

Before The Center

Iowa State's recorded history of queer activism dates back to a few years after the Stonewall Uprising. The Gay People's Alliance — Formed in 1971, originally named the Gay Liberation Front — Wrote letters to the Iowa State Daily and participated in talk shows highlighting queer issues and confronting negative stereotypes

Gay/Lesbian Student Outreach — Officially recognized as a student organization in 1984 — Organized rallies in 1988 for minority rights

Obstacles

However, these queer organizations received immense push-back.

— 1986: A petition is formed to de-fund the GLSO

— 1987: The Sloss House received a bomb threat during a GLSO meeting

— 1990: President Gordon Eaton refused to publish a statement for National Coming Out Day

— 1991: Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Day festivities are interrupted by the Heterosexual Society (later Young Americans for Freedom)

— 1991: Assault on a queer student occurs in Campustown

In Memoriam: The Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success

A brief history from conception to abolishment and what to do moving forward

Trigger Warnings:
Queerphobia and Mentions of Violence

Zine by Alexis Newport in collaboration with Coalition for University Equity

Resources used:
Page 1, 2, & 3: <https://exhibits.lib.iastate.edu/lgbt-studentlife-at-iowa-state-university-1970-1999/introduction>
Page 3 & 4: <https://iowastatedaily.com/9980/news/thecenter-for-lgbtqia-student-success-history-on-campus/>
Page 5: <https://iowastatedaily.com/316203/news/studentsgather-to-mourn-loss-of-the-center-for-lgbtqia-studentsuccess/>

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Student Services

In 1992, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Student Services is opened with the mission to develop programs and services to better the campus climate for LGB students. In 1996, the office was renamed the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Student Services to better address the needs of trans students.

Originally, the LGBSS was staffed by only one part time graduate assistant working 20 hours a week. In 1997, the Dean of Students office recognized a need for more resources and began lobbying to be staffed by a full time staff member, a need not filled until 2008.

Moving Forward

Even in the face of opposition, queer students have always been at Iowa State and always will. The loss of The Center is not the end for us, here are a few things we can do moving forward:

— Keep Using The Center: Even though The Center is not designated as a queer space, we can still keep its spirit alive. Need a place to study? To talk with friends Between classes? To host a student event? Go to The Center!

— Stay Up to Date: The crusade against DEI won't stop at stripping campus resources. As the Upcoming legislative session looms, its important to read up on current legislation and Board of Regents decisions.

— Speak Up: Email your representatives. Attend protests. Join an organization. Use your voice!

The Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success

In Fall 2010, the LGBSS got a much needed renovation to offer a more student friendly space.

In 2017, the last name change occurred, officially becoming the Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success. Additionally, The Center was moved to its last location on the 4th floor of the Memorial Union. The Center hosted 2 full time staff members and hosted many events for the queer community at Iowa State, as well as offering important resources like safe-sex supplies.

Abolition of The Center

Senate File 2435 and the Board of Regents enforcement restricts universities from having Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, which lead to the "reformatting" of The Center.

Instead of having a dedicated space to celebrate and support the queer students of Iowa State, the Center is now a hollow shell of what it previously was, serving as general computer lab. Instead of investing in the community and providing full time staff members dedicated to providing programming and support, these responsibilities have fallen to unpaid and under supported student orgs.