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## Sex Matters: In honor of "Pride Week" at the University of Maine

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# Sex Matters

In honor of "Pride Week" at the University of Maine:

This week our university is celebrating "Pride Week" in an attempt to educate and honor gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered issues. There are a number of programs planned throughout the week. This time provides us with an opportunity for education, as well as reflection and discussion. In his writing, "Homophobia on the College Campus," Brian McNaught (author of "On Being Gay," "Gay Issues in the Workplace," and "Now That I'm Out, What Do I Do?") provides us with a list of questions to prompt such a discussion. A sampling of these questions are listed below. As you read each one, please take the time to reflect on our own university. Do we really live in a "Safe Zone?"

1. Does the university recognize that there are gay, lesbian and bisexual people among administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni? For example, it is commonly accepted that four to 10 percent of the population is homosexual.

2. Can we agree that a significant number of people at this university have gay or lesbian family members and friends and that homophobia takes a toll on these individuals, too? How do we imagine intense and pre-occupying negative feelings about homosexuality affects the well-being and productivity of heterosexual people?

3. Do we recognize that homophobic

behaviors and attitudes exist on the campus? Would we, for instance, encourage a gay administrator, faculty or staff person or student to "come out." If not, why not? If the gay and lesbian members of our campus are not out, what toll do we imagine that it takes on them on a daily basis?

4. To what extent are we willing to go to guarantee that no discrimination exists?

5. Do openly gay and lesbian faculty receive tenure?

6. What would be the reaction to a gay or lesbian residence hall or to the formation of a gay and lesbian fraternity or sorority?

7. Does Wilde Stein (the student group) receive the same recognition and resources as other student groups?

8. Are gay and lesbian studies recognized as valid academic pursuits?

9. Is there a thorough, mandated training on the issues facing gay, lesbian and bisexual people for the campus security, the health center and counseling center staff, campus living personnel, Greek life, athletics and campus ministry?

10. Is there an orientation session for all new students that outlines the university's policy on non-discrimination?

11. Are there an abundance of good, current books on homosexuality written by and for gay people in the library?

12. Does the health center/counseling center provide non-judgmental services? What would communicate to gay,

lesbian and bisexual students that they are safe and welcome?

13. Is there a thorough, mandated orientation session for all new students that discusses cultural diversity, teaches about homophobia and makes the link between racism, sexism and homophobia?

14. Are student leaders taking into consideration the needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual students when they plan student functions?

15. Does the student newspaper (and other media outlets) regularly include information of interest to gay, lesbian and bisexual students?

16. Do fraternities and sororities acknowledge the presence and needs of gay and lesbian members? Are there

By Sandra L. Caron

non-discrimination guidelines in the national charter?

If you're really interested in getting involved and educating our community, contact the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgendered Concerns Committee at 581-1406.

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