



*Committee on Issues of Sexual  
Orientation & Gender Identity*

## Annual Report for Academic Year 2020-2021

### Introduction & Charge

The President's Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (CISOGI) is charged to

- (a) advise the President on matters pertaining to issues of sexual and/or affectional orientation and gender identity and expression as they pertain to USF faculty, staff, and students and
- (b) evaluate and monitor the university environment for problems and issues related to these matters.

The charge of the Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (CISOGI) is based on the understanding that prejudice and discrimination toward people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities is experienced in society, including the workplace and academic settings such as a university. It is CISOGI's goal to assist and advise the President in recommending equitable processes, visibility, access, and policies to all members of the LGBTQ+ community in order to maximize their talents and their contributions to the university. These recommendations seek to bring value to the educational outcomes of USF and are consistent with USF's commitment to diversity and inclusion as indicated in the USF Statement on Diversity and our Principles of Community.

## Accomplishments

During the 2020-2021 academic year, CISOGI met monthly to assess progress on key areas, plan activities, and address new issues as needed. The accomplishments in each of our three areas represent the hard work of multiple students, faculty, and staff members, on the committee and those who worked in collaboration with us for the betterment of our university. The committee was led by co-chairs: Jennifer Icteton and Michael Rogers as well executive committee members: Meg Stowe and Ren Bradley-Tyler.

### **Adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic in order ability to continue carrying out our charge.**

- **Committee Structure and Meetings:** During the pandemic year, CISOGI pulled back on having multiple subcommittee meetings and instead primarily met as one group in order to accomplish the larger committees' tasks while conserving team member's energy as possible. The committee relied upon the CISOGI executive committee and its close partnership with Office of Multicultural Affairs LGBTQ+ Programs Coordinator, Cristina Yelvington, to handle the day to day functions. A positive change was noted that since all meetings were on Teams, it allowed for greater participation from all three campuses.

### **Review relevant policies and resources on campus for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff to determine opportunities to address gaps and recommend enhancements.**

- **Campus Pride Index:** We continue to use the national evaluation tool, the Campus Pride Index, which provides a framework for evaluating and monitoring policies and resources that impact the LGBTQ+ community in higher education institutions. This index results in a 5-point scale indicating how welcoming a university is to its LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty based on its policies and resources.
- **Rating at 3.5 out of 5:** Our overall score on the scale has remained at 3.5, indicating that the University of South Florida is a generally LGBTQ+ affirming institution. The Campus Pride Index also has provided guidance on where the university might focus its attention to continue to improve the experience and wellbeing of its LGBTQ+ members. While this score is positive, the Committee recognizes that these resources may not equally accessible to all USF students across our three campuses, such as a residential community for LGBTQ+ and allied students.

### **Support the visibility and vibrancy of USF's LGBTQ+ community on campus and in Tampa Bay**

- **Lavender Graduation:** CISOGI worked closely with USF Foundation and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to plan the 4th Annual Lavender Graduation for graduating LGBTQ+ and ally students on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. We partnered with the Office of Multicultural Affairs to hold the event in conjunction with annual Audre Lorde event to reach a wider audience and avoid duplication of effort during a pandemic year. The event was held virtually to protect the health and safety of the USF community during the COVID-19 pandemic. A record number of LGBTQ+ graduates (more than 100) registered for the

virtual ceremony due to our newfound ability to email all students who had been registered to graduate in Spring 2021. Each student was mailed a rainbow stole and a personalized letter of affirmation on the student's achievement and their names were read aloud along with sharing additional information via PowerPoint slide. During the event we also announced the winners of the 2021 USF Pride Awards and the student recipients of LGBTQ+ Alumni scholarship.

- **Campus Activities:** CISOGI participated in a welcoming event for LGBTQ students in Fall 2020 and the in-person student pride celebration in June 2021. Co-chairs participated in search processes for key positions at the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and met with DIEO as it underwent changes in personnel and structure. Members advocated for key provisions within a name change policy at USF that students who are transgender and/or gender non-binary can utilize to be called their appropriate name within multiple USF systems. The committee also wrote and sent a letter to the president in solidarity with Black faculty and staff who had called for institutional changes to address anti-Black racism at the University of South Florida.
- **Community Involvement:** As the pandemic continued to make large-scale community events inadvisable, CISOGI decided to continue to postpone organizing a USF contingent to attend Tampa Pride. CISOGI members and guests represented USF at a LGBT Chamber of Commerce event in the summer of 2021.
- **Promotion of LGBTQ+ Specific Resources at USF:** CISOGI shared information regarding the following resources at meetings, on its Teams page and via email distribution lists
  - **Stonewall Suites Living & Learning Community** (Housing & Residential Education)
  - **Queer and Sexuality Studies Minor** (Department of Women's & Gender Studies)
  - **Safe Zone Training** (Office of Multicultural Affairs)
  - **Special Collection: LGBTQ Studies** (Library)
  - **Therapy Groups for LGBTQ+ and Trans/Non-Binary students** (Counseling Center)
  - **Haven Clinic for LGBTQ+ student health concerns** (Student Health Services)
  - **CISOGI and LGBTQ+ Alumni Scholarships** (Foundation)
  - **LGBTQ+ focused groups for students, current faculty & staff, and alumni** (Various)

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR

In addition to monitoring LGBTQ+ activities, academics, and issues across the entire USF system, CISOGI plans for the 2021-2022 school year include the following:

- Continue to support the visibility and vibrancy of the USF LGBTQ+ community through multiple efforts, including by organizing our Annual Lavender Graduation
- Increase active participation in CISOGI by university community members and enhance CISOGI's ability to carry out its charges
- Engage in respectful advocacy regarding one or more of the committee recommendations to the president (see next page)

**Committee Recommendations to the President**

Recommendation	Rationale
Add self-reported gender identity and sexual orientation questions to admission materials in order to have data on the number of LGBTQ+ students at USF	Representation
Appointment members to the committee from key, unrepresented departments such as: Human Resources, Admissions, Financial Aid, Police, and Athletics	Representation
Centralize pertinent information related to USF LGBTQ+ resources into a website maintained by DIEO and CISOGI	Resource Identification
Create consistent signage across campus for gender inclusive restrooms	Resource Identification
Encourage consistency across all three campuses regarding Safe Zone training experiences by centralizing all trainings through one office	Cultural Competence
Institute an annual training on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression with the University Police Department	Cultural Competence
Institute required training on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression for all newly hired staff and faculty	Cultural Competence
Standardized process for USF alumnx to update their name post-graduation	Inclusivity
Enhance and publicize accessible processes for preferred name updates to, but not limited to, USF ID cards, NetIDs, and diplomas	Inclusivity
Adopt the "LGBTQ+" acronym and use it consistently in university documents and websites when referring to populations that are not heterosexual and cisgender	Inclusivity
Create a gender inclusive housing policy via Housing and Residential Education. Per Campus Pride Index standards, gender inclusive housing is defined as "housing not segregated into men's and women's spaces--including double and multiple occupancy bedrooms--and welcoming to students who identify outside of the gender binary."	Inclusivity

**Submitted By:**

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Jennifer Icton, M.A.

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CISOGI Co-Chair

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Date

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Michael Rogers, Ph.D.

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CISOGI Co-Chair

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Date