

## B-GLAD holds diversity dialogue

Workshop includes faculty, students and staff to create create understanding and allies

by Bo Dean  
OutWilmington.com

Celebrating its first successful year, the Human Resources office at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington had the 6th Project B-GLAD training. The 3-hour workshop, designed to examine ways to foster healthy dialogue and acceptance of sexual orientation issues, has in its short tenure developed relationships on campus furthering the University's mission to enhance diversity.

"Over 100 faculty, students and staff have engaged in the process to become allies to date, and many more have requested to be a part of this effort," Says Liz Grimes, director of Staff Development and Training for Human Resources. Many said the experience changed their perceptions in dramatic ways.

"Going through the training helped me to begin to understand the suffering and pain LGBTs have endured because of other people's responses to their sexuality. I left the training a true ally," Said Linda MacCrae, Assistant Director of Admissions.

Project B-GLAD, based on well established programs like *Project Safe*, *Safe Zone*, and *Ally Project* at schools across the country, was unanimously approved by the UNCW executive cabinet and signed into effect by the Chancellor on National Coming Out Day, 2001.

The acronym B-GLAD stands for Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians and Allies for Diversity and it's

with this ally creation process that this program is primarily concerned. Becoming a Project B-GLAD "ally" simply means to be an identifiable person on campus who is willing to provide an accepting and open place for LGBT students, staff and faculty. The identification is done with the Project B-GLAD emblem that is hung on the individual's door or workstation.

Project B-GLAD is designed so the individual has a unique opportunity to hear from people sharing personal experience, hear factual data, and then talk about his or her own issues and concepts with others in a safe and supportive environment. "Characteristic of all great endeavors, I learned just as much as I taught," said attendee and assistant Dean of Students, Kate Temoney, "The open conversations and willingness to both understand and be understood exemplified what I expect in a higher education setting. The success of the program provides a wonderful blueprint for future topics that we may talk about, but do not truly discuss because of controversy or unawareness."

"I was very excited to see that Project B-GLAD was endorsed and supported by the university. I participated in the training because I believe that all students (as well as faculty and staff) need advocates so that they will be successful at UNCW," said UNCW Teaching Fellows Director and ally, KB Benzaquin. "Since my training, I have had several students come to me for support and assistance. I believe that this program really works. I'd like to see this type of training developed and implemented for other areas of diversity on campus. One can never be too enlightened!"

And implementing this successful program to

teach and to aid the UNCW community about diversity is in the works. "This actually was a first step in building modules for awareness raising about a host of diversity issues on our campus," said Project B-Glad Committee Chair, LS "Bo" Dean. "While we focused on LGBTs issues in this because there was a real and defined need, our committee always saw the potential for this to go into different areas of diversity. What a wonderful opportunity to do this kind of education regarding a number of different areas of diversity as we learn about each other in community."

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