

COMMISSION FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

The City of Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities (SCSM) has continued to collaborate with the community and work with City of Seattle governance to advocate equality for LGBTQI constituents. This document summarizes SCSM accomplishments from February 2007 to January 2008; please contact the SCSM co-chairs at exec@sexualminorities.org with any questions.

The SCSM held public meetings on the third Thursday of every month from 6:30 pm-8:30 pm in City Hall. All commission seats were filled for most of 2007, and seven interviews are pending to fill three recently opened seats. The SCSM leadership included two co-chairs (Joseph Daniels and Eileen Terry) and chairs of three committees: 1) Committee Relations (Jeanine Johnson), 2) Media and Marketing (Kenneth Cuong La), and 3) Recruitment, Administration and Government (Charles Butler).

During 2007, the SCSM hosted three forums: 1) A general community forum in November 2007 with the support of the Office of Civil Rights and City Council. Attendance at the forum included the representatives from Seattle Policy Department including Chief Gil Kerlikowske, Washington State Senator Ed Murray, and Ingersol Center Executive Director, Marsha Botzer. 2) A hate and bias crimes forum in January 2007 in conjunction with the Human Rights Commission. And 3) Another hate and bias crimes forum in conjunction with the Seattle Police Department in January 2008 inspired by community-based organization around anti-gay attacks in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood.

The SCSM also widened awareness of transgender issues throughout 2007. The SCSM advocated for awareness training for city employees through the Trans 101 course offered by Aiden Key, and requested a city proclamation to recognize Trans Awareness Week in August. Also, the SCSM nominated the Trans Jail Policy Committee for the Seattle Human Rights Award, which the group received.

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The SCSM will hold its annual retreat in February 2008 to complete its 2008 Work Plan.

1. Community Relations (CR) committee

In 2006, the SCSM CR led five forums covering the topics of diversity, health and well-being, gender identity, aging and parenting within the LGBTQI community. These forums were a big success. They not only advertised the existence of the SCSM, connecting us with more of Seattle's LGBTQI population, but also provided a lot of constituent data that helped the commission influence policy and budget decisions to promote equality.

As a result, the CR committee continued this momentum into 2007 by:

1. Hosting a day-long community forum on November 10th, 2007.
2. Providing SCSM commissioners with the opportunity to serve as "liaisons" to a diverse and representative group of Seattle organizations to bolster community relationship ties.
3. Updating SCSM's website to include more relevant information about our community, organizations and activities (see <http://www.seattle.gov/scsm/resources.htm>).
4. Providing SCSM commissioners with ongoing networking opportunities to improve our group's cohesion and bolster community relationship ties.
5. Using 2006 forum data to help SCSM's Recruitment, Administration and Government (RAG) committee make strategic budget and policy recommendations that helped equalize the lives of Seattle's LGBTQI constituents.
6. Continuing to advocate prior SCSM recommendations to relevant community groups to promote equality.

Each of these actions is discussed in the corresponding sections of this document.

1.1 All day community forum on November 10th, 2007

Inspired by the dynamic discussion initiated in 2006's "Diversity" forum, the CR committed hosted an all-day "open space" forum that allowed constituents to confront controversial issues directly and speak with the SCSM about their concerns.

Open Space concept

The "Open Space" forum model allowed participants to discuss whatever they desired about LGBTQI issues in Seattle. The flexible model encouraged participation and aired constituents' concerns to the SCSM directly (see <http://www.openspaceworld.org/> for more information).

Forum day agenda

Most SCSM Commissioners attended, including former SCSM Commissioners Marsha Botzer and Adana Lloyd. The forum sessions' facilitators were:

- SCSM Co-Chairs Joseph Daniels and Eileen Terry

- The forum's event coordinator and SCSM Community Relations (CR) Chair Jeanine Johnson
- The SOCR's Director Julie Nelson and Acting Director of Policy and Outreach Jacque Larrainzar

1.2 Commissioner liaisons for community organizations

In April 2007 a list of organizations was sent to SCSM Commissioners and they were asked to voluntarily liaison with at least one group, in order to give more community groups direct contact to the SCSM. These included, "implicit organizations" that Commissioners were already involved with, as well as "explicit organizations" that were identified as active community groups the SCSM should bolster relationships with.

Ultimately, the SCSM attempted to connect more frequently with the following community organizations:

- Camp Ten Trees (206-985-2864, info@camptentrees.org, <http://www.camptentrees.org>)
- Dunshee house (206-322-2437, <http://www.dunsheehouse.org>)
- HRC (todd.landis@gmail.com or kathleenjudd@yahoo.com, <http://www.hrc.org>)
- KEXP (Monica Ramsey 206-520-5817, <http://www.kexp.org>) ← NOTE: This is not explicitly an lgbtq group, but a great source for community news, etc.
- Lambert House (Ken Shulman 206-322-2515 ext. 11, ken@lamberthouse.org, <http://www.lamberthouse.org>)
- LGBT Center (206-323-5428, info@SeattleLGBT.org, <http://www.seattlelgbt.org>)
- Lifelong AIDS Alliance/Chicken Soup Brigade (tinapo@llaa.org)
- PFLAG (tkwong@microsoft.com)
- Pride Foundation (Audrey Haberman 206-323-3318, info@pridefoundation.org, <http://www.pridefoundation.org>)
- Rainbow Families (Janet and Karen Howell-Clark klhc@msn.com)
- Three Dollar Bill Cinema (aka Seattle GLBT Film Festival, 206-323-4275, <http://www.seattlequeerfilm.org>)
- UW's lgbt group
Seattle U's lgbt group (Triangle Club) magem@seattleu.edu
- Safe Schools Coalition <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/>
GLAAD (our contact is based in LA and covers the NW, Krochmal@glaad.org 323-933-2240)
- Equal Rights WA <http://www.equalrightswashington.org>
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (Seattle chapter)

- Entre Hermanos
- Lambda Legal
- Trikone NW
-
- Bent (Queer writing institute)
- Queer People of Color Liberation Project

1.3 Updated SCSM website with community information

It was brought to the attention of the CR committee that the SCSM website lacked information about community groups, events and activities. In response, the CR committee gathered known online resources and worked with city technology officials to upload the relevant contents to the SCSM website.

1.4 Group cohesion through strategic networking events

Historically, SCSM Commissioners have interacted with the community via a variety of volunteer, fundraiser and networking events. The CR committee continued to drive SCSM participation in these events, with the goal of ensuring each Commissioner reached their 11 community events per year commitment.

1.5 Put 2006 forum data into action

In 2006, the SCSM hosted five forums and collected data from the community on how the City of Seattle could improve the lives of its LGBTQI members to be on par with non-LGBTQI constituents. As a result of these forums, the CR committee took the following actions:

1. Contacted Tom Rasmussen about the City of Seattle's health insurance to clarify coverage of gender-transition services for the city's employees.
2. Worked with RAG to write a letter to the City of Seattle urging them to update their forms to include the transgender community.
3. Investigated the LGBTQI training given to foster and adoption parents.
4. Recommended two policy papers to RAG for, "LGBTQI Senior Housing needs in Seattle," and "Healthcare costs for gender transitioning services in Seattle" and suggested the SCSM get assistance from the University of Washington's Evan's Public Services Clinic.

Worked with RAG to ensure past recommendations were heard by city officials

The CR informed RAG of two past recommendations the SCSM made to the City of Seattle via February 2006's, "LGBTQ Youth Policy Paper" and November 2005's, "Connections Homeless Center" memo.

2. Media and Marketing (M&M) committee

The Media and Marketing committee set ambitious goals for 2007, to increase the SCSM's visibility and improve its communications.

With five members, Jake Zukowski, Arnold Martin, Aurea Astro, Shelley Ho (joined in September) and Kenneth La, the Committee started with a work plan to identify some deliverables to accomplish our ambitious goal. These deliverables included attending community events presenting the Commission, getting involved with events at the sponsor level, placing the Commission in spotlights, re-launching the SCSM's SharePoint Site, planning social events to reach out to community as well as to build a cohesive Commission, acting as an agent to feed news to newspapers such as the SGN, and lastly, creating quarterly e-News to communicate the works of the Commission.

Even though the Committee suffered several obstacles¹ which slowed its progress, it has a successful year in increasing the visibility of the Commission, high lights are:

- 2 Organized the attendance of the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce – Seattle Award event honoring former commissioner Marsha Boltzer.
- 3 Involved with the International Coronation extensively including presenting awards to keys members of the Court system for their leadership, attending the ceremony, as well as sponsoring a welcoming message placed in the program books.
- 4 Coordinated the involvements of the commission at the Fruit Bowl Award, our very own committee member – Arnold Martin aka Aleksa Manila – was awarded the Peach Award for leadership and community volunteerism. In addition, Aleksa Manila also hosted the event.
- 5 Both the Commission and our commissioner, Arnold Martin were awarded the Community Service Awards for our work both as the Commission and individual commissioner.
- 6 Sponsored the highly publicized event of the book signing of celebrity Reichen Lehmkuhl. Also, arranged the attendance of the celebration for the Commission to be recognized by the community.
- 7 Extended our involvement with the Greater Seattle Business Association by having committee member Arnold Martin hosted the Scholarship Award ceremony.
- 8 Conducted extensive outreach to community organization within the Greater Seattle area as well as beyond the boundary of State of Washington, including national organization such as Lambert House, the NGLT, Californian Transgender Community, Safe School Coalition, Family like Ours, the Lesbian and Gay Health Center, Antioch University, and Gender Odyssey.
- 9 Coordinated the Commission's attendance of various festivities during Pride, including marching in both parades, designing and producing promotional materials such as t-shirts, pamphlet, bookmarks to promote both the Commission and the Community Forum.
- 10 Managed marketing campaigns for the Community Forum.

¹ Jake Zukowski's job changing leads to lacking of involvement; Arnold Martin went on a personal leave.

- 11 Acted as a communicating agent of the Commission by feeding news to the SGN, meeting with City Council members, promoting the Commission to the Mayor office, attending Council hearing.
- 12 Organized and hosted the Holiday Party for commissioners.

Although we have achieved most of what we set out to do, there are areas of opportunities for the Marketing and Media Committee to be even stronger and more effective. Even though the visibility of Commission within the community has been positive as a result of the combination of outreach and communication, the M&M Committee could better utilized other tools to multiply the effectiveness in communication such as the SCSM's website, e-News, press releases, op-eds pieces, Seattle Channel television broadcast.

In 2008, the Media and Marketing Committee will continue its effort in promoting the visibility of the Commission through volunteer activities, community involvement, and delivery of timely news reports to the community at large as well as to the City government and its departments.

3. Recruitment, Administration & Government (RAG) committee

Monthly Meetings

- RAG met on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm (the monthly RAG meeting was sometimes rescheduled to the third Wednesday of the month, as needed)
- Monthly RAG meetings were always enjoyable and helped build a strong team spirit within the RAG committee

Recruitment for the SCSM

- Through RAG, the SCSM successfully participated in the application/interview/selection process for our Get Engaged Commissioner, Lillie Cridland
- RAG maintained an efficient application/interview/selection process that resulted in zero Commissioner vacancies during the majority of the current 2007-2008 Work Plan
- RAG effectively dealt with a relatively high percent of turnover during the current Work Plan
- RAG worked to promote the selection of diverse candidates to the SCSM during our application/interview/selection process
- RAG also implemented a new Commissioner orientation process, during which newly appointed Commissioners received dedicated attention in numerous areas
- RAG, likewise, initiated a mentor program wherein new Commissioners would be matched with more "senior" Commissioners on a mentee/mentor basis

- On a constant basis, RAG encouraged Commissioners to keep an eye out for potential new Commissioners

Administration of the SCSM

- RAG worked with Seattle Office for Civil Rights (“SOCR”) staff persons to achieve a smooth transition from our previous administrative support staff person, Marta Idowu, to our current administrative support staff person, Rose Hoskins
 - RAG worked to promote efficiency in SCSM meetings
 - RAG implemented a successful Commissioner attendance tracking process that monitored Commissioner attendance at monthly SCSM meetings as well as at monthly committee meetings; this process also including tracking the various community events in which Commissioners participated on a monthly basis
 - RAG worked hard to follow-up with specific Commissioners, and with the SCSM as a whole, to highlight areas of improvement regarding efficient SCSM administration
 - RAG participated in the quarterly review process of the current Work Plan, in order to continually track the progress of RAG in achievement of the various goals set for 2007-2008
 - RAG worked to promote an atmosphere where all Commissioner’s ideas/thoughts/feelings were able to be heard
 - RAG managed the process of reinvigorating the use of SharePoint as a means of communication/organization for SCSM Commissioners, documents, and activities

City of Seattle government relations

- RAG implemented a government liaison assignments program, in which every Commissioner was assigned to one of sixteen (16) different local political officials, including, but not limited to: the Mayor, the City Council, the Seattle City Attorney, the King County Prosecuting Attorney, the King County Executive, and the Seattle Public Schools Superintendant; this program was a success in that it increased the visibility and accountability of the SCSM in the greater Seattle community
 - The SCSM was continually praised by the Mayor as being very active, present, and participatory in the greater Seattle community
 - The SCSM worked hard to build relationships with the other two SOCR Commissions: the Seattle Human Rights Commission, and the Seattle Women’s Commission; the SCSM participated in the 2007 Women’s Summit (sponsored by the Women’s Commission), and participated in the Seattle Human Rights Day (sponsored by the Human Rights Commission)
 - The SCSM actively participated in every Three Commission Meeting throughout the current Work Plan