

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## LGBTQ RESOURCE CENTER



## One Time Funding Request for FY 2021 - 2022

Programs – Increasing Student Involvement and Learning

## **LGBTQ RESOURCE CENTER ONE-TIME REQUEST FY21**

### **Programming**

The LGBTQ Resource Center (LGBTQRC) at University of Houston is dedicated to offering services and programs that provide support, resources and a safe space for LGBTQ (Q – Questioning or Queer) people on campus, and create a campus environment of LGBTQ acceptance and affirmation. The LGBTQ Resource Center aims to contribute to student success for LGBTQ students at the University of Houston, working in partnership with other offices and departments across UH and in the surrounding community. According to UH Wellness's Annual Surveys approximately 7-8% of students identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQ).

Over the years SFAC funding allowed us to hire student employees, a Diversity Education Coordinator, and an Office Coordinator. That funding has allowed us to greatly increase our impact on campus and develop into one of the most comprehensive LGBTQRC in the nation. We have depended heavily on inconsistent sources of funding from donations and grants. This year (FY20) we will benefit greatly from the one-time funding that SFAC approved. Since, we are to the point where the donations do not reach the level of demand in programming, advertising, and overall functioning of the Center which has increased substantially over the years, we are requesting these funds again.

The LGBTQ Resource Center would like to request funding from SFAC for programming and advertising in the amount of \$14,000. We would use the additional funds for three of our newer programs, Lavender Graduation, Sexuality and Gender Acceptance (SAGA) Squad, and Sexual Health / Sexual Violence Prevention and Education.

### **Lavender Graduation**

We began the Lavender Graduation event in 2015 and it was an overwhelming success. We expected about 50 attendees but over 65 people showed up and we had standing room only. By Spring 2019 the event had grown to over 200 and due to high demand, we had to add a December 2018 ceremony. With the large increase in participation and doubling the number of ceremonies our costs have more than tripled over the years.

Lavender Graduation is an annual ceremony conducted on numerous campuses to honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and ally students and to acknowledge their achievements and contributions to the University. Because LGBTQ students commonly struggle with additional obstacles working their way through college, it is important to recognize their unique accomplishments. It is a symbol to them that UH recognizes and welcomes their existence on campus, and values them for who they are, building their confidence as they go out into the world. Also, some students are much more connected to the LGBTQ Resource Center or an LGBTQ student organization than with their college. The Lavender Graduation

gives them a chance to celebrate and be recognized by the people that mean the most to them. To the younger, less adjusted LGBTQ students on campus, the existence of this event can help them feel better about themselves and their future.

### **SAGA Squad – Ambassador/Leadership Program**

The SAGA Squad Program began three years ago with no additional funding. SAGA Squad is a student ambassador/leadership program for the LGBTQIA+ and ally students. Participants represent the Center, plan outreach initiatives and events, create a welcoming environment for all in the LGBTQRC, and learn leadership skills such as public speaking, facilitation, strategic planning, confidence, accountability and other skills beneficial for their future.

Students set and demonstrate leadership development goals such as:

- Responding to homophobia/transphobia
- Facilitating discussion groups on topics of exploring identity and intersectionality
- Engaging in community building by collaborating with non-LGBTQ specific student organizations and academic departments
- Practicing conflict management between team members
- Speaking in public as an official representative of the Center
- Learning about issues outside of their personal backgrounds and experiences such as racism, disability, and HIV status

SAGA contributes significantly to the growth and outreach of the Center to the campus and Houston community. We estimate that their efforts amount to over 500 additional people annually that are educated about LGBTQ+ issues or supported by the programs of the LGBTQRC. They do this in many ways including events open to the public, tabling, classroom visits, student organization visits, and group discussions.

The SAGA program also propels students to expand their personal leadership roles and to advocate for LGBTQ issues campus wide. One SAGA member became an officer of the United Greek Council overseeing a total of six UH fraternities and sororities. This student advocated for and implemented LGBTQ ally training for the entire United Greek Council and used their (singular pronoun) platform to educate their peers on inclusive practices related to gender identity and expression.

Another SAGA member had a budding interest in politics and after some leadership training with SAGA, ran for Student Government Association (SGA). She became chief of staff and started an LGBTQ Task Force in SGA. This year she is the president of SGA.

Finally, a SAGA member used his position to market and promote UH's new gender-inclusive housing community called Gender Diversity Living Learning Community. He increased the membership

from two to over twenty in just one year. He also became Vice President for UH's LGBTQ inclusive student organization, GLOBAL.

### **Sexual Health & Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Programming**

Since the formation of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Committee the LGBTQRC has been represented on that committee and is committed to including this type of programming as part of UH's overall commitment to abiding by Title IX requirements and doing wide-spread prevention and education throughout the campus. Previously, the LGBTQRC did an online awareness campaign that cost about \$165 and did not have the type of impact that we had hoped for. We then brought to campus a sex education couple and the feedback from the students clearly indicates that they are hungry for this type of information. The couple's program was engaging, humorous, positive, educational, and included information about consent, communication, healthy relationships, and risks of alcohol consumption.

The student feedback for this event include:

As a result of this program...

94% stated they are better equipped to engage in conversations about sex,

95% stated they are better equipped to engage in conversations about consent,

100% were able to define "enthusiastic consent",

Comments include: I feel more informed, glad you came to UH, much respect, make this an annual event, love the openness, appreciate the balance, forward and honest...

Since receiving such positive feedback and seeing first-hand how interested the students were in the information presented, the LGBTQRC has been committed to providing *effective* Sexual Health & Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Programming every year. We brought a gender-diverse sex educator in Spring 2019 with the same positive results.

### **Advertising**

An FY19 survey and focus group indicated a need for more visibility on campus. We agree that there should be more LGBTQ representation on campus in general, and more students need to be aware of the LGBTQ Resource Center's existence. We have done our best to promote our programs and services in many cost saving ways, but to be visible on a campus this size intentional use of funds is necessary. We would like to rent campus bus-stop panels on a regular basis as we believe this will have a large impact, but we do not want to divert funds from other advertising (as we had to do this year) in order to continue using the bus-stop panels.

**Breakdown for One Time Funding FY21:**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Annual Funding</b>
Lavender Graduation	\$5,000
SAGA Squad	\$3,500
Sexual Health & Violence Prevention	\$ 3,500
Advertising	\$ 2000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
Admin Charge (6% )	\$ 840
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,840</b>

We would like to make SFAC aware that the LGBTQ Resource Center will continue to partner with other units, departments, and programs within the university community to offer our students and the UH community the best in terms of programming and services, and will demonstrate the utmost in fiscal responsibility upon the granting of our one-time funding request.