1994

James Madison University Seeks Safe Zone Project

Jim Eby

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/safe-zone-dated-documents

Recommended Citation
Eby, Jim, "James Madison University Seeks Safe Zone Project" (1994). Dated Documents. Paper 7,
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/safe-zone-dated-documents/7

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the History of the Safe Zone Project at URI at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dated Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.
Dear University Member,

Thank you for requesting a Safe Zone sticker and showing your support for lesbians, gays and bisexuals at the University. The intended message of the symbol is that the person displaying this symbol is one who will be non-judgmental, understanding and trustworthy should anyone need help, advice, or just someone to talk to.

The pink triangle was used by the Nazis to label gay men and the black triangle was used to label lesbians (and others deemed antisocial). These symbols have been adopted as a symbol of gay and lesbian identity and self-esteem. The green circle, the opposite of the familiar red circle with a slash, signifies that it is okay for these issues to be discussed in the area where the symbol is displayed.

Please let us know the kind of responses you get to the sticker, positive and negative. We are particularly concerned with stickers being defaced or removed. Your feedback is welcomed, and can be sent to the Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia, c/o Affirmative Action Office, 201 Carlotti Administration Building.

Again, thanks for your support as we try to make this campus a welcoming place for all members of the University community.

Sincerely,

Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia
Dear [Name],

Thanks for your reply and offer. My mailing address is:

James A. Eby
218 Kezez Hall
English Department
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

I think I told you that I'm a faculty member here. I'm in the English Department. In fact I'm the Director of our graduate programs. There aren't three of us - we along with another man here in this department and an associate director of residence life - who are interested in seeing what we could do here to set something like what you have up. This is a very homophobic campus (the students, not the administration) and I know from my own students that being gay here is a miserable experience. I have had a number of former undergraduate men students come back to visit after they have graduated, and, now that I'm publicly out, to tell me that they are gay and what it was like here as a student. There is a student gay group, but whenever they try to hold an event their posters are always ripped down by the next day, etc. And I hear some of these guys say "I just wish I'd known I could have gone to you to talk." Well, I was in the closet, too, during most of my years here, and I couldn't talk to them either. Now I not only want to be visible as a positive role model but to help whenever I can because I know how it hurts to be afraid to be yourself and to think you'll never find anyone else like yourself. Been there, I'm sure we all have.

But that's enough of me prattling on about the obvious. Thanks again for offering the materials you have. I'll probably be in touch one day again for advice after I've seen exactly what you did and how we think we could translate it into something that would work here.

Take care,

Jim Eby

---

[Signature]

[Address]

[Phone number]

[Notes on image]