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The Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and  
Homophobia

Gender and Sexuality Center

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1992

## Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia Pamphlet

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## Homophobia

is the irrational fear of homosexuality and the hatred, disgust, and prejudice that fear brings. Oppression of lesbians and gay men, as well as bisexual women and men, is based on homophobia.

## Heterosexism

is homophobia that has been institutionalized. The assumption that being heterosexual is inherently better or more moral than being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is, like racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, based on false assumptions.

Heterosexism awards power to members of the dominant group (heterosexuals) and denies privilege to members of the subordinate group (lesbians, gay men, and bisexual women and men).

## Homophobia and heterosexism

clearly oppress lesbians, gay men, and bisexual individuals through acts of verbal and physical harassment and collective actions which result in invisibility, invalidation, and discrimination.

But homophobia and heterosexism also hurt heterosexuals by helping maintain rigid definitions of "appropriate" sex-role behavior and gender relationships. In the same way that racism is a white person's problem and sexism is a man's problem, homophobia and heterosexism are a heterosexual's problem.

### University of Rhode Island Anti-discrimination policy:

"The University of Rhode Island prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, handicap, or sexual orientation, and discrimination against disabled and Vietnam era veterans in the recruitment, admission or treatment of students; the recruitment, hiring or treatment of faculty and staff; and the operation of its activities and programs."

The Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism was formed in 1991.

This group of students, staff and faculty, of all sexual orientations, are working together to address the concerns of lesbian, gay and bisexual people at the University.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the meetings of this group.

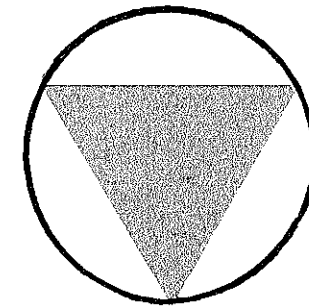
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of Languages, 792-4705.

The Committee thanks Gwenneth Rae for her time and energy preparing this brochure.

# The Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism



AFFIRMS

*President Carothers  
STATEMENT,*

*"Our goal within this community, however, is not merely to avoid discrimination.*

*Rather, it is our goal to respect the dignity of each individual and to affirm the right of each member of this community to lead his or her life free of fear or harassment.*

*Sexual differences, like other differences, are important aspects of URI's rich cultural heritage."*

(Memorandum, March 2, 1992)

## A VISION OF OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY

### RESPECTING DIVERSITY OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

1. All policy statements of the University would include sexual preference as a non-discriminatory class.
  2. Language of announcements and other public documents mentioning couples and families would use terminology that was inclusive, i.e. partners, co-habitators, parents as opposed to mother, husband.
  3. Same sex couples and families and non-married heterosexual partners would receive the same benefits as heterosexual couples and families, i.e. health care, memberships in gym, etc.
  4. University members would support state legislation to eliminate discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals.
  5. An on-going series of programs on lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues would be publicized throughout the state to show active support.
  6. Education positively reflecting diversity would be an emphasis across the curriculum. Course content would include the lifestyles, concerns and contributions of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people whenever applicable.
  7. Lesbian and gay groups would receive funding and recognition at the same level as other groups of similar purpose, i.e. gay, lesbian and bisexual organizations, gay fraternity, if desired, etc.
  8. Campus entertainment would include programming of openly gay speakers, musicians, comedians and others of value to the university community.
  9. Women or men holding hands, walking with an arm around each other, or otherwise showing affectionate regard for each other would be just as ordinary and acceptable as it is now for heterosexual couples on campus.
  10. Just as a person is not identified as being heterosexual, no individual would be identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual in an article or written material unless that information was pertinent to the purpose of the writing and such identification was agreed to by the individual.
  11. Freshman orientation would include information on lesbian, gay, and bisexual groups and activities as well as those for other minorities. This information would be embedded in all material printed or reported on campus to assure the normalness of these endeavors as a part of any campus community.
- Non-discriminatory policies would be emphasized at the point in orientation when all other issues of law and order are discussed (drinking on campus, rape issues, etc.)

12. Any discriminatory behavior on campus including harassment would be vigorously addressed.

COMMITTEE TO ELIMINATE HOMOPHOBIA AND HETEROSEXISM