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URI LGBTQ community to screen It Gets Better At URI: Coming Out for Change video 2011

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URI LGBTQ community to screen *It Gets Better* At URI: Coming Out for Change video, Oct. 5

KINGSTON, R.I. – September 29, 2011 –In response to the rash of suicides by lesbian, gay, and transgender youth during the fall of 2010, the national *It Gets Better* campaign, www.itgetsbetter.org, was launched. Two months later, it became a global movement, leading to than 10,000 videos viewed more than 35 million times.

Inspired by a desire to instill hope in others, members of the URI LBTQ Women's Group have produced a campus wide version of the It Gets Better video, *It Gets Better at URI: Coming Out for Change*. Their purpose has been to help those struggling with their sexual or gender identity, to identify other members of the LGBTQ community and their allies with whom they can seek support as well as to provide examples of how URI can create a more welcoming and affirming environment.

Eighty-five URI students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni came together to share their moving stories of struggle and perseverance, discrimination and compassion. The film provides personal accounts of what it means to be an ally or member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning community. The video, which runs about 40 minutes, will be screened Wednesday, Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. in Edwards Auditorium, 64 Upper College Road, Kingston. It is free and open to the public.

"The video is really compelling," says Betty-Jo Cugini Greene, supervisor of new media in URI's Department of Communications and Marketing, who helped edit the film. "It's about people sharing their personal stories to try to really make a difference in other people's lives."

"The film illustrates how URI is working toward ending discrimination and intolerance against the LGBTQ community," says Holly Nichols, a clinical counselor at URI's Counseling Center and co-advisor of the LBTQ Women's group.

A discussion led by four students who are members of the LBTQ

Women's Group will follow the video. After the discussion, the URI LGBTIQ2 Alumni and Friends Chapter and the URI LBTQ Women's Group will co-host a reception in the URI Alumni Center.

For questions about the screening or the LBTQ Women's Group, contact Holly Nichols at hjnichols@uri.edu. For questions about the reception, contact Jess Raffaele at 401-874-4604 or jraffaele@advance.uri.edu.