

LGBT Resource Center Celebrates 15 Years of Changing the Culture at UC San Diego

Since opening its doors in 1999, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center has offered comfort, community to thousands of students, faculty and staff



In the early 1990s, concerned staff, faculty and student activists sought to establish a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego. In 1999, UC San Diego finally opened the LGBT Resource Office—the last campus to do so in the UC system. Fifteen years later, the [Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center](#) at UC San Diego, one of the largest LGBT resource centers in the nation, celebrates a milestone anniversary—a visible presence that enhances a sense of connection and community among faculty, staff, students, alumni and the San Diego community

Shaun Travers, campus diversity officer and director of the LGBT Resource Center, has been with the center for nearly 14 years. He was the first full-time staff professional, and is credited with growing the original two-room, 300-square-foot space into a facility that has

tripled in size.

“This is my dream job,” Travers noted. “I am so proud of the center’s public spaces, internship program and continuous focus on policy change. The LGBT Resource Center, together with the campus community, has played a role in changing the culture at UC San Diego. There is an institutional commitment here, with a direct impact on the campus.”

UC San Diego’s LGBT Resource Center is a diverse, open and public space for all members of the university community to explore issues relating to sexual and gender identities, practices and politics. It develops student leadership, builds workplace equity, promotes academic research and provides resources. The center challenges existing definitions of variant genders and sexualities by engaging in community building both on and off campus.

“I appreciate the work, the support and the impact that the LGBT Resource Center has made on our campus climate and campus members. Congratulations to Shaun Travers and all of the people who have contributed to its success as we celebrate the LGBT Center’s 15th anniversary,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, who joined students, faculty and staff along with the broader LGBT community and elected officials March 30 at an event that observed the center’s 15 years on campus.



One focus of the LGBT Resource Center’s anniversary is on the experiences of transgender women of color. The center’s yearlong milestone celebration launched last April with an event featuring transgender advocate, writer and New York Times bestselling author Janet Mock.

“Fifteen years ago we had the ‘T’ for transgender in our mission and messaging,” Travers said. “We were a part of that national movement. Because there is a lack of knowledge regarding transgender people in general, today most of the LGBT Resource Center’s emphasis is on transgender programming, policy and practice related issues. For the next decade, we will be focused on the transgender community. The pace of change is amazingly slow.”

He added, “Transgender women of color—this is the most marginalized community. There are a lot of issues related to this struggle, and we are here to help as a welcoming resource.”

 Image

LGBT Center and staff with transgender advocate and author Janet Mock

Over the past 15 years, thousands of students, faculty and staff have found the LGBT Resource Center a comfortable and friendly place to spend time, including Cara Dessert, a 2005 UC San Diego graduate who is executive director of Immigration Equality, a nonprofit that works to advance equal immigration rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive community.

“I grew up in a rural community where I was the only out LGBT person I knew. It was isolating and sometimes scary,” she said. “On my first day at UC San Diego, I went to the LGBT Resource Center and soon met a group of LGBT students like me. The LGBT Center gave me my first safe place to call home and a community that knew and accepted all the parts of who I was.”

Jeff Dodge, from the class of 2002, added, “While I was at UC San Diego, I was AS President and one of the founders of the AS Alliance, working to build support for the LGBT community across campus. One of my best memories was the work we were able to do with the LGBT Resource Center.”

Identified by its new heart-shaped logo, the LGBT Resource Center at UC San Diego is located on the second floor in a building between Mandeville Center and the original Student Center. The center provides opportunities for campus community members to reserve spaces for meetings, classes,

group dialogues and more. These spaces include the Family Room, the large, main room of the Resource Center; the Conference Room, for smaller meetings; and the Heritage Room, a more intimate space for small group discussions, interviews and confidential meetings.

The LGBT Resource Center falls under the purview of Becky Pettit, vice chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. “Our campus community centers build community among a diverse population of students, faculty and staff members. Each provides a forum to increase awareness of social issues, encourage dialogue, build community and improve retention.”



2014 Rainbow Graduation

The LGBT Resource Center will conclude its 15th anniversary celebration with Out and Proud Week, April 20-24. The annual event presents the largest opportunity for community visibility on the UC San Diego campus. It is a weeklong group celebration and private reflection on the achievements of LGBT-identified students, staff, faculty and allies. It is also a time for public awareness and discussion of current LGBT issues on the state and national levels. To volunteer for Out and Proud Week, contact lgtrcvolunteers@gmail.com. To learn more about the [LGBT Resource Center's history and milestones](#).

The LGBT Resource Center can make a tremendous impact on the lives of students at UC San Diego. As it celebrates its 15th year, the center is encouraging individuals to make a difference with their gifts. Consider giving online to the [Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender \(LGBT\) Resource Center \(3827\)](#) or visit give.to.ucsd.edu and key in “LGBT” to donate to scholarships and other related funds to assist LGBT students.

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