

"The freedom of our Constitution demands a tolerance for the privacy of each individual."

(Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 28)

What is Sexual Orientation?

The New York State Division of Human Rights defines SEXUAL ORIENTATION as follows:

"The disposition of an individual for heterosexuality, homosexuality, asexuality, or bisexuality; or a history of such a disposition; or an identification with having such a disposition."

(New York State Register; March 2, 1988)

The Imperative

"The Preamble to Governor Mario M. Cuomo's historic Executive Order 28 eloquently defends the 'freedom that makes us strong.' It is a freedom, we are told, that acknowledges 'cultural diversity,' that demands a tolerance for the privacy of each individual,' and that looks upon discrimination against any 'private way of life' as threatening to us all. It is a freedom that 'says so long as an individual's conduct and action remain a matter of personal expression and do not deprive others of their rights,' they deserve the protection of government."

(Preface to the Report of Governor Cuomo's Task Force on Gay Issues, Albany, 1986)

Policies Relating to Access and Fair Treatment. Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

A. Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 28

1. No State agency or department shall discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation against any individual in the provision of any services or benefits by such state agency or department.
2. All state agencies and departments shall prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in any matter pertaining to employment by the state including, but not limited to, hiring, job appointment, promotion, tenure, recruitment and compensation. (November 28, 1983)

B. Policy of the Board of Trustees, State University of New York

It is the policy of the State University of New York and the expectation of the Board of Trustees that no discrimination against or harassment of individuals will occur on any of the campuses or in the programs or activities of the University. Consistent with this policy, the Board of Trustees expects that all judgments about and actions toward students and employees will be based on their qualifications, abilities, and performance. Attitudes, practices, and preferences of individuals that are essentially personal in nature, such as private expression or sexual orientation, are unrelated to performance and provide no basis for judgment. The Board of Trustees expects all State University campuses to take appropriate action to implement this policy of fair treatment. (Resolution 83-216, October 26, 1983)

Does Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation Happen Here?

Responses to these questions can provide the answer:

1. Do you know of anyone on campus who has been a target of harassment due to sexual orientation or preference?
2. Have you heard of or witnessed acts of physical violence directed toward gay or lesbian students or employees?
3. Do you know of people whose lives are made quite miserable because they appear to belong to someone else's stereotypical ideas of what a gay or lesbian person looks like?
4. Are you aware of instances of verbal or written threats, (including graffiti) to kill, physically maim, or harm in any other way homosexual students or employees?
5. Have you seen or heard of homosexuals being singled out in the classroom as appropriate targets for abuse?
6. Are gay campus organizations accorded status not equal to other student groups?
7. Do student groups and organizations deny full access and participation to homosexual students?
8. Are you aware of any person who has been denied employment on campus or fired from a campus job based solely on his or her sexual orientation?
9. Do you know of graduate student who face official discouragement or are made to feel that their future careers are at risk if they pursue studies related to homosexuality or the gay/lesbian community?

A "Yes" answer to any of the above means, "Yes, It Does Happen Here."

Be an Opinion Leader Against Prejudice

Fear prevents some persons from disclosing their individual sexual orientation when it is other than heterosexual. This negation may give rise to emotional problems. On the other hand, stereotypes about homosexuals, like so many other stereotypes, are almost always wrong.

There are university employees and groups of campus volunteers who are available to assist with eradicating prohibited discrimination. These persons, some of whom are included in the list below, are willing to listen, discuss specific incidents, provide help and advice, when necessary.

1. The members of the staff of the EDAAA Office
2. Your Department Dean or Chair
3. Members of the University Counseling Service
4. The Vice Provost for Student Affairs
5. The Department of Public Safety staff
6. The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Alliance

Under Executive Order No. 28.1, as amended, the New York State Division of Human Rights is charged with the enforcement of the order. Complaints may be made to:

Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns
New York State Division of Human Rights
55 West 125th Street
New York, NY 10027
(212)870-8604

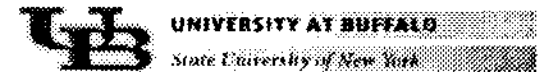
You Can Assist

1. Work with your student organization to raise levels of awareness
2. Cooperate with University staff in their educational, preventive and investigative efforts.
3. Report to the EDAAA Office (645-2266) or to Public Safety slogans, graffiti or any other type of written material intended to poke fun or incite harmful behavior. Whenever possible, remove offensive written or illustrated material placed on campus property as soon as you see them.

You Can Assist Further by Avoiding Behaviors Such As:

1. An irrational fear of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior, belief or attitude which does not confirm to rigid sex role stereotypes
2. Looking at a gay man or lesbian and allowing his or her sexuality to influence the discourse
3. Laughing at jokes about gays and lesbians because if you don't, you may be identified as one of "them". Better still, avoid making such jokes.

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Non-Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation