

QUEER TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Colby College is dedicated to the education of humane, thoughtful, and engaged persons prepared to respond to the challenges of an increasingly diverse and global society and to the issues of justice that arise therein. The College also is committed to fostering a fully inclusive campus community, enriched by persons of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and spiritual values. We strive to confront and overcome actions and attitudes that discourage the widest possible range of participation in our community, and we seek to deepen our understanding of diversity in our daily relationships and in our dealings as an institution.”¹

Colby’s statement on diversity forcefully articulates the institution’s values and goals. It clearly affirms the College’s commitment to equal treatment for all, including those who embrace minority sexual or gender orientations. But neither this statement, however sincere, nor the documented presence of a diverse range of individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, or questioning (GLBTIQ, hereafter queer), are enough to ensure that queer people are treated equally with others and are able to participate fully in all aspects of campus life.

There is, both at Colby and in the larger society, a long history of prejudice and discrimination against queer people, and heterosexism and homophobia remain obstacles at Colby. The Queer Task Force has attempted to analyze and explicate the harmful and often invisible ways that heterosexism, homophobia, and internalized homophobia divide the entire college community, but we have focused particularly on their negative effects on those who identify as queer or questioning.²

In our analysis, the Task Force has identified five major areas of concern, and we have offered recommendations designed to address and resolve them. Through the implementation of these recommendations, we hope to foster the development of a healthy, diverse, and supportive queer community on campus, one in which students can comfortably pursue their intellectual and personal development. We also hope to facilitate the growth of a better informed, more open, and more accepting campus community, one that can learn and benefit from intellectual, cultural, and social engagement with the queer community in all its diversity. We are optimistic that if we move beyond talk and planning to action, we can achieve these vitally important goals and make significant progress toward creating the institution imagined in Colby’s statement on diversity.

¹ Colby’s Statement on Diversity is available at <http://www.colby.edu/diversity/>

² We have found the following definitions helpful as we have pursued our work:

Heterosexism: Belief in the superiority of heterosexuals or heterosexuality, as evidenced in the exclusion, by omission or design, of non-heterosexual persons in policies, procedures, events, and activities. In society, it involves the stigmatization, denial, or denigration of non-heterosexuality in social and cultural institutions, from religious institutions to the courthouse to the media. Psychologically, it involves the internalization of this worldview, which can erupt in anti-gay prejudice.

Homophobia: Prejudice, discrimination, harassment, or acts of violence against sexual minorities, evidenced in a deep-seated fear or hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex. It is often subconscious. Within this concept, we include bisexual phobia and transgender phobia.

Internalized homophobia: Conscious or subconscious adoption and acceptance of negative feelings and attitudes about homosexuality in GLBT people, evidenced in fear of discovery, denial, discomfort, low self-esteem, aggression against other GLBT people, as well as exaggerated gay pride or rejection of heterosexuals.

These definitions are adapted from James T. Sears and Walter L. Williams, eds., *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia: Strategies that Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 15-19.

II. Queer “Top Ten” Recommendations

In reviewing the five areas of concern, we developed a comprehensive list of recommendations. We agreed it would be advisable to highlight, from the full list, those recommendations that are most significant and that we believe will have the greatest beneficial impact on the community.

1. Create an implementation committee to oversee work on these recommendations and to assess further steps needed to improve the campus climate for faculty, staff and students.
2. Create a Queer Studies minor, to be administratively housed within the Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. A proposal for this minor will be sent to the Academic Affairs Committee. Offering this minor will require hiring a new faculty member, to be appointed in the WGSS Program, to teach courses in gender studies and queer studies.
3. Hire one full-time professional, housed in the Dean of Students’ Office, to oversee queer support, resources, curricular support, and assistance to all constituencies of the College.
4. Solicit funding for queer-related initiatives, such as an endowed chair for Queer Studies.
5. Create an Overseers Visit to examine the full range of queer issues.
6. Ensure that faculty and coaches are made aware of the kind of insensitive, inappropriate, heterosexist, or homophobic language and assumptions that students report hearing frequently from instructors, advisors, and coaches. Encourage faculty and coaches both to avoid such behaviors and to be inclusive in their examples, discussion questions, assignments, story problems, and other relevant aspects of course work or athletics. A booklet should be produced and distributed to all faculty and coaches to assist in this effort.
7. Work with those developing a campus Women’s Center to provide a joint Resource Center.
8. Appoint openly queer alumni and/or experts to the Board of Trustees.
9. Provide multicultural housing as an option for queer students.
10. Address the concerns of queer athletes by acting to ensure that team cultures do not create and perpetuate heterosexism and homophobia.
11. Commission a “Queer Cultural Literacy Primer” for distribution to all Colby community members. This primer would be used to educate the entire community about queer life and culture and provide a common language and understanding for discussions among various campus constituencies.

III. INTRODUCTION

Students often refer jokingly to living in the “Colby bubble,” a mythically “safe” place in which everyone is protected from all the problems and struggles of daily life, including the prejudices and discrimination that structure the larger society. Of course, the reality is that all of us who make up the Colby community bring with us to Mayflower Hill the attitudes, assumptions, and values that we have learned in the larger society, and so Colby is, inevitably, a microcosm of that society; it simultaneously contains all of our society’s positive and life-enhancing elements, but also all its less admirable features and structures.

National attitudes towards gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people have changed dramatically for the better in the last two decades, but studies show that while a growing number of Americans do not favor discrimination against GLBT fellow citizens, many Americans do still hold strong prejudices against homosexuality and GLBT people. While in one major study more than 70% of members of the “general public” thought there should be laws to protect gay, lesbian, and bisexual people from prejudice and discrimination in employment, housing, inheritance rights, health insurance and other benefits, more than 50% of those surveyed also said they thought homosexual behavior was morally wrong. In the same study, 74% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people surveyed said they had experienced prejudice and discrimination in employment, housing and other areas.³ In many localities of the United States, anti-sodomy laws still criminalize GLBT sexual behavior, and anti-discrimination laws do not extend to GLBT people. Heterosexism, homophobia, and internalized homophobia are still major social problems, both in the U.S. and at Colby.

Nevertheless, large majorities of Americans surveyed (both GLB and not) agreed that, compared to a few years ago, there was more social acceptance of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.⁴ This somewhat contradictory context, one of greater acceptance that coexists with continuing discrimination, generally structures campus life at Colby, just as it does the larger society. In what follows, we highlight both our successes and our continuing challenges.

Charge to the Task Force

Over the last two years, GLBT students and their allies became much more vocal participants in the campus conversation about diversity that was catalyzed by the arrival of President Adams and by the strategic planning process. This process made clear that we needed a more expansive definition of “diversity”. In recent years, “diversity” had primarily been conceptualized as a matter of non-majority racial, ethnic, or national identity. GLBT students and their allies repeatedly raised the issue of diversity of sexual orientation and gender orientation. President Adams, in response to these concerns, and as part of the strategic plan, appointed a Task Force. He charged us to look at the campus atmosphere and the existing support systems and to develop strategies to improve the atmosphere and raise the visibility of GLBT people and issues on campus. (See Appendix A for charge.) While the conditions that produced the need for this study are specific to Colby, we are participating in a larger national trend; many other colleges and universities have undertaken similar studies in the last decade.

Method

President Adams appointed the members of the GLBTT Task Force during the summer of 2002, and each member was sent a copy of Out and About on Campus, a collection of narratives written by GLBT college

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, “Inside-OUT: A Report on the Experiences of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals in America and the Public’s Views on Issues and Policies Related to Sexual Orientation,” November 2001. Available at www.kff.org. Transgendered people were not included as a separate group in this survey.

⁴Kaiser Family Foundation, “Inside-OUT”

students to describe their experiences.⁵ We hoped this would give us a common ground from which to think about and discuss the situation of queer college students more generally, and to analyze the situation at Colby.

The Task Force met weekly over the course of the fall semester. In our first meeting, we agreed to rename our group the Queer Task Force, because the term “Queer” is most inclusive of all the different non-dominant sexual and gender identities (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed, and questioning) claimed by those whose experiences we were charged to investigate. We also meant to signal our participation in two larger national political projects: to reclaim a pejorative term and redefine it positively, and to claim the right to proudly embrace a non-normative identity.

Early in the process, we decided that our limited time frame dictated that we would only have time to explore the climate for students, not the entire community. We hope that further investigation of other areas of campus life will follow. After several preliminary meetings, we divided into three sub-groups of three members each. Each subgroup investigated and developed recommendations for several areas of campus. The entire group then met to discuss the recommendations and prioritize a final list.

To build on anecdotal information members of the Task Force had about aspects of queer life on campus, we decided to survey various constituencies, and sent email questionnaires to current students, to alumni who had graduated in the last five years and who had provided the College with their email addresses, and to the faculty, including coaches. (See Appendix B.) We also invited current students who did not wish to be quoted in writing to speak privately and confidentially to a member of the Task Force and many students took the opportunity to do this. We collected and reviewed reports of similar task forces at a variety of schools, to see how other institutions had framed similar studies and discussions. We also collected and analyzed a wide range of documents produced by and/or used at the College, from the materials sent out by the admissions office and the office of communications, to the intake forms used by Health Center practitioners. Members of the Task Force also spoke to the heads of various departments to collect information and to ascertain the feasibility of some of our proposed recommendations. We generally received prompt and helpful cooperation, and we are grateful to all those who assisted us so graciously.

Findings

We have identified five significant, overlapping concerns for queer students at Colby:

- 1) The invisibility of queer people and queer experiences;
- 2) Pervasive harassment that reinforces that invisibility;
- 3) The insensitivity of the majority community;
- 4) A lack of support systems and services; and
- 5) The absence of a healthy and vibrant queer community.

Each of these issues is discussed in detail in the pages that follow.

Our recommendations are designed to address these concerns and improve the campus atmosphere and the educational and social experiences of queer students and their allies. Through their implementation, we hope to achieve two major goals. First, we hope to foster the development of a healthy and diverse queer community on campus, one in which students will find a safe space in which to pursue their intellectual and personal development, to explore their identities in a supportive and affirming context that is free from harassment, and to find the resources, information, and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Second, we hope to promote the development of a better informed, more open, more

⁵ Kim Howard and Annie Stevens, eds., *Out and About on Campus* (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2000).

diverse, and more accepting campus community, one that can engage the queer community in intellectual, cultural, and social exchanges, and which can empower those who wish to be allies to the queer community to do so constructively.

In the end, we conclude that the best way to defeat intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination is through education, and we see our recommendations as the first steps in a process of raising awareness and building a collective commitment to making Colby a more inclusive and welcoming community for everyone who lives and works here. We see implementing these recommendations as a necessary part of creating the diverse and inclusive community envisioned and eloquently described in the Colby Statement on Diversity (2002), and elaborated in the Strategic Plan for Colby.

IV. CAMPUS ATMOSPHERE

Colby is generally viewed by many as a friendly, welcoming, tolerant place, but that is not the experience of many queer people. Yet, describing the climate for queer students at Colby is not simple or straightforward, because the community is quite diverse. As one respondent put it, *“Colby cannot act as if the queer community is a mono-cultural entity—queers come in all shapes, sizes, personalities and backgrounds. Colby must understand this—queers are just as likely to be found on the football, swimming, or track teams as they are at the drag show. Treat the gay community like it actually is—not as a simple pop culture stereotype.”*

Some queer students are generally happy here and do not feel major changes are required. Indeed, several wrote to say that they felt well-supported by peers and didn’t experience major problems while coming out. For others, the process has been significantly more difficult. In our exploration of the atmosphere on campus, we identified five major and intertwining problems. Our recommendations are designed to address these five issues.

1. The invisibility of queer people and queer experiences

The fact that queer life and queer community are often largely invisible at Colby contributes to students’ sense that being queer is not acceptable. Indeed, it reinforces the larger society’s message that being queer is something to be ashamed of and hidden. When queerness does periodically become visible, it is often received with a backlash from majority students that makes many students fearful of coming out and becoming the objects of such backlashes.

Beyond these overt responses to queer visibility, the erasure of queer existence is often an act of omission, not commission. The realities of queer people are simply not acknowledged. Queer students know all too well that their very existence on campus, their history, culture, interests, and contributions are often effaced by the curriculum, by the organized social life, by the heterosexist climate on teams, and by a wide variety of campus departments, from the Dean of Students Office to Career Services, from Off-Campus Study to the Health Center, and from campus publications to the college web pages. Virtually nowhere one looks can one find evidence of queer life or queer people at Colby. The messages this invisibility sends are all problematic: either there are no queer people, so one is all alone; or gay people are not welcome and should hide; or queers will only be accepted if they hide or at least do not make an issue of their difference.

Queer students definitely notice that they are entirely erased from view in all areas of campus life; they are made to feel like they do not actually exist, or that they will only be allowed to stay if they remain closeted, except in some small safe circle of friends. This “symbolic annihilation”⁶ has devastating consequences for student development, because unlike majority students, they do not feel free to explore an important aspect of their lives in an open and accepting environment. Instead they hide, and some even turn to substance abuse to lessen behavioral inhibitions and ease great pain in ways that are dangerous.

Invisibility is devastating. By erasing, however inadvertently, the existence of queer people, the institution sends a clear message to all students that queer people are not at Colby and that discomfort with their

⁶ “Symbolic annihilation” is a concept used by media sociologists to describe the virtually complete invisibility of non-stereotypical queer people in the media. While queer visibility has improved somewhat in recent years, in a culture in which a large proportion of our ideas about the world come through the media, and in which things do not seem quite real unless we see them in the media, the erasure of queer people contributes to many feeling that no one like them exists. They cannot imagine their own lives. When queer people do become visible, it is often in ways that make them either silly caricatures, villains, or victims. These largely negative images are easy for young people to internalize, as there are few positive images of ordinary queer people to counterbalance them. See Larry Gross, “Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media,” in Michele Wolf and Alfred Kielwassen, eds., *Gay People, Sex, and the Media* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1991).

presence is normal and widespread. Many people in authority, overwhelmingly straight as far as anyone can tell, signal their discomfort with these issues and set a standard for students. Administrators and other staff members who cannot even pronounce (or are visibly uncomfortable pronouncing) words like gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer, who use euphemisms like “students of different sexual orientations,” or who simply fail to mention queer people in the lists of “diverse” groups that make up our community, send the signal that queer people are unmentionable or somehow embarrassing. These people seem fearful of a negative reaction from the straight majority. But it is very important that we model behavior, and set a high standard, especially for younger students, who often come with little experience of queer people and with unexamined homophobic attitudes.

There are very few openly GLBT faculty and staff on campus, but there are plenty of closeted ones. What message does that send? Why don't people feel free to be open? The lack of open adults indirectly affirms all students in their homophobic notions that being queer is something to be ashamed of, but it is particularly problematic for queer students, who have few role models for how to construct healthy adult lives. Straight students have many, many positive role models of all different kinds. Ironically, however, role models are more important for queer than for straight students, because our media culture overwhelmingly affirms and celebrates straight lives and choices. Queer people don't have this affirmation, they have the opposite: a nearly constant message that they are sinful, sick, perverse, and doomed to misery and lonely, early death. In this cultural and media climate, everyone inevitably internalizes a very high level of homophobia and heterosexism.

As a community, we must work to counteract these messages and affirm queer students' right to exist as fully respected and valued members of our community, without requiring them to assimilate to dominant norms and hide their differences to be accepted. We must simultaneously challenge majority students' heterosexism and homophobia, and, ideally, turn them into allies. We must ensure the visibility of queer people and lives; queer students must be able to see themselves represented in all areas of campus life and majority students must be educated so that they do not find the presence of those who are different to be frightening or threatening.

2. Pervasive Harassment that Reinforces Invisibility⁷

We have been pleased to learn that the majority of Colby students do not usually fear that they will be the victims of violence or hate crimes; they feel safe in this community on that level. However, several students and alumni emphasized that they did occasionally feel unsafe, especially on weekend nights with organized parties, when some of their classmates were drunk and out of control. Some stated explicitly that they felt confident that the Colby community would respond to something as overt as a hate crime or assault. That they are right is suggested by the fact that one student who admitted to having sent another a very homophobic and physically threatening note was suspended last year.

Nevertheless, students and recent alumni also consistently identify several less dramatic, but nevertheless very real and important ways that they are or were made to feel unsafe or unwelcome. A majority of those who communicated with the task force mentioned the pervasiveness and normality of deeply homophobic language and ideas, in all areas of campus life, and acknowledged that hearing such things constantly created a hostile and harassing environment and made them feel unwelcome and unable to be themselves openly. One noted, “*The use of words like fag and homo and using gayness as a way to make fun of people is very prevalent.*” Others noted that those who used that language often had no idea just how hurtful it was to others; they say they “*don't mean anything by it,*” and are often not responsive to their peers who are courageous enough to challenge them for using such language casually. A male

⁷ The Kaiser Family Foundation's national survey suggests that this harassing climate is not at all unique to Colby. 74% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual respondents said they had been “personally targeted for verbal abuse such as slurs or name calling,” while 32% said they had been “personally targeted for physical violence against their person or property.”

student explained why this is so serious, *“As a freshman I moved onto a floor with two rooms occupied by male athletes. After a long day of drinking, I became ‘gaylord faggot’ in a chant that was repeated into the night. I was very upset when I heard of this, considering I had little, if any, interaction with these individuals. I never realized how much that type of behavior hurt until I was the object of this taunting in my own dorm.”* If we imagine how we might think about the casual use of racist epithets that were regularly overheard by students of color, perhaps we might not think these things so relatively harmless.

Similarly, a recent alumna enumerated the following examples of her experiences: *“My partner was called ‘dyke’ by a number of other students while walking down the hallway of her dormitory; we had our board on our dormitory door defaced with homophobic remarks; we received stares, whispers, etc. while dancing together at a semi-formal dance; the Bridge’s whiteboard was defaced with homophobic graffiti. I should also state that during my four years at Colby I never exhibited any public displays of affection with my partner because of the unsafe climate we felt on campus from a number of these incidents. A number of our GLBTT friends had similar experiences that they shared with us, evidencing the fact that this was not a safe campus to be out on.”*

Another alumna wrote, *“I felt threatened when there was a hate crime on campus. I felt threatened when I heard ‘fucking dyke’ whispered as my girlfriend and I walked by. I felt threatened by the ignorant language abundant in the dining halls.”* And these harassing comments are not aimed only at students. At least three openly gay or lesbian faculty members have received harassing phone calls or messages on their campus voice mail recorders in recent years.

The ever-present harassment often slowly erodes students’ sense of self and ability to develop a healthy self-concept. The mocking jokes and insulting names send a clear message to queer students that their classmates have a negative view of queer people and that if they are visible, they will not be welcome on campus. Many queer students have internalized these homophobic attitudes, and the things they hear all around them reinforce the idea that they should be ashamed and hide their identities to remain safe. A recent graduate argued, *“Verbal harassment is pervasive at Colby. In some respects I believe verbal harassment to be more damaging than physical harassment. Physical violence against a queer person is easier to address—the results of the perpetrator’s actions are clear and intelligible. However, verbal harassment is often subtle and at times can even be invisible. The passive and subtle nature of verbal harassment can often lead to internalized homophobia and impede one’s development of self-confidence.”* A current student, describing locker room, weight room, and team bus conversations and comments, put this problem in context: *“All of these tools that preserve heterosexism and homophobia are not necessarily physically threatening to queer players, however, they are powerful in their subtlety. Another player does not need to call me a ‘dyke’ to my face to make me feel uncomfortable or inferior, there are many other ways to be just as oppressive.”* This student quit the team rather than endure this treatment. The Task Force also knows of other students who quit teams because of similar experiences.

Students report hearing not only nasty epithets aimed at queer people, but expressions like *“That’s so gay,”* to describe something negatively. They hear these things not only from other students, but from coaches as well. One coach encouraged players by saying, *“We can beat that team; they’re wicked gay!”* Faculty also use language and examples that make students feel unwelcome. When students summon the courage to confront their peers on such language, they are regularly asked, *“Why do you care? Are you gay?”* Students who use such expressions typically insist that they don’t mean anything by it, and refuse to accept that their language harms others. And while it is difficult enough for them to confront their peers, few students feel able to confront faculty members or coaches, and so such ideas typically go unchallenged. This kind of insensitivity from respected authority figures sends a powerful negative message to all students.

But it is not only verbal harassment that is the problem. There have been, over the last few years, a number of incidents which, taken individually, may not seem serious, but when taken together constitute a pattern of negative responses to the increasing visibility of queer people and events on campus. For example, in fall of 2001, when queer students chalked messages designed to raise consciousness on campus walkways, there was a very hostile backlash against them in a variety of campus locations. A campus email discussion list became the site of quite virulent attacks, the most benign of which said simply, *“May I suggest that the chalkers transfer to Wesleyan?”* The campus newspaper printed a number of editorials and letters to the editor objecting to this visibility and to the methods of the chalkers. While we might see this as part of the lively give and take and clash of competing ideas that we want to encourage as part of healthy intellectual debate, the mean-spirited, personal attacks and uncivil language of the discussion precluded any reasonable analysis or argument and changed the subject from queer issues to some majority students’ insistence that they had a “right” not to have to encounter ideas or messages they didn’t like. Some objected strenuously to being “forced” to think about the experiences of their queer classmates.

In the context of this backlash, other apparently isolated incidents of vandalism become even more troubling. For example, one student, whose bicycle was decorated with rainbow stickers and flags, discovered that it had been taken from the bike rack where she had locked it, and damaged beyond repair. (Other, unlocked bikes in the same rack were not touched.) The stickers were scratched off, and the bike appeared to have been run over by a car. The owner of the bike wrote in the Colby Echo, *“I don’t want to believe that someone on this campus would damage property because it boasted support of GLBTQ, but I don’t have much choice. This hurts me beyond words because the bike was my sister’s before it was mine. She bought that bike, painted it, and put those colored stickers in place, proudly announcing who she is and what she stands for. Having someone treat that bike in an unintentionally violent fashion is a direct attack on who my sister is, what she stands for, and the respect I and everyone else should have for her as a fellow human being.”*

Less significant incidents, like students having the rainbow stickers they had put on their campus mailboxes scratched off; students and faculty having “Project Ally” stickers taken off their doors; and students and faculty involved with queer issues having their dorm message boards or office windows vandalized with drawings of male genitalia, occur with troubling regularity and contribute to the unwelcoming climate. Unfortunately, these incidents often go unreported, because students assume that nothing will be done. Since the perpetrators are not typically known, there is not much that can be done. But it is important for the administration, especially the Dean of Students Office and Security, to recognize that these incidents, which may seem isolated, are part of a clear pattern.

On this point, it might be noted that these kinds of expressions and incidents do not only affect students who identify as queer. A surprising number of those who communicated with the task force mentioned how hurtful they found homophobic comments, in part because they have parents, siblings, close relatives, and close friends who identify as GLBT. These students and alumni found the climate hostile and unwelcoming as well, even if they identified with the majority. A recent alumnus, who told few friends at Colby that his father is gay, wrote, *“I loved the sidewalk drawings, the flag raising, the rally on the library steps by the gay and allied community. But I think the popular backlash to such action is a great barometer for the social climate at Colby.”* This backlash, which comes with unerring regularity, contributes to the unwelcoming climate.

Several examples of the majority’s hostile reaction to queer visibility came this fall, when a group of students in Alternative Popular Cultures (AMST 376) worked with The Bridge to put on an impressively full, week-long series of events in celebration of National Coming Out Day. These events included everything from an open-mike/poetry reading night in the coffeehouse, to a reading by a prominent gay author, to a vigil in honor of those lost to the high rate of queer teen suicide, to a drag ball. These well-attended, well-

received, (and largely chem-free) events make clear that there is interest in this kind of programming that combines the social, the arts, and the intellectual. These students also organized the chalking that has become a Coming Out Day tradition at many campuses. In response to the negative responses that last year's chalkings produced, this group made a conscious effort to be only positive, to use no language that could be perceived as vulgar or aggressive, and to be as upbeat and affirming as possible. One lengthy chalking included a list of prominent queer figures in history; this excited a lot of interested comments (e.g., "*I didn't know he was gay!*") from passersby. But overall, to the dismay of the students in the class, many negative comments were also overheard, and ridiculing, mocking, and dismissive reactions from majority students were numerous. Several students reported hearing remarks like "*Those damn queers are taking over the school,*" and similarly hostile statements that clearly construct two groups: "us" and "them."

Another form of backlash that occurred during this week was that posters and other signs announcing various events were systematically removed from official posting areas within hours of when they were put up. This is part of a much larger, longer-term pattern. And it is not merely a matter of maintenance of up-to-date bulletin boards; signs for many events from weeks earlier remain long after queer-themed announcements disappear. Particularly disturbing was the fact that educational posters outlining the problem of queer teen suicide, posted in the early morning, were all removed before 10 a.m.

More recently, this pattern was repeated again, when a group of students organized a poster campaign that involved putting a different, thought-provoking poster all over campus each day for a week, and also putting table tents defining such terms as "heterosexism" and "homophobia" in the dining halls. This group also made a conscious decision to be positive and upbeat in their approach. Many students on campus responded positively to the posters and the educational materials, appreciating their humor and cleverness and taking the time to read them. But others apparently did not. Once again, many of these posters were either defaced, torn into pieces, or taken down quite soon after they went up; virtually every copy of one poster, perhaps the most provocative, disappeared within hours of having been put up. Students in the class reported being asked by fellow students why they were "*so angry*" and why they had to be "*so in our faces with this stuff.*" Others asked what negative incident had provoked the campaign; it didn't occur to them that just seeing evidence of queer existence around campus was a positive thing for queer students. One faculty member ridiculed the Queer Task Force to his class, asserting that "*they*" were "*all up in our faces,*" so making fun of "*them*" was appropriate. Perhaps not coincidentally, that same week, a particularly nasty letter to the Colby Echo appeared, mocking those students who had helped to change the name of the "screw your roommate" dance last year and describing them as "pansies."

These kinds of comments suggest that even the most positive and not at all "angry" or "complaining" queer visibility makes many members of the majority Colby community very uncomfortable. More troubling is the assumption that many of the students reported hearing: that since they were "in the faces" of straight students, for no apparent reason and with no "legitimate" complaints, a homophobic reaction was justified. Again, majority students generally do not see (or do not see the harm of) the kinds of harassment queer students experience, so they do not see the need for their classmates to "flaunt" their identities. These patterns also suggest that as soon as queer existence becomes visible beyond a single event, some students apparently feel threatened and try to eliminate any evidence of queer presence. Further, something as benign as a reading in the Coffeehouse is viewed as "too political" when it is organized for queer students; just raising an issue is perceived as "angry" and "aggressive." One student wrote about a recent social event, "*I didn't think the drag ball was activism. I don't see why having a dance is considered activism when it is queer, but it is "normal" when it was straight-centered.*" The message that they are unwelcome if they are open and having fun together is not lost on queer students when things like this happen again and again.

This problem is also evidenced by how many heterosexual students and alumni wrote the task force to say that they knew very few people who were openly gay at Colby, and that those whom they did know did not feel that it was a supportive place to come out and explore that part of their lives. One straight alumnus wrote, *“I have a very close friend from college, who proclaimed his homosexuality only after leaving the school. He said he was not comfortable dealing with it at Colby and did not think the college was a good place to reveal this.”* Another alumnus wrote, *“I had a friend who was questioning their orientation at the time. The individual felt very strongly that Colby was not the place to be open about one’s sexual orientation and chose to keep that information private throughout the four years of school. During my time at Colby, I did not feel it was a welcoming place for people to express their sexual orientation without fear of prejudice or worse.”*

In the end, this pervasive harassment creates a climate that makes queer students feel that they should hide their sexual orientation because it is something to be ashamed of. They feel that if they are to be accepted and avoid harassment, they must not embrace their identities openly. This contributes to the isolation and alienation of many queer and questioning students because these pressures to conform often keep them from forming a community of support with other queer students and allies.

3. The Insensitivity of the Majority Community

Many of those who communicated with the task force, both gay and straight, current students and recent alumni, eloquently outlined a larger problem, which is the unwillingness of many majority students at Colby to accept those who are different from them. As one heterosexual alumnus wrote, *“Despite the fact that Colby had many liberal-minded community members, there was also a pervasive conservatism that had a tendency to shun anyone other than white upper middle class, straight, athletic people. Thus I certainly feel that many homosexual students, or those struggling to identify their sexuality, chose to hide their differences from the Colby community for fear of rejection or betrayal.”* In addition, as another alumnus explained, majority students often reacted with hostility when asked to consider the experiences of non-majority students, arguing, *“There is a strong pull from many of the ‘typical’ Colby students for people who are different to keep their mouth shut. I think we saw that around the activism that took place in spring of ‘99 by African American and other minority students. The message was, sometimes literally, ‘shut the fuck up’ and worse, was delivered by a large, drunk guy, and you knew he would follow it up.”* Putting it slightly differently, a recent alumna articulated this problem persuasively: *“The biggest threat to queer students at Colby is a mentality. Colby students don’t like to see anger, or hear that they may take part in the oppression of a group of people. They would rather find fault in the messenger than hear the message.”*

This was confirmed by things we heard repeatedly from majority students. Many who identified as heterosexual also admitted that they, or people they knew, were made uncomfortable by queer visibility, such as chalkings, rallies, events, courses in queer studies, and other signs of queer existence. These majority students did not wish to be “forced” to acknowledge the presence of queer people, or to hear that queer students were raising the issue of heterosexism and homophobia on campus. These majority students either do not accept that these problems exist, or they think they are not important. They have not been helped to understand, and so they don’t; they need to be educated about this and to see it as their problem too. At best, they are indifferent to the fact that many of their classmates and teammates are made extremely uncomfortable by the climate on campus. At worst, they are overtly hostile. The College must address this directly; the best way to change this is through education and raising awareness; it is essential to break down the “us” versus “them” logic that divides the campus community.

Many queer students who have tried to be more open noted that they feel that majority students (even close friends), while generally not overtly hostile, only accept them if they downplay or suppress their sexual orientation. Self-censorship is the norm, which reinforces that being queer is something that should be hidden because it is shameful or makes others uncomfortable. They are obsessed with not being too

visible, too public, with drawing attention that might be negative. They are in thrall to the dominant culture's negative messages, which they hear repeated by their classmates.

Many also report being pressured not to be open and being criticized for their refusal to hide their identities. Indeed, one man wrote, *"I must be careful, even with my closer friends who know all about me, not to be 'too' gay or come off as a very sexual person. Far from me being threatened, it is the straight friends of mine who are threatened when I say or do homosexual things. I cannot wear tight clothing because my friends would be uncomfortable. I cannot say 'Wow, he is a hottie' while we are watching tv because a dreadful silence will surely follow."* A female student explained at length, *"I feel like a lot of people I've told have then had to struggle not to act differently around me. It makes them uncomfortable, though they try not to let it, and that makes me uncomfortable, or maybe exasperated is a better word, or maybe both at once. ...I don't feel comfortable telling everyone, and even with those that know, I hold back comments that I would feel okay saying if I were with a bunch of queer people. I feel like I have to watch what I say and do to make sure they don't take something the wrong way. ...Sometimes I'd rather not have to deal with the subtle changes in people's behavior towards me. It's a kind of unconscious mental attack from them, I suppose. Most of the time they're not trying to hurt me or act differently, they just don't know how to get over that built-in homophobia stuff."*

An African-American alumnus wrote that he was once complimented by a fellow student who thought he handled being gay appropriately. *"An African-American student who I termed as being kind of "thuggish" told me once that he liked the way I carried myself in that I didn't boast or flaunt my 'gayness' but that I carried myself with dignity and kept it on the down low, whereas he felt that others at times threw it in everyone's face in a bad way."* This notion that GLBTT identity should be kept "on the down low" is widespread. Numerous students and alumni wrote that they felt that they were accepted until they became "too visible" or too "in your face." A kind of tacit "Don't ask, don't tell" attitude is widespread. One recent graduate analyzed the different reactions to coming out she experienced. *"At Colby I found that whether people were supportive of my 'coming out' was always dependent on the particular circumstances that surrounded each instance I found that it was only okay if it was non-threatening to the straight majority. For instance, when I came out at a rally in 2000 I had tremendous support. But as soon as I did anything that challenged the power of the heterosexual majority, I was ridiculed and my opinion was often discounted. People's reactions to my coming out at the rally were very different to people's reactions to queer students 'coming out' through chalkings. What I find particularly interesting is that reactions to queer students coming out was always contingent upon what medium queer students used to express their identity. I use these two examples because...these instances were understood in very different ways. The chalking episode never got constructed as an act of coming out. Instead the dominant Colby culture constructed this as an act of aggression that did not fit within the parameters of acceptable behavior. No one was proud of the chalkers for expressing pride in their identities. Instead everyone diverted the issue away from queer pride and obsessed with the fact that a few of the chalkings contained obscenities. In this situation, heterosexual students were anything but supportive. I believe that many straight students reacted the way they did because they felt threatened by this presentation of queer power and assertiveness. Once we came out as aggressive and powerful as opposed to passive and invisible, the straight community found a way to discount our identities—this time our messages shouldn't be heard because we 'scribbled profanities on the ground.' In sum, Colby was a supportive place when one's "outness" was passive and non-threatening, but as soon as queer lifestyles were "in your face" the Colby community was no longer supportive."*

4. The Lack of Support Systems and Services for Queer and Questioning Students

Students who are questioning their sexual or gender identities or who come to the realization that they are GLBT face certain issues, in a heterosexist and homophobic society. Since most students in this position have been raised by heterosexual parents in a homophobic society, they have internalized the same

negative messages as everyone else about homosexuality. The process of unlearning this internalized homophobia and accepting oneself is a lengthy one, but it can be made much easier if students have appropriate role models, advice, services, and a supportive community. Students in this position all face questions about when to tell friends and families, what the reactions of friends and family will be, and similar issues. They need support when the reaction is not initially positive, as is often the case. Some students even face extreme pressure and rejection from their families, who refuse to accept or approve their sexuality. Some of these students also have to deal with the threat, or the reality, that their parents will withdraw financial support for their education. As noted above, a subtly hostile and unwelcoming campus climate may make every day a gauntlet of micro-aggressions that one must learn to deal with and try to avoid the negative effects of. These kinds of difficulties are exacerbated for students of color, and for students from minority religious and national backgrounds.

This climate makes it difficult for students to explore their sexual orientation. Many are, understandably, extremely fearful, too fearful even to attend meetings of groups like The Pocket and The Bridge. (Part of the problem is that the Bridge is perceived by some as “political” and thus as not something they are ready to be part of.) Those who don’t feel they can be “out” on campus often feel an overwhelming sense of sadness, loneliness, alienation, and isolation. One student described sitting and crying by Johnson Pond for hours during her first two years, because she felt there was no one she could talk to. Although by her senior year, after a term abroad, she felt more secure and had found a community, she still struggled with these feelings, saying, *“We’re all so sad, and nobody cares.”* An alumnus wrote of a close friend who talked to him about his homosexuality, but only came out after graduation, *“I know that my friend often got sick because he felt like he had no one to talk to and was alone. He has since told me that he often got so sick he had to go to the health center.”* An alumnus who identifies as African American and queer asserted that *“the unwelcome feelings students mention in several documents...pervade EVERY aspect of Colby life, from the pump house to the steam plant and everywhere in between.”* He explained, *“Whenever I cried myself to sleep, two feelings were at the fore: unwelcomeness and anger.”* Another alumnus concluded, *“It is always scary to be alone, and even scarier when support is questionable.”*

In this context, it is not surprising that many students who do want to be more visible are afraid of the social consequences of coming out on campus. This is quite a rational fear, as students who have come out consistently use words like “marginalized,” “discredited,” and “tokenized” to describe how other students treat them when they come out publicly. One wrote, *“I have found that I am ‘that gay kid’ and feel both pigeon-holed and trivialized by both close friends and acquaintances.”* Others are upset at being described as “those militant lesbians” and dismissed as “whiners,” who embrace a “victim status,” when they are simply trying to create a better campus climate for all. A recent alumna wrote of her decision to remain partially closeted, *“I was not open with everyone mainly because of the fear of facing a threatening atmosphere or because of the associations and misconceptions that I constantly had to battle once I came out. As a member of many college committees, clubs, etc., I knew that once my sexuality was brought into the discussion, my opinions and suggestions were immediately colored with the comment, ‘Yes, but this is coming from a lesbian.’ This would consistently be the case whether or not sexuality had anything to do with our discussion (as was often the case).”* Another recent alumna explained, *“I was not as open about my sexuality as I might have liked because I didn’t want to constantly have to explain, defend, justify, protect myself.”* Part of the problem here is that there is no real queer community for students in this position to join and from which to draw mutual support.

Regrettably, some students report that they feel that there is no one in the Dean of Students office who will be able to understand their concerns, advise them when they encounter problems, refer them to appropriate resources, act as their advocate with the institution, or organize programming or other community-building events. Whether this is true or not is not precisely the issue, as students’ perceptions that the office offers little support to them drives their behavior. There is no openly queer member of the

staff, and some queer students reported encounters with staff that they perceived as homophobic and unfriendly.

While the Dean of Students office has a small fund to assist in programming efforts, the office has acted only as a funding agent, rather than as an advocate or the generator of activities. There is currently no one assigned as a liaison to work in support of the queer community, which means that students who seek intellectual, personal, or political and organizational support tend to turn to a very small number of faculty and staff members who are known to be queer or are perceived as queer-friendly and understanding. (Quite a few respondents noted how important Postmaster Allen LaPan's support had been to them, for example.) While these faculty and staff members are quite willing to help, the sheer volume of demand is impossible for the limited number of individuals to meet, in addition to their official responsibilities.

The College must find ways to offer these students the support they need to pursue their intellectual and personal development in a healthy and positive way. The most direct and effective way to do this would be to hire a full-time member of the Dean of Students' office to do this work of helping students find themselves and build a strong community.

5. The Absence of Queer Community

In the last few years, the number of students on campus who are openly queer and willing to be identified as part of the queer community has grown dramatically. Arguably, this is because a few brave queer students decided to come forward and insist on their right to participate in the campus conversation on diversity. These students made themselves visible and entered the public discourse with their ideas about sexual orientation and discrimination. Simultaneously, they organized a number of events that brought many closeted queer students together, so that they could begin to feel some tenuous sense of community. These were important interventions, but what they primarily revealed was that there is no real sense of community among queer students at Colby, and that many queer students are very reluctant to be identified with what they perceive to be "the queer community." Indeed, the "community" seems to consist of a series of queer friendship circles, each of which is frightened by and alienated from the other queer friendship circles.

Yet one of the most important results of these events that have brought the different circles together is that these students have gotten to know each other better and have come to see that their fears and perceptions of each other are largely unfounded; they enjoy spending time together in queer-friendly intellectual and social venues. Seeing this has led some queer students to begin to imagine that there might be a real queer community here, and that they might create it. Although this will be difficult, it is vital, and the College must help these students nurture the growth of such a community.

As noted above, the campus climate is such that many queer students do not feel comfortable publicly affirming their sexual orientations; they legitimately fear powerfully negative responses from their fellow students. Because being queer is still very stigmatized in our society and on our campus, they understandably try to avoid that stigma by hiding their identities and trying to distance themselves from those who are publicly identified with queerness. This creates the overwhelming sense of isolation and sadness that students repeatedly described to the Task Force. Even more importantly, it reinforces the internalized homophobia and sense of shame that most of the queer students we spoke to admitted feeling. These queer students share all the deeply negative attitudes about and prejudices toward homosexuality that the larger society teaches; part of their healthy development as individuals requires that they learn to notice these negative attitudes they have internalized and decide consciously to unlearn them. This is very difficult to do in an atmosphere in which these negative attitudes are regularly

reaffirmed by the dominant campus community. A healthy and supportive queer community could be enormously helpful in creating a safe space for students to work these issues out.

One of the largest obstacles to community building is this internalized homophobia. Some queer students are overtly hostile to others whom they perceive as “too queer,” or who perform non-normative gender behaviors and/or refuse to be silent and invisible, because they fear the backlash they think this visibility might produce. Unfortunately, this stigmaphobia sometimes leads them to join in criticizing or rejecting their fellow students who are more open and who are calling for change.⁸ Those who are criticized for their visibility are hurt and become angry at those who feel unable to be in solidarity with them. This conflict unnecessarily alienates these two groups from each other and powerfully impedes the development of a sense of community.

And yet, all these students also say they desperately want a sense of community and real solidarity with other queer people. The problem is two-fold: first, they are afraid and uncertain, and second, they do not know how to imagine something they have never seen and don't quite dare hope for. This can be paralyzing. What is most ironic about all this is that many queer students believe that there IS a queer community, and that they have been excluded from it by others. This sometimes leads them to criticize those who try to take on a leadership role and pull people together. But the reality is that there is no community, and there is no leader or cabal of people who are empowered to exclude others. In the end, they all feel lost and disconnected. Most unfortunately, all too often they also turn on each other, rather than confront the real problems of heterosexism and homophobia.

However, as noted above, the social and cultural events of the last few years have brought all these people together and made many begin to see glimmers of what might be possible. The first step is to provide the education and support that students need to overcome their internalized homophobia and embrace their identities with pride. The next step is to support the growing number of students who want to become involved in making this barely imagined community a reality.

Those students who do feel ready to be publicly identified with a queer community are a remarkably diverse group. This fact constitutes another obstacle to building community: the queer community includes men and women, and people of all races, religions, classes, nationalities, and gender orientations. It also includes those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, or questioning; members of each of these groups may well have very different experiences of and ways of thinking about being queer. For example, at present, there is a significant divide between men and women on campus. The women generally are much more visible and much more able to form open friendship circles than the men. The rigid gender conformity that is central to the larger society becomes a special problem here; both among the men and among the women are large numbers of students who are very uncomfortable with non-normative gender performances by other queer students. That is, those who can “pass” as heterosexual, by virtue of not violating the culture's gender norms, are often uncomfortable with those who do violate those norms: women who seem stereotypically “masculine” or men who seem stereotypically “feminine.” Some of those who challenge gender norms are critical of the others in return, seeing them as motivated by a fear of stigma. The misogyny of the larger culture is a crucial element in this division, and a healthy community would address and resolve this directly, through education and discussion.

Queer students of color may also find it difficult to imagine themselves as members of Colby's queer community, which is often viewed as all white and not sensitive to differences of race, ethnicity, and class. The inclusion of students of color in queer groups or events is often, however inadvertently, tokenizing.

⁸ This concept of stigmaphobia, or fear of being associated with a stigmatized group, was coined by sociologist Irving Goffman, and is used helpfully in the context of queer culture by Michael Warner in *The Trouble With Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Students of color find it particularly difficult to come out because they feel caught between two communities that do not fully accept them or understand their positions; the white queer community can be and often is racist, and communities of color can be and often are homophobic. Socio-economic class also divides potential members of the queer community from each other. Some students do not necessarily understand or acknowledge the ways their privileged positions insulate them from some of the disadvantages of being queer; those students not so protected can feel alienated by this lack of understanding by their peers. Finally, queer students also represent a full range of political views, from those who hold progressive views to those who are quite conservative; these differences in viewpoint can also divide the community, because students do not agree on what needs to be changed or on what is the most effective strategy for change.

Another important problem for the queer student community is the lack of a diverse range of open adult role models and mentors who have the experience to help students negotiate these issues and conflicts, which are hardly unique to Colby. As noted above, there are few visible faculty or staff members who can or will help queer students to imagine and construct the healthy, productive adult identities that we want all our students to form. By contrast, the majority students have a wide range of positive role models. If queer students see a community in which older queer people also feel unwelcome and unsupported, and perhaps are afraid to be too visible themselves, it harms the students' sense of possibility and limits their willingness to risk visibility. Closely connected to this lack of role models is the students' almost complete ignorance of the long and fascinating histories of queer people, of queer cultures, and of queer political movements. Because they do not see themselves as part of a long tradition of people who have created vibrant and thriving communities in the face of repressive and unwelcoming cultures, and who have fought successfully to gain equal rights and equal treatment, they cannot imagine that it is possible. But it is.

All these factors that hinder the development of a sense of community can be overcome fairly simply. First, the college must develop a Queer Studies curriculum that introduces these students to their histories and their cultures. Those students who have been active have been, almost to a person, those who have taken Queer Studies courses and thereby begun to see themselves as part of a larger community and a tradition. They feel empowered by knowing that they are not alone in their struggles, and inspired by learning that others have overcome similar obstacles with dignity and courage. This is a crucial element in helping students overcome internalized homophobia as well; they learn that the myths and prejudices they have been taught about queer people are not true. An important corollary to this is that majority students who take these courses often see precisely the same things and are then motivated to act as visible allies to their queer peers.

Second, the College must support the groups on campus that are working to get queer students together, so that a dialogue can begin. Most of these issues and misunderstandings can be overcome by honest discussion and debate, but there is no forum in which such conversations can be held and no one to moderate them. Any healthy and vibrant community must be able to include a wide range of perspectives and ideas, but the grounds on which queer students can agree to disagree, and the terms of how they will interact with each other and pursue their collective goals, remain to be negotiated. Negotiating these terms will not happen without deliberate and conscious efforts to build a genuinely inclusive and diverse community that can support and sustain the largest possible number of those who wish to be included. The students need leadership to do this work together, and the College must help to provide that.

Work In Progress Toward these Goals

Despite the difficulty of the campus atmosphere, there have been, over the last few years, a number of important developments that suggest the Colby community is ready for positive change. Queer students and their allies have begun to organize and build community, and it has become clear that there is a sizable population of queer students desperate for a sense of connection and community and eager for

leadership and assistance in building such a community. It is also clear that there is a large and well-meaning (but often invisible) group of majority students, who are willing to be allies to their friends in the queer community, but who need guidance and education about how to do this most effectively.

Queer and questioning students and their allies have organized various clubs that seek to support queer students and try to create dialogues around issues of gender and sexuality. The Bridge, Men Against Sexism and Homophobia (MASH), and the Women's Group have all been active and have begun to organize with and co-sponsor events with other student groups like the Students Organized for Black and Hispanic Unity (SOBHU). Recently, a new group, The Pocket, was founded by students seeking a new space for discussion and mutual support.

In 2001, queer students organized a petition drive in support of a President's Council resolution that called for the college to create a Queer Studies program and provide more support services for queer students. Over 700 students signed the petition, and the resolution was unanimously approved by the Student Government Association (SGA). Faculty responded to this student initiative and are currently working on a proposal for a Queer Studies minor and on mainstreaming GLBT-themed materials into more courses.

Queer students and faculty troubled by a backlash against the Coming Out Day chalking in Fall 2001 organized a "Be Who You Are" dance and actively recruited faculty, staff, and students to attend, and to thereby actively manifest their support for the queer student community. President Adams and Cathy Bruce, over twenty faculty members, and hundreds of students came and powerfully and meaningfully demonstrated their support. The second annual version of this dance was held this fall, and was again a well-attended success.

In 2002, the Bridge organized a discussion of "How to be an Ally" that drew over 100 students, who collectively produced a long and concrete list of things allies could do. This was published in The Echo and distributed widely across campus, along with rainbow stickers allies could place on their mailboxes to show support. Dean Kassman also reported on the ally meeting and distributed the list of suggestions to faculty at the faculty meeting.

In spring of that same year, President Adams, Cathy Bruce, and Dean Janice Kassman, along with many faculty and staff, joined a large audience of students in the Page Commons Room, in support of the Drag Show organized by students in AM 376. This very entertaining and educational event, followed by a well-attended dance, also demonstrated very clearly that there are many members of the Colby community who want to be allies to queer students and to welcome queer people as valued and contributing members of the campus community. In addition, students in various Women's Studies and American Studies classes over the last few years have created an impressive array of social action and service-learning projects, many of which have contributed strongly to educating the Colby community and to making change.

Project Ally, a volunteer faculty/staff/student group, offers periodic trainings for those who wish to learn more and become allies to the queer community. They also train hall staff and other student leaders each year and run a film series featuring queer-themed movies. This often unrecognized group's efforts have contributed in important ways to making the campus a safer place for all students.

The administration has responded to student calls for more diverse programming by creating and funding the Pugh Community Board. This year's SGA social and cultural chairs have worked effectively with the PCB to offer a much greater range of queer-friendly and alternative programming, intended to be of interest to those not attracted to more mainstream offerings. Also, the administration's support for training a range of student leaders to be more sensitive and for the new diversity training component of COOT are

also very positive steps forward. Similarly, DELTECH training for faculty and staff has raised awareness of diversity issues for many who have participated.

All this forward momentum must not be lost. But an analysis of these positive developments makes clear that the momentum has almost entirely been created by volunteer efforts, and has no structural support to sustain it. No one is responsible for making sure such things continue to happen, and they require a great deal of effort and time to produce. The administration must find ways to create structures that build on these efforts and ensure that these improvements in the climate continue, even when particular students graduate, or when particular courses are not offered, or when faculty and staff decide to pursue other goals. The time is now. Students and concerned community members have created the conditions for change, and the College should seize this opportunity.

V. ACADEMICS

The Importance of Queer Studies

Over the last decade, the interdisciplinary field of Gay and Lesbian Studies, now expanded and renamed Queer Studies, has been one of the most intellectually lively and rapidly expanding areas of the academy. Substantial bodies of important work in gay and lesbian history, literary studies, sociology, psychology, classics, philosophy, art history, film/popular culture studies, and social/cultural theory are now central to their respective disciplines and powerfully affect the way all scholars in these fields think, not only about the social and cultural organization of sex, gender, and sexuality, but also about much larger questions of the social construction of power and knowledge. Many book-length monographs and influential anthologies now help define the field, and numerous scholarly journals have been created to bring this work to a rapidly growing scholarly and non-scholarly audience.

This is not a field that is of limited interest and appeal. Like the changes in disciplines shaped by the introduction of feminism, European social theory, ethnic studies, and other new methodologies of recent decades, Queer Studies approaches and insights have transformed many fields, and drawn new attention to the tremendous power and significance that norms of sex, gender, and sexuality have in the organization of all societies and cultures. Queer Studies inquiries have historicized sexuality, and illuminated the dense connections between the social construction of gender and sexuality and the political, economic, social, legal, scientific, and cultural structures of societies past and present. Moreover, since Queer Studies is now frequently included as an essential part of graduate training in many social science and humanities disciplines, and in many professional schools, Colby has an obligation to its students to introduce them to this significant new scholarly field, as part of preparing them appropriately for future graduate study. Even those who do not go on to further study can benefit from the fact that Queer Studies projects require careful critical examination of dominant paradigms, norms, ideologies, and values, and thus require students to develop the skills of critical thinking, analysis, and ethical reasoning that are central to a liberal arts education.

Many schools now have some kind of GLBT or Queer Studies programs (majors, minors, or certificates), including most Ivy League schools (Yale, Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton), other elite research universities (Duke, University of Chicago, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Brandeis, NYU), and many smaller liberal arts colleges (Barnard, Smith, Sarah Lawrence, Hobart and William Smith, Grinnell, Allegheny, SUNY Purchase). In the NESCAC, Bowdoin, Amherst, and Wesleyan have organized QS programs, Trinity is in the process of creating a program, and Tufts, Williams, and Bates all offer quite a few courses in this area.⁹

During this period of scholarly ferment, Colby has offered a few queer studies courses, most taught by Professor Phyllis Mannocchi, the pioneer in this field at Colby. While some other courses have been taught, often by visiting faculty, there has been no consistency to the offerings in QS. This was noted in the 1992 Lesbian Gay Subcommittee of the CCC's report to President Cotter, which recommended the introduction of a Gay and Lesbian Studies minor; a follow-up report reiterated this recommendation in 1994. In 1997-98, this issue arose prominently again, when the coincidence of various faculty members' sabbaticals and the end of a two-year visiting appointment in History meant that there would be no Queer Studies courses taught that year. A group of faculty members asked President Cotter and Dean McArthur to re-consider the need for an organized and consistent program of study. Since that time, a few new courses have been taught in GLBT/Queer Studies, including Professor Cheshire Calhoun's "Thinking Sex," (part of an Integrated Semester cluster), Professor Jorge Olivares' "Arenas of Desire," Professor Terry Arendell's "Sociology of Sexuality," and Professor Margaret McFadden's "Alternative Popular Cultures." All

⁹ The most comprehensive listing of schools that offer GLBT/Queer Studies Programs is maintained by Professor John Younger of Duke University. See <http://www.duke.edu/web/jyounger/lgbprogs.html>.

of these courses, like those that have been offered in the past, have enrolled at or above capacity, and student demand for more courses in the field is high and well-documented. Numerous courses, especially in the social sciences and humanities, include some content related to Queer Studies, but these are not typically taught from a queer perspective, but rather, from a majority perspective.

In 2001, students aware of the development of this exciting new field, and troubled by its absence at Colby, circulated a petition asking the College to create a Queer Studies program (and to improve support services to queer students). Over 700 students signed this petition, and the Student Government Association passed, by a unanimous vote, a resolution in support of it. A year later, a group of students concerned about what they perceived as a lack of progress on issues of diversity, and calling themselves the Coalition for Institutional Accountability, petitioned the board of trustees for a number of changes, one of which was the creation of a Queer Studies minor. This year, the Women's Studies Program added a requirement that their majors pursue one of three concentrations within the major; one of these three concentrations is Queer Studies.

In the meantime, an ad hoc faculty committee convened to analyze the feasibility of starting a Queer Studies program with current faculty resources and concluded that, at this time, Colby did not have the resources to create an intellectually coherent Queer Studies program. These faculty members all agreed, however, that such a program should be developed, and since the Dean of Faculty advised that new free-standing majors were unlikely to be feasible, decided that a Queer Studies minor could logically be housed within Women's Studies, just as the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas minor is housed in Anthropology. To this end, the Women's Studies program requested a new faculty position for 2002-03, the incumbent to be appointed in Women's Studies and to specialize in Queer Studies. This request was unsuccessful. This fall, Women's Studies has received the Academic Affairs Committee's (AAC) approval to change its name to "Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies," so as to reflect the expanded conception of the program. The program will also revise and re-submit its request for a position in this field, which will both enable the proposed Queer Studies minor and help meet the very pressing, ongoing staffing needs of the WGS program. The ad hoc committee will also send a proposal for the minor to the AAC in the Spring 2003 term.

Content of the Proposed Minor

After analyzing Queer Studies programs at comparable schools, the ad hoc faculty committee drafted the outline of a potential Queer Studies minor. Minors at Colby typically involve 5-7 courses and require a progression from lower level to higher-level and/or capstone courses. To be intellectually coherent and in line with programs at other comparable institutions, the proposed minor would require seven courses, including three core courses. Those three core courses would be an Introduction to Queer Studies, a History of Sexuality, and Queer Theory. At present, none of these required core courses is offered.

The other four courses toward the minor would be chosen from an extensive list of currently offered courses. (See Appendix C.) In addition to the explicitly Queer-themed courses noted above, there are more than twenty courses offered regularly that include substantial materials or units related to Queer Studies, and whose instructors have agreed to welcome queer-related topics in assignments, research papers and other course work.

The difficulty with this is that these courses are not, in fact, Queer Studies courses, as they do not necessarily approach the material from a queer perspective. That is, these courses typically explore questions of sex, gender, and sexuality from the majority perspective, not from the perspective of queer people. This might be further explained by analogy; the difference between these two types of courses might be compared to the difference between a course that explores representations of African-Americans in dominant or mass culture and an Ethnic Studies course that looks at African American history,

literature, music, or life experiences from the points of view of African-Americans. Both kinds of courses are valuable, but they have different goals and approaches. An intellectually credible Queer Studies program should have enough Queer Studies courses to meet the demand, from students of all orientations, for courses taught from a queer perspective. This will require the development of new courses.

As noted above, staffing is a serious issue for Queer Studies, since, at present, none of the core courses is being offered, and it is not immediately clear who would teach them in the future. (Some years ago, a U.S. Histories of Sexuality course was offered twice –and enrolled at capacity both times– by Visiting Assistant Professor of History Marc Stein.) Current faculty members might be able to develop these courses, but the sabbatical replacement policy makes it extremely difficult to offer new courses outside one's current area of expertise, as it is often a stretch just to cover required courses for one's home department. Of course, if departments and programs were to hire faculty members with Queer Studies expertise, who could regularly offer a course that would count toward the minor, that would help tremendously. The administration should make it known to departments that hiring new faculty with such expertise would be a welcome contribution to the College's long-term goals. Another possibility would be to offer additional courses to part-time faculty who would be willing to teach new courses in this field.

In addition, the College should recognize that many junior faculty members, in particular, fear that senior faculty in their home departments or programs will not welcome, respect, or value work in Queer Studies in the same ways that they value more traditional work, and that working in this field will negatively affect an untenured faculty member's chances for tenure and promotion. A few junior faculty members have been strongly discouraged from pursuing research in the area of sexuality, by senior colleagues who will presumably be writing letters of reference for them in the near future. The college should take steps to make clear that this work is to be valued equally with other specialties and the Dean of Faculty should be especially vigilant in ensuring that this is so in specific cases.

The Problem of Invisibility in the Curriculum/Activities

As part of the new strategic plan, the College intends to develop stronger linkages between students' intellectual work and their social and cultural lives. Development of a Queer Studies minor would certainly contribute toward this goal, as many students take what they learn in Queer Studies courses out into the community in positive ways and are highly motivated to create new forms of social and intellectual life and engagement. Students of any orientation who learn queer history, analyze queer literature, look anew at the world using queer theory, and learn the details of the rich, sophisticated, and diverse cultures that queer people have created in the face of overwhelming odds and discrimination are often inspired to see themselves as part of a tradition and a history, and to participate actively in making that tradition live here at Colby and in the larger community. For example, students taking Queer Studies courses in the last few years have organized political rallies in support of a state gay rights bill, held forums for intellectual and political discussion, put on film series, poetry readings, and various queer-themed social events, made and screened powerful documentaries, and even helped Waterville High School students and faculty create a Gay-Straight Alliance. These are wonderful educational experiences, both for the organizers and for those who attend and learn, but they are one-time events, and if the classes that enable this work are not offered, few such events take place.

Students say they want more lectures, cultural events, social events, and other programs that celebrate and explore these histories and cultures and the connections between these topics and their lives, but there is no one on campus with the responsibility for organizing, publicizing, and supervising such events. The Bridge does some of this, but these students cannot and should not be expected to provide all their own programming. The Pugh Community Board is also an excellent addition to more diverse campus programming efforts, but they have many different constituencies to respond to, in addition to queer

students. This year's SGA social and cultural chairs, Thomas Jackson and Andrea Breau, have also contributed in important ways to these efforts.

Faculty and staff in parallel fields like African-American Studies, Women's Studies, Latin American Studies, and Jewish Studies have as part of their jobs (for which they are compensated and recognized for service to the College), the task of organizing intellectual programming for students. For example, the College regularly celebrates Black History Month, Martin Luther King Day, and Latino Heritage Month, offers well-attended Women's Studies and Jewish Studies lecture series, and otherwise meets the intellectual needs of students in historically marginalized groups and of others interested in these subjects. There is no one to do this work for Queer Studies, because many of the faculty members who might do it are already committed to similar efforts in their home departments and because there are no staff members with specific responsibility for programming for queer students within the Dean of Students office. The need for more such events is pressing. We recommend that a faculty or staff member be assigned to (and compensated for) organizing a lecture series and/or other intellectual and cultural programming in Queer Studies.

The absence of consistent Queer Studies courses and the lack of co-curricular programming that teaches these histories and explores these cultures sends a powerful message about what the College values and deems intellectually and culturally important enough to recognize and support. It contributes in harmful ways to the carefully constructed erasure of queer people from American cultural life more generally, and indirectly promotes the biased idea that queer people and cultures are invisible because they are shameful and should be hidden from view. Not only does this directly harm students who identify as queer by reinforcing the self-hatred that they have so often been taught, it deprives majority students of the opportunity to educate themselves on subjects about which they know little, and reinforces the prejudices many of them have already internalized. Indeed, majority students in Queer Studies courses often ask, *"Why haven't I ever learned any of this material before?"* In course evaluations and in responses to the task force's surveys, these same majority students say unequivocally that taking these courses really opened their eyes, and they argue that more students should be exposed to these subjects. One heterosexual alumna explained that she took two classes in Queer Studies because she was *"interested in learning about differences,"* and because she *"wanted to gain as much knowledge about the topic"* as she could before she left Colby. She wrote, *"Even though I took many of these 'liberal' classes, I never felt it was enough. I definitely think alternative sexuality courses should be part of the core requirement at Colby. Yes, some may hate it and squirm when they hear about it, but if this is the case, one must ask, 'why?' Why does that make one uncomfortable?"* She concluded, *"The problem is lack of education. There are not enough classes and teachers willing to educate students on these issues. Here is where Colby needs to step up."* If it is to meet its own admirably high standard for valuing diversity and educating everyone on campus about its benefits, the College must make a concerted and focused effort to redress the long-standing and widespread invisibility of queer people and cultures and to make information, programming, and courses widely and visibly available to all students, in a way that makes it clear that this is a legitimate and important field of study.

One other, very specific way that the invisibility of Queer Studies is inadvertently perpetuated is the absence of any obvious way for students interested in these subjects to find out what resources—both intellectual and social—are available to them. Queer Studies courses or courses with significant QS content are not listed together anywhere, and many of the course descriptions in the catalogue make it difficult to discern which courses explore these topics. Many students are unaware of faculty members with research or teaching interests in these fields, and of the outstanding library collection that has been built by Reference Librarian Marilyn Pukkila and her colleagues. This could be improved by commissioning a comprehensive guide to available resources, which should be widely distributed, readily available to students and prospective students, and regularly updated. Similarly, lectures, performances, concerts, and other queer-themed events are not advertised in any systematic way or in any central location that allows

students interested in these subjects to keep abreast of what events are happening. This too could be solved by creating a web page with links to relevant groups and offices, an email list that groups could use to publicize events, and other ways of centralizing and distributing information to the campus. To this point, there has been no person responsible for doing work like this, but it needs to be done.

Raising Faculty Awareness

Queer students and allies report two significant problems with the academic experience at Colby. First, they describe widespread insensitivity and even bias on the part of faculty members towards queer students. Second, they are troubled by the lack of GLBT content in mainstream courses, and a perceived unwillingness on the part of faculty and other students to discuss relevant queer topics when they arise.

Queer students and their allies recognize that more often than not, faculty insensitivity is inadvertent and simply reveals that faculty members who have not been sensitized are susceptible to the normalized heterosexism and homophobia of the larger society. However, this insensitivity is often very harmful and hurtful to these students, who describe vividly how they have become alienated and made to feel unwelcome within classes. At best, they report feeling silenced by the assumptions made about them and the norms apparently taken for granted by instructors; at worst, they report receiving explicitly negative messages about queer people and their lives.

This is certainly not conducive to learning. For example, just this semester, a faculty member delivering a lecture defined the difference between normal/abnormal and natural/unnatural by comparing heterosexuality and homosexuality. In a different course, he instructed students that heterosexual attraction was biologically determined and natural; he reportedly asserted that *“men are naturally attracted to women’s flesh.”* While faculty members appropriately have wide latitude in what and how they teach, and we do not support any abridgement of academic freedom, we also note that these claims were extremely upsetting and angering, not only to students in the classes, but to other students on campus to whom they were reported. These ideas also do not seem to represent current thinking on these questions in many disciplines; perhaps such claims might be more fully contextualized as controversial and differing perspectives also included.

In the end, those who suffer most are the students, who report over and over that the alienation they feel in such courses makes them less interested in learning from that professor and much less motivated in those courses. One student explained that before she had a negative and homophobic experience with a faculty member, she had enjoyed his class and worked hard. Afterwards, she admitted that despite being a very serious student who loved her major, she was much less inclined to put in work or effort for that one course, and described feeling that she no longer *“cared about the work or the class.”* She even admitted having uncharacteristically left the final exam without having completed a last question to which she knew the answer, deciding that she *“just didn’t want to deal with this class anymore.”* These are striking examples of otherwise invisible ways that students’ educational experiences are harmed by their experience of heterosexism and homophobia in the academic realm.

Another faculty member jokingly called a student a “dyke” in front of other students in a class; when the student explained to the professor in private that this had made her very uncomfortable, he insisted that he had lesbian friends who used this term among themselves and therefore felt entitled to use it himself. His justification also referred to the Task Force; he asserted that, *“They’ve been so up in our faces the last couple weeks, I thought it was okay.”* This student had never discussed her orientation with him; even if she had, such comments would be completely inappropriate, as would be any singling out and humiliating of a student in front of his/her peers. The instructor’s justification essentially blamed the Task Force for provoking him to speak to the student this way; we interpret it as a manifestation of his anxiety and discomfort with even the most modest queer visibility. What is most troubling about this is that the

student internalized the idea that it was somehow her fault that she had been treated this way, and she had to be repeatedly encouraged not to think that. These kinds of hostile messages make an unwelcome space that easily moves out of the classroom and into the larger campus culture. Faculty members should be reminded of how much power their statements have and how such loaded words can influence and have negative effects on all students.

Queer students also report many other less overt, but still discomfiting academic experiences, which erase their existence by assuming that everyone is heterosexual. For example, some language courses require students to write personal ads or love letters as exercises. Unless the instructor makes explicit to the whole class how to write both an opposite-sex and a same-sex version of such assignments, queer students often feel constrained either to write a heterosexual response that requires them to lie and reproduces the notion that same-sex love is something to be ashamed of and hidden, or to take a considerable risk and write a same-sex version of the assignment. Many students, unsure of what a faculty member's response would be, are not willing to take such risks. Faculty members in these fields report that textbooks are often filled with heterosexist examples and exercises, which are not always easy to work around.

The phrasing of discussion questions can also be problematic. For example, one faculty member began a discussion of gender roles and relations by asking, "*What attracts you to members of the opposite sex?*" The heterosexism of this kind of question is obvious; it assumes everyone is attracted to members of the opposite sex, and silences and alienates those who are not. This silencing hinders the intellectual development of those students who do not feel free to participate in the discussion, and also of those who are not exposed to other perspectives or options.

Unstructured classroom time can also be uncomfortable for queer students. For example, both students and faculty in the sciences report that while they are waiting for experiments to develop in labs, or traveling to field trip sites, many interesting conversations on varied topics take place. This is generally viewed very positively by all involved. Yet some queer students report that they receive strong, if only implicit, messages that their classmates and teachers do not welcome discussion of queer topics in such contexts. Two science majors explained that when they began to discuss the events of this fall's "Coming Out Week," and how much they had enjoyed the drag ball, the classroom quickly emptied; they perceived that talking openly about this subject had made their classmates uncomfortable, and the other students were not even willing to overhear such discussions. They got the message not to raise such issues again.

Students experience similar kinds of discomfort when queer issues unrelated to a class come up and the faculty member does not intervene to ensure that civil discussion follows. One such incident involved a faculty member who was using the back of a poster for a queer-themed event as scratch paper in class. Queer students in the class were made very uncomfortable when the poster occasioned a series of very negative student comments about the event and about why "*they*" (queer students) are "*all up in our faces about their issues.*" The queer students perceived the faculty member to be visibly uncomfortable as well, and didn't feel they could intervene to defend the event or the community, because it was not clear that anyone would support their views and they did not feel ready to be "out" in that context. They wished the faculty member had been able to offer the class some leadership in how to think about the matter or had challenged biased comments.

Many faculty members who responded to our survey stated that they would try to turn such events in their classes into "teachable moments," in which they might try to get students to examine their assumptions and begin a discussion. As one put it, "*Teaching beats preaching.*" But many of these same faculty members said they did not feel entirely sure about how to do this, and would welcome advice about how to handle such situations, which often arise with no warning and no time to prepare a response. Such guidance could be provided by the college through brief sessions at new faculty orientation, and through

production and distribution of a booklet raising awareness and offering suggestions about how to respond when these kinds of issues arise.

The advising process can also be alienating to students, many of whom report being discouraged from taking sexuality-related courses by their advisors. Often this pressure is subtle; they are asked, “*Why would you want to take such a course?*” Students interpret questions like this as reflecting either the advisor’s presumption that they are heterosexual (and should not be interested in those who are different), or a subtle pressure to hide being queer, if they are. Other times, this pressure may derive from positive intentions by the advisor, who may encourage the student to focus intensely on his/her major and not take courses that do not seem relevant to that larger goal. Nevertheless, students are made uncomfortable when an advisor, whom they respect, asks, “*Do you really have time for that course? Don’t you have more important things to do?*” Such questions are also sometimes framed in the context of suggesting that a student be less active in groups like The Bridge; some advisors suggest that students should not pursue such distractions from their majors. Other faculty members feel free to confront and criticize students, whom they know to be members of The Bridge, when they don’t like something the group has done (whether the student was involved or not).

Along these same lines, one faculty member, discussing the posters put up around campus by students in AM 376 with an advisee who was in the class, asked repeatedly why she had been involved in putting them up. He asked her several times, “*You only did that because it was required for that class, right?*” Having great respect for this faculty member, whom she described several times as “brilliant,” she felt forced to pretend that she wouldn’t have been involved in such things, had they not been required by “that class.” She received a clear signal that being openly queer-affirming would not be acceptable in that department.

These are all cases where faculty members might be more attuned to what they are communicating to students and how those messages might be hindering students’ intellectual and personal development. Most students do not feel that they are in a position to challenge faculty members who will be grading them or writing them letters of recommendation. Those students who do not feel entirely comfortable with their faculty advisors might be helped by an additional level of mentoring support. A group for queer students, modeled on the Faculty Allies group for students of color, would be helpful to some and developing one should be explored.

On the other hand, students note and deeply appreciate faculty members who use inclusive language (e.g. “partner” instead of wife/husband/spouse); language or mathematics teachers who devise practice examples or problems that include queer people as characters; and those who either welcome students’ wish to bring queer themes and analyses into the mainstream classroom, or who raise those issues themselves and thereby create a safe space for students to explore them. It is clear that faculty members can make important contributions toward creating a welcoming classroom environment by their actions. One faculty member noted that when she gently challenged students who said, “That’s so gay” in class, they and the other students understood the problem and such phrases were not repeated. Perhaps the ideal example of a comfortable classroom is one in which when a biology major’s lesbian partner sent flowers to her lab on her birthday. The professor and the other students acknowledged and affirmed the gesture and made that student feel a very welcome member of the group without requiring that she hide her identity to be accepted.

Quite a few faculty members who responded to the task force’s survey noted that, while they tried to be inclusive of all students, they were concerned that they were not always fully successful. One wrote, “*I try to use inclusive language, and usually that makes me aware of how severely our default language is heterosexual.*” Another explained, “*I do not assume heterosexuality, but it is a challenge to work against heterosexist assumptions in class (and I have caught myself in those assumptions...I’m always working*

on this)." Others acknowledged that they rarely thought about such matters, and probably did assume that their students were heterosexual; our questions made some respondents think about how they might become more aware of their own implicit heterosexist assumptions. Faculty members in both these groups clearly expressed an interest in having more information about how to be more inclusive, and in having some guidance in how to avoid problem areas and how to handle discussion of controversial issues. The college should provide this.

Some faculty members strongly expressed the view that queer topics were entirely irrelevant to their disciplines and that students' sexuality, or questions of sexuality more generally, were of no significance to them in their role as teachers. This may well be true in many contexts, but we hope that in their roles as advisors and mentors to students, these faculty members will consider the possibility that issues of sexuality may be very present for the students whom they teach and advise, even if that has no apparent connection to their disciplines. For example, the department chair of the faculty member who called his student a "dyke" stated very strongly to the Task Force that such issues were completely irrelevant in that department, but that seems not to be entirely so, since it clearly did come up in a classroom context.

Indeed, many heterosexual faculty members may think nothing of mentioning spouses and children in class, or even talking and joking about heterosexual romance or sexuality, in, for example, the context of informally discussing a film or a television program. Because this is the norm, it is seen as appropriate and unproblematic. Issues of personal relationships and sexuality come up all the time in all kinds of ways, both in and out of classes, and this is unremarkable. But when such discussions involve queer relationships or sexuality, they are often viewed as intrusive "flaunting," or as demonstrating an inappropriate "obsession with sex". This is a clear example of heterosexism; there is a double standard here that imposes a special kind of invisibility and silence only on discussion of queer issues and sexuality.

Some students felt this disconnection between their lives and their studies was more pronounced in the sciences. As one science major wrote about how much she enjoyed the questions about society and sexuality raised in her humanities classes, *"I began to think about the idea that social structures affect everybody, no matter how hard we try to live outside of them, or change them, or embrace them. Thus the associated problems affect everybody who lives in that culture. This is what seems to be lacking in the science departments to me. There is a very pervasive sentiment that these problems do not affect anybody in the sciences. (And that even if it did, it is that person's private problem, and it should not be discussed in or out of class.) This bothers me a lot. ...The lack of concern surprises and disturbs me."* Noting that on National Coming Out Day she saw no professors and few students wearing rainbow ribbons, even though she made them available, she concluded, *"I am frustrated with the way the science departments ignore anything that goes on that is not science. There is more to life than that and there is more to me than that."*

The second significant problem raised by many students is the lack of Queer Studies content, and a perceived lack of faculty and student openness to discussing queer topics, in courses that are not explicitly about queer themes. For example, students note with dismay the general absence of discussion of homosexuality as a theme in literary, scientific, or artistic works, the failure to explore queer issues in politics, economics, law, and other important realms of society, and the general exclusion of GLBT authors, artists, histories, theories, and experiences in their courses. These absences are compounded by the fact that students who dare to raise these issues themselves, in class presentations, in discussions, and in papers, often feel that their points are either ignored or are greeted with an uncomfortable silence or a refusal to engage their ideas. Taking such intellectual risks is difficult, as many heterosexual students assume that anyone who raises such questions must him/herself be GLBT, and so to mention these topics is likely to result in one's being labeled as queer by classmates. Many students, queer or not, are

not comfortable risking being linked with this stigmatized group, because of the climate on campus and, perhaps, their own homophobia.

Since not everyone is willing to take on that role, students would be greatly helped if faculty members raised such issues, thus signaling to the entire class that such perspectives, where relevant, are welcomed, and that queer people are not the only ones who find such questions important and interesting. Those faculty members who already do this—who raise these issues in lectures and discussions, who encourage students to pursue their interests in research papers, and who otherwise create a safe space for student inquiry—report that while some students are initially surprised by this, many respond very positively to the intellectual opportunities they provide. Responses from both students and faculty suggest that this is more successful when the instructor takes the lead and sets the intellectual tone, rather than passively approving the efforts of students.

Faculty interest in Queer Studies and queer-related topics is high. Several faculty members, including Cheshire Calhoun, Jorge Olivares, Jane Moss, and Jennifer Finney Boylan, noted that they have published work on GLBT topics. Over thirty-five faculty members (almost all in the social sciences and humanities) reported that they included some GLBT-related content in their courses; many of these instructors said they wished that they had the ability to do more. Only a small number expressed interest in funds for new course development in queer studies; most explained that time (e.g., course relief) to develop new courses or new course units was more important than money. In addition, many also noted that while they were quite interested in mainstreaming queer studies materials into their courses or in creating new courses, the demands of covering essential courses in their departments made such work nearly impossible. It is clear that heavy workloads are a significant impediment to the current faculty's ability to strengthen curricular offerings in Queer Studies. The college should explore ways to free faculty for the research and study required to prepare new courses and to encourage departments to support these courses, in spite of the tight scheduling constraints that are clearly present in most programs.

Many students and alumni argued that offering Queer Studies is vital. One alumna wrote, "*Queer Studies will affirm the identities of queer students, educate straight students (taking the burden off queer students), and attract prospective queer and heterosexual students who are interested in creating a campus atmosphere that affirms all types of identity. The implementation of a Queer Studies program is the single most effective way to make Colby a more accepting place for queer students.*"

To address these varied issues relating to academics, the QTF strongly recommends the creation of a minor in Queer Studies, to be housed in and administered by the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. Since this will not be possible without additional staffing, we urge the administration to create this new position and assign it to WGS. We recognize that, given current budget constraints, this may not be immediately possible. However, we recommend that the administration immediately take these other steps in support of the development of the minor and to improve the intellectual and academic climate for queer students.

ACADEMICS: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a Queer Studies minor, to be administratively housed within the Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. A proposal for this minor will be sent to the Academic Affairs Committee. Offering this minor will require hiring a new faculty member, to be appointed in the WGS Program, to teach courses in gender studies and queer studies.
2. Offer summer course development grants to continuing faculty members who wish to develop new courses in Queer Studies and encourage departments to permit faculty to pursue these scholarly and

intellectual interests. Offer similar grants to faculty members wishing to mainstream QS materials into existing courses.

3. Encourage departments and programs to consider recruiting faculty with QS expertise, both for tenure-track and temporary positions in any field.
4. Notify departments and programs and the Committee on Promotion and Tenure through the Dean of Faculty that teaching and scholarship in QS is to be treated as a valid area of research and is to be evaluated like any other field of specialization.
5. Include in new Faculty Orientation a presentation on the kinds of insensitivities that students report hearing/experiencing from faculty. New instructors should be informed that such behaviors are strongly discouraged at Colby.
6. Encourage a better classroom climate by having faculty include in annual reports what steps the faculty member has taken to make his/her classroom and courses more inclusive and welcoming to all students. Such steps might be rewarded in merit reviews. In addition, the faculty course evaluation committee should be encouraged to add a question about the faculty member's treatment of members of under-represented groups.
7. Ensure the faculty is made aware of the kind of insensitive, inappropriate, heterosexist, or homophobic language and assumptions that students report hearing frequently from instructors and advisors. Encourage faculty both to avoid such behaviors and to be inclusive in their examples, discussion questions, assignments, story problems, and other relevant aspects of course work. A booklet should be produced and distributed to all faculty to assist in this effort.
8. Provide a comprehensive guide on available resources related to Queer Studies at Colby. This should include courses offered, faculty who teach or do research in this field, and the excellent and extensive resources that are housed in the libraries. QS courses should also be listed together on the registrar's web page so that their existence is more visible to students, as they consider course selection. In addition, a link to the Queer Studies concentration in Women's Studies should be added. Information on how to pursue QS as an independent major should also be provided. All this material should be easily discoverable by any student/prospective student, through a link from the "academic", as well as "admissions" sections of the Colby web site. This curricular information should also be linked to the Bridge's web page, which provides information on other aspects of queer social and cultural life at Colby.
9. Pursue the possibility of a Jan Plan in Queer Studies, either by a current faculty member or outside instructor.
10. Institute a QS lecture series. One way to accomplish this goal would be to compensate the Assistant Director of Women's Studies, who currently organizes the WS Colloquium series.
11. Create a faculty/staff mentoring group for queer students by providing "seed" money for this initiative.
12. Work with those developing a campus Women's Center to provide a joint Women's/Queer Resource Center.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

GLBT issues have been the subject of three formal reports over the last decade. The lesbian and gay subcommittee of the College Community Committee (CCC), chaired by Professors Cheshire Calhoun and Jorge Olivares, formed in 1992 and made a report to President Cotter, to which he replied in February 1993, accepting some of their recommendations and rejecting others. In 1994, the subcommittee submitted a further report on the College's progress towards implementing the 1992 recommendations. In 1997, in response to a letter from concerned faculty about the lack of courses in GLBT studies, Dean of Faculty Bob McArthur reviewed what had been done and reported again to the CCC on the College's progress on these issues. While several important changes were made in response to these reports (e.g. extending benefits to same-sex domestic partners), there has been little progress on many of these issues since 1992. We believe it is time.

Promoting Diversity

Colby's policies against discrimination and its statements affirming these policies are clear. But policies alone, even when backed by considerable goodwill and good intentions, will not produce a better climate. The administration must take an active leadership role on queer issues and not continue to reproduce the invisibility and ignorance that is so pervasive. As a first step, the administration should make a strong public statement in support of efforts to make the campus more welcoming to and accepting of queer people and discussion of queer issues and concerns.

Some of the work that needs to be done is already in progress. The strategic plan calls for considerable attention to building a more diverse, inclusive and welcoming campus community. The new diversity statement eloquently articulates the College's values and goals in this respect. The President has demonstrated his strong commitment to this ambitious project of transformation and has allocated considerable financial and human resources to ensure that these initiatives are carried out. As a result, we have considerable momentum toward changing the campus climate in important ways. However, queer issues are a relatively recent addition to our conception of diversity; as an institution, we have a much clearer sense of how to think about and respond to questions of racial and ethnic diversity. Because this is true, we recommend that senior staff and the directors of all academic and administrative departments be provided with a workshop to increase their understanding of what is at issue for queer members of the community and learn to recognize and see the effects of heterosexism and homophobia.

We also recommend that the College draw more directly on the vast resources of talent and insight available from alumni and friends of the College, so as to ensure that queer voices are fully a part of this important campus conversation. We suggest that the College create an Overseers Committee to explore the full range of queer-related issues on campus. Given our limited time frame, the Queer Task Force was able only to examine the situation for queer students, but the experiences of faculty, coaches and staff, along with many other elements of campus life, bear further analysis. Second, we suggest that the College diversify its leadership structures by appointing an openly-GLBT person to the Board of Trustees.

A few College policy statements and procedures should be reviewed and/or revised. In recognition of the growing number of transgendered individuals in the larger society, who should have equal opportunity to study or work at Colby, all statements of Colby's non-discrimination policy should be revised to include "gender orientation" as a protected category. The statement on AIDS should also be revised to include more current thinking and language about HIV/AIDS. The Harassment Advisory group should always have an openly GLBT member.

In the end, the administration has the final responsibility for improving the atmosphere on campus. It can and should assist the development of a strong and supportive queer community in various ways. First, it

can make available adequate resources to hire the staff required to support this community and pursue new initiatives. Second, it can increase funding for programming designed both to appeal to the queer community and to increase the majority's awareness of queer issues, histories and cultures. Third, it can provide access to information and varied forms of networking by creating a gender and sexuality resource center; this center would draw together the components of a queer resource center and the women's resource center that has recently been proposed. The connection between these two centers is important and organic and a partnership between the two efforts is logical and appealing to all concerned.

We are well aware that budget constraints may make the immediate hiring of a staff person, and other significant commitments of resources, impossible. In the interim, we should not lose the considerable momentum we have built up and should begin work on implementing these recommendations. We propose that the President appoint an ad hoc committee to oversee the implementation of these recommendations where appropriate, and to work with the overseers group to assess what further steps are required.

In addition, the administration should commission, publish, and distribute a queer cultural literacy primer to the entire community, so as to educate those unfamiliar with queer life and culture and to provide a common language for discussions among various campus constituencies. This should be a tool for recruiting the entire community to become more aware and informed and motivated to do their part to make a more welcoming community in which everyone does not have to be the same to be accepted.

ADMINISTRATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Provide Senior Staff and the directors of all academic and administrative departments with a workshop on the full range of human sexuality in order that be more aware of definitions, roles, resources, programs, educational and political realities.
14. Create an Overseers Visit to examine the full range of Queer issues.
15. Appoint openly Queer alumni and/or experts to the Board of Trustees.
16. Publish a clear statement of support for efforts to improve the campus climate for the queer community from the trustees and senior staff.
17. Create an implementation committee to oversee work on these recommendations and to assess further steps needed to improve the campus climate for faculty, staff, and students.
18. Devote a section of the President's Annual Report on Diversity to queer issues.
19. Commission a "Queer Cultural Literacy Primer" for distribution to all Colby community members. This primer would be used to educate the entire community about queer life and culture and provide a common language and understanding for discussions among various campus constituencies.
20. Provide the resources to hire one full-time professional, housed in the Dean of Students Office, to oversee queer support, resources, curricular support, and assistance to all constituencies of the College.
21. Allot \$10,000 for the fund supporting queer issues, currently being overseen by the Dean of Students Office.

22. Revise policy statements on non- discrimination to include gender orientation under the list of protected categories. All other policy statements that include lists of protected categories should also be revised to include gender orientation.
23. Revise the College policy on AIDS in keeping with more contemporary thinking about HIV and AIDS.
24. Ensure that the Harassment Advisory Group has an openly-GLBT member.

VII. ADMISSIONS

Colby represents itself to the world through a variety of mechanisms. The Admissions office formulates many of the representations through which students come to understand the identity of the institution. When prospective students first consider Colby—when they attend college fairs and interview at Colby—they listen to verbal descriptions of Colby presented by Admissions officers. On campus visits, prospective students take campus tours and encounter student tour guides' speeches about life at the College. Throughout the admissions process, applicants are exposed to printed and web-based materials that articulate and reinforce certain ideas about the college; these ideas are expressed not only in text form, but also through the powerful medium of photography. While the Admissions office does not itself construct all of the representations confronting a prospective student, it nonetheless originates a high percentage of them.

The problem with the current representational regime is that it marginalizes queer students and other members of non-dominant groups. A careful assessment of these representations reveals that many of them construct and sustain the notion and the image of a “typical” Colby student. This normative figure is white, wealthy, athletic, and straight. This figure is consistently, albeit implicitly, defined against that which deviates from the norm. The “typical” Colby student exists at the rhetorical center, while every student whose difference marks him or her as “other” is accorded attention conditioned by and commensurate with the grounds of this difference. Therefore, for example, students of color belong on campus only insofar as they provide evidence of the College's racial diversity; that they are often foregrounded in college materials is a reflection of the degree to which they are bracketed. Queer students are among those marginalized by these practices of representation. This marginalization occurs in covert forms—as when the presence of queer students at Colby is invisible in textual and photographic representations of campus life. But it also occurs in more overt forms—as when a tour guide, passing a rainbow flag, loudly declares to his tour group that he thinks such displays of queer pride are “disgusting” (a recent incident reported to the Queer Task Force).

Representations are always politically inflected, embedded within systems of social power. Some representations are intentional and calculated; others unconsciously reflect the structures of prejudice, and are the result of a history of practices at an institution. The Admissions office bears an important responsibility to review and reconstruct the messages, both explicit and implicit, being sent to prospective students. It is only then that it will become possible to de-center the “typical” Colby student, in order to reflect the true diversity that already exists at Colby and to increase the likelihood that such diversity will grow.

ADMISSIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Research, through the Director of Admissions, “queer-friendly” open houses, college fairs, or other marketing outlets to promote Colby College and send representatives to appropriate venues.
26. Utilize a faculty/staff member to train professional staff, office staff, tour guides, student workers, alumni interviewers, and overnight hosts with regard to queer issues.
27. Revise the view book and website to de-center the normative majority student, and to represent queer life on campus, highlighting queer resources and curricular offerings.
28. Provide queer-friendly rooms/hosts for overnight program.
29. Add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Admissions diversity statement.

30. Create a brochure for all prospective students which highlights queer resources at Colby.
31. Have queer-friendly publications in the Admissions reception area.
32. Include a statement of non-discrimination/civility/respect for first-year chat room.
33. Invite openly Queer faculty/students/staff to present at guidance counselor panel discussions, The Maine Event, etc.
34. Explore the possibility of adding a space to student admissions application to encourage self-identification of sexual orientation.
35. Develop a program in Student Financial Services to assist students who are having difficulty with parental financial support, once they identify their sexual orientation.

VIII. ALUMNI RELATIONS/DEVELOPMENT

Historically, the College has focused specific attention and energies on setting priorities, and then the development office has followed up with fund- raising efforts to address those defined needs. The Queer Task Force has suggested priorities and looks to the development and alumni offices to capitalize on the growing awareness of queer issues and associated needs among alumni, trustees, and other benefactors. Within the body of this document there are both conceptual and practical recommendations, many of which require funding that may not currently be available in the annual budget.

In addition to raising financial resources, the development and alumni staff must also work in large and small ways to develop human resources to support the queer community, by articulating the progress taking place on campus and helping people understand better how advancing queer issues will elevate all facets of the Colby Community. Publications and activities of all sorts - mass letter mailings, quarterly magazines, Homecoming and Alumni weekend events, regional receptions - are opportunities to tell the good news of Colby, that we continue the inspiring work of rigorous exploration of the human condition, and through such discourse, instill in our graduates a love of the liberal arts and skills with which to enter the greater world. Queer issues are not parochial. They have application in every endeavor and the sweep of recommendations in this report help to articulate that point. Just as microscopes and classrooms cost money, so too do the other tools of learning throughout the academy. This institutional priority requires no less commitment on the part of our colleagues in development and alumni affairs.

Building a network of queer and ally alumni to support the college should be a goal of the alumni affairs staff. We have learned that many queer alumni feel alienated from the College because of their experiences here. Despite their support for the Task Force's work, several people we contacted explicitly refused to respond to our surveys because they were not willing to commit time and energy to helping Colby. One straight alumnus with a number of gay friends wrote that he knew that those friends deliberately failed to give the College their email addresses, because they didn't want to be contacted. We believe it is possible to heal this breach with many queer alumni, and to build a campus community that will make future queer alumni willing to help the College after they graduate. If these older alumni see that the College is changing in ways that no longer perpetuate the climate of invisibility that they experienced, some will be motivated to renew their connection to the College. We must make our efforts visible to them and to others who will support such changes.

A number of current queer students suggested to us that events during Family Weekend would be helpful to them. Some parents have difficulty accepting their children's choices and others do not, so a PFLAG group meeting to let these parents meet and discuss their views could be helpful at Colby, as it has been at comparable schools. We can help these students by helping to educate their families as well.

ALUMNI RELATIONS/DEVELOPMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Plan PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)/queer-related programs for alumni and family members.
37. Hold queer-issue workshops for all staff in Alumni, Development and Communications.
38. Encourage the Alumni College to address queer issues in curriculum and programming.
39. Continue existing events for queer alumni during Family Weekend and Reunion, and have openly queer alumni, staff, faculty, students and friends of the college hold workshops on current issues on these weekends.

40. Provide a significant piece in the Alumni magazine on Queer Task Force recommendations, and new developments in this area at Colby.
41. Create/develop queer alumni network to rebuild relationships and to expand internship opportunities for current students
42. Hold some regional alumni events in queer-friendly venues.
43. Solicit funding for queer-related initiatives, such as an endowed chair for Queer Studies.

IX. ATHLETICS

Athletics play an important role in the lives of a high percentage of Colby students, and so the Task Force thought it was an important area of campus life to explore in detail. Previous Task Force reports had suggested that queer students in the past had found the Athletic Center an uncomfortable space; we tried to ascertain if this was still the case or not.

The task force sought input from both coaches and students with regard to the climate for queer students on Colby's athletic teams. The task force sent a survey, similar to that sent to all faculty, to each varsity coach [See Appendix B]. We did not survey student athletes directly. Rather, the task force asked for student and alumni input generally and listed athletics as one area of interest. We also spoke directly to some student athletes and alumni.

Response rates were not high. Only six coaches chose to respond to our survey, giving us a much lower response rate than for the survey sent to the rest of the faculty (see section IV). Members of the task force were told off the record that some coaches were offended by the introduction to the survey¹⁰, by individual questions, or by the survey as a whole. Five of the coaches who responded were men. The only female respondent indicated that she was openly queer. Since our survey did not produce the fullest possible picture of the experiences of queer people in Athletics, we recommend that the survey be re-done under the auspices of the Director of Athletics and with the input and assistance of coaches.

From the students, we received a limited number of responses, but they were quite detailed. All of our respondents were female. In an attempt to get some indication of the situation on men's teams, task force members approached a few male athletes directly. We do not think that the gendered response is accidental and discuss our interpretation of it below.

Coaches

All of the respondents indicated that while they had limited experience with queer players, they did not feel that queer players would present any particular difficulties or, for the most part, experience any significant problems. As we expected, all of the coaches see themselves as role models and work very hard to help students deal with the transition to adulthood. Several made it clear that they spend a substantial amount of time talking to their teams about various sorts of non-athletic responsibility issues (drinking, respect of self and others) and that respect for queer athletes would very much fit into the sorts of issues that they deal with now. Two coaches' understanding of their roles as models for students were typical:

We talk frequently about being first class citizens and a first class program. We want our team to represent what is great about Colby Athletics. This includes no trash talking to opponents, no disrespect toward officials or opponents' coaches and always being accountable for your actions. Respect for yourself, Respect for your team and respect for others.

¹⁰ The introduction noted, "Historically, athletic environments have not always been friendly to homosexuals" and proceeded to give several examples. Apparently, some coaches felt that we were unfairly singling out the athletic department. We deny this claim. We were quite appropriately singling out athletics as a particularly important social space in which masculinity and femininity, and thus in our view, sexuality, play an important role. The examples in the introduction to the survey were intended to show that we were not singling out the Colby athletic department. We did not then nor do we now believe that Colby athletics provide a better or worse environment than athletic departments in other colleges. We do believe that athletics are a particularly difficult realm for queers.

I think that I have helped a few of my students to become a little more responsible and held accountable for their actions. . . . A major issue that I discuss with my team is the excessive and irresponsible intake of alcohol. Other more subtle issues like swearing, being on time, communicating with faculty and staff are all part of the personal influence that we interject onto our team. . . . We have a team meeting about expectations, respecting others, responsibilities, being sensitive to 'words' that we use to tease or poke fun at others . . .

It is unfortunate that more coaches did not respond to the survey, as the students' reports are not terribly positive. Despite the dearth of information, we do not believe that the coaching staff as a whole is a fundamental part of the problem for queer athletes. In general, the task force believes that the coaching staff is no different from the rest of the faculty. A tiny fraction are prejudiced, a much larger percentage are unaware or indifferent, and some are aware and concerned. In this regard, they are no different from any academic department. In our view, this accounts for the scattered negative reports of students such as those quoted below. We therefore recommend that coaches be asked to undergo the same sorts of training and reporting requirements that we have recommended for the rest of the faculty.

Students

As indicated above, the task force does not think that coaches are the central problem. Most students who wrote or spoke to us indicated that their coaches would not have a problem with queer students and would ensure fair treatment of queer students. However, as with any group, there are exceptions to this generally positive picture. Student athletes wrote:

Often times certain stories [about player's sexual activity] would get back to our coach and coach would ask players questions in front of everyone else (to embarrass that particular player). This only perpetuated heterosexism within the team dynamics further. While anybody could share her story, it was always implied that the person's [partner] would be of the opposite sex.

As a member of the team, I was never a witness to overt acts of homophobia. I did, however, sense a generally negative atmosphere for queer students, fostered by both players and coaches, and was not comfortable in disclosing my sexual orientation to the team as a whole. This may be the result of offhand comments made by players and coaches in the locker room or on the bus, which, although unintentional, were homophobic.

I wouldn't say that [our coach] is homophobic, but I do think she helps to perpetuate the culture of our team. I think that [our coach] would be supportive of and open to homosexual players (and I know [our coach] has been in the past), but I can't imagine anyone feeling comfortable talking to her about it. [Our coach] is too involved in our lives socially. She knows way too much of the team gossip and I think perpetuates and encourages some of the negative culture of the team. She has a view of what she would like her players to be like – pretty, popular, social etc. It's not always as much about just playing [our sport] as it should be. I think she is too involved in issues of "who's cool" on our team as well as trying to stay in touch with that part of herself. I think part of her would like us to be like a sorority.

If there were ever blatant issues of homophobia I think she would address them and condemn it firmly, but I don't think [our coach] is as aware of or thoughtful of more subtle issues.

While we do not believe that these actions by coaches are the decisive issue for queer athletes at Colby, we do believe that they justify our recommendation of training and reporting.

None of the students indicated any direct bigotry or homophobia on their teams, and all either stated or implied that such behavior would not be tolerated. At the same time, all of these students felt that their team environments were heterosexist and would be uncomfortable places for queer students. Among their comments:

I wouldn't say that there is a blatant homophobia on the lacrosse team, but I certainly do think that it is a heterosexist environment.

If you were gay or believed to be, you were given subtle messages that this was a topic not to be openly discussed.

I remember one player that was believed to be gay and vicious rumors were constantly being spread by certain upper-classmen. I recall hearing these rumors during preseason of my freshman year and getting the feeling that this player was not a good person to hang out with. I was a nervous and intimidated freshman and all I wanted to do was to fit in (I don't think these are uncommon feelings) and thus I took these rumors and suggestions as truth. In response, other new players and myself distanced ourselves from this one player, since we wanted to be with the in group.

A lot of discussion revolves around the weekend's activities of drinking and hooking-up, all in a heterosexual context. The assumption is that people are straight.

The emphasis on boys and sex combined with our team showers I feel like would be enough to make any gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning individual uncomfortable. To answer your question more directly, I do not think that such an individual would find our team environment a friendly one, unless they were very comfortable and confident in their sexuality.

While queer students should not be made to feel uncomfortable in their attempts to pursue athletic excellence, it became clear to the committee that the central problem for queer students was not with coaches, locker room banter, or anything that happened as they were playing or preparing for their sports. The most uncomfortable and clearly problematic situations came outside of the playing field in the realm of team social life and culture

While I have gained many positives from playing on [our team] and am good friends with many players, overall I wish it was different and if I were a lesbian (particularly a freshman) I don't think I'd feel comfortable. The team is way too focused on social issues. We eat dinner together every night after practice. Every Saturday after a game we have a team party. Friday night we often have team activities too. From freshman year girls are drawn into a very limited part of the social scene at Colby and are expected to fit right in. I think this narrow world would leave little room for a queer student.

It is on these trips and at our [team] parties where sex is discussed frequently. Although it has always been a pretty close team, the topics that are discussed and questions that are asked are often ones that I would hesitate to ask a good friend . . . As a freshman, I felt fortunate to have a boyfriend, a situation which lifted the pressure to hook up with someone every weekend, a pressure I had to fight to ignore in years following.

I also think a lot of the team culture can be demeaning towards women in general.

There was one incident in particular that comes to mind when I think of all this and it is the one that led one girl not to want to return to play the following season. I only heard about this incident as it happened while I was abroad, but it horrified me when I heard it and it is definitely the worst incident of forced sharing that I know of. Apparently this one night at a [team] party, one of the upper classmen sat in the middle of the circle of girls and demanded that they detail their last sexual encounter. This girl told me that she had never felt more uncomfortable on the team as she did then.

My first encounter with homophobia on Colby's campus was on my recruiting visit . . . This same player [the host] later described her first impressions of the other players on her team as manly, weight lifting lesbians.

All of the team-organized parties I attended were focused around a sports team of the opposite sex and thus this encouraged heterosexuality. Also, when I look back on my three seasons I can see a pattern forming among certain people who gravitate towards a particular clique. The team seems to carve itself into two groups, one revolved around the heterosexual social scene and everyone else who does not participate in such activities are labeled the "other."

One queer student who did not wish to be quoted directly told the task force of several team-related incidents that had been deeply troubling to her. The first was being pressured, as a first-year student who was not out, to attend a "handcuff party," sponsored jointly by her team and a men's team. Each female player would be handcuffed to a male player, and they were required to drink large amounts of alcohol together before they would be released. She was made to understand that sexual activity was a likely outcome. Even after she came out as a lesbian to her team, she was frequently pressured by her female teammates to "give it (heterosexual sex) a try". Her teammates regularly sent male players present at joint team parties to try to persuade her to have sex with them, "for her own good." This student told the Task Force that this had become so wearing that she was close to giving in, just to get them all to leave her alone, even though she was not interested in these men. The idea of pressured sexual activity of this sort is extremely troubling to all of us.

This student was also pressured and even harassed by teammates on a different team, who demanded to know why she refused to attend their end-of-season party with a male team. She refused because it was to be an "envelope party," in which players picked slips of paper with instructions on them from an envelope and then had to follow those instructions. Since most of the instructions involved some form of forced sharing or sexual activity ("go in the closet for three minutes and neck" or "do a lap dance") with

one of the male players, she knew this would be uncomfortable and didn't go. When she explained to her teammates why she did not want to attend, they claimed to be unable to understand her problem.

It is the Task Force's belief that the central problem for queer athletes is the degree to which heterosexuality is embedded in team culture. This appears in two ways. First, it appears when team cultures ostracize athletes who are thought to be queer. Much more often, it appears in the assumption of heterosexuality that pervades team cultures. No student, straight or queer, ought to be subjected to "forced sharing" or feel "pressure to hook-up with someone every weekend" because of athletic participation. Queer students are more exposed in these circumstances.

Men's and Women's Sports

All of our student respondents were women. Thus, the descriptions given above are all about women's teams. The issue of homosexuality in sport, as in other aspects of life, is not the same for men and women. In our society, men are less likely to be out than women, whether they are athletes or not. We did ask a few male athletes about the possibility of queer students on their teams. The most revealing answer came from a former team captain. When asked what advice he would give to a teammate who wanted to come out to the team, he said that while he personally wouldn't have a problem with it and thought that people ought to be able to be open with their teammates, the situation was such that he would advise his teammate to stay in the closet.

The Task Force has found that athletics at Colby are a particularly unfriendly environment for queer students. This situation is not the result of direct actions by coaches and administrators. Instead, it results from the fact that while coaches are faculty, teams are not classes. Classes are analogous to practices; they occur over a short period and are led by faculty/coaches. The distinctiveness of teams comes at the point when practices end. The members of an introductory sociology class have only the most tenuous social connection outside of the classroom. Typically, the members of a class do not eat, live, travel, dress or party together. Teams do all of these things together. In doing so, they create team cultures. It is in those cultures that homophobia and heterosexism live and breathe.

This is particularly true because athletes at Colby do not seem to feel that they can separate themselves from team culture while remaining a part of the team. More generally, athletic teams appear to play a particularly prominent role in the overall social life of the college. This has the effect of giving the College's only significant gender segregated component a dominant role in the structuring of student social life. In effect, athletic teams have become the new fraternities and sororities, with many of the same negative consequences of sororities and fraternities. The most important recommendation of the Task Force in this realm is that all athletes must be allowed to separate themselves from the social obligations of team membership if they so choose and that the college must find a way to de-center athletic teams from the organization of college social life. In addition, we strongly encourage all coaches to set a high standard of treating others with dignity and respect; they can set a tone that will make clear what is and is not acceptable behavior, and this can help make the climate for queers more comfortable.

Having said this, the task force recognizes that this issue is particularly difficult to deal with for several reasons. In the first place, team culture develops autonomously and is created, controlled and perpetuated by student athletes and not by coaches. Coaches have only a limited ability to impact team cultures. Also, we are completely confident that whatever hazing and initiation rituals occur, they do so over the direct objections of and warnings from the coaching staff. At the same time, coaches do have some influence. Coaches are role models and many of them address lifestyle issues with their teams. Coaches would certainly try to undermine loose language about race and racial cliques on their teams and we believe they can to the same for queer students. Making visible their active support for diversity training for captains, and their support for captains playing a positive leadership role on these issues, would help a great deal.

In addition, team solidarity can be a good thing and, it is clearly supported by coaches. We believe that coaches need to make it clear that an athlete can be a solid member of a team without participating in team social events, and that simultaneously, team social events should be open to all team members regardless of their sexual orientation, race, religion, or other differences. We are asking coaches to recognize this issue and do what they can, we are not asking them to do the impossible.

The task force recognizes that there are significant free speech and privacy issues here. Any student, and by implication, any athlete has the right to hook up with a different partner every weekend and then discuss the graphic details of the encounter with his or her friends. The task force recognizes and indeed supports those rights. However, no student should be pressured to do those things because of his or her participation on an athletic team. We want to defend the right of student athletes to remain silent about their sexuality and to keep those private matters private. Of course, we also think that queer students ought to have the same right to speak as do heterosexual students.

ATHLETICS: RECOMMENDATIONS

44. Have the Director of Athletics work with the implementation committee to survey the coaching faculty regarding their view on homosexuality and homophobia in college athletics and at Colby, and use the information collected to develop and implement recommendations for improving the campus climate for queer athletes.

45. Consider, when hiring in the Athletics Department, whether the candidate has the ability to handle queer and other diversity issues.

46. Formulate a statement in the Athletics Department explicitly affirming the rights of queer athletes to be treated equally to majority students.

47. Include explicit information in the orientation of new coaches on the kinds of insensitivities that students report hearing/experiencing from coaches. Inform new coaches that such behaviors are strongly discouraged at Colby.

48. Inform the entire coaching staff of the kind of insensitive, inappropriate, heterosexist, or homophobic language and assumptions that students report hearing frequently from coaches. Encourage coaches both to avoid such behaviors and to be more inclusive in their language and assumptions.

49. Include in each coach's annual report a section on what steps he/she has taken to make his/her team more inclusive and welcoming to all students. In addition, the evaluations filled out by team members should include a question about the coach's treatment of queer students and other members of underrepresented groups.

50. Prepare a comprehensive guide to available resources related to homosexuality and homophobia in college athletics for distribution.

51. Start a peer-mentoring group for queer players, focused on underclass men and women.

52. Act to ensure that team cultures do not create and perpetuate heterosexism and homophobia.

53. Offer team leaders the same sorts of diversity training that COOT leaders, hall staff and other student leaders receive. Coaches must not undermine or minimize the importance of this training and should expect team captains to attend sessions and bring what they have learned to bear on their leadership of the team.

54. Ensure, through coaches, that locker room culture and conversation is not exclusive or targeting queers or others.
55. Investigate the ways that team culture outside of practice and playing fields affects queer students and campus social life.

X. BOOKSTORE

The bookstore responded effectively to previous task forces' requests that their stock always include GLBT books and other merchandise. The GLBT book section, while small, is good, though it could be expanded to include more scholarly queer studies books. The only gay periodical we found for sale was The Advocate; we recommend that the magazine offerings be expanded a bit, perhaps to include magazines of interest to women as well as men. Also, the card selection includes a range of cards, some of which suggest nothing about the gender or sexual orientation of the sender or the receiver. But there are no explicitly gay-themed cards, while there are quite a few that are explicitly heterosexual in their message or humor. There is also, appropriately, an entire rack of cards that represent and are clearly designed to appeal to people of color; a small selection like this should be available for queer customers too. We also recommend that the bookstore include queer-themed Colby memorabilia (e.g. rainbow Colby t-shirts) among the stock of clothing and souvenirs. Finally, window displays in the past have highlighted queer-related themes or anniversaries; this kind of visibility is very important and positive and should be continued regularly.

BOOKSTORE: RECOMMENDATIONS

56. Continue to pursue opportunities to feature window displays, in-store displays, especially in conjunction with events, such as, Coming Out Day (Oct 11), Pride Week (April), and National Gay and Lesbian History Month (June).

57. Offer queer-themed Colby memorabilia, such as rainbow Colby t-shirts.

58. Explore expanding the stock in the Gay and Lesbian trade book section, in periodicals, and in the cards section.

XI. CAREER SERVICES

Because there are relatively few queer-focused career services tools and resources, the question for queer students is less how to find “their” tools and materials than how to make generic tools work for them. This leads to an issue of confidentiality. Career Services staff are perfectly able to teach students techniques that will yield queer-relevant information, but only if the students ask and thereby “out” themselves to the staff. Although there is no reason to believe that Career Services staff would react negatively to such a disclosure, we must recognize that queer students may not want to, and should not have to, identify their sexual orientation in order to use standard student services. Our primary recommendation is that Career Services make clearly queer-focused resources, and queer-relevant instructions for using generic resources, available through its website.

In addition, we recommend that Career Services include some additional queer-relevant programming. Queer people have certain special needs in the workplace. For example, job discrimination against queer people is still legal in many localities; whether or not to “come out” on the job is an important question for new employees; and whether or not an employer offers domestic partner benefits and other rights and privileges is very important to some queer employees. Our detailed recommendations follow, and Appendix D includes examples of the sorts of resources that might be included on the new section of the Career Services web page.

CAREER SERVICES: RECOMMENDATIONS

59. Develop a map of the career services library indicating the location of queer-relevant resources, and put this information on the web.
60. Modify the career services web page to include links such as the ones listed in Appendix D.
61. Create a guide to finding queer-friendly and/or queer-relevant graduate programs. In addition to finding graduate programs in Queer Studies, the guide should assist students in locating departments in various disciplines that have a group or a significant individual conducting queer-relevant research.
62. Update the websites in the appendix and the Career Services library regularly.
63. Offer an annual workshop on being queer in the workplace and on matters related to queer discrimination in the workplace.
64. Increase the number of internships and job listings with queer organizations.

XII. THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

As noted above, students do not always perceive the Dean of Students (DOS) office as queer-friendly, and therefore do not make use of the considerable resources and support the deans can offer. Instead, they often turn to a small number of faculty and staff, who are not trained student affairs professionals, for the help they need. The DOS office has to be made more queer-friendly and welcoming.

Professional Staff

While faculty and staff members can and do serve as unofficial support systems, an openly GLBT dean assigned to support this community is needed, one who can understand the students' experiences and fears, affirm their right to exist openly, help them figure out how to build a community that meets their needs, and act as their advocate with the institution. This person could organize intellectual and cultural programming, but also events that let people from across the campus come together and get to know each other and thus begin to develop a sense of community. Among the kinds of things that seem to work at similar institutions are things like a weekly GLBT lunch, Queer study breaks, Queer tea, a Tuesday afternoon discussion group, etc. This person could also play the vital function of coordinating the flow of information about services and events and making sure that all students have easy access to information about what's going on. For example, s/he could produce and distribute the brochure describing available services and resources for queer students. Finally, this person could provide staff support to groups like The Bridge, The Pocket, MASH, and Women's Group.

In addition, this person could be charged with keeping track of the climate and making sure that the institution is following up on its own plans and proposals. As the history of progress on queer issues makes clear, since no one has been charged with following up on ongoing activities, they mostly happened once and were forgotten.

Social Life

Many, but by no means all, queer students often find that the social and cultural events planned for the majority by the Student Activities infrastructure (SGA, SPB, social and cultural chairs) are not of interest to them. Many are not comfortable at dances or parties, especially ones with overtly heterosexualized themes. These organizing groups mostly do not bring performers, speakers, or other programming that recognizes that there are queer people here, or that caters to their interests and concerns, or that reflects the diversity of queer culture and queer people.

Indeed, quite frequently, programming on topics related to homosexuality makes it a topic for debate, rather than celebration or exploration. Students need programming that meets their needs and is of interest to them, and at which they do not have to defend or argue for their right to exist. The Pugh Community Board can help address this, as can culturally-sensitive social and cultural chairs. But this is entirely dependent on who volunteers for and is elected to or selected for these positions in a given year. There is no structural requirement that the SGA more generally meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. The same is true for The Bridge; if they don't have strong leaders, who sacrifice a lot of time to putting on events, then there is no queer-positive social/cultural/intellectual life.

Queer students are in the unfair position of having to create their own social, cultural, and intellectual lives by themselves, and this is a burden that majority students do not typically have to bear. While a queer student may be just as interested in a lecture on global warming or Russian literature, as intrigued by a jazz performer or art exhibition than any other student, the fact remains that there is lots of programming with "general" appeal and very little with specific appeal.

The burden of putting on these programs is often overwhelming to those students who try to undertake it and often, their school work suffers, and they “burn out” and withdraw. One recent graduate who was very active in organizing queer-themed events recalled, *“I clearly remember my senior year when I went to a forum pertaining to queer life and I turned to my friends and realized that this was the first time in two years that I’d been to something queer-related that not one of us helped organize. This moment symbolizes the reality of queer social life at Colby: If we didn’t organize any lectures or events, they probably would never have happened. It’s pretty sad that queer students spend all their time organizing events not only to educate straight students, but simply to see themselves, their histories, their experiences represented. I still can’t believe that over a span of two years, every queer-related event I went to was organized by me or one of my friends.... It’s simply too much work for queer students to take on the full responsibility of making the social life queer friendly.”*

Another alumna described this problem a bit differently: *“Unfortunately, many queer students were so busy being the token queer student fighting for queer studies and queer rights on campus that they had no energy to counsel other people, even deal with issues themselves. There was too much that needed to be done. There were some isolated members of the faculty and staff who were magnanimously helpful, but they themselves were being stretched very thin.... I felt that, in much the same way that it was my “job” to let the Colby community know why I deserved to be respected and treated fairly, it was also my “job” to implement, myself, the kind of support systems I, or someone like me, might need. I think the college needs to do a better job of anticipating the kind of support incoming queer and questioning students may need. I also think it needs to do a better job of taking some of the pressure off queer students on the activist front so they can have some time for themselves and for each other.”*

Another concluded, *“I’d ask this committee to recognize that as queer students we all have different experiences, but the trends of isolation, burn out, and tokenism remain the same. These trends should not be debated, but taken as the sad reality that queer students (and other minority students) face during their four years.”*

The Bridge and Other Student-Led Groups

The Bridge, like many student groups, has sometimes lacked effective leadership. The 1992 report asserted that *“The burden of general education, improving the campus climate, hall staff training and orientation work should not fall on members of the Bridge, but should be spearheaded by the college administration.”* Everyone agrees in subsequent reports, but this work still falls primarily to the Bridge, which is not always up to the task. And if they don’t do it, it doesn’t happen. Indeed, their inability to formulate a coherent mission is their primary problem, but that is in part because they are expected to be all things to all people, and to indeed bear the burden of educating and changing the campus, and organizing their own social/cultural life, at the same time that many of them are still struggling with difficult identity issues and with the stresses of being openly gay at Colby. This is too much to expect of them. Many student leaders need better leadership training, and these particular students, among others, need training that addresses the complexity of their position as members/leaders of a stigmatized minority group. The leadership training program planned by the Student Activities office is an encouraging first step. Training for student leaders offered by Loel Greene has also sensitized hundreds of Colby students to issues of diversity. The Pugh Community Board has also been able to take some of the programming pressure off the Bridge, but much more needs to be done.

Another important development is the recent formation of The Pocket, a student-led support group. However, its leader will graduate in May, and it is not clear whether the group will survive. Even if the group does continue, students who have been involved in it agreed that a coming-out support group led by a professional staff member would be very valuable to them, and the college should arrange to offer such a group, in an ongoing way.

GLBT Fund

A \$5000 fund to support GLBT lectures and programs continues to exist (but hasn't increased since 1993), and is now under the administration of Dean Ron Hammond. This is an important resource, but there is no one who is responsible for planning programs to spend that money in a systematic way, and as noted above, we need someone to do this organizational work. Obvious times for such programming are National Coming Out Day (October 11), Gay History month (June), World AIDS Day (December), Day Without Art (January), and Pride Week (usually in April). The college also celebrates Black History month, Women's History month and Latino Heritage month in impressive ways; perhaps GLBT issues could be made part of those programs as a matter of course. This fund should be increased to \$10,000.

Orientation and Adjustment to College Life

From the moment they come to campus, students should be made aware of the diversity that exists in human sexual orientation, just as they are made aware of the complex racial, ethnic, religious, gender and national identities that characterize us all. Because queer or questioning students may be even more anxious about how they will "fit in" or be accepted than other first-year students, Orientation programs, COOT, speeches, sports practices, social events, informational packets, and first-year readings should all, where relevant, include mention of or information about queer existence or resources. This will send a message to all students about how welcome queer people are. It is especially important for students who come with seriously homophobic attitudes; modeling that this is not acceptable may help ease the discomfort queer students feel.

Hall staff (including faculty residents) and COOT leaders who greet people when they arrive set a tone as well. Having openly gay staff and faculty and their partners and families living on campus offers all students positive role models for alternative family life, provides a resource for students who might want to discuss such issues, and helps majority students come to know and become comfortable with openly gay adults in a structured and positive way. Hall staff who feel comfortable self-identifying as queer or questioning should be as visible as possible. This is often avoided, for fear that first-year students may react badly or with fear to a queer H.R. Fear of the majority's bad reaction should not be an excuse for perpetuating homophobia or not making evident that there are queer students in all sorts of leadership roles on campus. H.R.s are in a powerful position to encourage their residents to engage in dialogues across various differences and to provide programming that helps those dialogues to begin. They should be required to facilitate these kinds of programs around sexuality, in particular.

First-year seminar suppers are an excellent opportunity to help reinforce some of these ideas. This year, one program deals explicitly with gay issues. Other scheduled programs deal with sexual assault and AIDS, and will offer appropriate opportunities to include discussion of queer-related issues. This kind of queer-inclusive programming should be continued every year, and speakers should be prepared to deal with relevant questions professionally and non-judgmentally.

We must not make the mistake of assuming that queer issues are only of interest to a small minority of students who self-identify as queer or questioning. What has become clear over the last few years of increasing queer visibility is that many straight students have siblings, parents, and other relatives who are GLBT, and many friends who are GLBT, and want to know more, have support as they deal with family coming out issues, and be able to understand, so as to be better friends.

Since there are so many allies to the queer community who are already here, there is no reason to perpetuate the invisibility of queer people in the service of not making straight people uncomfortable. Those who will be uncomfortable should not be allowed to impinge on the rights of others and should be

invited to learn more and think more deeply about their homophobic or heterosexist attitudes. Perhaps most importantly, we must engage the entire community in the process of making the campus climate safe and welcoming for everyone. Several alumni opined that the best thing the college could do would be to enlist everyone on campus, especially the heterosexual students, to believe it is their responsibility to foster an accepting and open environment. As one person wrote about GLBT students, *“The problem lies outside that group; they aren’t the ones who need to change. Perhaps a better question would be, ‘what kinds of expectations should Colby place on its students with regard to promoting a community in which diverse individuals can feel welcome?’”*

Housing

Some students describe feeling very uncomfortable in the residence halls and experience intense homophobia from roommates and dormmates. As noted above, many students and alums reported finding homophobic graffiti on message boards, having to hear homophobic comments and insults in the hallways and bathrooms with troubling frequency, and being challenged on their right to enter a bathroom because of their gender presentation. Others dislike the heavy drinking that is typical in many residence halls, or the uncontrolled behavior of fellow students who have had too much to drink.

Homophobic roommates must be systematically dealt with in the housing system. One student reported that when she came out to her first-year roommate, the roommate stopped talking to her, stopped giving her phone messages, and pretended that she wasn’t there. The situation was hostile and unbearable. When she requested a new living situation, a dean told her she had to wait a semester. For two months, the student kept her books in the Pugh Center and slept either in the Pugh Center or in friends’ rooms. Another student was repeatedly told by her roommates, who were also her friends, that she had to stop becoming so active and visible in the queer community because she was making them look bad. They ridiculed her involvement and told her that there was no problem for queer students, creating such a negative environment that she felt she had to move. The Dean’s office must have a fair and equitable written policy in place for how to deal with these kinds of conflicts, without punishing queer students for being different or blaming their identity for the conflict.

Queer seniors who have the financial means to do so often move off campus to escape the unwelcoming and alienating atmosphere of the dorms at Colby. Others told us they would move off campus if they could afford to, but they cannot. One way to keep such students, many of whom have been quite involved in a wide variety of activities, on campus would be to create a multicultural housing option, which would bring together those who actively seek to live with others who are different from them across many dimensions. Quite a few current queer students think this would make a significant improvement in their ability to be comfortable and feel at home at Colby.

Senior Week

In recognition of the fact that queer students, like other minority students, have had to overcome extra obstacles to reach graduation, senior week should involve at least one event that recognizes and affirms the queer members of the class and their allies. One possibility is a “lavender graduation” ceremony, currently being held on numerous campuses. There is some precedent for this, as a special dinner for African-American graduates and their parents is held each spring. Perhaps such an event could be organized in conjunction with PFLAG activities and supportive parents.

Chaplains

Many queer students expressed an interest in having full access to resources to pursue their spiritual development, but do not always find that campus religious organizations are welcoming of queer people.

The chaplains should be encouraged to reach out to these students and to bring GLBT clergy, speakers, and denominational groups (e.g. Dignity, Integrity, Am Tikva, Metropolitan Community Church) onto campus.

Colleges are centrally concerned with helping students develop into healthy adults, intellectually, socially, and personally. We must ensure that queer students receive the same opportunities for personal and intellectual growth as other students, because Colby remains a campus in which many do not feel free to be themselves or explore sexual or gender identity as important parts of their self-concepts. The atmosphere here does not make enough people feel safe and supported as they try to figure these complicated issues out. The Dean of Students Office has a vital role to play in changing this climate and insuring that all students can develop their potential as fully as possible.

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE: RECOMMENDATIONS

65. Ensure new student orientation events acknowledge the presence, needs, interests, and concerns of queer and questioning students.

66. Continue diversity training to COOT leaders and COOTers. Ensure sexual orientation and gender issues are part of the focus of such programs.

67. Acknowledge during the Preview Program for international students and self-identified students of color that there are likely queer students among the participants, and provide information about what services are available. Also, part of orienting international students to the American context should include an explanation that the College does not condone discrimination against queer individuals.

68. Include, during training for student leaders in SGA, LEAP, Judicial and Appeals Boards, components to improve student leaders' awareness of diversity regarding sexual orientation and harassment issues.

69. Be certain First-year Supper Seminar programs recognize and are inclusive of different sexual orientations. Every year, queer issues and themes should be explored.

70. Include queer-related texts in first year reading assignments.

71. Encourage student leaders to include at least one senior week event designed for queer seniors and allies.

72. Offer a "lavender graduation" event or dinner and make available rainbow tassels to anyone who would like one.

73. Continue Hall Staff training that includes sensitivity to issues of sexual orientation. Require hall staff to program on matters related to queer life, issues, or events on campus.

74. Develop a policy in housing for dealing with queer-related roommate conflicts. This policy should require a meeting between the dean, the student or students involved, and a neutral third party.

75. Include an openly queer faculty/staff member in the faculty resident program, whenever possible.

76. Provide multicultural housing as an option for queer students.

77. Develop a brochure explaining what is available in services, activities, academics, and other resources of interest to queer students. This should be widely distributed, posted on the web, and easily accessible to anyone interested.

78. Link the DOS web page to queer-related information available on other campus web pages.

79. Ask chaplains to program for and/or reach out to queer students, bringing queer chapters of different denominations to campus, making sure that queer students feel welcome and able to pursue their spiritual needs in supportive environments.

80. Provide staff support and leadership training for The Bridge and related groups that struggle with organizational issues unrelated to their central missions.

81. Provide social life opportunities that are more welcoming for queer students. Look at the use of heterosexual themes in social programming which may seem exclusive. Such exclusively-themed events, coupled with the abuse of alcohol, combine to make the social scene for queer students and allies problematic. To improve this situation, provide training to student programmers.

XIII. HEALTH CENTER AND COUNSELING SERVICES

While the health center typically receives quite positive evaluation from those who use its services, significant numbers of queer students perceive it to be an unwelcoming place and therefore do not access its resources. We have identified three main obstacles for students. The first obstacle is students' perception that to receive adequate care they will have to reveal their sexual orientation to providers whom they do not know and about whose reactions they cannot be sure. Students' fears of a homophobic reaction may not be borne out, but the anxiety keeps some from going for treatment (or from answering questions honestly). This dynamic is exacerbated by the fact that students still coming to terms with or questioning their sexual orientation often find it difficult to discuss such issues openly.

This fear of a homophobic reaction can be partly explained by the second obstacle students face: the perception that caregivers presume everyone is heterosexual, or that they make assumptions about students' sexual orientation based on appearances. For example, one student reported being discomfited by the fact that she was taken to be heterosexual when she had very long hair and presumed to be a lesbian when she cut her hair very short. Another issue that queer female students frequently mentioned was their discomfort with always being asked if they might be pregnant and being offered a pregnancy test. Caregivers could easily change these perceptions by developing and consistently using intake and medical history questions that make it clear that disclosing a queer identity will not produce a negative or uncomfortable reaction from the provider, and by explaining why they must always ask about possible pregnancy. We recommend that the health center make a visible public statement that providers are queer-friendly. We also recommend that the college provide the staff with training to ensure that they all do understand how to be genuinely queer-friendly to patients.

The third major obstacle for some queer students is the widespread perception that things revealed in medical examinations and counseling (including alcohol-related) sessions may not be kept confidential. Indeed, many are convinced that the Dean of Students office and other college offices can get access to information that these students may not wish to reveal, and that this information will be used against them if they have other difficulties on campus. This keeps some students from taking advantage of important resources and services. While we think it is extremely important and valuable that there is an openly-GLBT counselor on the staff, if students are generally afraid to see a counselor, they may not receive assistance they need. Counseling services should take steps to publicly and truthfully clarify their confidentiality policies so students can make informed judgments.

The facilities of the health center and access to information about sexual identity issues and HIV/AIDS should also be re-evaluated. Student members of the task force who visited the health center in search of information and safe sex items found a decidedly inconsistent response to their needs; the health center should train all staff members so as to ensure that students consistently encounter welcoming, informed, and non-judgmental advice and easy access to unbiased information and to condoms, dental dams, and latex gloves. Students should not have to explain why they want these items and staff should not have to search the building to find adequate stocks of these materials. This is vitally important in the age of AIDS, when it remains quite difficult for many people, especially young and inexperienced people, to follow safe sex practices that they know to be essential, but are not always assertive enough to act on. We must make it easy to obtain these items so that sexually active students have no obstacles to protecting themselves and their partners appropriately.

Health center staff should also evaluate whether decorations or wall hangings in the facility contain images of heterosexual couples and romance that implicitly affirm heterosexuality and erase homosexuality. Some students reported being made uncomfortable by these images, at a moment (awaiting a physical examination) at which they felt rather vulnerable. Along these same lines, some students judged the informational materials about sexual identity and the brochures about AIDS to have

problematic content and assumptions; these should be evaluated and re-written, if necessary. Health center staff should also carefully consider the placement of brochures and other information about homosexuality and sexual identity issues. These materials are currently on a display rack that also includes information about STDs and eating disorders; queer students are very sensitive to the implication that homosexuality is an illness or disease.

The health center should also develop a consistent policy about offering HIV tests to students. Some gay male students who felt comfortable discussing their sexuality with providers reported receiving frank and helpful advice about being tested and about the need to practice safe sex. Other students, who had reason to fear they had been exposed to HIV, described being discouraged from getting the test; these students found having to argue for the test very distressing. The need to protect oneself and one's partners from exposure to HIV should be emphasized to all students who are or may be sexually active, regardless of orientation. This is not only an issue for gay men.

The college should also explore the possibility of offering anonymous, not simply confidential, HIV testing. If it cannot be done on campus, perhaps having the test at an off-campus location could be subsidized, as on-campus tests now are. The issue here is less with the confidentiality of health center records (though that is a concern for some), than it is with medical insurance companies' increasing capacity to collect large amounts of data on patients without their knowledge. Given the well-documented history of discrimination against those who have HIV/AIDS, confidentiality of test results is of the utmost importance. Concerns about confidentiality should not keep people who ought to be tested from doing so.

The health center's web page, while a bit out of date, is helpful and informative. We appreciate the presence of easily available and supportive information for students exploring sexual identity issues, and recommend that this and some other elements of the page (especially re: HIV/AIDS) be brought up to date.

Finally, we have discovered that there is an extensive medical literature about treating GLBT patients and we recommend that health center staff consult this literature and make any appropriate changes so as to ensure the best possible care for all students.

HEALTH CENTER AND COUNSELING SERVICES: RECOMMENDATIONS

82. Provide informational sensitivity training to Health Center and Counseling staff on queer issues. For example, providers must recognize that sexuality cannot be determined by a person's appearance and must not require queer students to work against heterosexual assumptions to receive proper care.

83. Review the intake and history questions used by caregivers to eliminate any assumptions of heterosexuality. Providers should explain why they ask women about pregnancy.

84. Require caregivers to consistently offer an HIV test, since they consistently offer pregnancy tests. Caregivers should not discourage students who request HIV tests.

85. Explore the possibility of anonymous (not only confidential) HIV testing.

86. Reexamine information on sexuality and its placement on display racks in the Health Center.

87. Update and improve the Health Center website, to include:

- a. Revision of the AIDS testing page under crisis information.
- b. Information about the availability of dental dams on the Women's Health Issues page.
- c. Replacing the word gay with queer throughout.

88. Continue to provide counseling support group for those dealing with issues surrounding sexual orientation.
89. Offer an ongoing, staff-led coming out discussion group through counseling services.
90. Develop a visible public statement that healthcare providers are queer-friendly.
91. Provide easy access to (and keep adequate stocks of) all forms of birth control and safe sex-related items, including condoms, dental dams, and latex gloves.

XIV. PUBLICATIONS

As one can judge by the recent time, effort, and expense put into developing a new and unique printed image for Colby College, marketing counts. In that same spirit, Colby College can yield tremendous gains by investing in greater attention to detail in the written, photographic, and electronic image we present to the world around us. From the homepage to the view book, from the quarterly magazine to departmental brochures, Colby publications are expected to be welcoming and open. In the highly competitive market in which we find ourselves, there is no prize for finishing second place and our message should be inclusive, innovative, and interculturally aware. All our publications must reflect the presence of queer people at Colby. For example, our publications might include photographs of students wearing queer-identified insignia, profiles of faculty and staff who teach Queer Studies or are otherwise involved in queer student support, or posters for queer-themed events on campus.

PUBLICATIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

92. Develop clear and consistent definitions for “queer”, “LGBTTIQ”, “Diversity”, “Multicultural”, and “Intercultural” and include them in all relevant printed and Internet materials.

93. Ensure that all publications reflect the presence of queer people at Colby. Representations of campus life, like photographs, press releases, notices of events and speakers, recruitment and publicity materials, and magazine stories, should acknowledge the presence of queer people and groups as full members of the community.

94. Provide Communications staff with training on issues surrounding the representation of queer people/issues.

95. Provide awareness training for all photographers, in-house or contracted, before they are able to photograph campus events.

XV. STUDY ABROAD

A great deal of detailed work goes into evaluating sites at which our students study abroad. Professional staff take exhaustive trips, communicate closely with on-site faculty and staff, and research curricular offerings to insure a high quality experience for Colby students. Likewise, it is now time to extend that same effort to examine the welcomeness of off-campus sites for queer students or any student wishing to undertake queer studies as part or all of their curriculum.

Issues of safety, acceptance, community networking, and building allies are vital when students arrive on Mayflower Hill and are no less important to our students when they look for a well-fitting study abroad program. The ability to understand and appreciate the needs of queer students and the range of queer offerings in the classroom is essential for OCS staff who strive to assist all of our students in their pursuit of study abroad opportunities. In addition, students need to have as much information as possible about the situations into which they might travel before making up their minds where to study.

This is particularly important because a remarkable number of students reported to the Task Force that the Colby climate was so difficult that they had only felt able to come out as GLBTQ when they were abroad. Unfortunately, even a foreign country is a safer place to come to terms with being queer than Colby, and we should provide as much support for that process as possible.

STUDY ABROAD: RECOMMENDATIONS

96. Offer awareness training on queer issues to study abroad office staff and program directors.

97. Provide queer-friendly home stay and apartment guides.

98. Provide information about queer-related services that are offered in any city where Colby students regularly attend off-campus academic programs in the OCS office.

99. Allow students to attend queer studies programs and enroll in queer studies courses for credit, as long as academic rigor is held equal to that of other programs. Staff should make themselves aware of such offerings throughout the programs Colby students attend.

100. Provide locally specific descriptions of safety issues, social and programmatic offerings, and information about the cultural environment for queer students studying in particular locations abroad.

101. Include questions on the study abroad re-entry to Colby survey about the environment for queer students. For example, the survey might ask, "Based on what you and/or your peers heard, saw, or experienced on your program how welcome do you think it is for queer students at _____?" Make the results of the re-entry survey available on the web or in hard copy for any Colby community member.

102. Provide guidelines to the Registrar's office concerning credit acquisition when no "comparable course" is available for programs abroad.

XVI. CONCLUSION

This Task Force Report represents the fourth time in a decade that issues of queer life have been explored administratively at Colby. While some progress has been made (for example, the very important addition of domestic partner benefits for employees), the College's response to calls for change has been very limited. We have had no choice but to conclude that addressing these issues has simply not been an institutional priority, and that the consequences of this failure have been devastating for many queer students. What has also become clear is that the problem is systemic, and therefore, cannot be dealt with effectively in a piecemeal way. Individuals, however well-meaning or energetic, whether they be students, faculty, or staff members, cannot fix these problems by themselves. The problem is structural, so an effective response will require a concerted effort, led by the administration. We hope our leaders will be moved by what we have learned and ask them to take responsibility for responding in a way that addresses the complexity, seriousness, and urgency of the problem. We are confident that the administration's good will on these issues, when turned into a set of concrete actions such as those we recommend, will contribute significantly to the College's larger goals of making a more diverse and inclusive campus for all members of the Colby community.

The length of this document makes clear that the Queer Task Force believes that there is much to be done to improve the campus atmosphere and the support systems for queer and questioning students. We have included so many voices and anecdotes, and analyzed the issues in great detail, because the nature of heterosexism is such that the problems we found are often invisible to the majority community. We decided that it was important to explain, as comprehensively as possible, the contexts from which we developed our recommendations. We hope this will give members of the majority community a detailed picture of how the campus looks from the position of members of sexual minority communities, and will persuade them to support implementing our recommendations. Further, we believed that it was important for anyone who would read this document to understand that these are not abstract or theoretical issues. They profoundly affect many members of the Colby community every day, in myriad ways. Indeed, the gratitude with which many people greeted our efforts was quite moving, and many respondents said how glad they were that Colby had taken the step of creating the Task Force and starting the work for change. The Task Force strongly believes that all across the campus, there is enormous good will and a genuine desire to improve the campus climate for queer and questioning students, and we are grateful for the opportunity to have been part of this effort. We look forward to the progress we know will follow.

The importance of even the smallest steps forward is captured in the words of an alumna from the class of 1996 who did not feel able to be out when she was at Colby. She reported that when she and her life partner, also a Colby grad, visited the campus for reunions, *"Every trip is filled with reflections on 'how things were'. We are ALWAYS pleasantly surprised to see a gay film being advertised, or a gay author being showcased in the library foyer. Our most profound experience was our last trip, and seeing the rainbow flag hanging in the window of the Pugh Center. I cannot imagine how things might have been different had I walked by that flag every day during my Colby Days. It made us stop in our tracks and say, 'Wow'".*

XVII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we wish to thank President Adams for creating the Queer Task Force and for his strong and unflagging support of our efforts and of the queer community at Colby more generally. We also very much appreciate the time and insight of all those current students, alumni, and academic and coaching faculty who responded to our surveys, either in person or in writing. This report would have been impossible without the important information, ideas, analyses, and suggestions they so generously shared with us. We are also indebted to those department heads who responded promptly and graciously to our requests for information, advice, and assistance with carrying out our charge. We also thank Lisa Sweet, Administrative Assistant to the Vice-President and Dean of Students, for her help with all phases of our work, especially the production of our final report. Finally, we thank each other, for hard work, determined optimism, and great collegiality, under considerable time constraints.

APPENDIX A

TASK FORCE ON GLBTT ISSUES

June 1, 2002

BACKGROUND

The diversity section of Colby's strategic plan includes the intention to review the College's support for GLBTT students. In addition, recent events on campus suggest the need to look more broadly at the campus atmosphere with regard to GLBTT issues and individuals, and to explore ways to improve that atmosphere. In light of these intentions and concerns, the President has called for the appointment of a task force to review these matters and to make any related recommendations to the administration.

CHARGE

The purpose of the Committee is to explore GLBTT issues and concerns in three primary areas:

1. Campus atmosphere with respect to GLBTT students and staff and their concerns.
2. Existing support for GLBTT students;
3. Strategies and initiatives that might improve campus atmosphere and raise the visibility of GLBTT community members and issues.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee will consist of nine individuals, including three faculty members, three students, and three members of the administrative staff. Individual members include:

Students: Gretchen Groggel, Steven Sarno, Jay Bougere
Faculty: Katherine Stubbs, Margaret McFadden (co-chair), Alec Campbell
Staff: Janice Kassman (co-chair), Ron Hammond, Allen LaPan

TIMETABLE

The Committee will commence its work in early fall 2002 and complete that work by the end of the semester. A final report and recommendations will be submitted to the President no later than December 15, 2002.

APPENDIX B

Survey sent by SGA President Gretchen Groggel to all current students at Colby and to the members of The Bridge.

The Queer Task Force has been charged with exploring campus atmosphere and institutional support for GLBTT students and staff. Toward this end, the task force is soliciting comments from students and staff. We are very interested in any general comments that students and staff would like to make regarding campus climate and institutional support for GLBTT people, but we are particularly interested in whether or not students and staff are able to be as open about their sexuality as they would like, and if not, why not? We are also interested in whether students and staff have ever felt threatened because of their sexual orientation, and in the circumstances surrounding any threats that they have experienced. Finally, we are interested in thoughts about the support services provided, or not provided, to GLBTT people by the college. Comments may be submitted by email to Margaret McFadden, (mtmcfadd@colby.edu) co-chair of the task force, or in writing to Box 5296. Submissions may be made anonymously.

Survey sent to recent alums that have provided Colby with an email address.

As part of the Strategic Plan, which charts the course for the college for the next 5- 10 years, the college is looking at all the ways we support an increasingly diverse population. To that end, a task force has been formed to study the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual individuals.

The group, the Queer Task Force, felt it would be helpful to learn of the experiences of recent alumni in this regard. We have therefore asked the Alumni Office to send the message below to those graduates in the classes of 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997 and 1996 who have shared email addresses with the college.

We hope alumni will answer the questions below and return them to me, Janice Kassman, Dean of Students, via email at jkasma@colby.edu. If you would prefer anonymity, you can send your comments to 5296 Mayflower Hill, Waterville, ME 04901, the college address of Margaret McFadden, one of the faculty members on the task force.

.....
We are very interested in any general comments that you would like to make regarding the campus climate and the institutional support for GLBTT people when you were in residence.

How did you identify your sexual orientation while attending Colby?

- a. GLBTT
- b. Heterosexual
- c. Questioning

We are particularly interested in whether or not you were able to be as open about your sexuality as you would have liked, and if not, why not?

We are also interested in whether you ever felt threatened because of your sexual orientation at Colby, and in the circumstances surrounding any threats that you experienced.

Finally, we are interested in your thoughts about the support services provided, or not provided, to GLBTT people by the college.

Thank you for your assistance.

Janice Kassman
Dean of Students

Letter sent to all coaches.

October 28, 2002

«FirstName» «LastName»
Box «Box»

Dear «FirstName»,

President Adams has charged the queer task force with examining the campus climate for queer students. As a part of that mission, we are examining the experience of homosexual students who participate in athletics.

Historically, athletic environments have not always been friendly to homosexuals. Bobby Valentine's recent claim that Major League Baseball was ready for an openly gay player was received skeptically by many, including former major leaguer Tommy Herr, who said, *"I think the guy would be ostracized in the clubhouse. He would be ridiculed by fans. That's the way it is."* The problem of homophobia in collegiate athletics is well recognized by the NCAA ("H" The Scarlet Letter of Sports in *The NCAA News* Oct 8 2001). These issues affect both men's and women's sports as evidenced by Jeremy Shockey's recent statement to the effect that homosexuals would not have been welcome on his college football team and Penn State Women's basketball coach Rene Portland's well known team rules "no drinking, no drugs, no jeans on the road, and no lesbians."

Because athletics are so important to so many of our students we are asking for your help in assessing the athletic climate for homosexual students by answering a few questions.

- 1) How many years have you been coaching at Colby?
- 2) Do you think that coaches play a significant role in helping student-athletes become responsible adults and if so how?
- 3) How many openly homosexual student-athletes do you currently have on your team?
- 4) How many can you recall in your time as a coach at the college?
- 5) Do you think that a student-athlete's sexual orientation affects his or her experience as a participant on your team and if so how?
- 6) If you cannot recall any openly homosexual student-athletes on your team, what sorts of difficulties, if any, do you think that they might experience on your team?
- 7) How have, or how would, you handle a situation in which one of your players indicated to you that he or she was a homosexual and that they wanted the rest of the team to know?
- 8) What steps have you taken to ensure that the climate on your team is inclusive and respectful of all athletes regardless of their sexual orientation?
- 9) What steps have you taken to ensure that team leaders help to create such a climate during team activities including time spent on busses, conditioning and in the locker room?

Our task force faces an end-of-semester deadline and so we are asking you to send your responses to me as co-chair of the task force by November 15. Thank you for your time in helping us to examine this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Janice Armo Kassman
Vice President for Student Affairs

APPENDIX C

Courses currently offered that could count toward a Queer Studies minor

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) has begun offering a concentration in Queer Studies as of Fall 2002. Although most of the courses that will count toward this concentration are not explicitly QS courses, they have significant relevant content and the faculty members who teach them have affirmed both that students pursuing this concentration would be welcome and that they would find materials (and could pursue topics) appropriate to their interests. Each will be offered regularly over the next three years. The following fifteen courses have been identified as electives for this concentration, and would be equally appropriate for a minor:

AM 275	Gender and Popular Cultures (McFadden)
AM 315	Contemporary Asian-American Women Writers (Thoma)
AM 398	Alternative Popular Cultures (McFadden)
AY 373	Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality (Mills)
BI1XX	Biology, Race, and Gender (Tilden)
CL 332	Manhood in Greek Society and Literature (J. Roisman)
ED 332	Women, Girls, and the Culture of Education (L. Brown)
EN 362	Art and Oppression (Mannocchi)
EN 429	Passionate Expression (Mannocchi)
MU 255	Music, Sexuality, and Gender in Opera (Linfield)
PS 136	Topics in Sex and Gender (Raag)
PS 352	Sex and Gender Seminar (Raag)
SO 177/276	Sociology of Gender (Arendell or Blake)
SO 273	The Family (Arendell)
SO 278	Sociology of Sexuality (Arendell)
SO 391	Gender and Public Policy (Arendell)

Additional possibilities (either offered less regularly or open by agreement with instructor) include:

EA 232	Male Friendship in Chinese Literature (Besio)
ED 235	Revolutionary Multiculturalism (Barnhardt)
EN 179	Love, Literature, and Society (Boylan)
EN 398	Love and Loss (Sagaser)
HI 273	History of Women, Gender, and the Family in Latin America (Fallaw)
HI 313	Women in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Taylor)
HI 412	Body and Soul: Sex and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Taylor)
PL 272	Applied Ethics (Calhoun)
PL 312	Philosophical Topics in Feminist Theory (Calhoun/Gordon)
SO 359	Social Movements (A. Campbell)
WS 311	Feminist Theory (Thoma)

While this list may not be comprehensive, it represents a significant range of possibilities for students wishing to pursue work in the area of sexuality studies and queer studies.

APPENDIX D

CAREER SERVICES

1. GLBT Scholarship Resources such as the following
 - a. <http://www.washburn.edu/sobu/broach/glbtscholar.html>
 - b. http://www.queertheory.com/academics/financial_aid.htm
2. Links to queer specific career information and resources such as
 - a. Articles on queer friendly employers from the Advocate
 - b. http://www.advocate.com/html/stories/797/797_top_companies.asp
 - c. http://www.advocate.com/html/stories/823/823_topten.asp
3. GLBTQ career information including
 - a. www.gaywork.com
 - b. www.gfn.com
 - c. www.progayjobs.com
 - d. Directions to the resources available on web exchange
4. Instructions for finding queer relevant information on regular job and internship search engines.
5. Information on federal, state and Colby non discrimination laws including
 - a. The text of Colby's statement.
 - b. www.aclu.org/issues/gay/hmg1.html
 - c. <http://uspolitics.about.com/cs/jobdiscrimination> (this site allows searches for discrimination policies of employers)
6. Information related to being queer in the workplace such as
 - a. <http://www.outandequal.org/programs/index.htm>
 - b. http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student_dean/career/GLBT.shtml#coming%20out
7. Information on domestic partner benefits such as
 - a. www.nglft.org/library/dp_pub.htm
8. Assistance on resume writing and interviewing
 - a. Lawrence college has a particularly nice discussion of this issue at http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student_dean/career/GLBT.shtml#Resumes%20and%20Interviews
9. Good examples of college websites include
 - a. http://www.coe.edu/careerservices/students/job_listings/glbtscholar.html
 - b. <http://www.upenn.edu/careerservices/wharton/LGBResources.htm>
 - c. <http://web.grinnell.edu/careerdevelopment/special/glbtscholar.html>
 - d. http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student_dean/career/GLBT.shtml

Queer Task Force Recommendations

ACADEMICS

1. Create a Queer Studies minor, to be administratively housed within the Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. A proposal for this minor will be sent to the Academic Affairs Committee. Offering this minor will require hiring a new faculty member, to be appointed in the WGS Program, to teach courses in gender studies and queer studies.
2. Offer summer course development grants to continuing faculty members who wish to develop new courses in Queer Studies and encourage departments to permit faculty to pursue these scholarly and intellectual interests. Offer similar grants to faculty members wishing to mainstream QS materials into existing courses.
3. Encourage departments and programs to consider recruiting faculty with QS expertise, both for tenure-track and temporary positions in any field.
4. Notify departments and programs and the Committee on Promotion and Tenure through the Dean of Faculty that teaching and scholarship in QS is to be treated as a valid area of research and is to be evaluated like any other field of specialization.
5. Include in new Faculty Orientation a presentation on the kinds of insensitivities that students report hearing/experiencing from faculty. New instructors should be informed that such behaviors are strongly discouraged at Colby.
6. Encourage a better classroom climate by having faculty include in annual reports what steps the faculty member has taken to make his/her classroom and courses more inclusive and welcoming to all students. Such steps might be rewarded in merit reviews. In addition, the faculty course evaluation committee should be encouraged to add a question about the faculty member's treatment of members of under-represented groups.
7. Ensure the faculty is made aware of the kind of insensitive, inappropriate, heterosexist, or homophobic language and assumptions that students report hearing frequently from instructors and advisors. Encourage faculty both to avoid such behaviors and to be inclusive in their examples, discussion questions, assignments, story problems, and other relevant aspects of course work. A booklet should be produced and distributed to all faculty to assist in this effort.
8. Provide a comprehensive guide on available resources related to Queer Studies at Colby. This should include courses offered, faculty who teach or do research in this field, and the excellent and extensive resources that are housed in the libraries. QS courses should also be listed together on the registrar's web page so that their existence is more visible to students, as they consider course selection. In addition, a link to the Queer Studies concentration in Women's Studies should be added. Information on how to pursue QS as an independent major should also be provided. All this material should be easily discoverable by any student/prospective student, through a link from the "academic", as well as "admissions" sections of the Colby web site. This curricular information should also be linked to the Bridge's web page, which provides information on other aspects of queer social and cultural life at Colby.
9. Pursue the possibility of a Jan Plan in Queer Studies, either by a current faculty member or outside instructor.

10. Institute a QS lecture series. One way to accomplish this goal would be to compensate the Assistant Director of Women's Studies, who currently organizes the WS Colloquium series.
11. Create a faculty/ staff mentoring group for queer students by providing "seed" money for this initiative.
12. Work with those developing a campus Women's Center to provide a joint Women's/ Queer Resource Center.

ADMINISTRATION

13. Provide Senior Staff and the directors of all academic and administrative departments with a workshop on the full range of human sexuality in order that be more aware of definitions, roles, resources, programs, educational and political realities.
14. Create an Overseers Visit to examine the full range of Queer issues.
15. Appoint openly Queer alumni and/or experts to the Board of Trustees
16. Publish a clear statement of support for efforts to improve the campus climate for the queer community from the trustees and senior staff.
17. Create an implementation committee to oversee work on these recommendations and to assess further steps needed to improve the campus climate for faculty, staff, and students.
18. Devote a section of the President's Annual Report on Diversity to queer issues.
19. Commission a "Queer Cultural Literacy Primer" for distribution to all Colby community members. This primer would be used to educate the entire community about queer life and culture and provide a common language and understanding for discussions among various campus communities.
20. Provide the resources to hire one full-time professional, housed in the Dean of Students Office, to oversee queer support, resources, curricular support, and assistance to all constituencies of the College.
21. Allot \$10,000 for the fund supporting queer issues, currently being overseen by the Dean of Students Office.
22. Revise policy statements on non- discrimination to include gender orientation under the list of protected categories. All other policy statements that include lists of protected categories should also be revised to include gender orientation.
23. Revise the College policy on AIDS in keeping with more contemporary thinking about HIV and AIDS.
24. Ensure that the Harassment Advisory Group has an openly-GLBT member.

ADMISSIONS

25. Research, through the Director of Admissions, “queer-friendly” open houses, college fairs, or other marketing outlets to promote Colby College and send representatives to appropriate venues.
26. Utilize a faculty/staff member to train professional staff, office staff, tour guides, student workers, alumni interviewers, and overnight hosts with regard to queer issues.
27. Revise the view book and website to de-center the normative majority student and to represent queer life on campus, highlighting queer resources and curricular offerings.
28. Provide queer-friendly rooms/hosts for overnight program.
29. Add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Admissions diversity statement.
30. Create a brochure for all prospective students which highlights queer resources at Colby.
31. Have queer-friendly publications in the Admissions reception area.
32. Include a statement of non-discrimination/civility/respect for first year chat room.
33. Invite openly queer faculty/students/staff to present at guidance counselor panel discussions, The Maine Event, etc.
34. Explore the possibility of adding a space to student admissions application to encourage self-identification of sexual orientation.
35. Develop a program in Student Financial Services to assist students who are having difficulty with parental financial support, once they identify their sexual orientation.

ALUMNI RELATIONS/DEVELOPMENT

36. Plan PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)/queer-related programs for alumni and family members.
37. Hold queer-issue workshops for all staff in Alumni, Development and Communications.
38. Encourage the Alumni College to address queer issues in curriculum and programming.
39. Continue existing events for queer alumni during Family Weekend and Reunion, and have openly queer alumni, staff, faculty, students and friends of the college hold workshops on current issues on these weekends.
40. Provide a significant piece in the Alumni magazine on Queer Task Force recommendations, and new developments in this area at Colby.
41. Create/develop queer alumni network to rebuild relationships and to expand internship opportunities for current students
42. Hold some regional alumni events in queer-friendly venues.

43. Solicit funding for queer-related initiatives, such as an endowed chair for Queer Studies.

ATHLETICS

44. Have the Director of Athletics work with the implementation committee to survey the coaching faculty regarding their view on homosexuality and homophobia in college athletics and at Colby, and use the information collected to develop and implement recommendations for improving the campus climate for queer athletes.

45. Consider, when hiring in the Athletics Department, whether the candidate has the ability to handle queer and other diversity issues.

46. Formulate a statement in the Athletics Department explicitly affirming the rights of queer athletes to be treated equally to majority students.

47. Include explicit information in the orientation of new coaches on the kinds of insensitivities that students report hearing/experiencing from coaches. Inform new coaches that such behaviors are strongly discouraged at Colby.

48. Inform the entire coaching staff of the kind of insensitive, inappropriate, heterosexist, or homophobic language and assumptions that students report hearing frequently from coaches. Encourage coaches both to avoid such behaviors and to be more inclusive in their language and assumptions.

49. Include in each coach's annual report a section on what steps he/she has taken to make his/her team more inclusive and welcoming to all students. In addition, the evaluations filled out by team members should include a question about the coach's treatment of queer students and other members of underrepresented groups.

50. Prepare a comprehensive guide to available resources related to homosexuality and homophobia in college athletics for distribution.

51. Start a peer-mentoring group for queer players, focused on underclass men and women.

52. Act to ensure that team cultures do not create and perpetuate heterosexism and homophobia.

53. Offer team leaders the same sorts of diversity training that COOT leaders, hall staff and other student leaders receive. Coaches must not undermine or minimize the importance of this training and should expect team captains to attend sessions and bring what they have learned to bear on their leadership of the team.

54. Ensure, through coaches, that locker room culture and conversation is not exclusive or targeting queers or others.

55. Investigate the ways that team culture outside of practice and playing fields affects queer students and campus social life.

BOOKSTORE

56. Continue to pursue opportunities to feature window displays, in-store displays, especially in conjunction with events, such as, Coming Out Day (Oct 11), Pride Week (April), and National Gay and Lesbian History Month (June).

57. Offer queer-themed Colby memorabilia, such as rainbow Colby tee shirts.
58. Explore expanding the stock in the Gay and Lesbian trade book section, in periodicals, and in the cards section.

CAREER SERVICES

59. Develop a map of the career services library indicating the location of queer-relevant resources, and put this information on the web.
60. Modify the career services web page to include links such as the ones listed in Appendix D.
61. Create a guide to finding queer friendly and/or queer relevant graduate programs. In addition to finding graduate programs in Queer Studies. The guide should assist students in locating departments in various disciplines that have a group or a significant individual conducting queer-relevant research.
62. Update the websites in the appendix and the Career Services library regularly.
63. Offer an annual workshop on being queer in the workplace and on matters related to anti-queer discrimination in the workplace.
64. Increase the number of internships and job listings with queer organizations.

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

65. Ensure new student orientation events acknowledge the presence, needs, interests, and concerns of queer and questioning students.
66. Continue diversity training to COOT leaders and COOTers. Ensure sexual orientation and gender issues are part of the focus of such programs.
67. Acknowledge during the Preview Program for international students and self-identified students of color that there are likely queer students among the participants, and provide information about what services are available. Also, part of orienting international students to the American context should include an explanation that the College does not condone discrimination against queer individuals.
68. Include, during training for student leaders in SGA, LEAP, Judicial and Appeals Boards, components to improve student leaders' awareness of diversity regarding sexual orientation and harassment issues.
69. Be certain First-year Supper Seminar programs recognize and are inclusive of different sexual orientations. Every year, queer issues and themes should be explored.
70. Include queer-related texts in first year reading assignments.
71. Encourage student leaders to include at least one senior week event designed for queer seniors and allies.
72. Offer a "lavender graduation" event or dinner and make available rainbow tassels to anyone who would like one.

73. Continue Hall Staff training that includes sensitivity to issues of sexual orientation. Require hall staff to program on matters related to queer life, issues, or events on campus,
74. Develop a policy in housing for dealing with queer-related roommate conflicts. This policy should require a meeting between the dean, the student or students involved, and a neutral third party.
75. Include an openly queer faculty/staff member in the faculty resident program, whenever possible.
76. Provide multicultural housing as an option for queer students.
77. Develop a brochure explaining what is available in services, activities, academics, and other resources of interest to queer students. This should be widely distributed, posted on the web, and easily accessible to anyone interested.
78. Link the DOS web page to queer-related information available on other campus web pages.
79. Ask chaplains to program for and/or reach out to queer students, bringing queer chapters of different denominations to campus, making sure that queer students feel welcome and able to pursue their spiritual needs in supportive environments.
80. Provide staff support and leadership training for The Bridge and related groups that struggle with organizational issues unrelated to their central missions.
81. Provide social life opportunities that are more welcoming for queer students. Look at the use of heterosexual themes in social programming which may seem exclusive. Such exclusively-themed events, coupled with the abuse of alcohol, combine to make the social scene for queer students and allies problematic. To improve this situation, provide training to student programmers.

HEALTH CENTER AND COUNSELING SERVICES

82. Provide informational sensitivity training to Health Center and Counseling staff on queer issues. For example, providers must recognize that sexuality cannot be determined by a person's appearance and must not require queer students to work against heterosexual assumptions to receive proper care.
83. Review the intake and history questions used by caregivers to eliminate any assumptions of heterosexuality. Providers should explain why they ask women about pregnancy.
84. Require caregivers to consistently offer an HIV test, since they consistently offer pregnancy tests. Caregivers should not discourage students who request HIV tests.
85. Explore the possibility of anonymous (not only confidential) HIV testing.
86. Reexamine information on sexuality and its placement on display racks in the Health Center
87. Update and improve the Health Center website, to include:
 - a. Revision of the AIDS testing page under crisis information.
 - b. Information about the availability of dental dams on the Women's Health Issues page.
 - c. Replacing the word gay with queer throughout.

88. Continue to provide counseling support group for those dealing with issues surrounding sexual orientation.
89. Offer an ongoing, staff-led coming out discussion group through counseling services.
90. Develop a visible public statement that healthcare providers are queer-friendly.
91. Provide easy access to (and keep adequate stocks of) all forms of birth control and safe sex-related items, including condoms, dental dams, and latex gloves.

PUBLICATIONS

92. Develop clear and consistent definitions for “queer”, “LGBTTIQ”, “Diversity”, “Multicultural”, and “Intercultural” and include them in all relevant printed and Internet materials.
93. Ensure that all publications reflect the presence of queer people at Colby. Representations of campus life, like photographs, press releases, notices of events and speakers, recruitment and publicity materials, and magazine stories, should acknowledge the presence of queer people and groups as full members of the community.
94. Provide Communications staff with training on issues surrounding the representation of queer people/issues.
95. Provide awareness training for all photographers, in-house or contracted, before they are able to photograph campus events.

STUDY ABROAD

96. Offer awareness training on queer issues to study abroad office staff and program directors.
97. Provide queer-friendly home stay and apartment guides.
98. Provide information about queer-related services that are offered in any city where Colby students regularly attend off-campus academic programs in the OCS office.
99. Allow students to attend queer studies programs and enroll in queer studies courses for credit, as long as academic rigor is held equal to that of other programs. Staff should make themselves aware of such offerings throughout the programs Colby students attend.
100. Provide locally specific descriptions of safety issues, social and programmatic offerings, and information about the cultural environment for queer students studying in particular locations abroad.
101. Include questions on the study abroad re-entry to Colby survey about the environment for queer students. For example, the survey might ask, "Based on what you and/or your peers heard, saw, or experienced on your program how welcome do you think it is for queer students at _____?" Make the results of the re-entry survey available on the web or in hard copy for any Colby community member.
102. Provide guidelines to the Registrar's office concerning credit acquisition when no “comparable course” is available for programs abroad.