mean new services, services re-invented, or possibly services we once provided not being available in the same way we always have.
- There are too many departments that clamor for trainings from us and no fair way to select who gets our time. We will pilot a new idea to increase capacity by

- shifting: Trainings will go to 1 large quarterly training for the entire campus instead of specialized department trainings that have minor attendance.
- We will be reviewing our Mission statement and our core principles and values. Currently our scope is too large for our capacity. We must find a way to realign our work to our mission.

#### Issue 4

“However, students not seeing themselves reflected in the professional staff was a theme repeated throughout all of the data”.

The professional staff want to validate the ongoing experiences of the students that we serve. In the future, we can create job descriptions that ask for expertise in areas we are lacking, which will dramatically increase opportunities and chances to address this concern. We can also work in the ways available through partnerships to increase these identities in the RC. Another goal will be to hire during periods that maximize student opportunities for involvement. We also want to be sure we include students more in the entire hiring process, including having multiple student voices represented on committees.

To provide more support for women we will provide more depth in attention to programs surrounding their identities. We will acknowledge the labor and work of those partnerships and in the voices of our students. Another tangible goal will be for the Center to create partnerships with the Womxn’s Hub, and partnering with other queer, femme, staff and faculty of color for future strategizing, programming, and vision. All professional staff will work creatively to ensure that femme and women-identifying voices are not only heard, but their insight, capital, emotional labor will be recognized and celebrated.

We also understand and recognize the ongoing labor that QTIPOC students experience every day. We will continue to actively celebrate, protect, affirm while working continue to move towards a liberatory consciousness where QTIPOC students feel restored and can be retained in our space. Cultural wellness and competency will be developed throughout the fabric of all the work we do. To provide more support for QTIPOC identities, we will continue the QTIPOC summit as an annual event and its continued development & future growth. We have an intern position that works with both the LGBTRC and the CBCRR. We will continue our development of our programs centering around tackling whiteness, white privilege, and anti-racism work. White staff will continue to attend trainings and development (conferences centering on racial justice, Real Talks with the CCC, etc.) as well as engage in POC spaces on campus and conversations held in other places such as the CCC. Staff of Color will be given support in areas around wellness and the work it takes to be a visible representation of QTIPOC support on campus. Intentional time will be put aside to work on QTIPOC issues at regular staff meetings. Staff will develop assessment tools to measure and improve the experiences of QTIPOC folx in our space (w/ Community Council).

Professional staff will have conversations with the identity centers across the campus to assess the climate for QTIPOC people. We want to assure QTIPOC people are experiencing sense of safety and security. We will do solid evaluation to make sure QTIPOC students can bring ALL their identities without the need to leave any identity at the door. We will work with other departments that do identity-based work to develop and share the intersectional needs from students in our space. For example, we will continue to share with our colleagues when we learn LGBTQ student are avoiding specific programs altogether in departments because the programs or space do not meet their intersectional needs or do not feel welcoming.

QTIPOC Staff will create stronger mentorship roles with QTIPOC Student leaders and expand advisory role to QTIPOC Student orgs. All professional staff will work creatively to ensure that QTIPOC voices are not only heard, but their insight, capital, emotional labor will be recognized and celebrated.

#### Issue 5

“This perception barrier has created roadblocks for the director and an overflow for the assistant director and program coordinator.”

The professional staff of the LGBTRC have held conversations and will continue to work to identify the overflow work experienced by the Assistant Director and Program Coordinator that may occur due to the lack of connection/trust students may have with the Director. It has been determined the Director will be strategically engaged where there can be the most impactful presence. This will include a new opportunity under the Director’s coordination, similar to a “coffee with the director” type of program. This quarterly program will allow for students, staff, and faculty to have scheduled time to talk with the Director, get to know them, and engage in conversations that may not otherwise occur.

#### Issue 6

“However, an overarching collective opinion is that there is uneven distribution of labor, especially in relation to QTPOC work and not enough support for women-identifying students”.

Professional Staff want to continue to validate that there is an uneven distribution of labor, especially in relation to QTIPOC work and the lack of support for women-identifying students. White staff can improve this distribution by volunteering and initiating the support of QTIPOC initiatives and assisting in the components QTIPOC programming to alleviate excess stress and work on QTIPOC pro and student staff. In one-on-one and LGBTRC Pro-Staff student meetings, intentional questions will be asked centering around (support, emotional labor, self-care & wellness) where Pro-Staff can assist in providing avenues of support when QTIPOC & Women identifying students raise issues or concerns.

We want to be sure where possible we are including the voices of femme-aligned folx to create balance as described in statement above. We have a history of working with various

departments and we will continue and increase our efforts to invite and elevate women and femme folk and their narratives, from other departments and centers like the Counseling Center, Student Wellness and Health Promotion, faculty in residence, etc.).

## Issue 7

“However, a recurring theme across stakeholder and constituent groups was the desire to know more about what the LGBTRC was doing, how the work was tied to the Center’s values and student learning outcomes, how others can be involved, and how the Center’s work connects to the broader goals of Student Life and Leadership. Focus group participants and respondents wanted more communication about upcoming events, milestones and achievements, and strategic directions. Related to perception issues of being spread too thin and being overly focused on increasingly identity-specific programming, there was a desire from many to understand how the LGBTRC both served the population(s) it is tasked with serving, as well as how the staff of the LGBTRC are resourcing and informing the broader campus community on improving climate for sexual and gender minoritized communities”.

In this excerpt from the report we will focus on communication.

As a preface, although we have some ideas that can be implemented immediately and in the short term, it should be made clear that we will be using most of this year to implement a wide range of changes to our department and culture. Communication development will never have a completion date as it is forever changing and in need of evaluation and adjustment.

First, there is a desire for our community at UCI to better understand our goals, mission, values, and ultimately how the work we do is in service to these. We plan to review all of these over the coming months to clarify and simplify them to be more easily understood and digested.

Second, we have not historically been as good at communicating the work we do, our achievements, milestones, and strategic direction. It is clear this has been a lost opportunity and it is critical that we find ways to communicate our work and achievements with stakeholders and community. To do this we will be developing communication strategies and timelines for regular development and dissemination of reports, infographics and others data forms throughout the year that will include and share information about:

- Our events
- Collaborations
- Data related to learning outcomes
- Qualitative assessments to demonstrate the active learning, growth, and impact of our programming
- Information about our goals, mission, and strategic efforts and how they connect to larger institutional goals
- How others can engage, be involved, and help us build capacity

- Other information to help our campus partners understand our work, our goals, and how we support the campus

Other things we are doing to improve communication with our community and stakeholders:

- We are developing a Community Council that will be dedicated to supporting the center by helping us with the development of assessment, various other ideas, and tools to build capacity and reach many of the goals outlined in this review.
- Communicate to the UCI community and campus partners our Learning Outcomes, Mission & Vision of the LGBTRC via marketing materials.
- Engage SLL and other campus partners in collaborations and planning. As partners we will harmonize around learning outcomes and goals for our students.

One of the elements that came up multiple times in this external review was reports that our staff is at its' capacity. There are a number of possibilities about how to manage the work we do so we are not spread too thin. There were various reasons people suggested in this report that we were over capacity, one was that we focus on too many specific identities. However, because we run many of these programs and relevant groups, and because we speak directly with hundreds of community members each year, it must be stated plainly that for these people having programming relevant to their specific identities is not incidental. This is necessary and vital to their identity development and formation. The complexity of many of these marginalized identities requires many of our students to learn words, concepts, and be in community spaces with others to formulate and integrate these uncommon and marginalized identities. It has been the professional staff's role to act as co-facilitators with student interns in many of our spaces the LGBT Resource Center provides.

We will work tirelessly to work to streamline our work so that we can more time available from professional staff, but cutting or reducing specific identity work as a solution needs to be approached with caution. It is possible although it could save time for our staff, it could also put many marginalized students at risk through lack of support and omission in our space.

With that said, we can partner with more student leaders, faculty, or staff coming in to help do some of this development. We can look at the possibility of having group spaces for various identities where the groups self-facilitate and peer-to-peer education can occur. Another option might be to have a set time each week facilitated to develop a program led by a professional staff member and each week that program covers a different identity. Each of the ideas above have some possible value and each has inherent problems will be less education than we currently provide.

Issue 8

“Graduate student respondents mentioned feeling disconnected from the Center and from LGBT life on campus, as they have different problems than undergraduate students, along with different social needs. Because much of the programming is held inside the Center, there was a

feeling by a number of stakeholders that the programs serve the same students and may not be reaching others.”

As with other efforts around publicity and transparency, the LGBTRC will be increasing their publicity efforts across the campus in hopes of increasing both graduate student engagement and expanding the population who visit the physical space of the LGBTRC. This includes, but not limited to: Newsletter emails, flyers, co-sponsored programs, etc. The LGBTRC will continue the support of the newly created Queer Grad Network that was started last year, and work with these graduate student leaders to determine how the LGBTRC can support them moving forward.

With regards to the concern that our space is catering to the same students, we need to respond that the LGBTRC is a drop-in space and people self-select in. Students can come as often as they like without limit during business hours, and this has been and will continue to be valuable and intentional on our part. Not everyone feels comfortable entering the LGBTRC for a myriad of reasons, and the professional staff want to validate and honor this. Intentional collaborations with other campus partners will occur to both strengthen relations with the LGBTRC, as well as engage with students who do not frequent the physical center space.

#### Issue 9

“However, this is an untenable situation that is not reasonable for students, and most certainly not reasonable for the health and well-being of the staff.”

The LGBTRC professional staff recognizes the situation and has aspirational learning outcomes for the Center as a whole that reflects back to the mission and vision of the Center. Using the external review and other forms for assessment in our trainings and workshops we will adjust, improve and reconceptualize the work that we do. This year we will shift and develop our learning outcomes and core values to better fit the current and future needs of the Center. Along with Professional staff and a new Community Council, student leaders will have a more hands-on opportunity to engage in the assessment and utilize their collected data to give recommendations of change for the LGBT Resource Center to the staff to utilize in the growth of the center and its programming.

#### Issue 10

“A number of stakeholders pointed to the need for building capacity, possibly reconceptualizing the work based on function or learning outcomes to better understand programmatic impact in order to make strategic choices, and finding alternative ways to validate students’ existences without adding more programs and events”.

Many LGBT Resource Centers and professionals across the nation have extensive experience and like us are still at capacity, it becomes easier to make adjustments and add what is missing than to reconceptualize the work. This tends to mean we keep growing and adding more and more to serve the needs of community members. As professional staff it has been validating to hear through this review that our constituency, peers and stakeholders value our work and are invested in our success. We appreciate their honesty and vulnerability in sharing they see what we do and are concerned about our ability to sustain what is currently a trajectory that is simply not sustainable.

We will begin the process of strategizing ways to build capacity through reconceptualizing the work based on function or learning outcomes to better understand programmatic impact in order to make strategic choices, and finding alternative ways to validate students' existences without adding more programs and events.

The process will not be simple, it will be on-going, and it will take tremendous effort.

We agree there is incredible value in looking to learning outcomes to improve our services. This is something we do and we intend to increase in the coming year. However, we would be remiss if we did not address that some of the challenges addressed here in the subtext of this statement could be fixed in other ways besides reconceptualizing our work.

This document points out what our department, the student that work here, the students we serve, and our community and campus partners all know and have stated repeatedly, we have grown beyond our:

- space limits,
- human resources limits (FTE)
- financial limits to do the quality programming that our constituency would like to see. Much of the critique of the document could be achieved with proper resource allocations.

We need / would dramatically benefit from:

- permanent Student Registration fees/funding
- a larger staff
- more space. We currently have 1 staff member that does not have an office with a door. Therefore, private conversations cannot occur.
- We have a part time Counselor for our space, but the Director or Assistant Director must vacate their offices so the counselor can have an office with privacy.
- We have had a faculty in residence for the last year. The same problem applies.

- We have a growing number of liaison positions from other departments each year and struggle to find places to put them.

It is the history of the LGBTQ+ community to be ignored, underserved, underfunded, and given inadequate support from institutions and community partners. This is not an accusation, simply a fact. UCI is no different. A new framework that can help to change this paradigm, is that we ask for is that the LGBTRC not be seen as the one place on campus that handles all issues related to LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty, but instead every person, every department, and every entity that serves the UCI campus are accountable for serving the LGBTQ+ community. Much of the LGBTRC workload would be alleviated if the campus mandated trainings for all employees like we do for Sexual Harassment and safety. All identity centers would benefit from the campus learning about how to affirm and celebrate people with disabilities, as well as various racial, cultural, religious identities. Additionally, this type of training would help align UCI to its values and principles of community.

Our campus is not unique in its' challenges around being perceived as anti-black, around racial inequity, around sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and cissexism. Our center and many identity-based centers need the support of the larger campus to change the culture for marginalized identities. Across the nation universities are experiencing similar challenges and clamoring for resources.

Our department can certainly do many things to improve, but ultimately, even a revisioning of our space, clever time-savers, improved methods of operation are no match for hiring more employees, when the critique is unanimously and unequivocally stating the staff is spread too thin.

## Issue 11

“Students, staff, and faculty all pointed to the need for additional financial resources and space for the LGBTRC. There is a recognition, even from those who are critical, that the staff attempt to make space for all and are stretched thin. In addition, specific gaps were raised in relation to how othering occurs inside the space. Pointed concerns raised included experiences of misogyny, microaggressions, and racism, specifically anti-Blackness. There is also a feeling and a perception that while the Irvine Queers student organization is well-served, La Familia (LaFa), Queer and Asian (Q&A), and the Black Queer Collective (BQC) are not as well-served in terms of resource allocation or spotlighted “big” events (such as Prom). This again reflects some of the feedback in the programming section, regarding the perception that those who regularly frequent the Center are well-served, but those in Queer student of color organizations, less so.”

The LGBTRC recognizes that the attention and support to all LGBT student organizations engaged with the center has not been equal, and over the last year has been crafting a new process to ensure equal allocation of said attention and support. As well, this new process is to create a path for accountability both for the LGBTRC and the organizations. The new LGBTRC Affiliation process is underway as of Fall 2018, this process is for LGBT-centered campus organizations that are looking to involve themselves with the LGBT Resource Center and whose mission aligns with the LGBT Resource Center's values.

Affiliation will create pathways and procedures for organizations to request support in the form of room reservations within the LGBTRC, financial support, advising support, and event coordination support. Part of the LGBTRC Affiliation process will be the active participation of student organization representatives in the newly formed Community Council, a student focused group that will allow student leaders from these organizations to voice their concerns around issues (such as racism, anti-Blackness, etc.) together with the Community Engagement Intern and/or professional staff for the LGBTRC. Assessments done through the Community Council can be focused in assessing the awareness/perceptions of students in the center around larger issues, as well as assessing programs, events, etc. We also want to recognize the possible limitations that may exist for organizations who are not official registered with the university versus those who are registered when it comes to the type of support the LGBTRC is able to offer.

The LGBTRC has community agreements that are intended for everyone and allow anyone in the space to name intended or unintended violence whether racism, sexism, or other forms. The professional and student staff will redouble our efforts to make sure every space reviews and agrees to community agreements before each program daily throughout the year. As professional staff and with the assistance of paid interns, volunteers, and community members we will ask everyone in the center to speak out and name instances of anti-blackness, racism, ableism, misogyny, etc. when it occurs. Addressing community climate issues can only be fixed when everyone in the community working to do so. We also want to recognize and honor the emotional labor it takes to name injustices, concerns and create pathways to healing different sites of oppression & trauma. The LGBTRC professional staff will continue to utilize and improve center climate, and provide education with regards to shared community accountability to improve the environment

## Issue 12

The space sometimes seems as if it is geared towards those who already have a grasp on identity and lingo. Some felt that students (and others) may be intimidated to enter the space or the programs because they may feel afraid to make a mistake or offend someone by accident (i.e. unintended misgendering through incorrect pronoun usage) or not being mindful of an issue they are not aware of yet.

Since we received the first draft of this report, the LGBT Resource Center has expanded the Community Agreements for the Center both as a tool to have dialogues from a place that honors our shared humanity, our diverse lives, our sites of trauma and healing and our varied positionalities. These Agreements are used as a reference for those that wish to develop their allyship practice. The Center is open to everyone but may not be comfortable for everyone. Everyone that engages at the center is accountable to make the space welcoming and as safe as possible which is why we have community agreements.

We, as the professional staff, have and will continue to work with many individuals each year to get to a place of understanding of the complexities of identity. With that said, we work hard via our community agreements to approach new students and anyone that is not familiar with our space with compassion, care, sensitivity, and good intention for them to feel welcome. As we recognize that community members are at different places and have both different positionalities and levels of consciousness, there are different levels of programming and different themes and outcomes attached to them, the differences between Stay Woke vs Late Night vs Queer talks, may require a bit of Social Justice knowledge, some are introductory, this is done to ensure that many different needs of the community can be met.

#### Issue 13

“Returning each year to wrestling with a name change, as the adding letters model is insufficient (and unwieldy). But the challenge exists to create a name that is inclusive for all, yet still meaningful, and that will not be outdated in two years.”

This is something we examine every 2-3 years since 2008. As we move forward readdressing our mission, vision & community outcomes, a possible name change will be discussed in that process.

#### Issue 14

“support from administration, Student Affairs leadership, and colleagues is called for.”

The LGBTRC professional staff would like to reiterate that we cannot and should not be solely responsible for all things LGBTQ+, as every department and classroom on campus needs to serve all students. We provide support, programming, and more for the betterment of LGBTQ+ students at UCI, and this includes a multitude of trainings and workshops that take us out of the physical space of the center. We need every staff and faculty member on this campus to have a modicum of understanding about these identities, what needs the community has, and how to support them. Others across campus need to tackle the intersection of the LGBTQ+ community

with the specific or general population they serve, and the LGBTRC professional staff are happy to provide consultations and advice around an LGBTQ+ focused event, program, lecture, etc. upon request.

Part of our planning in the coming months and into our annual strategic planning sessions will include a more specific set of requests from our department and our community about how administration, Student Affairs leadership, and campus departments and colloquies can better support LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty.

#### Issue 15

Strategic communication is necessary, especially when additional resources are not forthcoming. You can only stretch so far –

The LGBTRC professional staff will continue to develop an ongoing commitment to transparency around shortcomings, struggles, challenges and opportunities for growth and support. This will be done through the utilization of qualitative/quantitative assessment data and surveys to better inform others about the needs, wants and desires of the Resource Center. Additionally, we will be working to put out a newsletter and reports to keep the larger campus aware of what we are working on including shifts, challenges, and successes. While learning outcomes guide many programs and some assessment data is collected (in addition to attendance data), we recognize there is a missed opportunity in terms of translating that data into materials that inform the campus.

#### Issue 16

“plus, staff members are carrying the psychological load of case and crisis management (“our students might die”).”

The LGBTRC professional staff appreciate and feel validated in the comments gathered in the external review pointing the amount of heart and emotional labor we put into our work on a daily basis. We as a whole want to continue to work together to find a balance with self-care, processing emotions, and releasing the “psychological load” that comes with our work.

#### Issue 17

While student learning outcomes guide many programs and some assessment data is collected (in addition to attendance data), there is a missed opportunity in terms of translating that data into materials that inform the campus

The LGBTRC staff have a dedication to creating and implementing meaningful assessments and data collection from its variety of programs and events. We recognize we have not utilized the opportunity to share these materials with the larger campus. With the creation of the student-led Community Council to continue to hold student centered assessment, the center staff will work in collaboration with the council to assess both the quantitative and qualitative learning that occurs from the center's learning outcomes.

#### Issue 18

Reporting on the programs and their valuable impact will position the Center to present their role on campus in a data driven manner. Given the range, breadth, and depth of programming, this is also critical to making decisions about effectiveness and when and where to cut unnecessary programs.

As with other efforts around publicity and transparency, the LGBTRC will be increasing their publicity efforts across the campus in hopes of showing the critical need for the LGBT Resource Center and its programs. The LGBT Resource Center staff will be sure to include not just the quantifiable data and numbers, but the qualitative data to show the depth of the education, community building, and depth of the programming. This will be done in tandem with the efforts of the student-led Community Council. Publicity will include, but not limited to: Newsletter emails, flyers, co-sponsored programs, infographic, etc.

#### Issue 19

"This is also an opportunity for Student Life and Leadership as a whole. How does leadership in the broader structure facilitate a strategic direction for units, including the use of learning outcomes, data reporting, and prioritization of resources for SLL units?"

The LGBTRC cannot respond on behalf of Student Life and Leadership (SLL). However, we have and will continue to work closely with SLL as our home department. They were instrumental in hiring Sumun L. Pendakur, Ed.D. to come do interviews, then create and present this document in the form of an external review. The LGBTRC has a reciprocal relationship of supporting and being supported by the larger SLL unit. We will continue to engage as we always have with them on this question and others raised in this document about opportunities for SLL to provide assistance. Like many elements of this document, this will take time. In the future we will share documents and communications with our community and stakeholders.

#### Issue 20

“Move Center-based events into other spaces, such as the Cross-Cultural Center, the Women’s Center, or the CBCRR, so that students are building capacity, community, and resilience in multiple spaces. This is also a way to bring in and involved those who are not walking into the LGBTRC currently.”

In terms of building capacity, dialogues and efforts have been put forth throughout the summer to have an exchange of programmers both in our space and into other spaces. For example, at least 4 different programs will partner with other spaces and feature multiple collaborators and community partners (Queer Care, White Folx Practicing Anti-Racism, Queer & Race Series & SPACE). The LGBT professional staff will work towards extending partnerships & collaborations with other organizations to create more intentional programming. As well, we emphasize that other departments need to also hold programs for their LGBTQ+ populations, which may be through collaboration with the LGBTRC or with consultation by the professional staff of the center.

#### Issue 21

“Consider building a programming model that focuses more on depth than breadth, community care and connections between seemingly disconnected identities, and building resilience and coping skills. Servicing and representing every identity is neither possible, nor the goal.”

The LGBTRC professional staff recognize that attempting to represent every identity is not a sustainable programming model. As we work to change our programming model throughout the upcoming months, an emphasis on the overarching conversations of oppression, privilege, and social justice with the nuances of identity and intersectionality will be central to our work. We will continue to stretch, improve, and adapt our models to be sustainable for the staff and supportive for the campus community.

#### Issue 22

“Finally, the identity issues playing out in the LGBTRC are difficult – across staff and between staff and students. Healing and building work with an external mediator/staff development coach needs to be done with the pro-staff.”

All staff at the LGBTRC want for each other to feel validated, appreciated, and witnessed in their efforts and work within individual positions. With complexities and personal ties to identity-based work it is natural for issues to arise among colleagues. To help provide opportunity for healing and growth the professional staff will be meeting with campus

ombudsman at the start of the Fall 2018 quarter, and additional meetings either with the ombudsman or another entity will occur on a regular basis.

Additionally, at this time the job descriptions held within the LGBTRC are being reviewed along with the workload each description holds versus the workload the individual is engaging in.

### **Final Note**

Having received the final additions to the external review document 9/4/18 we will require some time to process and think about methods to address the many issues and concerns raised here. As stated in the LGBTRC staff responses, there are things we are already doing to change and address concerns, some things will require engagement with campus leadership in coming months, and some of this will require strategic planning and revision after we implement some of the changes we are attempting.

We thank you for reading this document and supporting us in our efforts to be a superior LGBTRC resource center for UCI.