

# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Student Handbook

*"Coming out means choosing to live on your own terms. It is a resounding vote of confidence in your own worth." John R. Stowe*

## **Being Out As a Law Student and as a Lawyer**

### Living Openly on Your Terms:

- It's important to remember that the journey from "Coming Out" to "Living Openly" is ongoing, and unfolds at your own pace.
- Living openly is something that becomes easier with time, it will often take a little energy when you tell someone new even after you've been open for years — but it gets exponentially easier with time.
- Living openly as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or straight-supportive person can help to make it easier for young LGBT people who will follow this generation.
- Living openly can be a passive expression of who you are — such as not hiding a rainbow or equality sticker or a loved one's photograph — or it can be a deliberate process involving a planned conversation or the decision to always be ready to affirm your sexual orientation or gender identity should a situation arise.
- Living openly doesn't mean that the sole, or even primary, aspect of your identity is being LGBT. It means making this part of your life a natural piece of you — just like your age, height, hair color or personality.
- Living openly lets other people know, especially those who are judgmental or biased, that their attitudes are theirs alone.
- On a daily basis, you will face decisions about where, when and how to come out — or where, when and why not to. Always remember, this is your journey.

Being open at work or school can be a daunting challenge. But it can also relieve the daily stress of hiding who you are. At the same time, however, no one wants to put their job security or opportunity for advancement in jeopardy. So here are some things to think about as you progress through law school and face the decision about whether or not to come out in a workplace, whether it be an internship, clerkship, summer associate position or permanent post-graduate position:

### Questions to Ask When Considering Coming out at a Job:

- Does your employer have a written non-discrimination policy? Does it specifically cover sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression? Does insurance cover domestic partner benefits? Does health coverage cover transitioning costs?
- Is there a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employee resource group at your workplace?
- What's the overall climate in your workplace? Do people tend to make derogatory comments or jokes? Are any of your co-workers openly LGBT?
- What are your work relationships like? Do people discuss their personal lives? Are they asking questions about yours? Is the atmosphere friendly or guarded?

- Does your state or locality have a non-discrimination law including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?
- Is your company ranked on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index? If so, what rating has it earned?
- Get more information on state and local laws, view an online copy of the HRC Corporate Equality Index and find tools on transitioning in the workplace and other helpful information on being open at work.

### Moving Forward

Once you've assessed your workplace atmosphere, here are some practical steps to take:

- Identify someone who is LGBT or LGBT -supportive, and talk to them first.
- Take a breath. People will often take their cues from you on how to talk and feel about LGBT issues. The more casual you are, the more likely they are to follow your lead.
- Make a plan. The Human Rights Campaign has tools for coming out and transitioning at work.
- Talk about LGBT -related news stories, movies, TV shows or other topics as a way to signal your views or start the conversation.
- Bring a partner or date to company functions, or have them meet you at work one day.

### Benefits of Being Open at Work

- Eliminates the need to hide or mislead.
- Makes deeper friendships possible.
- Breaks down barriers to understanding.
- Builds trusting working relationships.
- Lets us bring our "whole selves" to work.
- Being open can make you more productive, and can even benefit your career because your peers will see you in a new, perhaps even courageous, light.

The above information was obtained from the website of the Human Rights Campaign at [hrc.org](http://hrc.org)

## Resources

### ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

#### Local:

**The Gay and Lesbian Legal Alliance (GALLA), John Marshall Chapter -**

[www.jmls.edu/students/organizations/galla.shtml](http://www.jmls.edu/students/organizations/galla.shtml)

**Outlaws Coalition:** Blog for gay and lesbian student groups at Chicago-area law schools -

<http://outlawscoalitionchicago.blogspot.com/>

**The Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) -** [www.chilagbac.org/](http://www.chilagbac.org/)

**Chicago Bar Association Committee on the Legal Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men -**

[www.chicagobar.org/news.asp](http://www.chicagobar.org/news.asp)

**American Constitution Society, John Marshall Chapter -**

[http://www.jmls.edu/students/organizations/american\\_constitution\\_society.shtml](http://www.jmls.edu/students/organizations/american_constitution_society.shtml)

**Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce -** <http://www.glchamber.org/>

**Howard Brown Health Center -** <http://howardbrown.org/>

**Center on Halsted -** <http://centeronhalsted.org/coh/calendar/home.cfm>

**Gerber/Hart Library, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Information Resource and Archives -** <http://gerberhart.org/>

#### National:

**Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund –** [www.lambda-legal.org](http://www.lambda-legal.org)

*Midwest Regional Office, 11 East Adams, Suite 1008, Chicago; 312-663-6303*

**The National Lesbian and Gay Law Association –** [www.nlgl.org](http://www.nlgl.org)

**The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee of the American Bar Association  
Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities -**

<http://www.abanet.org/dch/committee.cfm?com=IR516000&edit=1&new=1>

The Committee works to protect and advance the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons by educating the legal profession, by developing, implementing and disseminating policies supporting equal justice under law without regard to one's sexual orientation or gender identity and by filing amicus curiae briefs.

**The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) –** [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

Promotes fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

**American Constitution Society -** <http://www.americanconstitutionsociety.org/>

**The ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Project –** [www.aclu.org/lgbt/index.html](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/index.html)

Fights discrimination and moves public opinion on LGBT rights through the courts, legislatures and public education.

**Association of American Law Schools Section on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity -**

[http://www.aals.org/services\\_sections\\_gl.php](http://www.aals.org/services_sections_gl.php)

**International Association of Lesbian and Gay Judges -** <http://home.att.net/~ialgj/>

**The Human Rights Campaign –** [www.hrg.org](http://www.hrg.org)

A national advocacy organization that publishes LAWbriefs, a quarterly publication summarizing major developments in LGBT issues, including case law, legislation and information ranging from family law to discrimination protection to international legal developments.

## **FACULTY AND CURRICULUM**

**AIDS and the Law (Law 100)** – This course examines the medical, political and legal reactions to the HIV-AIDS epidemic. Regarding specific legal subjects, the course amounts to a survey of much of the law school curriculum including such topics as torts, criminal law, employment discrimination, education law, domestic relations, insurance law, estate planning, public and private health care law, international law and others.

**Family Law (Law 104)** – Legal problems concerning the validity of antenuptial agreements, marriage, dissolution of marriage (divorce), declarations of invalidity (annulment), legal separation (separate maintenance), rights and duties of husband, wife, parent and child, legitimacy and illegitimacy, adoption, adjustment of rights in divorce, including marital and non-marital property doctrines, maintenance (alimony), child support, child custody and visitation, legal status of infants, conflict of laws and constitutional law problems in family law context, and remedies to prevent domestic violence. **Depending on the professor, this course may or may not include specific discussion of the above topics in relation to same-sex partners.**

**Human Rights in a Changing Society: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Law (Law 168)** – This seminar explores the legal regulation of sexual orientation and gender identity. It begins by examining historical views of sexual orientation and the myriad effects that religion, culture, science and politics have had on sexual orientation law. The seminar then surveys employment discrimination and other legal issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Law and Diversity (Law 141)** – The course addresses the role of law in establishing, maintaining, and remedying group-based inequality, exclusion, and oppression within the American social, economic and political community. The course includes study of the history of group-based inequality, the responses law has made to this inequality, and critiques, such as feminist jurisprudence and critical race theory, of the law's role in perpetuating such inequality.

**Professor Mark Wojcik** – faculty adviser to GALLA

## **MENTORS**

A list of LGBT Alumni Mentors is available from your Career Services counselor. Mentors are available to answer a host of questions about navigating law school, the job search process and working in the legal world.

LAGBAC also has a mentor program. For more information, go to LAGBAC's webpage [www.chilagbac.org](http://www.chilagbac.org).

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

**LAGBAC Foundation Scholarship Program** - created to award summer internship stipends to first and second year law students focusing on LGBT/civil rights issues in the Chicago area. Awards from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for 300-400 hours of work over 10 weeks.

**Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund (TSELF)** - TSELF awards several scholarships for transgender-identified students in the helping and caring professions, including social services, health care, religious instruction, teaching, and law. The awards are sponsored by the International Foundation for Gender Education. For more information, contact: International

Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), TSELF Awards Committee, PO Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229, Phone: 1-781-899-2212; Fax: 1-781-899-2212; [www.tself.org](http://www.tself.org)

**The Point Foundation** - The Point Foundation is a national, publicly-supported scholarship fund that provides financial support, mentoring and hope to meritorious undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Awards amounts vary based on need, and are renewed annually until the completion of one's degree as long as key expectations are met in the "Contract of Excellence" signed by each Scholar, which includes a requirement to maintain a 3.5 GPA. Past award amounts have ranged from \$5,000 to \$28,000 per year. For more information, contact: The Point Foundation, PO Box 11210, Chicago, IL 60611; Phone: 1-866-33-POINT (1-866-337-6468); Fax: 1-866-39-POINT (1-866-397-6468)

**American Atheists Gay/Lesbian College Scholarship** - The American Atheists Gay/Lesbian College Scholarship (Dr. Richard Chinn Fund) is a \$500 grant to an outstanding gay/lesbian Atheist activist. Award amount is \$500. For more info, see: [http://www.atheists.org/family/temp/scholarship/body\\_index.html](http://www.atheists.org/family/temp/scholarship/body_index.html).

**An Uncommon Legacy Foundation Scholarship** - This program provides awards to outstanding undergraduate and graduate lesbian students. To qualify, applicants must be planning to become a full-time student in the U.S.; have a minimum of 3.0 GPA on their transcripts; demonstrate a commitment or contribution to the lesbian community; demonstrate financial need; and follow Legacy's Lesbian Leaderships Scholarship guidelines at an accredited college or university. Consideration will be given to academic performance, honors, personal or financial hardship and, especially, service to the LGBT community. Applicants must apply online.

Contact: Scholarship Review Committee, An Uncommon Legacy Foundation, Inc., PO Box 33727, Washington, DC 20033; Phone: 202-265-1926; [Scholarship@uncommonlegacy.org](mailto:Scholarship@uncommonlegacy.org); [www.uncommonlegacy.org/](http://www.uncommonlegacy.org/); Fax: 202 265-1927

## **WRITING COMPETITIONS**

**Michael Greenberg Student Writing Competition** – First prize is \$1,000, publication in the Journal of Law and Sexuality at Tulane University Law School and registration, airfare and lodging for Lavender Law. Topic is cutting edge legal issue affecting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Intersex community. <http://www.nlglaw.org/competition.html>

**The Dukeminier Awards Student Writing Competition** - annually recognizes the best law review note written by a student in the field of sexual orientation law. The first place award is a monetary prize and publication in The Dukeminier Awards: Best Sexual Orientation Law Review Articles. The competition is open to students enrolled in an accredited law school. Entry topics should focus on a cutting-edge legal issue affecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender communities. Entries should have been written during the preceding year and should not be previously published or scheduled for publication. Entrants may choose to either submit their entry by email or by postal mail. For more details, go to: <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/DASStudent.html>

## **CONFERENCES AND CAREER FAIRS**

**Lavender Law Conference** (organized annually by Lambda Legal) - <http://www.lavenderlaw.org/>  
This conference provides a unique opportunity for academics, practitioners and students to explore theoretical and practical perspectives on cutting-edge legal issues affecting LGBT individuals.

Potential topics include constitutional law developments, estate planning and drafting, employment discrimination, HIV/AIDS, immigration, workplace diversity, domestic violence, and LGBT issues in academe, the military, and the family. The conference also incorporates a career fair where over two hundred attorney candidates and sixty employers representing private firms and public organizations from all over the country convene to discuss legal career opportunities.

*Lavender Law is the only job fair dedicated to the LGBT community. However, other diversity job fairs are held at different times of the year and in different geographic locations, including:*

**Bay Area Diversity Job Fair** - The Diversity Career Fair brings together prominent law firms and government legal departments in the San Francisco Bay Area with highly qualified diverse second year law students. The participating students come from distinguished local law schools, as well as other top schools from around the nation to participate in summer associate programs.

[http://www.sfbar.org/diversity/career\\_fair.aspx](http://www.sfbar.org/diversity/career_fair.aspx)

**Equal Justice Works Career Fair** - Recommended for 2L and 3L students interested in public interest law and held in Washington D.C., it is the largest public interest-related job fair in the country, bringing together 200+ employers (primarily non-profits and government agencies) and various public interest organizations. Register directly through the Equal Justice Works website at:

<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/careerfair/>

**Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair** – The HDLJF is held annually in Kansas City, Missouri. The primary purpose of the HDLJF is to increase the participation of under-represented groups in the practice of law in Kansas City. The founders and organizers of the HDLJF strongly believe that the inclusion of diversity in its many facets, including, without limitation, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and physical challenges, enriches us all. <http://www.heartlanddiversity.org/>

**Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference** - About two dozen public interest organizations and government agencies attend this Chicago event each year to interview first-, second-, and third-year students and to participate in "Table Talk" discussions. Information about the Career Conference is available at <http://mpilcc.uchicago.edu>.

**Minnesota Minority Recruitment Conference** - The MMRC is held each year, joining the largest legal employers in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area with top-quality 2L and 3L candidates from local law schools and those around the country. Each year includes around 30 employers and upwards of 150 law students. <http://www.tcc-mmrc.org/index.html>

**Philadelphia Area Minority Job Fair** - The Philadelphia Area Minority Job Fair (PAMJF) was created through a partnership of the Legal Recruitment Administrators of Philadelphia (LRAP) and Philadelphia Area Law School Administrators in order to address the issue of minority recruitment in the legal profession. PAMJF offers minority students the opportunity to meet with large law firms; major corporations; public interest organizations; the judiciary; and federal, state, and local government agencies. This job fair is not invitational; students need only sign up to attend.

[www.pamjf.org/](http://www.pamjf.org/)

**The Rocky Mountain Diversity Legal Career Fair** – The RMDLCF, held in Denver, provides an excellent forum for legal employers, law students and recent law school graduates to meet and discuss employment options with the goal of expanding opportunities and assisting the legal profession in

fulfilling its commitment to diversity. Legal employers attending the RMDLCF seek to hire law students and recent graduates from culturally diverse backgrounds that have been traditionally under-represented in the practice of law in the Rocky Mountain region, including those who are ethnic or racial minorities and/or gay or lesbian. [www.rmdlcf.com/](http://www.rmdlcf.com/)

**Vault Legal Diversity Job Fair** - Vault, a top source of career information for law students and associates, has partnered with the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA), an advocate for increased diversity in the legal profession, to produce a series of legal diversity career fairs for law students and lateral associates. One of these fairs is held annually in Chicago. See [www.vault.com/legaldiversity/](http://www.vault.com/legaldiversity/) for more details.

### **ONLINE JOB POSTINGS & OPPORTUNITIES**

**Gay and Lesbian Professionals** - <http://www.glpcareers.com/>

**Gay Job Biz** - [www.gayjob.biz/index.cfm](http://www.gayjob.biz/index.cfm)

**GFN Career Central** - [career.gfn.com](http://career.gfn.com)

**Progayjobs.com** - [www.progayjobs.com/](http://www.progayjobs.com/)

**WorkplaceDiversity.com** - [www.workplacediversity.com/](http://www.workplacediversity.com/)

**PSLawNet** (general public interest and public service job site, including options to search for LGBT-related opportunities) – [www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org)

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**Center on Halsted** - [http://www.centeronhalsted.org/prog\\_legal.html](http://www.centeronhalsted.org/prog_legal.html)

**Lambda Legal, Take Action** - <http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/action/index.html>

**ACLU Lesbian and Gay Action Center** -

[action.aclu.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AP\\_alerts\\_lgbt\\_rights](http://action.aclu.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AP_alerts_lgbt_rights)

**Hate-Crime Network** - [hate-crime.website-works.com/volunteer.htm](http://hate-crime.website-works.com/volunteer.htm)

**Howard Brown Health Center** - [http://howardbrown.org/hb\\_volunteer.asp](http://howardbrown.org/hb_volunteer.asp)

**The Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights** – legal clinic where law students act as “legal clinic advocates,” providing the initial response to legal clinic hotline calls from individuals facing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 605, Philadelphia PA 19107 USA

Tel: 215-731-1447/ Fax: 215-731-1544

[c4crinfo@center4civilrights.org](mailto:c4crinfo@center4civilrights.org); [www.center4civilrights.org/about/volunteerLegal\\_signup.php](http://www.center4civilrights.org/about/volunteerLegal_signup.php)

### **NETWORKING**

**Meet the Bar** – a monthly social event sponsored by LAGBAC that brings together law students from all the Chicago-area law schools, practitioners, and judges in an informal setting to meet, network, and socialize. To find dates and locations, see the LAGBAC webpage.

### **PRINT RESOURCES**

**Out At Work, A Guide for LGBT Employees** - [www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/publications.html?record=1493](http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/publications.html?record=1493)

**Tulane Law School Journal of Law & Sexuality** -

[www.law.tulane.edu/tuexp/journals/law\\_sex/default.htm](http://www.law.tulane.edu/tuexp/journals/law_sex/default.htm)

**The National Journal of Sexual Orientation Law** - [www.ibiblio.org/gaylaw/](http://www.ibiblio.org/gaylaw/)

**Chicago Free Press**

**Windy City Times**

**To Be Out or Not To Be Out** – NALP (copies available in the Career Services Office)

**REMEMBER: There is no such thing as a complete list – be sure to check with the CSO for additional resources!**