



## Message from the President

### Michael Sam, Social Change and Inclusiveness Hugh Crethar, PhD

On Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> of this year, the SEC Defensive Lineman of the Year Michael Sam made the public announcement that he is gay. His announcement, prior to the NFL Draft, was met with immediate, supportive and positive response that was nearly universal. Numerous teammates from the University of Missouri, leadership within his university, a number of NFL players, and the head of the NFL Players Association all shared public support of Sam's choice to come out as well as emphasized his welcome amongst NFL players. The only real exception to the warm response came from anonymous coaches, scouts and general managers. Sam's case

is a clear reminder that despite rapidly advancing cultural acceptance of diversity in affectional orientation, workplace bigotry continues to endure. This highlights the need for a Federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act to be passed. According to the Pew Research Center, a large majority of Americans believe lesbians and gays face between "some" and "a lot" of discrimination in the workplace.

Michael Sam's choice to enter the draft as an openly gay man does break ground by directly and publicly confronting and highlighting the ongoing existence of workplace discrimination (*continued next page*)

## Table of Contents

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>NEW AND NOTEWORTHY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PRACTICE MATTERS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STATE CHAPTER NEWS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>GUIDELINES FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS</b>	<b>14</b>

for people of varying affectional orientation. With the rapid advance of marriage equality in the U.S. and around the world, it isn't shocking that a segment of our society continues to focus on how Sam's orientation will purportedly disturb "the heartbeat of the

locker room" and cause "distractions" for his team and how he may not be "manly enough" for a football player. Sam's strong and effective play on the football field and his interactions with his teammates, who



had known of his orientation for a year negate these opinions.



Much like others who have come before him – Jackie Robinson as the first Black Major League Baseball player; Fritz Pollard and Bobby Marshall, the first Black players in NFL football; Jason Collins as the first openly gay player in the NBA and Brittany Griner, the first openly lesbian player in the WNBA – Michael Sam continues the tradition of breaking ground for the acceptance of diversity in sports as well as the embracing of affectional diversity in our society at large.

I see the brave, important and pioneering step that Michael Sam has taken in coming out as he recently did as key to highlighting an issue of the need to continue battling for equitable treatment of all people in our society. Sam’s announcement comes at a time when views on affectional orientation and marriage equality have been undergoing huge changes of their own. In the past decade, 16 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have allowed same sex marriage, including seven states in 2013. For the first time last year, a majority of Americans (51 percent) said they favored same-sex marriage, according to a Pew survey. As counseling professionals, we need to understand that life contexts are

key variables in the ethical treatment of all those whom we serve. It is therefore imperative that all counselors stand for equitable access to rights and privileges for people of all affectional orientations.

Further, as counseling professionals, it is our ethical duty to maintain the focus of our energies on what is in the best interest of our clients and those in their communities. Our field is rooted in a wellness perspective, where we focus primarily on the holistic needs of those we serve and on working with them towards goals based in their cultures and contexts. This perspective requires counselors to take an inclusive stance in our work as opposed to one that is exclusive.

Finally, on a different note, I want to take a brief moment to thank the ALGBTIC Board members, committee and taskforce members for all the wonderful work that they have been doing throughout this year. I am particularly excited about the activities that were held at ACA, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual 5K Rainbow Run and 1 Mile Walk, as well as the upcoming inaugural ALGBTIC Conference in New Orleans this fall. There are also many who do important work quietly behind the scenes, such as our wonderful newsletter editors, those working on bylaw adjustments, developing a Policy and Procedures Manual, developing a strong ally movement within our circles, and those taking action to defend those we serve against exclusionary laws and regulations around the globe. I am honored to serve among you all and was pleased to see those who could make it to Honolulu.



Mahalo nui loa,  
Hugh C. Crethar

2013-2014 ALGBTIC President

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*Image source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/ravens/ravens-insider/bal-source-ravens-met-with-draft-prospect-michael-sam-20140222,0,184761.story>*



## New and Noteworthy

### **Come Celebrate with ALGBTIC in New Orleans –**

By Catherine Roland, Conference Chair

Since this conference is built around YOU and your needs as counselors, mental health and education professionals, graduate students, and individuals who work with our community, I'd like to share some of the titles of presentations that will be available during the event.

**Friday, September 19 – Full Conference Day of Workshops, Roundtables and Poster Presentations and Featured 3-hour intensives** (*there an extra charge for these session, see the registration form please*):

**Intensive I** 9am-12pm **Dr. Michael Kocet, former Chair of the ACA Ethics Code Revision Task Force, Past-President of ALGBTIC.**

#### *Integrating the New ACA Code of Ethics into Practice with LGBTQ Clients*

This interactive workshop/presentation will examine how the newly released *2014 ACA Code of Ethics* can be integrated into counseling practice in a variety of settings, with LGBTQ clients and students. With special emphasis on issues of spirituality, we will explore the relationship between spirituality and religion and the lived experiences of LGBTQ clients and student. Discussion will focus on boundary crossing in the LGBTQ community, the role of values in the therapeutic process, social media, and other current topics that may impact ethical practice. The presentation will involve case studies, discussion, and small group exercises designed to foster deeper understanding among participants. We will highlight the key changes to the *2014 ACA Code of Ethics*, and how the Code can be a useful tool in guiding ethical practice, in our quest to practice competently as an LGBTQ professional.

**Intensive II** 1:30 – 4:30 **Dr. Barbara Herlihy, well-known author, mentor and leader.**

#### *Conflicts between Personal and Professional Values: An Update on Legal, Ethical and Professional Responses to the Issue*

This interactive workshop/presentation will focus on the issues that have arisen out of the court cases where counselors and counseling students have refused to counsel LGBTQ clients on relationship issues, among others, due to the counselor's or student's religious beliefs. The cases, legislative actions, and how the new *ACA Code of Ethics* has responded, will be discussed. Interactively, we will share how we can respond to colleagues, students and supervisees, regardless of work setting, who are struggling between personal or professional issues. Sometimes being "intolerant of intolerance" is difficult, as it can be viewed value-laden, and at time generates a reaction that we are imposing our own values of inclusion and acceptance on others. We will use case studies, role plays, and small group exercises as we explore the best ways in which to navigate the rocky road toward true openness and ethical counseling, based on real cases that have paved the way in the past few years.



**Saturday, September 20 - An all-day workshop day, with a luncheon. Speakers will be announced shortly on the beginning Opening Session and the luncheon.**

**We have over 90 workshop, roundtable, and poster offering for you! Below are just a few of the topics over the two-day conference, please see these teasers:**

- The Influence of Societal Expectations on How Same-Sex Couples Define Gender Roles and Relationship Satisfaction
- Advocating for School Transformation: Creating Agents of Change for Safer Schools
- LGBQ College Women & Sexual Violence Prevention: Student Campus Climate Experience and Bystander Intervention
- Forbidden Conversations: Sex-positive Counseling with Younger and Older LGBT clients
- LGB Persons Living with Chronic Illness/or disability (CID): Research, Counseling and Social Justice Implications
- I'm an Athlete, I'm Sorry: Discussion of Stereotypes and Apologetic Behavior in Female Athletes
- Counseling Gay Men of Color: Understanding Dating, Sexual Risk-taking, and Microaggressions through Social Media
- Promoting Clarity, Connection and Compassion: Counseling LGBT Families Using Developmental Relational Counseling
- One Less Lipstick Lesbian: Exploring the Self-identification and Experience of Masculine-of-Center Black Lesbians
- Spirituality as Part of Cultural Competence: Ethical Dimensions of Working with GLBTQQ Clients
- Work, Work, Work: Career Choices, Challenges and Celebrations of Lesbians and Gay Men
- A Red-Ribbon Alert: HIV in 2014



The potential for Continuing Ed Hours is a total of 12-14 for the two days. The networking possibilities at the inaugural conference are unlimited. The joy of spending time in the great City of New Orleans is unsurpassed.

For further information please contact: Catherine Roland, [caroland@gru.edu](mailto:caroland@gru.edu)

Jane Rheineck, ALGBTIC President –elect, at  
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Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler!! “Let the Good Times Roll!!”



## Practice Matters

### **Blue in a red state: One program's attempt to promote diversity in an aversive climate** Douglas Knutson and Julie M. Koch

Any child who has played with clay knows that a small speck of blue in a large ball of red is nothing to shed tears over. A few moments of manipulation are enough to resolve the pesky blue problem without changing the overall appearance of the red clay. However, this trivial metaphor drops its playful trappings when applied to actual human lives. In areas where red anti-LGBTI sentiments exist, blue lives are regularly swallowed up and, in some cases, snuffed out. The same can be said for LGBTI oriented counseling programs and services nationwide that run counter to the political or academic climate in which they are located.

This article is our attempt to examine one such group, the Counseling and Counseling Psychology programs at Oklahoma State University (OSU), located in rural Oklahoma. OSU's main campus in Stillwater is over an hour's drive from either of the state's urban centers, Tulsa and Oklahoma City. While organizations like Oklahomans for Equality and Cimarron Alliance have opened community centers in these major cities, the Counseling program at OSU is geographically isolated from such groups and, therefore, faces the unique challenges of maintaining a diverse program in an aversive setting alone. In this article, we will establish the political and university climate in which OSU's Counseling program is located, examine the program's focus on diversity, and discuss some of the unique challenges and opportunities that this disjointedness presents.

#### Statewide Values

In early November 2013, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin ordered Oklahoma National Guard facilities to stop processing marriage benefits for all married couples in Oklahoma (Krehbiel, 2013). This move on the governor's part was an effort to avoid

granting benefits to same-sex married couples in compliance with an order from the Pentagon. Her actions won her national attention on shows like the Colbert Report, but this was not the first time Oklahoma was thrust into the spotlight over its anti-LGBTI politics (Luippold, 2013). State Representative Sally Kern is notorious for her comments equating homosexuals with terrorists (Branson, 2010).

Few people know about the deeper impact that anti-gay political theatrics have had on LGBTI people in the state. Health services for LGBTI individuals in Oklahoma have been stifled substantially. When a government agency funded an LGBTQ21 Summit in 2012 for mental health providers to obtain education on treatment and services for LGBTI individuals, the backlash left a lasting mark. Following the event, State Rep. Sally Kern pushed U.S. Rep. James Lankford to launch an investigation that left agencies like Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services understandably resistant to openly offering funds or services to LGBTI people (Keyes, 2013).

Located in the heart of the state, Oklahoma State University is hemmed in by this aversive climate and periodically succumbs to the pressures applied by its surroundings and leadership. Overall, the university allows individual departments to establish their own policies in regard to diversity. However, past leaders have made some visible policy decisions that come across as lukewarm in regard to LGBTI issues. For example, when funds were provided by two donors for an LGBTI chaired professorship, the title of the chair was changed to Counseling Psychology *Diversity* Professor (emphasis added).

Finally, the local community is not LGBTI-affirmative. While LGBTI students



congregate at local establishments from time to time, the atmosphere at these businesses depends from moment to moment on the overall clientele. On a football game night or what are affectionately termed “locals nights” the tolerance for diversity at a local establishment can be severely diminished. LGBT friendly churches and community centers that are available in many college towns are also conspicuously absent. Even something so small as displaying a rainbow on one’s car must be tempered by an awareness of safety when one leaves campus and enters the surrounding community.

#### Counseling Program Values

A cursory glance at the website for the Counseling program at OSU is enough to confirm that a culture of LGBTI diversity exists within the department. It is clear that professors work hard to foster LGBTI research and education within the College of Education. Nearly all current faculty list sexual/affectional orientation and/or transgender research among their interests and, while not included on the website, all faculty express a personal vested interest in LGBTI concerns. Furthermore, the program boasts an endowed professorship that focuses specifically on LGBTI issues.

Additionally, the majority of incoming students are involved in research or outreach to the LGBTI community in some form. For example, one student recently made a presentation on LGBTI older adult research to deans from across the university. Recently, one of our state’s largest mental health providers agreed to assist with data collection for a study of LGBT youth in collaboration with OSU. Other students volunteer their weekends to conduct research outside of gay bars in Tulsa and Oklahoma City and still others volunteer to lead transgender support groups and participate in LGBTI focused student organizations.

Without a doubt, the Counseling program at OSU is committed to LGBTI advocacy and research across the board.

However, it consistently struggles with how to do this research, and how to support its students and to ensure their safety in the rural Oklahoma environment.

#### Challenges

Maintaining a commitment to diversity in an aversive context presents regular challenges. For example, in order to receive funding from state organizations, funding proposals and research titles must speak of a focus on Special Population issues rather than LGBTI concerns. While this may be seem a small modification, the process becomes more grave in regard to LGBTI students and faculty who must live and work in this politically and culturally anti-LGBTI climate. For these individuals, the danger that comes with being LGBTI cannot be resolved with a simple name change. Students who may be married in one state find that their new governor is energetically invested in invalidating their union. Professors who wish to specialize in LGBTI studies operate with awareness that their efforts could be challenged or hampered.

Recruitment of LGBTI students is sometimes problematic because, while potential students are attracted to the progressive nature of the program, they are turned off by the aversive nature of the community, and often will choose to pursue their studies elsewhere. The counseling program at OSU is uniquely tailored to meet these challenges by offering students ample opportunities to socialize and by encouraging a climate of support within the department. Nevertheless, the program is incapable of moderating all of the negative effects of its surroundings since something as simple as going on a date could place students in danger of harassment. Unfortunately, this is the sort of challenge faced by many students who may seek graduate training in rural or red areas across the nation.

#### Potential Strengths and Opportunities

Nevertheless, the interplay between the Counseling program at OSU and the surrounding community is not all bad. Since



the program is so unique in its commitment to social justice for LGBTI people, professors and students are able to offer services that are not available even in the states that surround Oklahoma. For example, transgender clients have driven several hours to see competent therapists at our in-house training clinic or have met with clinic counselors via Skype as we are often able to offer these services pro-bono or at extremely low cost. Research in bullying and LGBTI inclusive policies provide support for LGBTI people of all ages by advocating for better treatment statewide.

Additionally, students within the university and the program itself benefit a great deal from the LGBTI affirmative culture of the program. Professors are able to teach diversity courses and partner and family therapy seminars that integrate LGBTI identity and relationships into curricula. In some cases, counseling professors have been the first people around whom students have felt safe enough to come out. This climate of safety adds to the collaborative environment within the program and fosters close working relationships between students and faculty.

Moving forward, as the nationwide climate for LGBTI people continues to take on deeper shades of blue acceptance, programs like ours may face additional challenges associated with its strong support of social justice for LGBTI people. If the past is any indicator, conservative, rural politics and leadership tend to respond to social progress by increasing the strength and severity of their politically red, aversive policies. Oklahoma certainly follows this pattern.

Thus, it is likely that the situation will get worse before it gets better. Yet, this potential backlash can be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the counseling programs like the one at OSU and to increase services for surrounding communities.

Counseling faculty and students have a unique opportunity to offer creative solutions

for operating effectively within an oppressive system.



Of all professionals, mental health faculty and practitioners are uniquely poised to investigate and process through oppressive systems and unequal power dynamics and to advocate for social change. This counselor insight will be vitally important for keeping our small specks of blue resistance from being swallowed up in

the surrounding seas of red (political and policy-based) adversity.

*Reference list available from first author upon request. Contact <douglas.knutson@okstate.edu>*



*Image source*

*<http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/oklahoma-reddest-state-not-interested>*



## State Chapter News

### PALGBTIC

Paul A. Datti, PhD, CRC, HS-BCP, Mark Kenney, MEd, NCC, LPC, and Ryan T. Gruber, MEd

The Pennsylvania Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (PALGBTIC) is an active and vibrant division of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA).

Among other activities, our members participate in several outreach initiatives to the LGBT community as well as trainings to the counseling community. For example, each year our members attend select LGBT Pride events across the state to provide valuable counseling information to community. At our vendor tables, we provide resources on how to find an LGBT affirming and competent counselor, information about programs and agencies across the state, and invitations to become involved in our division and state organization.

In addition, each year PALGBTIC provides an LGBT-themed educational track of sessions at the annual PCA conference. Officers and members help to coordinate meaningful and insightful educational sessions that stem from recent research, practical considerations, and counselor education issues for working with and educating about LGBT clients as well as important social justice, advocacy, and legislative issues that affect the population.

As part of the overall continuing education units (CEUs) for the conference, our track averages about six CEUs of specialized LGBT training. Upon completion of the track, we provide a certificate for participants to proudly display in their offices for clients, students, and others to see, sending the message to those who see them that the practitioner and/or educator not only has interest in the subject matter, but has completed a good amount of training in it. We like to think that the increased knowledge that participants gain helps to provide LGBT clients and students with more competent and inclusive services and education.

We are proud to offer a wide array of presentations each year, covering each of the sub-populations of the overall LGBT community, and in doing so are able to share our expertise in the area with those who are interested.

While listing each of the topics is beyond the scope of this article, here is a sample of what was offered at our most recent conference, held in November 2013:

- *Addiction Interaction Disorder: Implications for LGBTQ Clients*
- *Beyond the Binary: Bisexual Persons and their Unique Challenges in Counseling and Society*
- *Facilitating LGB Identity Group Counseling Processes*
- *Advancements in Care for Transgender Youth*
- *Integration of Professional Knowledge and Personal Experience as LGBTQIQ Allies within a Religious Community*
- *Ethical Issues in Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Clients*

We encourage you to provide similar initiatives and to share your ideas with us. If you would like more information about PALGBTIC or would like to become involved with us, please feel free to contact one of our officers!



Image source: [http://rlv.zcache.com/pennsylvania\\_pride\\_postcards-r96c2c91ecd2447e0b74da396f72545bc\\_vgbaq\\_8byvr\\_152.jpg](http://rlv.zcache.com/pennsylvania_pride_postcards-r96c2c91ecd2447e0b74da396f72545bc_vgbaq_8byvr_152.jpg)





## Chapter Update: Idaho

by Jennifer Gess

The LGBTQIQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, questioning, and allied) community in Idaho needs to be supported. Currently in Idaho, there are many challenges for LGBTQIQA people. For example, same-sex marriage is not recognized, hate crime laws do not include sexual orientation and gender identity, and the state discrimination law does not protect discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (State of Idaho Legislature, 2013). These discriminatory examples contribute to risk factors such as depression, anxiety, stress, suicidality, homelessness, and substance misuse (PBS, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013). As counselors, it is our responsibility to provide a “framework for creating safe, supportive, and caring relationships with LGBTQIQA individuals, groups, and communities that foster self-acceptance and personal, social, emotional, and relational development” (ALGBTIC LGBQIQA Competencies Taskforce, 2013).

In addition to individual counseling, advocating for the LGBTQIQA community in Idaho is important to make changes at the state level in order to decrease risk factors. The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics includes advocacy, stating, “When appropriate, counselors advocate at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to examine potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth, and development of clients” (American Counseling Association, 2005). Counselors have an ethical obligation to provide a safe space for LGBTQIQA people as well as to advocate on behalf of this marginalized community especially in a state, such as Idaho, which lacks many basic human rights. Eliminating discriminatory laws, advocating for equality, and growing a supportive community through IALGBTIC will reduce risk factors and enhance the well being of LGBTQIQA people.

Idaho Counseling Association (ICA) is currently in the process of forming an Idaho ALGBTIC interest group. “The mission of the Idaho Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (IALGBTIC), an interest group of the Idaho Counseling Association, is to improve the services and quality of life for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals through education, scholarship, and advocacy. We believe all individuals should be free to develop their full potential regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We recognize the unique challenges LGBTQ individuals face as a result of systemic oppression. Our aim is to promote understanding and foster competency among counselors in service delivery and advocacy within the community” (J. Gess, personal communication, November 25, 2013). The goal of IALGBTIC is to eventually become a state chapter under ICA and ALGBTIC.

The IALGBTIC interest group will meet at the annual Idaho Counseling Association conference in January of 2014 to enhance interest. Please contact Jennifer Gess at [gessjenn@isu.edu](mailto:gessjenn@isu.edu) if you are interested in attending or for more information.



## Guidelines for Newsletter Submissions

Next submission deadline is **June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014** for publication in July.

1. All submissions must be electronic, written in Microsoft Word document formats (.doc or .docx) and included as an email attachment.
2. All submissions must be in 12-pt Times New Roman font with 1" margins.
3. All submissions must adhere to word limits for article category.
4. All submissions must include author's name, degree(s), academic or institutional affiliation, telephone number and email address in a cover email.
5. Any citations must follow APA Style Manual, 6th Edition, and language should be free of bias in accordance with APA's style guidelines.
6. Any articles not adhering to #1-5 above will be returned to the author for revision before review.
7. We welcome all submissions that would be of interest to our readership and ALGBTIC members. Information should be current and informative. Submissions that promote dialogue and opinion are especially encouraged.

### Submission Categories

- New and Noteworthy
- State Chapter News
- Fresh off the Presses
- Practice Matters
- Major Contribution
- Difficult Dialogues

Visit the ALGBTIC webpage at <http://www.algbtic.org/resources/newsletter> for details.