Annual Assessment Report
Academic Year: 2012-2013

Name of Department: Dean of Students Office, LGBTQA Student Services
Name of Contact Person: Katy Weseman
Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project: Katy Weseman

Abstract
This project was designed to assess student learning in the Safe Zone program administered by LGBTQA Student Services at DePaul University. The program exists to increase understanding of and develop allies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) people. The Safe Zone program strives to create an inclusive and affirming environment for this historically marginalized group, thusly supporting a group of students who often face barriers to success. The project’s methodology consisted of paper pre-training and post-training surveys conducted during the trainings and a follow up survey sent electronically after the training was completed.

Findings indicated an increase in participants’ knowledge of LGBTQ issues and development of ally skills. The follow up surveys also indicated that participants found practical applications of the material covered in the training by educating others and intervening in discriminatory situations. Project implications include needed attention to curriculum, content, and format of the training to make it more information-rich. The project also raises a question of the program’s reach and who is compelled to attend. Pre-training survey data in particular highlighted that many participants brought a significant pre-existing understanding of issues faced by LGBTQ people. While surveys indicate that some learning did occur, it would be helpful to assess learning of people who did not have as much knowledge going in to the trainings.

Introduction and Context
A Safe Zone is a welcoming and supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) people. Safe Zone programs, also commonly referred to as “ally” programs, exist to establish highly visible and easily identifiable safe spaces for LGBTQ people. In a safe space, support and understanding are championed, and bigotry and discrimination are unacceptable. Safe Zone programs are typically found at colleges and universities, though they also exist in high schools, churches, and community centers/organizations.

The Safe Zone program at DePaul, administered through LGBTQA Student Services, provides training, support, and assistance to members of the DePaul community so that they may serve as safe and informed points of contact and support for LGBTQ people. The program aims to address oppression of LGBTQ people by educating those who are interested in being a resource for this community at DePaul. DePaul’s Safe Zone program has been growing in size and scope since its inception in 2004. It currently operates in the form of a three-hour training and reaches participants across many departments and divisions of the university. These trainings are offered throughout the year and are open to any member of the DePaul community (faculty, staff, and students). The 2012-13 academic year saw the addition of students to this demographic; while some had participated in past years, the trainings had not been specifically targeted to students before this year.
With this addition and growth, this year’s Dean of Students Office assessment project was designed specifically to measure the student learning that occurred as a result of participation in Safe Zone trainings conducted between August 2012 and April 2013, asking the guiding question: What learning occurs through Safe Zone trainings at DePaul University? Building on this question, the project aimed to assess three learning outcomes:

- Students who participate in Safe Zone trainings will gain strategies to welcome, validate, support and guide LGBTQ individuals within and outside of DePaul University.
- Students who participate in Safe Zone trainings will become familiar with campus and community programs and services for referrals or to help report harassment or discrimination.
- Students who participate in Safe Zone trainings will put knowledge into action/activism for LGBTQ individuals and communities.

Answering the research question and measuring these learning outcomes enables the LGBTQA Student Services Coordinator to reflect on the curriculum, structure, and impact of the trainings and to make adjustments to better promote student learning through the program.

This project is fundamentally linked to DePaul’s current Strategic Plan, Vision Twenty18, and to the 2010-2013 Student Affairs Strategic Plan through a link to the greater mission as well as specific objectives. St. Vincent de Paul, for whom DePaul University is named, and from whom DePaul derives its sense of community and values, believed in “the God-given dignity and inestimable value of each human person.” At DePaul, differences between people are celebrated and difference is not used to decide a person’s value or importance in the community; everyone is equally important. Vision 2018 aims to foster diversity and inclusion (Goal 4) by strengthening campus-wide diversity (Objective 4a) and building a vibrant community (Objective 4b). With this in mind, the Safe Zone Program at DePaul was developed with a commitment to identifying, informing, and supporting relationships between LGBTQ students and allies. The program further promotes an inclusive community for all individuals at the University, regardless of sexual orientation/identity and/or gender expression/identity.

The Safe Zone program acutely addresses four of the seven Student Affairs Divisional Learning Outcomes. This assessment project provides evidence of the following:

- **Divisional Outcome 1: Knowledge Acquisition, Application and Integration**
  Rooted in learning and skill building, the Safe Zone program operates in the form of trainings lasting three hours. In addition to the content of the training, participants receive a comprehensive written manual including information on LGBTQ terminology, history, identity development, ally building techniques, and more. During the training, participants reflect on experiences and discuss ways to apply knowledge gained to real life scenarios in the classroom and other university contexts.

- **Divisional Outcome 2: Intellectual Skills and Practical Competence**
  The scenario-based skills gained during the Safe Zone trainings increased students’ knowledge of resources and referrals for LGBTQ students both on campus and off campus.

- **Divisional Outcome 4: Socially Responsible Leadership**
  The tenets of Social Responsible Leadership are integral to the mission of DePaul’s Safe Zone program. When striving to be an ally to marginalized groups (LGBTQ people in the case of the Safe Zone program), it is crucial to focus on empathy building and perspective taking. The ally development portions of the trainings emphasize these components.

- **Divisional Outcome 5: Intercultural Maturity and Inclusive Community**
  The Safe Zone trainings are designed to increase participants’ intercultural maturity through learning about the diverse perspectives that the LGBTQ community contributes
to society. Furthermore, the content of the training emphasizes the diversity and intersecting identities that exist within the LGBTQ community, how this “community” is in fact comprised of many “communities.”

As mentioned earlier, Safe Zone programs exist at many colleges and universities. Similar to this project, many of these institutions assess their programs in order to improve curriculum and better train allies to LGBTQ people. Below are four annotated sources that have been helpful in growing the Safe Zone program at DePaul and in implementing this assessment project. These sources along with best practices from other institutions ground the Safe Zone program, and this project, in the larger context of LGBTQ resource work in higher education.

  In this text, Bishop details six steps involved in ally development: Understanding oppression; Understanding different oppressions; Consciousness and healing; Becoming a worker for your own liberation; Becoming an ally; Maintaining hope. This model is helpful in facilitating ally development within Safe Zone training program.

  This resource sharing website is an interactive tool for LGBTQ resource professionals in higher education. The site allows professionals to upload documents (training manuals, activities, policies, job descriptions, presentations, etc.) and to download documents that others upload. The site includes extensive content on Safe Zone training programs from colleges and universities around the country.

  This article details the positive effects of a Safe Zone project on a campus climate for LGBTQ students. This research, one of many studies on this topic, provides support for the continued improvement of a Safe Zone training program, citing how the visible presence of allies can make a campus feel more welcoming to LGBTQ students.

  This issue of New Directions for Student Services contains many articles on LGBTQ issues on college campuses, ranging from research about LGBT identity development to information LGBT students at community colleges. Of particular relevance to the topic of Safe Zones, the article “Campus climates for sexual minorities” describes the positive effects of Safe Zone trainings on campus climate. Also, the article “Analysis of LGBT identity development models and implications for practice” provides background information on identity models that is included in the curriculum of most Safe Zone trainings.

Methodology
Safe Zone trainings are open to any student, faculty, or staff member at DePaul University. Ten trainings were conducted over the course of the 2012-13 year, three of which were advertised widely and included an online registration link (indicated as open registration in the table below). The remaining seven were provided by request to specific groups, i.e. Student Government Association, Resident Assistants, the Student Affairs Graduate Student Association, and more. Each of these trainings ran for exactly three hours and included the same content. The LGBTQA Student Services Coordinator facilitated all of the
trainings. The table below details the date, participation numbers, and audience for each of the ten trainings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Participants (total)</th>
<th>Number of Student Participants (out of total number)</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/23/2012</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Athletic Academic Advisors and Campus Recreation staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/27/2012</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Student Government Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30/2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Staff, students, and faculty (open registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4/2012</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Student Affairs Graduation Student Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2/2013</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Student Leadership Development Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13/2013</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staff, students, and faculty (open registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22/2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Resident Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/13 &amp; 3/13/13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Dean of Students and Health Promotion &amp; Wellness staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/11/2013</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staff, students, and faculty (open registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/19/2013</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>University Housing staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every Safe Zone program participant completes a pre-training survey at the beginning of the training session and a post-training survey at the end. For the purposes of this project, the 46 students who participated in trainings between August 2012 and April 2013 were also sent a follow up survey with questions specifically aimed at assessing learning.

As detailed in the table above, 108 people participated in the trainings during this time period, 46 of which were students (the target sample for this project). All 46 completed the pre-training and post-training surveys. Eight of the 46 completed the follow up survey. This project report includes analysis of the eight follow up surveys, with some information from the 46 pre-training and post-training surveys.

Regarding informed consent and identity security, follow up surveys included an informed consent statement at the beginning. In the context of the trainings, participants were asked to complete the pre-training and post-training surveys but were told that the surveys are not required. Participation in the trainings is voluntary, as is completion of the surveys. Pre-training and post-training survey data was kept in a locked file cabinet within a locked office. The follow up survey data was stored in the Qualtrics online survey tool, with the researcher having sole access.

Please see Appendix A for the pre-training and post-training survey instrument and Appendix B for the follow up survey instrument.
Findings/Results and Discussion

46 students (24 undergraduate, 22 graduate) participated in Safe Zone trainings between August 2012 and April 2013 at DePaul University. Of the 46 students who attended the trainings, all completed the pre-training and post-training surveys. The post-training survey results indicated an initial increase in or maintenance of students’ understanding of LGBTQ communities and identities, campus and community resources available to LGBTQ people, and their role as allies to LGBTQ people. For instance, all participants agreed or strongly agreed that they recognized the influence of a heteronormative society on LGBTQ communities. Further, 2% of participants noted that they did not support LGBTQ communities in the pre-training survey. However, post-training, all training participants agreed or strongly agreed that they did support LGBTQ communities. Additionally, the trainings were the first time 67% of participants received any formal training on LGBTQ communities and issues.

A follow up survey was sent to these 46 participants in April 2013. Of the 46, eight completed the follow up survey, representing a 17% response rate. These responses also illustrated growth, showing that students developed in their ability to apply the material to real-life situations. For example, when prompted to provide a specific example of how Safe Zone training knowledge was used, one participant stated, “I had a conversation with a few of my classmates about being careful of what gender pronouns to use, and not to assume you know what pronouns someone prefers.” Additionally, though students recognized that confronting discrimination can be uncomfortable, they described a responsibility to address oppression of LGBTQ people. In responding to a hypothetical situation where two peers are overheard using transphobic language, one participant expressed that it “depends on who they are, I am a strong person until I’m alone, then I get intimidated easy and may not. But, they should be corrected that the term is EXTREMELY offensive.” Another student stated, “Yes, I would intervene. I would try to help them understand how their actions are disrespectful to certain communities and I would stress the importance of respecting all people no matter their identities.”

For another scenario, which asked participants how they would support students who were negotiating their way through the coming out experience, students expressed a comprehension of best practices and resources available at DePaul. One respondent, for example, shared, “I would make sure they knew that I was there for them… point them in the direction of the LGBTQA Student Services Office, and tell them… [about] student groups such as Spectrum and Act Out.” Similarly, other students demonstrated knowledge of resources as well as an appreciation and respect for their role as a confidant to LGBTQ students.

Notably, pre-training and post-training survey respondents expressed how effective engaging content delivery methods (e.g., videos, scenario discussions) were on their learning of the training material. A number of students indicated dryer subject areas (i.e., terminology and history) could be more engaging if the delivery of the content were livelier. Equally, as students expressed interest in deeper conversations, especially for minimally discussed topics (e.g., intersex), they communicated an interest in using dynamic delivery methods to convey the material and increase its efficacy. Finally, across all of the surveys, the students detailed an interest in transgender issues and gender expression/terminology (e.g., gender-neutral pronouns), indicating an area which should receive more focus in the future.

The demographic questions asked on the pre-training and post-training surveys revealed some expected trends in participation. The vast majority, 76%, of participants self-identified as female, with 22% identifying as male and 2% identifying as female/genderqueer. Regarding sexual orientation, 65% identified as heterosexual/straight with the remaining 35% identifying as queer, questioning, bisexual, lesbian, gay or a combination of these identities. The follow up survey questions did not breakdown
demographics as specifically, it only asked if the participant identifies as a member of the LGBTQ community. Of the eight people who completed the follow up survey, 25% indicated that they do identify as a member of this community with the remaining 75% answering that they do not. With the majority of survey respondents identifying as members of the dominant social groups (i.e. heterosexual/straight and cisgender), the content and focus of the trainings remains relevant in that it is largely structured as an educational opportunity for a population that has limited first-hand experience as members of the LGBTQ community.

Other demographic questions revealed more surprising data. For example, of the 46 student participants, 52% were undergraduate students and 48% were graduate students. Similarly the age demographic break-down spanned the 19-30 year old range with, 44% identifying as 19-21 years old, 26% identifying as 22-25, and 24% identifying as 26-30. The remaining 6% identified as over 30 or chose not to respond. These demographics are helpful in thinking toward the possible life experiences that participants may bring to the training. Discussions and research about “students” within the field of student affairs and within the sub-field of LGBTQ resource work in higher education often focus on traditionally aged undergraduate students, but this data indicates that we have a comparable number of graduate students who fall outside of the 19-22 year old range participating in these trainings.

The assessment data affirmed and illuminated several key findings:

- Survey responses indicated that participants feel more comfortable intervening when hearing homophobic/biphobic/transphobic language and that they gained tools for educating others about the LGBTQ community.
- Participants learned from the inclusion of specific information about transgender people (identity development, pronoun usage, etc.) and would appreciate even more information about this topic.
- Participants benefited from information about terminology and intervening in instances where negative language is being used.
- Several sections of the training could be re-worked to increase engagement, participation, and information retention.
- The large number of graduate students participants and students over the age of 22 indicates that the curriculum should take into account these students’ unique perspectives and experiences.
- More work must be done to reach potential participants across campus, especially those who do not necessarily possess pre-existing knowledge of LGBTQ people and identity.

This project faced several limitations. For example, participation in the trainings is voluntary and, as evident in the pre-training survey results, people who choose to participate come to the trainings already possessing a degree of knowledge around LGBTQ issues. It is likely that these participants’ pre-existing knowledge influenced their responses in the follow up survey. Thus, it is hard to know if the training directly caused an increase in knowledge around these issues.

This assessment project was also limited by the sample size and the fact that the training participants were self-selected. Specifically in analyzing the data from the follow up surveys, the eight people who completed the surveys all demonstrated learning in the form of practical application, but it is hard to discern whether those individuals would have intervened or responded in the scenarios presented before they attended the trainings.

**Implications**

The data in this assessment project indicates that the Safe Zone program is successful in increasing student knowledge around issues facing LGBTQ individuals and the development of techniques for
being an ally to this group of people. The project also illuminated some areas for growth/improvement in the Safe Zone program and has some transferable implications for other departments and offices within the university.

As a result of completing this assessment project, the LGBTQA Student Services will work to increase marketing for the Safe Zone program with a goal of reaching more students from a variety of backgrounds, thus increasing engagement in the program. LGBTQA Student Services will also work on revising the content of the trainings to be as engaging as possible (more interactive activities, more videos and voices of a diverse group of LGBTQ people). Furthermore, LGBTQA Student Services will continue to work on ways to reach those who may not know about the trainings or who may not be interested in participating. It is hard to know who this demographic may be considering the people surveyed all chose to participate in the program. A possible future assessment project on this topic could include surveying the campus more broadly on their knowledge of LGBTQ issues and developing targeted trainings/outreach based on the results.

The findings have implications for other departments and offices at DePaul that are focused on developing allies to marginalized identity groups. All departments and offices can benefit from considering the diversity of age, perspective, and identity that participants bring to education programs.

The data gathered and results found in this project are solely intended for internal use and for the improvement of the Safe Zone program at DePaul, not for outside publication or presentation. Results will be shared with university partners in the form of a poster presentation coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs in October 2013.
Appendix A: Pre-training and Post-training Survey Instruments

[Page 1]

DePaul University Safe Zone Training
Pre Training Survey

Thank you for your participation in the Safe Zone training program. Your completion of this survey will provide critical feedback.

1. **Which category best represents your U.S. ethnic group? Please circle:**
   - African American
   - Native American
   - Asian American
   - Latino/a
   - White/Caucasian
   - Multiracial
   - Choose not to answer
   - Other (please specify):

2. **Which category best represents your age? Please circle:**
   - 18 years of age or younger
   - 19-21
   - 22-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-35
   - 36-40
   - 41-45
   - 46-55
   - 55+
   - Choose not to answer

3. **Role at DePaul. Please circle (as many as apply):**
   - Undergraduate Student
   - Graduate Student
   - Staff
   - Faculty
   - Other (please specify):

4. **Gender. Please circle (as many as apply):**
   - Male
   - Female
   - Transgender
   - Genderqueer
   - Choose not to answer
   - Other (please specify):

5. **Sexual Orientation. Please circle (as many as apply):**
   - Heterosexual/Straight
   - Gay
   - Lesbian
   - Bisexual
   - Queer
   - Questioning
   - Choose not to answer
   - Other (please specify):

6. **I have previously received training on LGBTQ issues prior to this program. Please circle:**
   - Yes
   - No

[Page 2]

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Circle one number per row).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know people who identify as LGBTQ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know about LGBTQ history</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. I am confident in my ability to use appropriate language when discussing LGBTQ topics

4. I understand concepts of LGBTQ identity development

5. I recognize there may be differences between my own identity and those identities of other individuals

6. I respect the differences between myself and other individuals

7. It is important to educate myself about issues in LGBTQ communities

8. I am confident in my ability to initiate dialogue about LGBTQ communities

9. I am confident in educating others on how to support LGBTQ communities

10. I recognize the influence a heteronormative society has on LGBTQ communities

11. I am familiar with resources for LGBTQ people on campus and in the community

12. I support LGBTQ communities

What do you expect to learn during the training session?

[Page 1]

DePaul University Safe Zone Training Post Training Survey

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Circle one number per row).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements: I know people who identify as LGBTQ</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2. I know about LGBTQ history
3. I am confident in my ability to use appropriate language when discussing LGBTQ topics
4. I understand concepts of LGBTQ identity development
5. I recognize there may be differences between my own identity and those identities of other individuals
6. I respect the differences between myself and other individuals
7. It is important to educate myself about issues in LGBTQ communities
8. I am confident in my ability to initiate dialogue about LGBTQ communities
9. I am confident in educating others on how to support LGBTQ communities
10. I recognize the influence a heteronormative society has on LGBTQ communities
11. I am familiar with resources for LGBTQ people on campus and in the community
12. I support LGBTQ communities

[Page 2]

If you are a student, please tell us about your campus involvement. Are you a member of a student organization (i.e., student org recognized by OSI, Fraternity/Sorority, athletic team, club, etc.) at DePaul?
What components of the training session were most effective?
What components of the training session were least effective?
Are there additional issues or topics you wanted to discuss during your training?
Do you have additional comments for the facilitator?
Appendix B: Follow up Survey Instrument

[Survey also available at http://depaula.sus2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5dxooQJA8kem3qd.]

Thank you for participating in a Safe Zone Training earlier this academic year. Please help us make this program better by completing the following short survey. Responses will be collected through Sunday, June 2, 2013 at 5pm.

This survey is part of an assessment project being conducted by Katy Weseman, LGBTQA Student Services Coordinator at DePaul University. Your participation is being requested to learn more about the impact that the Safe Zone Training program has on the participants and the larger campus community. If you agree to being part of this project please complete the survey questions below. There is no requirement to participate and feel free to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. Your responses will be anonymous and will only be viewed by the researcher.

If you have any questions, please contact Katy Weseman at kweseman@depaul.edu or 773.325.4607.

1. Please indicate your academic level
   - undergraduate student
   - graduate or professional student

2. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community?
   - yes
   - no
   - prefer not to answer

3. Please give a specific example of how you have used the knowledge you gained from the Safe Zone Training?

4. How would you respond in the following scenario:
   A friend of yours discloses that they are struggling with coming out and don’t feel there are support systems at DePaul. How would you support or guide them?

5. How would you respond in the following scenario:
   You are working out at The Ray and you overhear two students laugh and refer to another as a “tranny.” Would you intervene? If so, how?