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## URI Makes Top 50 LGBT-Friendly

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By Linda Borg

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## URI earns high marks for its gay-friendly policies

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island has been named as one of the top 50 LGBT-Friendly universities in the nation by Campus Pride, a national group that works to make colleges more friendly to gay students.

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island has been named as one of the top 50 LGBT-Friendly universities in the nation by Campus Pride, a national group that works to make colleges more friendly to gay students.

Brown University also made the top-50 list.

Campus Pride ranks schools on a five-star continuum of progress for LGBT-Friendly policies, programs and practices. URI received a five out of five star overall rating, as well as five out of five stars in nine of the 10 categories measured, with 4.5 out of five stars for one.

The top marks are for LGBT inclusion policies, support and institutional commitment, student life, housing and residential life, campus safety, counseling and health and recruitment and retention efforts. The second-best mark was for LGBT academic life at URI.

"I'm very pleased with this national recognition and proud of all the work that is being done here. It shows our success in building a safe and inviting community in which every member is welcomed, supported, and valued," said URI President David M. Dooley. "This is essential to our University's identity and our mission."

Dooley said that the new LGBTIQ Center under construction on Upper College Road further shows the University's support.

The Campus Pride listing is based in research on policy, program and practice and is conducted for and by LGBT experts in higher education. Its used annually to show the status of LGBT life on campus.

"This is truly a testament to the administration's leadership and hundreds of people on and off-campus who have worked so diligently to improve our policy, procedure, practice, and campus life for LGBTIQ people," said LGBTIQ Center Director Annie Russell, "Many thanks go to the legions of folks around the URI campus who have worked to make our institution a better place for everyone. We are looking forward to having the new facility to continue to grow our programs and services for URI and the surrounding community in decades to come."

Designed to give URI's LGBTIQ community a strong identity, the single-story, stone and clapboard building will have a veranda running along the front of the center and plans call for its roof to feature ornamental plants and flowers. It will have a multipurpose room with a capacity of about 50, a conference room for about 20 people, a group counseling room and a student lounge. There will be offices for the director, three staff members and student staff members. The center is part of URI's Office of Community, Equity and Diversity.

The current staff of the LGBTIQ Center located in Adams Hall has developed and uses a strategic planning process to build and track the success of its programs and initiatives. The center started 27 new programs, services, groups or initiatives in 2011-2012 and added more than 50 in fall 2012 resulting in more than 75 initiatives within just two years. This year the center has hosted more than 100 programs and participation is growing. The URI programs and approaches have been adopted by more than 15 institutions nationwide and one internationally.

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