

BU Launches LGBTQIA Task Force for Staff and Faculty

Cochairs want to send message: "All kinds of people are welcome and valued here"

IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE BOSTON University more LGBTQIA-inclusive for faculty and staff, a new task force has begun studying and collecting ideas about what other universities are doing, with the aim of drafting a plan for BU to improve programming, recruitment, retention, professional development, and network-building for the University community.

"This University has a complicated legacy and history around diversity issues," says Judi Burgess, BU's director of labor relations and cochair of the task force along with Karen Warkentin, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of biology and of women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

"When I was hired, there was a point, maybe in my second year as a junior faculty, when the Gay-Straight Alliance at BU Academy was banned,"



Warkentin says. "Those situations sent a message that LGBTQ faculty and staff are not valued and not welcomed. It was like, 'We want your work, but don't want to know about your personal life and we consider it personal.'"

Now, both women say, times have changed—dramatically.

"Our understanding of community at work, and the value of workforce diversity, has really shifted over a decade," Warkentin says. "Different people with different life experiences and different perspectives bring value to the workforce and the environment, more creative solutions. And enabling

A new task force, aimed at making BU more LGBTQIA-inclusive for faculty and staff, is collecting ideas for a plan to improve programming, recruitment, retention, professional development, and network-building for the University community.

people to be their whole selves at work increases their productivity."

She adds, "We want to send a message that all kinds of people are welcome here

and valued here.... Our deliverable will be a report, with a set of recommendations, from within the University, as well as best practices from outside the University." **DM**

SNAP

ACTOR MICHAEL DOUGLAS SPEAKS AT BU

In a career spanning 50 years, actor Michael Douglas has starred in such classic films as *Wall Street*, *The China Syndrome*, and *Fatal Attraction*, and won nearly every award in the industry, including two Oscars and an Emmy. Douglas came to BU in November to accept another: the Bette Davis Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by BU's Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center and the Bette Davis Foundation. Douglas' papers and other career memorabilia are housed at the Gotlieb Center.



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