

LGBA member to take liaison post

Position will benefit homosexual and bisexual students

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A newly assigned program coordinator for homosexual and bisexual students at Iowa State, whose salary comes from diversity dollars, is long overdue, said Co-President of the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Alliance Stephen Lorimor.

Graduate student Tom Owings was recently hired by ISU administrators to fill the part-time position, creating what is reportedly the first position of its type at the three state universities.

"I think it's great. It's about time," Lorimor said. "Tom is kind of a liaison to the administration, and he

will work to change some of the university policies that are discriminatory."

Owings, who was selected from 10 applicants, will be paid \$825 per month, in addition to half of his in-state tuition and benefits, said Lisa Norbury Kilian, assistant dean of students.

Owings will work closely with the LGBA and will assist individual students in finding help when they have sexually-oriented concerns. He may also organize educational programs about homosexuality and bisexuality, Kilian said.

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Diversity dollars fund new position

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ago, and I think the demand is still here today. I think this position fits in very nicely with the diversity plan, particularly with student retention," said Kilian.

She said several students brought the idea for the coordinator to the administration several years ago. But, due to the budget crisis, the position was never filled. However, the diversity dollars have enabled the administration to fill the position, she said.

Owings will report to Kilian weekly to discuss priority direction for the program. He may also eventually work with a student, faculty and staff advisory committee that has not yet been set up, Kilian said.

Owings, who is a homosexual and a member of LGBA, said one of his main priorities is getting more women involved in LGBA. He said although LGBA has a membership of 30 or 40, only three or four women usually attend the meetings. "There are a lot of lesbians and bisexual students here, and they aren't satisfied with LGBA right now, and I want to help them feel welcome," he said.

"Maybe there are people here who have not come out of the closet, but that doesn't mean they aren't homosexual or bisexual, it just means that they are

scared to come out of the closet because this is a very conservative campus, and there is a lot of discrimination," Owings said.

The fact that only students with marriage licenses are allowed into married student housing is one university policy that Lorimor said he hopes Owings will be able to help change that.

Lorimor said the university can put the blame on the state because the state does not allow homosexuals to marry, but he said the university is just using the state policy as an excuse. "They could change their policy with the swipe of a pen," he said.

He also said the university does not make their non-discrimination policy surrounding sexual orientation prominent in most of their publications, and it is excluded from some.

However, Owings said he is not in a hurry to fight the administration.

"I believe the administration is working very hard to make some changes right now, especially Tom Thielen (vice president for student affairs) who is making an effort to help LGBA students," he said.

He also said he thinks homophobic students at ISU are harassing homosexuals and vice versa, and he hopes that through community education, this would be eliminated.