

The ALLY Network at The University of Western Australia: The Early Years

An evaluation report of the first three years of the ALLY Network
at The University of Western Australia (UWA) funded by
a Diversity Initiative Grant through the
Equity and Diversity Office at UWA.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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An Ally is a "person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her own personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for the oppressed population". Washington and Evans (1991, p.195)



Raising the Rainbow Flag at UWA October 2003

The Ally Network aims to create a more diverse and inclusive culture at UWA by promoting greater visibility and awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) staff and students and their issues. Central to this project is the training and development of a network of 'Allies', that is, staff and students who are prepared to align themselves with and advocate on behalf of GLBTI staff and students.

Foreword

The University of Western Australia has a long standing commitment to equity, yet issues of sexual diversity remained largely invisible. The findings of the *Rainbow Project* revealed that, while UWA was generally an accepting environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex staff and students, there was room for improvement.

In 2002, when the grant application for the Ally Network came before me as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and chair of the Diversity Initiatives Fund, this was an opportunity to more actively engage with issues of sexual diversity. While it may have been a bold decision to fund the Ally Network project particularly given that it preceded legislative reform, I have always believed that not making difficult choices reduces your capacity to make the next difficult decision.

This evaluation report vindicates that initial funding decision. Over the intervening years more than 280 staff and students have publicly identified as Allies. The Ally Network was a first for Australian universities and was a catalyst for the development of similar networks at a significant number of other Australian universities. This evaluation highlights the success of the Network in helping Allies become more empowered in their role and as champions for cultural change within their work and study environments, as well as the wider community. The Ally Network has contributed to the creation of a more inclusive culture for *all* staff and students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and students committed to progressing the aims of the Ally Network. In particular I would like to acknowledge Jen de Vries and Allan Goody who first conceived of the project and developed the partnership between Student Services, the Guild, Organisational and Staff Development Services and the Equity and Diversity Office. This partnership has sustained the Ally Network for six years and achieved national recognition for the University.

Sexuality is one of the equity issues least researched and least targeted by workplaces and institutions and has been called the 'last acceptable prejudice'. I am hopeful that the ongoing growth and maturation of the Ally Network at UWA and across the sector will continue to challenge prejudice, render this important area visible and continue to build an inclusive culture around issues of gender identity and sexual diversity.

This has been an enormously positive initiative for the UWA community and the higher education sector. I am proud that UWA has been able to show leadership in this area.

Professor Alan Robson, AM
Vice-Chancellor and ALLY

Executive Summary

The ALLY Network at The University of Western Australia, launched in 2002, was initiated by two staff members who formed a grassroots partnership of the Centre for Staff Development, Student Services, the Guild and the Equity and Diversity Office to progress the initiative. A small project grant was obtained through the Diversity Initiatives Fund and supported by the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The development of the Ally Network preceded law reform passed by the State Government.

The aims of the Ally Network are to extend the diversity initiatives of the University into the area of sexuality and to create a more diverse and inclusive culture at UWA by promoting greater visibility and awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) staff and students and their issues. An ALLY is someone who is informed about, is sensitive toward and understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) people and their issues and affirms the experience and rights of GLBTI people. Since the network's launch, more than 280 staff and students have publicly identified as Allies.

During the foundational and consolidation years, the Ally Network relied on the good will of staff and students who led and managed the initiative, often in addition to their regular duties. Financial and in-kind support was provided by the four partnership groups. From mid-2005, the Ally Network has been managed by the Equity and Diversity Office as a part of their broad range of programs.

Research conducted in 2006 aimed to evaluate the impact of participation in the Ally Network for Allies, on their attitudes and their perceptions of awareness and visibility of GLBTI staff and students on campus, and to gauge the extent to which participants considered that the Ally Network has met its original objectives. Data was collected through a web-based survey, an Ally forum and interviews. Forty-four percent of Allies survey (n = 144) responded and a core group of ten allies were interviewed.

The data shows clear and positive differences in people's levels of personal and interpersonal awareness with greater advocacy occurring in their workplace. This is reflected in the 50% of the Allies surveyed moving from a positive but essentially passive position to a positive and active advocacy position, joining the 27% that already considered themselves to be active advocates. Training and related activities were praised and are clearly achieving the aim of creating a network of active advocates for GLBTI staff and students. The number of Allies trained and the spread of the Ally model to other universities are further indicators of the success of the Ally Network.

Ongoing support from senior management and the commitment of those closely involved in the development and growth of the Ally Network has resulted in recognisable benefits both for the Allies and for the University. Resources are needed to expand the Ally Network and address concerns expressed by respondents including the need for more engagement of undergraduate students and the uneven spread of identified Allies across the University. The expansion of the Network should include a focus on encouraging the ongoing engagement of current Allies and recognising their contribution to the important resource that the Ally Network is for the University.

Acknowledgements

The development and continued growth of the Ally Network has been a pioneering journey for The University of Western Australia. The goodwill, interest and involvement of the UWA community have made it an extremely positive strategy which has developed a momentum and life far beyond what we would have anticipated. It has also been a personally empowering journey for those closely involved, especially for those identifying as members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community on campus. For some members of the steering committee and indeed for some Allies, the work of establishing the Ally Network has carried both personal and professional risk. As this report demonstrates, that courage has been rewarded. Our thanks go to all who journeyed with us.

The initial project and this evaluation project would not have been possible without the support and input of many people. The project committee is grateful to the University community for its support, and in particular, acknowledge the following for their contributions:

- ❖ Professor Alan Robson, AM, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Western Australia and Ally for his leadership in funding the initial project and his ongoing support and promotion of the Ally Network.
- ❖ The Diversity Initiatives Fund for the initial funding of the Ally Network Project and funding for this evaluation project.
- ❖ The Ally Network partners:
 - The Equity and Diversity Office for ongoing support and extra funding for this project.
 - The UWA Student Guild including current and past Guild presidents and councillors and the Queer Department (previously Alternative Sexuality Information Department) for their continuing support of the Ally Network.
 - Student Services for ongoing support and maintenance of the website.
 - Organisational and Staff Development Services particularly for support of Ally training.
- ❖ The survey respondents, interviewees and participants in the Ally Forum.
- ❖ All the Allies and in particular those who agreed to be members of the first group of Allies to participate in training and be publically recognised as Allies.
- ❖ Josh Hogan for his continued participation in this project beyond his role as project officer.

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Introduction

The Ally Network at The University of Western Australia (UWA) has been a groundbreaking project, a first for higher education in Australia. This report aims to 'capture' various aspects of the early years of the Ally story in the one place. A large component of this report is devoted to an evaluation of the program undertaken in 2006 and sponsored by a UWA Diversity Initiative Fund grant. In the process of compiling this report, however, it became clear that it was important to document some of the history and context of the program in order to make the best sense of the evaluation material.

It is difficult to do justice to evaluating an initiative such as this which aims, through creating a network of people, to create a more inclusive culture. Of necessity given the modest budget allocation, this report focuses on the impact of the program on the Allies themselves and their perceptions of organisational change. The timeframe of the main body of the report is limited to the 'grassroots' and consolidation phase of the program, from the initial inception of the idea in 2001 through to mid-2005. Subsequently the program moved to be the responsibility of the Equity and Diversity Office.

The adoption by other universities of the Ally Network model, which began in the grassroots phase, has continued to gain momentum under the guidance of the Equity and Diversity Office. This report will therefore be of interest not only to UWA in the ongoing development of the Ally Network, but will also be of interest to those organisations who are adapting the UWA model to their own institutions and to those considering embarking upon this journey.

The story of the Ally Network is an extraordinary one, moving from the launch of the program in one university in 2002, to the current position almost six years later, where the Ally Network model has spread to eleven universities. This report documents, evaluates and reflects on the early foundational years of the Ally Network.

Part A of the report details the development of the Ally Network.

Part B reports on the evaluation undertaken in 2006.

The UWA Equity and Diversity Office has provided a postscript to the report which briefly describes the consolidation and extension of the Ally Network that occurred after the initiative was incorporated into their programs in mid 2005.

Part A: Developing the Ally Network at UWA

In the beginning

The idea for the Ally Network at UWA was conceived during a discussion between two staff members over the office photocopier. However there were many unique aspects to the individuals, the institutional environment, leadership and the timing which came together to enable the Ally Network project to come to fruition.

Dedicated staff, building a team and institutional enablers

In this brief overview of the project's first steps, some of these enablers are explored. While in retrospect it might appear to be a fairly straightforward process, at the time it seemed a courageous and difficult enterprise. Although UWA was considered a tolerant environment with a senior leadership known for championing gender equity and diversity causes, it would still be expected that the attitudes of staff and students would reflect the homophobia evident in the broader community. That homophobia was on full display both at a local and national level. Nationally, allegations made against Justice Kirby under parliamentary privilege provoked comment from Senator Brian Greig, in saying 'we have a culture which makes homophobia the last bastion of acceptable prejudice' (Rose 2002). Meanwhile Western Australia was embroiled in highly controversial Gay and Lesbian Law Reform legislation. Letters to the Editor of the *West Australian* were filled daily with homophobic commentary, complemented by advertisements placed by right wing groups vilifying gays and lesbians. On campus, the presence of 'out' (openly acknowledging their sexuality) GLBTI¹ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex) staff members was close to non-existent. While this lack of visibility was interpreted by many as lack of a problem, it actually signified a perceived lack of safety.

The conversation over the photocopier took place between Jennifer de Vries and Allan Goody, academic staff members in the Centre for Staff Development (CSD) and both with some exposure to 'Ally' and 'Safe Zone' projects in North American universities. At UWA in 2001, however, a variety of factors occurred concurrently to open the space to make the project imaginable. A recently revitalised GLBTI staff network, co-ordinated by Malcolm Fialho, Project Officer in the Equity and Diversity Office, had gained courage from the launch of the Rainbow project (a survey-based research project primarily exploring student attitudes towards GLBT staff and students, initiated by the Guild, in particular Aaron Hewett², in partnership with the Equity and Diversity Office and funded through a Diversity Initiatives Fund grant.

Institutional support evident through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Professor Alan Robson approving the Rainbow Project funding was a landmark for diversity at UWA. The GLBTI community welcomed his speech at the launch of the Rainbow Project³ in March 2001, providing substance to UWA's long-stated policies in this area. At the launch of the Rainbow Project a lesbian member of staff spoke openly and courageously

¹ GLBTI is now also referred to as DSG – Diverse Sexualities and Gender.

² Other contributors from the Guild were Tim Huggins, Kristy Duckham, Emma Wynne, Bryony Horrocks and Ryan Batchelor.

³ Cameron Sullivan, Allan Goody, Delphine McFarlane and Malcolm Fialho were involved in the Rainbow Report.

about her sexual orientation in a way that was empowering for those GLBTI staff and students present. In contrast other GLBTI staff had stayed away. They feared being identified as GLBTI through association with 'out' GLBTI staff and through attending such an event. Despite the background of publicly vented homophobia, the institutional support as evidenced by the support of the DVC and the impetus provided by the Rainbow Project was sufficient encouragement to progress the idea of an Ally Network at UWA.

Allan, Jen and Malcolm, themselves members of the GLBTI community, formed a team with Monica Butler and Sylvana Oates of Student Services and Cameron Sullivan from the Alternative Sexuality Information Department (now the Queer Department) of the UWA Student Guild.⁴ These key staff and students brought together the Centre for Staff Development (now Organisational and Staff Development Services), Student Services, the Guild and the Equity and Diversity Office to form a grassroots partnership to progress the idea. Funding was sought from the Diversity Initiatives Fund and subsequently \$2500 was granted in 2001. While the amount of money was small, the group took enormous encouragement from the imprimatur of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who had again approved the funding. UWA was well on the way to doing pioneering work in the area of sexual orientation, an issue long ignored by institutions of higher education in Australia.

The development of the Ally Network was not driven by the impending Gay and Lesbian Law Reform legislation, although the timing was fortuitous. While the legislation provided the legal basis for institutional policy modification and enforcement, it was the actions of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in approving the funding that demonstrated that UWA was not simply going to ensure the legislation was adhered to, but that the spirit of the legislation would be manifested in the daily life of the university community. Further, it is important to stress that attitudes and even personal behaviours toward GLBTI persons cannot be simply be altered by legislation. This was very evident in the press during the law reform debate.

It should be noted that this grass roots model, initiated by GLBTI staff working in partnership with 'straight' staff and across key areas of the university, provided an unusual and unique model for implementing an institution-wide equity initiative. Typically in higher education, campaigns or strategies to address equity issues or to ensure compliance with policies or legislation would be driven by offices of Equity and Diversity.

The group, located as they were in the middle ranks of the institution, with a good array of skills and networks, the imprimatur of the DVC and a modest amount of funds, set about building the Ally Network.

First steps

The steering group focussed their efforts around several main tasks: reviewing programs and resources sourced online and from colleagues in North America, developing training materials and the training program, mounting a major publicity drive including

⁴ This group varied in membership over time. The initial Project Committee of the six members above expanded to a steering committee in 2003 that included Krysa Haq, Daniel Stepniack, Claire Webb, Jo Francis, Judy Skene and Emmeline Tan.

the 'badging' of the project with the development of a logo, badges, door signs and posters and staging a high profile launch.

A critical decision made at this point was the handpicking of key players for the first group of Allies. GLBTI staff members were all too aware from their own coming out experiences of the difficulty in anticipating people's responses to GLBTI concerns. Prejudice sometimes comes from surprising places and the steering group was operating in somewhat of a void where GLBTI issues were not visible, acknowledged or discussed. Together they put together a list of senior staff who it was felt would be supportive and positive role models for the university community and occupied key positions⁵. These individuals were personally approached and by launch time there was a group prepared to visibly support the Ally Network at the launch. Their training would occur soon after that. Not all those approached to be a part of the initial group of Allies responded positively.

The launch, a combined launch of the Rainbow Project report and launch of the Ally Network took place on 6 June 2002. It was a standing-room-only event with June Williams, the then recently retired WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner, launching the Ally Network and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Robson launching the Rainbow Project report. The Allies were visible wearing their Ally badges and many badges were still in evidence and provoking comment at the University Teaching and Learning Committee that took place later that afternoon. Key staff, members of the GLBTI staff and student community, several politicians and colleagues from other Western Australian universities joined in the cutting of the cake and a generally celebratory atmosphere.

The higher education context

It is important to realise that at the time of the launch of the Ally Network, no other Australian tertiary institution had any programs in place to address homophobia or discrimination on the basis of sexuality. Indeed, programs and initiatives addressing diversity in general were all but invisible across the Australian corporate landscape and where it was discussed the focus tended to be on gender and to a lesser extent race and disability. UWA, in common with some other universities, listed sexual orientation in their equal opportunity policy but there were no proactive initiatives in place. The Ally Network was the first, breaking new ground in a way that attracted considerable attention and was soon being emulated by others. It was a timely and positive initiative. The subsequent momentum that the project developed indicated willingness on the part of many, both at UWA and in the sector more broadly, to address the issues and become personally involved.

There was little in the way of Australian research or material to draw on. The Rainbow Report (Sullivan, Goody, McFarlane & Fialho, 2002) of the project undertaken at UWA (<http://www.equity.uwa.edu.au/page/8879>) provided the only survey data of a university student population. It painted a picture of a largely tolerant, though not necessarily knowledgeable student body, tainted by a vocal homophobic minority. Many students had heard derogatory comments and the majority did not challenge these. Thirty-five per cent agreed that they did not say anything if they heard a derogatory comment and a

⁵ Including Director of Human Resources, Chair of Academic Board, a senior librarian, Director of Student Services, Manager of Equity and Diversity, several Principals of residential colleges, Director Public Affairs, and the DVC.

further 25 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (Sullivan, Goody, McFarlane & Fialho, 2002, p. 9). Many were unaware of whether discrimination was occurring or not. This provided a useful foundation for our understanding of the UWA context. The work of Irwin (1999) who surveyed some 900 gay, lesbian and transgendered workers regarding their workplace experiences provided some understanding of the experiences of GLBT workers in Australia. Fifty-nine per cent reported harassment and/or prejudicial treatment in their current or previous workplace.

The international context

The international context was different. Ally Network and Safe Zone projects had been in existence on North American campuses since the early 1990s. The first of these programs is believed to have originated at Ball State University in 1992 (Poynter, 2000) and they have continued to grow in number. In North American colleges, these programs primarily reside within university counselling centres, student government or university administrative units. There was a great deal of material on the web outlining these projects, materials which proved enormously useful in guiding the development of the project and importantly, the development of the training manual, materials and workshops.

The philosophy of the Ally Network

The term "Ally" has been used to describe people who advocate for minority populations in social justice issues such as sexual diversity and race since the early 1990s, particularly in North America (Broido, 2000). An Ally has been described as "a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her own personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed population" (Washington & Evans, 1991, p. 195).

In practice, the Ally Network is a network of staff and students across campus who identify as an Ally to the GLBTI community. The Ally Network is open to all and no assumptions are made about the sexual orientation of Allies. This differs from the North American model where Allies are only those members of the campus community who do not identify as GLBTI; that is they are, as defined by Washington and Evans, representative of the "dominant or majority group". The presence of the critical mass of GLBTI "Allies" has benefited the Network especially in the training sessions where potential Allies have had the opportunity to meet and talk directly with a broader cross-section of GLBTI staff and students.

The broad objective of the Ally Network is to create a more diverse and inclusive culture at UWA by promoting greater visibility and awareness of GLBTI staff and students and their issues.

Specifically, the Ally Network aims to change the culture of the university by

- providing a visible network of identified Allies to the GLBTI community;
- promoting a productive and positive work and study experience and for staff, a greater sense of job security;
- building a support and advocacy network;

- using education to further awareness and visibility of GLBTI people and their issues; and
- negating homophobic and non-inclusive comments and behaviour.

Being an Ally involves accepting some obligations. Allies are asked to commit to

- participating in an interactive training program and attending occasional Ally meetings and information sessions on GLBTI issues;
- publicly identifying as an Ally, including being listed on the web site and displaying an Ally sign;
- providing a safe place to talk for members of the UWA community who seek confidential support, empathy or friendship and information on GLBTI issues;
- being open to questions from and about GLBTI students and staff; and
- working within and supporting existing policies and practices that bring equity to the UWA community and giving open support for GLBTI people and their issues.

The Ally training program

The training program is a crucial aspect of the Ally Network. The project was committed to developing a network of Allies who are knowledgeable and understanding of GLBTI issues and who are confident in their roles as advocates for GLBTI students and staff. A principal aim of the training is to assist people through the developmental stages of the process of alliance and providing opportunity to examine their own heterosexist assumptions, attitudes and behaviours. This process requires time and a willingness to engage in personal reflection. The training also aims to provide information and some insight to the GLBTI community and the experiences of GLBTI people. While the term 'training' is used, the sessions are more about facilitating each participant's personal exploration of what being an Ally means to them individually.

The training package and materials were prepared by Allan and Jen as the 'staff developer' members of the steering group and relied heavily on adapting the North American material and approach to the Australian context. Initially training of Allies was designed as two two-hour sessions a fortnight apart. While this format was ideal in terms of allowing time for reflection, setting of between-session awareness raising homework and capturing the richness of input from participants in the second session, it was difficult to sustain. Maintaining continuity of participation across two sessions and the requirement to attend both sessions to be listed as Allies on the website became administratively and practically difficult. Training eventually settled into one five-hour session including lunch.

A great deal of attention was paid to creating a safe environment where topics that are not usually part of everyday conversation could be raised and questions could be asked that might be considered rude or ignorant in other contexts. Each program was co-facilitated in the first few years by Jen and Allan or Malcolm. It was considered important that GLBTI persons facilitate the training as they were able to use their personal experiences and had a deeper understanding of GLBTI experiences and issues.

In addition, using two presenters allowed for more diverse experiences and views to be shared. Each session began with the personal stories of the presenters as a way of personalising the issues to be discussed and modelling the trust required for optimal learning to take place. This decision further emphasised the strength of the grass roots approach to the development of the Ally Network. Training sessions were structured to be varied using stories, interactive exercises, personal reflection, video clips, role plays, a panel and the provision of a comprehensive resource manual.

An environment of trust and confidentiality was integral to the openness and willingness to share by both facilitators and participants. As the training was open to all, personal experiences such as those of participants identifying as GLBTI, as parents and friends of GLBTI persons and those who identified as allies to social justice issues added authenticity and richness to discussions. The facilitators stressed that they did not have all the answers and often would only be able to speak from their personal experiences and that each only represented one aspect of the diversity of the GLBTI community.

Training sessions generally followed the same format with some flexibility for anticipated and unanticipated detours into discussions that the participants deemed important. Each session began with a rolling PowerPoint presentation with newspaper headlines, graphics of various GLBTI events and personal photos. Before providing an outline of the session program, the facilitators, accompanied by some personal photographs, began by telling some of their own stories as a way of illustrating issues such as coming out, judging 'safety' in the workplace, invisibility of personal and family life in the workplace, life choices, and examples of societies heterosexist assumptions. Following introductions through a warm-up exercise and the setting of ground rules to establish trust and confidentiality, language, definitions, inclusiveness and confusions were discussed.

An activity called "To be or not to be an Ally" explored the factors pushing participants away from or pulling them toward being an Ally that people experienced or may experience in taking on the role and being publicly identified as an Ally. Personal experiences of participants' process of alliance to other social justice issues were drawn upon to help participants consider their decision to be an Ally. The activity was enlightening for some participants as even though they were quite comfortable and confident in their decision to become an Ally, they had not fully considered the reaction of others to their decision, or how they might handle that reaction. An example of a "push" cited by a participant was how her husband and his conservative family would react and how she might deal with that reaction.

This activity was followed by a personal assessment of homophobia and introduction to the process of 'alliance', leading into a discussion of cultural and institutional homophobia, heteronormativity and heterosexism. Participants are challenged to critically examine UWA as their workplace and study environment, to critique university services, publications including the web, and the university's image in order to judge its "queer friendliness" or otherwise. The process of alliance and the role of Ally are explored further through clips from videos and television and the use of role plays. "Coming out" is also explored and again, participants are asked to reflect on their own "coming out" experiences that might help them understand the coming out process for GLBTI persons. An example of "coming out" cited by one participant was of a child with a disability in the family and the parents having to constantly "come out" to

various people they met.

The training sessions closed with a panel drawn from gay, lesbian, transgender and intersex staff and students, to provide participants with an opportunity to hear stories of people's lives and to ask questions, either directly or anonymously through a question box, and to interact on an individual basis.

During the sessions, the facilitators encouraged questions which participants may have felt were politically incorrect, clumsy or ignorant to be aired. Questions asked by participants in training and afterwards are both genuine and sometimes confronting but made possible by the creation of a safe space. They have included the following. *How could you 'become' lesbian after such a long marriage? When did you work out you were gay? I just can't get my head around a lesbian couple having a baby. What is a good response to someone who has just come out to me? What pronoun do you use for a transgender person?* The personal was often interspersed with workplace questions such as; *How can we make the health service more GLBTI friendly? Should we re-issue Degrees for transgender people in their new name? What do we provide for same sex couples when they move to a position here at UWA?*

A constant underlying theme of the training was to reassure participants of what their role as an Ally would be. Some spoke of their 'legitimacy' to speak on queer issues or acting as authoritative advocates within their sphere of influence or imagined they would be dealing with grievances. It was stressed that while being more aware and knowledgeable of the experiences and issues of GLBTI staff and students would assist them in their advocacy role, being an Ally did not rely on them having a deep knowledge. Their impact could be through small actions such as speaking up in the tearoom when homophobic comments are made or being more inclusive in their day-to-day conversations and routines including teaching. It was also stressed that it was not a scheme for dealing with grievances, nor was not intended to replace or replicate the Equity and Diversity Adviser Scheme or any other similar schemes. To underscore this concern the comment was made that as an Ally they may never have a GLBTI person come to them for any reason but the mere presence of the Ally sign on doors and in workplaces could make a very significant difference in the life of a GLBTI staff member or student and they, the Ally, may never be aware of it.

We previously mentioned the process of alliance to GLBTI people and that the training program aims to assist people through the developmental stages of alliance. The process of alliance is a major focus in the training but also over the longer term as Allies grow into their role and become more knowledgeable and empathetic and take on a greater advocacy role. Based on the work of a number of researchers including Washington and Evans (1991) and Poynter (1999), we have used a framework to help Allies in the alliance process. We have characterised it as a four stage process. The stages are recognised as being fluid and contextual, rather than a static or fixed position (Table 1).

The majority of participants identified as being in the third stage. Movement towards the more active positive end of the spectrum is encouraged both for themselves and those around them. During one training session, a participant suggested that there was a mid-level stage of those people who were negative and 'waiting to act'. This stage was demonstrated at the time on a number of occasions through the media where prominent

and respected individuals (eg talk back radio hosts and politicians) made negative comments about GLBTI people and members of the broader community saw this as an 'approval' to act upon their homophobia. These people, buoyed by a display of apparently publicly acceptable homophobia, in fact regressed to the first stage of negative-active.

Negative Active:	Being negative and acting out on their homophobia. Includes behaviour that is openly hostile and oppressive towards GLBTI people.
Negative Passive:	Being negative but not acting upon those feelings. Includes the attitude that being GLBTI is something that needs to be 'tolerated' and 'accepted'.
Positive Passive:	Taking a human rights position although still passive in their stance. Includes being supportive and having a 'fair go' attitude towards GLBTI people, but will not take a stand or speak out.
Positive Active:	Being positive and proactive and taking an advocacy role. Includes active appreciation and willingness to speak or act in support of GLBTI issues.

Figure 1. Four-stage process of alliance

Excerpts from the documentary *Scout's Honor* (<http://www.scouts-honor.com/index.html>) which chronicled the emergence of the advocacy group *Scouting for All* (<http://www.scoutingforall.org>) provided a very powerful demonstration of the process of alliance. *Scouting for All* was a grass roots initiative by a young scout in the USA who advocated against discrimination of gays in the Boy Scouts of America.

The program evolves

As it began to unfold the UWA Ally model deviated in several respects from the North American models we had used as a starting point. This began with the badging of the program but expressed itself in other ways including being inclusive of both GLBTI and non-GLBTI Allies. While many North American initiatives used pink triangles and the idea of safe zones, our focus was on rainbows (as a more recognisable symbol in Australia) and providing a sense of presence on campus. Once the training began we became aware of the potentially transformational impact of the training on the individuals. Naming the 'process of alliance' was empowering in facilitating the Ally's journey. The ripple effect of their raised awareness also became apparent. Participants reported the conversations they had on the bus (forgot to take the badge off), over Saturday night dinners, with their partners, their teenagers, with their work colleagues (what was that training all about?), and in negotiating putting up the Ally door sign with those who shared their offices.

The Ally Network also differed from people's understanding of equity networks as they currently existed on campus. People were inclined to think that becoming an Ally was

an extension of the well publicised Equity and Diversity Advisor Scheme (many advisers have completed the Ally training and publically identified as Allies), which has a small group of trained advisers dealing with local enquiries and complaints. Allies worried that they would have distressed GLBTI students and staff coming to them with complaints. This was not the intention and has in fact rarely been the case. While resources and information were provided in the training should this occur, the focus of the training was more on the awareness raising and education of the Ally with a particular focus on increasing their advocacy skills. Dealing with homophobic comments in the tearoom, overcoming their own discomfort in conversation with a gay or lesbian colleague or learning to use appropriate and inclusive language were seen as important. Asking a new staff member for example 'what does your partner do as opposed to what does your wife do and is she settling in OK?' can make a big difference.

Allies applying their understanding to their area of work jurisdiction was also seen as an important outcome. This might include, for example, undertaking an audit (a heteronormativity check) of posters on the wall in the medical centre, or spelling out the inclusivity of a policy by explicitly stating it applies to same sex partners, or ensuring a more diverse range of scenarios or examples are used in the teaching curriculum.

This focus on the development of the Allies themselves, rather than a sense of the Ally as a receiver of complaints or point of contact, permeated the training. It also built on an understanding of the need for culture change that could occur using a process of 'small wins', a concept that was being applied in the University's Leadership Development for Women (LDW) program (de Vries 2004). A common trap in equity programs is to focus on the minority or disadvantaged group as if they need fixing. Rather, according to Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) the focus should be on the organisational culture as the problem. They conceptualise culture change as an incremental step by step 'small wins' process. Translating this into the Ally Network puts the focus on the 'straight' (heterosexual) staff and students. Developing their understanding and advocacy skills contributes through a 'small wins' process to an institutional culture change process where the heteronormative status quo is challenged. The advantage of this understanding is the ways in which small steps can be appreciated as progress. So for example, the 'ripple effect' of the conversations the Allies were having, while obviously difficult to measure, is nonetheless valued as an outcome of the training.

The UWA model as it was evolving placed emphasis and value on the process of alliance. The following quote, drawn from an end-of-session evaluation form completed by a participant in an early training session, highlights the importance of the concept of alliance.

I have learnt a lot in the course of the training. Information about issues is very important and I see that this needs to be an ongoing process. I am happy to be an Ally and hope that I can make a contribution when the need arises. Maybe I am not as proactive as some people....., and there is still room for the process of alliance to grow.

The Ally Network became firmly established as an awareness and advocacy network where GLBTI and heterosexual staff and students could be involved.

The network grows

Ally training quickly became a regular occurrence each semester and was advertised alongside all other training and development opportunities in the university staff development program brochure. In total 12 groups attended training between 2002 and 2005, two in the latter part of 2002, four in 2003, four in 2004 and two in 2005. This included two sessions specifically for Guild staff and newly elected Guild councillors, and one requested by the Law School. In total, in these early years, 182 participants completed training and were listed as Allies on the website.

While it is difficult to ascertain categories for all participants from the training records, the approximate breakdown is 72 professional staff, 40 academic staff, 51 students, and 9 staff from residential colleges. Students were in the minority in all training sessions apart from the Guild training. Overall, this broadly constitutes a ratio of more than two staff to one student attending training. Given that students move on, the result is an Ally network numerically skewed towards staff allies.

Ongoing evaluation of the training

Training sessions were evaluated at the end of each session with 'minute papers' requesting feedback on aspects of the training that participants found useful and what suggestions they had for change.

In 2002 – 2003 training participants were surveyed at the end of each workshop using a simple evaluation form using a Likert scale of 1 (very poor) to 7 (excellent) and open-ended questions. From 2004, the workshops have been evaluated using the centrally managed student evaluation of teaching process using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, both in their comments and rankings. All responses in the sessions in 2002 – 2003 fell within the good to excellent range, with the majority in very good to excellent and subsequent evaluations (2004 – 2005) generally fell in the agree to strongly agree range. Participants commented most often on the value of personal stories from presenters and panel members. These experiences drew into sharp focus the experiences of GLBTI staff and students on this campus and some participants linked this new knowledge with their wish to be more active in support of GLBTI staff and students in the future. Participants valued the courage of presenters in telling their personal stories and the more detailed knowledge they gained from hearing such experiences.

Other comments focused on the very comprehensive resource manual provided as part of the training. Participants appreciated the fact that they had something to take away and read in their own time. Others felt that their knowledge of issues was already quite developed through their own experiences or those of family and friends but they still commented favourably overall on the balance between having the resources and the personal interaction during the training.

The evaluation forms conclude with an open-ended question and responses included:

After this workshop I feel:

...that being involved in the Ally project is incredibly important

...confirmed in my commitment to be an Ally
...much better informed and better able to address issues
...better informed and want to make a difference in some small sphere of influence at work

These comments indicated that the Ally training was successful in meeting the objectives of the Ally Network

Growing the Ally Network across UWA

A publicity campaign to promote the Ally Network and raise awareness was another key activity in the early stages of the project. The distinctive Ally logo was developed by Rebecca Kohn in the Guild graphics department and reproduced as badges, door signs for those who had completed the training program and committed to become Allies, posters, postcards and magnets. The postcards in particular were distributed widely around campus, in cafes and libraries and initially included in new student welcome packs. They were also available with other promotional material freely available to students in the Guild, Student Services and Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS, formerly CSD). In 2003 the Guild agreed to include a full page promotion of the Ally Network in the Guild diary and this practice has continued.

Following Ally training participants decided if they wished to identify as Allies. Those who did (and very few did not) were recorded in the Ally database. A website for the Network was established in 2002 and names of Allies published on the web. Student Services took responsibility for the website, with initial development managed by Monica Butler and Jo Hocking. After Monica left UWA in 2002, Judy Skene replaced her on the steering group and with assistance from Nathan Carson, maintained the website until the Equity and Diversity Office took over in 2005. An email list of Allies was maintained in OSDS and this provided a means of keeping Allies informed of any events of interest.

Participation in the initial training workshop was intended only as a first step in an ongoing process of development for Allies. Once a core group of Allies had been trained, further opportunities to meet and discuss GBLTI issues were offered in regular forums and events.

Some key events from 2003-2005 were:

- The Institute of Advanced Studies *Diversity Dialogues* conference in 2004 which included a stream on sexuality and featured Professor Didi Khyatt, York University and Professor Blye Frank, Dalhousie University, including an inter-university Forum and Professional Development workshop *Human Rights Workshop: Homophobia and Heterosexism*, with the Department of Education.
- Ally Networking meetings, which included screening the documentaries *Scout's Honor* and *Marriage Matters*.
- Presentation on *The new Gay and Lesbian Law Reform Legislation*: Damien Myer.

- A visit to an exhibition exploring the history of lesbian and gay presence in Western Australia at PICA, in conjunction with staff and postgraduate students from the discipline of History at UWA.
- Participation in the annual Perth Pride parade. Ally has had a presence at the Pride Parade since 2003 with Allies marching alongside GLBTI staff and students, with a specially designed UWA Ally banner and UWA Ally T-shirts, jointly sponsored by the Centre for Staff Development, Equity and Diversity Office and Student Services. In 2004, Allies attended a pre-Pride event and made mortar boards to be worn in the Parade.
- The Rainbow Flag raising was marked by a celebratory event at 7 am on the first day of Pride Month in Western Australia in October 2003. This act of solidarity, suggested and negotiated by Beverley Hill, Manager of the Equity and Diversity Office, has proved to be of enormous symbolic importance to the UWA and broader GLBTI community and has continued each year for the week prior to the Pride Parade. More than 50,000 cars pass by UWA and the flag during that week.

When the University flew the Pride flag for a week in October, it, along with the UWA Student Guild, sent a clear message this campus was a workplace and study environment accessible to everybody, regardless of their sexuality.

(Natalie Hepburn, Guild President and Ally. Unpublished Letter to the Editor, West Australian)

These activities brought recognition from the Perth GLBTI community of the work being undertaken at UWA. References to the Ally Network and flag raising were made in local gay and lesbian publications and a media release by Senator Brian Greig followed the Ally Network launch.

The partnership model: staying connected

The partnership between the various sections of the University proved to be important, with positive offshoots such as:

- Strong support from the Guild and successive Guild Presidents with Ally training provided annually for incoming councillors and sponsorship of Ally page in Guild Diary.
- The production of a jointly funded Ally postcard that was distributed to new students to ensure greater publicity for the standards expected of students and staff at UWA. This was superseded for new students by the sponsored page in the diary but postcards are still distributed during enrolment week to new students.
- Exceptionally strong support for Ally training from Student Services, staff and students from residential colleges, Law School and Blackstone Society (student law society).
- Links to and endorsement of other student initiatives eg Link Week and Sexual Health project.
- Involvement from 2003 onwards as guest lecturers in *Managing Diversity*, an undergraduate unit offered through the UWA Business School.

- Publicity articles in the Pride editions of *Pelican* (Guild newspaper) and in *UWA News* (fortnightly University publication).
- Considerable assistance from students in the ASID department, now the Queer department in providing panel members, collaborating in Pride Parades, assisting the students with O-day (orientation) stalls and including Queer students in the training.

Beyond UWA

The concept of the Ally Network has had broad appeal to other universities wishing to expand their diversity initiatives and develop a similar network to support GLBTI staff and students. The uptake of programs in other Universities was in part due to the growing public profile of the program – a result of conference presentations, invited public speaking opportunities and publications, as detailed below. The progress that UWA was seen to be making in advancing sexuality as an integral part of the equity agenda also encouraged other practitioners to address their concerns about practice at their own institutions through further research and conference papers (Stewart & King 2003).

UWA was asked to provide training to Flinders University in April 2003 to help them develop their own version of the Ally Network. The University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology followed in October 2004. Further visits included the University of New England in July 2005 and Australian National University in October 2005. UWA has provided substantial assistance with training and resources for these programs.

The Ally Network initiative and the process of its development has been discussed and presented in a number of professional, academic and community fora. These include:

- Spheres of Influence: Ventures and Visions in Educational Development, 4th World Conference of the International Consortium for Educational Development, 3 - 6 July 2002, Perth, Western Australia.
- Quality Conversations: Annual Conference of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA). Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, 7 – 10 July 2002.
- Workers Out: The Second World Conference of Lesbian and Gay Trade Unionists (31 October – 2 November 2002) University of Sydney, Sydney.
- BLegits (Queer) network of the WA State School Teachers Union 2003.
- W.A. OEEO Diversity Forum presentation on Rainbow and Ally (26 March 2003).
- Activating Human Rights and Diversity Conference, Byron Bay, July 2003.
- Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EOPHEA), From Rhetoric to Outcomes Conference, (4 -6 November 2003), Launceston, Tasmania.
- UnionsWA LGBTI Workers Rights Conference, (20 May 2005), Perth, WA.
- Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EOPHEA) Strategic Directions Conference (27-29 September 2005), Brisbane, Queensland.

A number of articles were also published including:

- Goody, A.E. & de Vries, J. (2002). Straight talk about queer issues. In A. Goody, J. Herrington and M. Northcote (Eds.), *Research and Development in Higher Education, Vol. 25, Quality Conversations*, (274 – 281). Jamison, ACT: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.
- de Vries, J. A. (2002). The last acceptable prejudice? *UWA News*, July 2002, 21(9), p. 12.
- de Vries, J. & Goody, A. (2003). GLBTI friendly classes. *Issues of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 9, No. 5, June. Perth, WA: Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, UWA.
- de Vries, J. & Goody, A. (2003). Creating a queer friendly campus: The Ally Network project at The University of Western Australia. *Word is Out e-journal*, no. 6.
http://www.uwa.edu.au/ally/_data/page/6836/Word_is_Out_Final_Web_Connected.pdf Accessed December 2, 2007.

The profile of the Ally Network has continued to flourish, with invitations to speak, conference presentations and the provision of assistance to other universities all continuing. Those occurring after 2005 are not detailed here as they fall outside the scope of the report.

Part B: Evaluating the First Years of the Ally Network

The Ally Network became widely recognised both within and external to the University as a innovative and successful project that had firmly established sexual diversity as an important organisational consideration and forged culture change at the University. It had also influenced other universities in their consideration of sexuality as one aspect of their diversity initiatives. The importance of the Ally Network to the University was demonstrated early in its existence by the receipt of a second grant of \$1700 from the Diversity Initiatives Fund in 2002 to expand and further enhance the Network. This was unusual, with funding usually reserved for one-off initiatives that were then expected to secure on-going funding from other sections of the university. The Network also benefited from the support of visible champions including the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor (now Vice-Chancellor).

Subsequently, in order to secure the Network, the decision was made to mainstream Ally into the Equity and Diversity Office in 2005. At this point, several long-term supporters recognised the value in evaluating the grass roots phase of the Ally Network. Allan, Jen and Judy Skene were successful in gaining another Diversity Initiative Fund grant in 2006 to conduct the evaluation which focused on the perceptions of the Allies as to the impact of being an Ally on them and on the culture of their workplace. The team engaged Josh Hogan as a project officer to conduct the evaluation. The results and discussion of the evaluation form the next section of this report.

Understanding personal and organisational change

The evaluation team focused on how the Allies themselves evaluated the personal impact of being part of the Network and how the concept of alliance played out in their workplace. This is in line with the definition used in the training:

An Ally is a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her own personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for the oppressed population. (Washington and Evans, 1991, p. 195)

There have been two other studies of the Ally Network at UWA that assist in extending our understanding of what can at first appear to be a very individualistic change process. Joan Eveline (2004) in her UWA based ethnographic study *The Ivory Basement: Power and Invisibility in the changing university* explored alliance as a form of companionate leadership. Eveline argues that 'the task of making a difference is a collective, often companionate, activity from which leadership emerges' (p. 53). Furthermore, groups that organise themselves into such models of collaborative leadership 'often gain legitimacy from equal opportunity and diversity discourses' (p. 53). This form of action draws on Fletcher's (2002) study of relational work, the essential work of networking, collaboration, shared leadership and emotional intelligence that is very often carried out by women or groups marginalised in the leadership structure of organisations but nevertheless critical to the smooth running of organisations. The alliance model however differs from this in drawing on the majority group in this instance, to make a difference in the work and study lives of the minority.

In relational models, change occurs through the efforts of individuals. Meyerson's (2001) model of 'tempered radicals' focuses on achieving change on a personal scale, whereas Eveline in her multiplying leaderships models, sees the change process as a group endeavour. In both the focus is still on incremental change and 'small wins' that multiply to slowly change the culture of the organisation. The Ally Network incorporates both these aspects, where individual advocacy and change agency operate within a networked structure.

Ann Stewart (2006) in her doctoral thesis entitled *Perceptions of leadership in equity in relation to sexuality and gender identity within an Australian higher education institution notable for its policies in this area* adds another perspective. Ann identified UWA as a best practice organisation through web searches of all universities and went on to conduct a comprehensive range of interviews with a focus on exploring the leadership that occurred in establishing the Ally Network. She identifies leadership occurring at various levels - the institutional leader, the positional leaders and initiating leaders. Her detailed descriptions of these leadership behaviours themselves fit the definition of alliance we are using here. These leaders, themselves acting as Allies, therefore become a model of how individuals playing various roles made a difference in the establishment and success of the Ally Network. The result far exceeded the simple addition of individual acts of alliance.

At what point does this collective leadership add up to something more? When does the leadership occurring at various levels of the organisation as described by Stewart (2006), the multiplying 'companionate' leadership as described by Eveline and the growing numbers of Allies themselves become something more than just a simple addition of individual endeavour? When and how is the organisation itself becoming an Ally to GLBTI staff and students? Beverley Hill (Equity and Diversity Manager) refers to this as the 'Institution as Ally'. The organisation itself becomes advocate and Ally through symbolic acts such as the provision of funding, the raising of the rainbow flag at UWA, approval for the use of the UWA flag in the Perth Pride Parade, references to the Ally Network at new student orientation, an officially endorsed presence, and an expectation of best practice both within and external to the organisation.

Methodology

Objectives of the study

The initial objectives of the study were:

- to evaluate the impact of participation in the Ally Network for Allies, on their attitudes and their perceptions of awareness and visibility of GLBTI staff and students on campus; and
- to gauge the extent to which participants considered that the Ally Network has met its original objectives, which were:
 - to provide identified Allies to the GLBTI community;
 - create a safe, nurturing, inclusive and affirming environment;
 - build a support and advocacy network;
 - forge cultural change; and

- through education, develop further awareness and visibility of GLBTI staff and students and their issues within the wider UWA community.

Data collection

To achieve these objectives it was determined that an anonymous online survey would be used as the primary source of data. The survey of all Allies would capture both quantitative and qualitative data in a confidential manner. This was the first stage of the research with the largest number of participants. Other sources of data in the study were interviews with key Allies and an Ally Forum discussing the results of the web survey.

The online survey, interviews and Ally Forum all focused on the individual change process while drawing on a broader understanding of the change process. The survey aimed to show whether or not participation in the Ally Network has made a change in the awareness, behaviour and attitudes of its Allies, as one way of beginning to identify broader institutional and cultural changes with regard to sexual orientation.

Evaluating broad cultural change in an institution like UWA was beyond the brief of this evaluation project. If the resources had been available to collect a data set similar to that of the Rainbow Project, there would be a basis for comparison of attitudes amongst students but it would still be problematic to attribute any change just to Ally given the relatively small involvement of students in the Ally Network project with the exception of a few pockets of activity around campus.

Survey The survey focussed on the changes in awareness and behaviour that Allies felt they had experienced personally on an intra- and inter-personal level as well as their perceptions of change on a broader institutional level (see Appendix A for copy of survey). These three levels of change formed the basic three-part structure of the survey:

- Personal change;
- Change on an interpersonal and professional level; and
- The broader University community and the public face of Ally.

In the 'personal change' section, respondents were asked a number of quantitative response questions which all had a similar basic form.

Respondents were also asked to identify their own personal change on a 12-point advocacy scale (Figure 2). This scale was based on the four-stage process of alliance used in the Ally training and described earlier in this report. The section on the broader University community and public face of the Ally Network focussed on questions relating to the effectiveness of the network in raising awareness at different levels within the institution and the identification of any discrimination within Ally workplaces. The survey included opportunity for qualitative responses.

Ally Forum A discussion forum on the preliminary results from the online survey was held in July 2006. Approximately 25 people attended and discussion helped to identify additional topics to be further explored through interviews.

Interviews There were ten interviews undertaken with a core group of Allies. In choosing the interviewees, the main focus was on key allies including the Manager, Equity and Diversity, a Faculty Dean, Ally Network coordinators, teaching staff who

incorporate some aspect of sexual diversity into their teaching and some Allies who were particularly active within their own professional contexts. Several interviewees were chosen for their institutional location which allowed them to comment in broad terms on the influence of the Ally Network. The interviews were loosely structured around questions about the Ally training and personal change, diversity in the workplace, incorporating sexual diversity in teaching and learning and ways to further develop the Ally Network.

Survey responses

The survey asked a mixture of qualitative- and quantitative-response questions. All currently listed Allies at the time of the study (144) were invited to complete the survey, of whom 63 (44%) responded. Allies who had left UWA (students and staff) were not contactable and were therefore not surveyed.

While the survey was anonymous, respondents were asked to categorise themselves into one of four broad headings: 'Professional Staff'⁶ (60% of responses), 'Academic Staff' (26% of responses), 'Student' (11% of responses) and 'Research Staff' (3% of responses). See Table 1.

Significantly, there was a greater response rate from the Professional Staff (65% of the total number of professional staff invited to do the survey), than both the Academic Staff (only 26% of the academic staff invited to do the survey responded) and Students (21% of those invited responded). It is important to note that the participants in the training sessions included staff and students identifying as GLBTI, therefore responses to the survey could include these GLBTI persons. This should be borne in mind when interpreting the survey data.

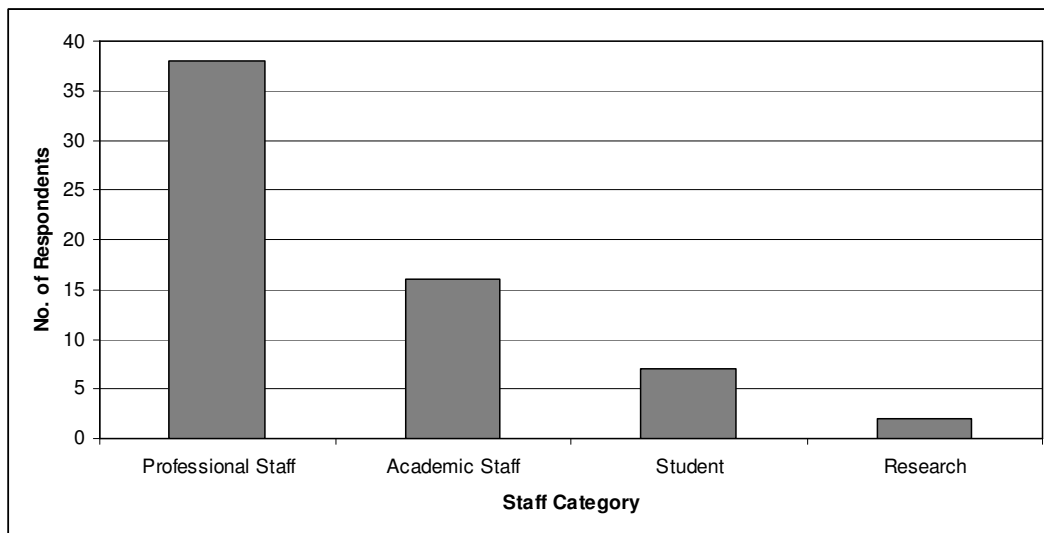


Table 1. Survey responses by category

A total of seven students responded to the survey, which was 11% of respondents but 21% of student Allies to whom the survey was emailed. The students were mainly from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Arts with one each from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and the Graduate School of Education. Two of the seven

⁶ In this report, Professional Staff refers to professional, general and technical staff.

indicated that they were research students. With such a small group, it is difficult to extract any meaningful data from their responses. As previously noted, more staff than students attend Ally training and this coupled with the turnover of students as they graduate and leave UWA, results in lower student Ally numbers.

Length of membership	Number of Allies
Since 2006	9
Since 2005	4
Since 2004	14
Since 2003	29
Since 2002	7
Total	63

Table 2. Respondent's length of participation in the Ally Network

Respondents were also asked to identify how long they had been an Ally and the majority had been Allies of quite long standing, i.e. more that two years (Table 2). This indicates that responses in the survey were based on considerable experience of the Allies in their role. The majority of these Allies were recruited in the 2002 – 2005 period of the program.

Further student contribution

During the course of the Ally Evaluation project, Malcolm Fialho was working with a lecturer in the Law Faculty to raise awareness amongst the lecturer's students of sexual diversity and the role of the legal profession. Diversity awareness training sessions such as these often resulted in students expressing interest in attending additional training and deciding to become Allies. In addition, one student wanted to investigate the impact of the Ally Network in the Law Faculty as part of her research project for the unit and worked with the Ally Evaluation team to design her own questionnaire. She submitted it to students and staff in the Law Faculty and received a good response rate. As the survey was directed to participants in the diversity training, rather than only Allies, the results are not comparable with the Ally evaluation survey and are not included here. However, the positive responses do highlight the benefit both of working directly within the curriculum to raise awareness and then providing the opportunity for interested students to explore the issues further in Ally training.

Findings

The following section broadly follows the logic of the online survey beginning with change on the personal level, moving onto the interpersonal and professional level, changes in advocacy or activism within the workplace, exploring the public face of the Ally Network within the University, and the broader issues of Ally Network effectiveness. Data from interviews is interspersed as appropriate.

Change on an internal, personal (intrapersonal) level

Respondents were first asked if they engaged in a range of activities that reflected an engagement with or awareness of GLBTI issues. For each example they were also asked if their engagement/non-engagement with this activity reflected either 'no change', 'a small change' or 'a significant change' in their behaviour/awareness.

The activity '*(Have you...) Read about GLBTI issues?*' received a 94% 'Yes' response. Significantly, of the respondents who said yes, 76% registered this as a change, either 'a small change' (64%) or 'a significant change' (12%). This is a good example of the changes in behaviour or awareness that Allies identified in themselves through doing the Ally training.

Two other similar activities which related to an Ally's engagement with mainstream media also had significant results. '*Watch a film, documentary or TV show with gay/lesbian characters or themes?*' had an 89% 'Yes' response (53% of those answering yes identified it as a change in their behaviour), and '*Read news or other print media differently*' received a 66% 'Yes' response. Of the 66% who read the news and other print media differently, a significant 97% said it was a change in their behaviour (70% 'a small change', 27% 'a significant change'). There were also several comments regarding reading the print media:

I am more aware when I read or see news/media articles and comment if I think that bias exists etc. (Professional Staff)

The two significant 'No' responses in this section could be grouped as activities engaging directly with the GLBTI community. They were '*Join a Gay-friendly organisation other than Ally*' (96% 'No'), and '*Attend a GLBTI cultural or community event*' (55% 'No' and all of these said it was 'no change' in their behaviour). The first question perhaps reflects a lack of advocacy groups in the broader community that solicit membership from both GLBTI and non-GLBTI members who are not immediate family members. The second question, although recording a majority 'no' response, still has 45% indicating that they do attend GLBTI community events. Many of these respondents would be recording their attendance and participation in the annual Perth Pride Parade.

At the end of Section 1 of the survey, respondents were asked 'If you have identified any change [in your behaviour/awareness], do you attribute it to being an Ally?' Sixty-two per cent of respondents answered 'Yes' to this.

Being an Ally has not so much changed my attitudes as it has my behaviours. I am now more outspoken in defense of GLBTI people.
(Professional Staff)

Change on an interpersonal/professional level

Structured much in the same way as Section 1, respondents were first asked in Section 2 if they would do certain things in their own workplace/relationships with others which reflected an engagement with GLBTI issues on an interpersonal and professional level.

To the activity '*Used more inclusive language in your conversations (i.e. partner rather than spouse, wife or husband)*', 90% of the respondents answered 'Yes'. Of these yes

responses, 75% said that it was a change in their behaviour (61% 'a small change' and 14% 'a significant change'). One general staff member exemplified this kind of change in the following comment:

I actively comment upon inappropriate conversations/statements/jokes of family and friends. Didn't feel I had the confidence or knowledge to do this previously. (Professional Staff)

There was a similar response to the activity 'Had conversations about GLBTI issues with your colleagues?' to which 86% of respondents answered 'Yes' (with 76% of these yes answers being a change in behaviour/awareness). Respondents also commented on their discussions with work colleagues.

I am in a better position now to have a very informed discussion with people who are not aware of the various issues and truths surrounding GBLTI topics. (Professional Staff)

'Confronted inappropriate language and behaviour?' had a 69% 'Yes' response which was particularly pleasing given this was identified as an issue in the Rainbow Project report. Homophobic language, jokes and behaviour left unchallenged impact on GLBTI person's assessment of workplace safety. 'Encouraged colleagues to join the ALLY Network?' had a 71% 'Yes' response. Allies also reported that having access to the information in the Ally training gave an increased confidence in challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, for example:

I feel more confident when I query or correct people who talk or act in heterosexual ways. (Academic Staff)

The significant negative responses for this section were for 'Been directly involved in some form of grievance resolution that would relate to your ALLY status' (90% 'No'), and 'Had more contact with GLBTI students' (64% 'No'). These responses demonstrate that the Ally Network has not functioned as a grievance resolution mechanism, which was an initial apprehension for some participants. There were, however, individual examples of how their presence as an Ally in certain contexts did have an effect.

When a staff member made homophobic comments in my presence, our supervisor reported he spoke with her about it later. Not that I had complained to him, but I may have made a gentle reply to my colleague at the time. I guess that was his action not mine, but the sensitivity rating was raised. (Professional Staff)

Respondents were also asked 'How would you rate your advocacy or activism in your workplace as an Ally' on a scale of 1 - 12 (Figure 2) before participating in Ally training and 'Now', that is, at the time that they did the survey. The scale used was developed as part of the training program and introduced to all Allies as part of their training.

The results from this section were also significantly positive (Table 3). The main concentrations of numbers for 'before Ally training' were in the positive passive range from 7 to 9 (66% positive passive, 27% positive active).

Responses to 'now', that is after training, (Table 4) indicated a significant concentration around the positive active range of 10 to 12 (25% positive passive, 74% positive active, and no respondents below positive passive).

The average change up the advocacy scale for all respondents was more than 1.5 steps (1.635). Perhaps even more significant was that 22% of all respondents registered a change of level greater than 3, which is equivalent to one bracket (e.g. negative-active to negative-passive) and indicates a substantial change in attitude and behaviour.

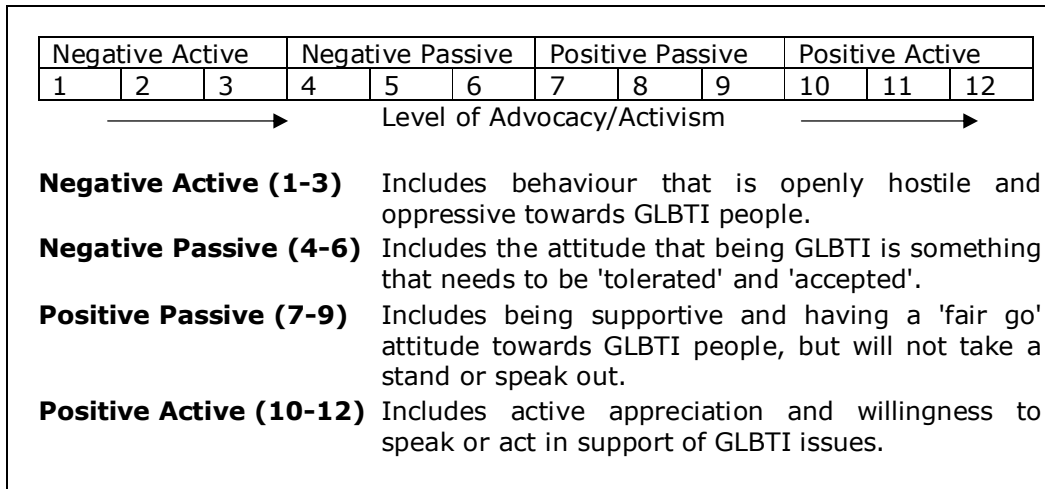


Figure 2. Ally Advocacy Scale

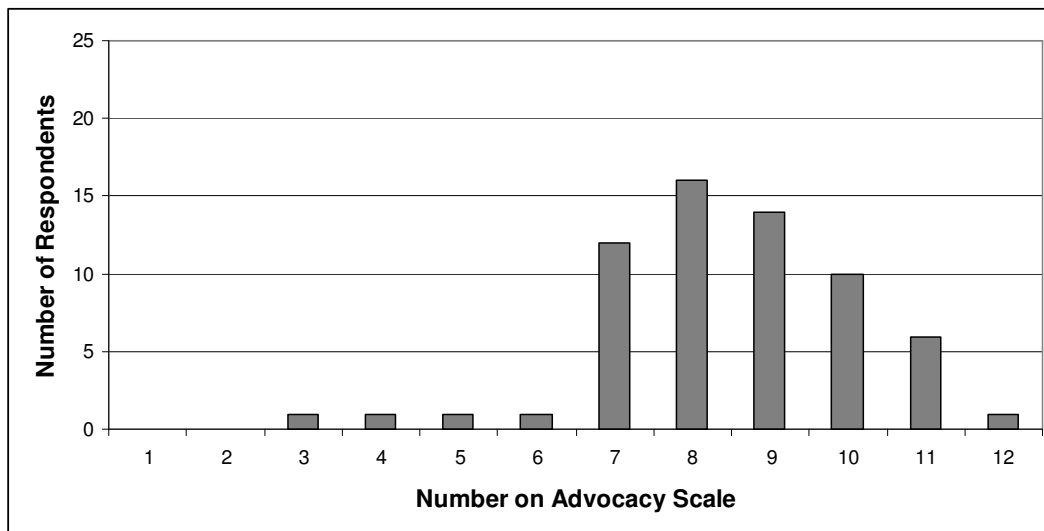


Table 3. Advocacy Scale Responses – 'Before Ally Training'

In addition to the overall increase in the advocacy scale for respondents, there was also a shift from passive to active stance recorded. Of the 63 respondents to this question, 34 indicated that they moved from Negative Passive or Positive Passive to Positive Active on the scale. In all, 47% of respondents moved from a passive to an active stance, even if this meant only a small change on the scale from 9 to 10. This is an extremely positive result in terms of visible advocacy on campus.

I feel like I can take strength in my advocacy from my membership of a University sanctioned network that I see as important. (Professional Staff)

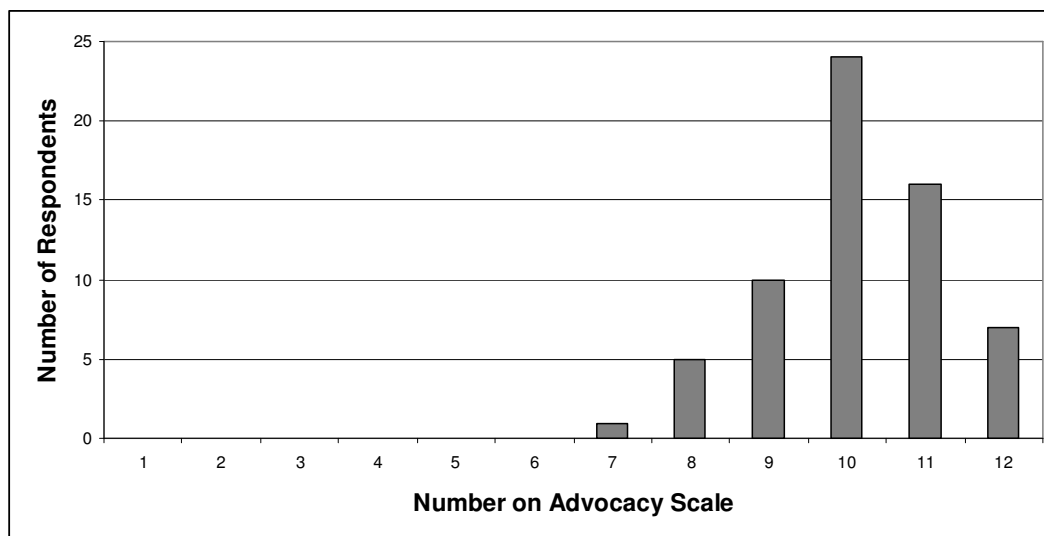


Table 4. Advocacy Scale Responses – 'Now'

The public face of the Ally Network

Both respondents to the survey and interviewees highlighted the importance of the Network's visibility and physical presence. When asked how visible the Ally Network was in their own area, almost all respondents answered some level of visibility, the majority (53%) answering 'moderately visible', followed by 'slightly visible' (26%) and 'very visible' (19%).

One interviewee explained the importance of having a visible presence in their work area in the form of the Ally sign.

I think for me just having the sign visible is the main thing, quite a few staff have commented on it, and a lot of students walk up and down this corridor on their way to hand in assignments and that kind of thing – just having a presence... I do note how many staff have commented on it. (Academic Staff)

There was also discussion at the forum about the importance of maintaining a visible presence. One forum participant related the following anecdote.

At the Law training, one history student related a story where she saw the Ally badge on a lecturer's door, and that she knew that she could feel comfortable doing a topic, without having to sound out in some way whether or not the topic she was interested in doing for an assignment was 'safe'. (Professional Staff)

The flying of the rainbow flag at the front of the University during Pride Week and its connection to the support of the Network at an executive level was also highlighted.

The flying of the flag is a HUGE thing, really important... and just that equity and diversity sits under the VC, and it is seen as something that is integral to the running of the university. (Academic Staff)

It is this sense of public presence that takes the Ally network beyond the individual efforts of a dedicated few and begins to build the Institution as Ally. It doesn't matter whose door the Ally sign is on, but it does matter that it is there – visible in the corridor in sufficient numbers to make a statement. While in this research we did not approach GLBTI staff to reflect on what difference it made to them, a lesbian panel member commented:

I had a huge emotional response to seeing the flag flying, a sense of belonging and acceptance that made me feel really differently about working at UWA. I know it doesn't mean homophobia is gone overnight, but I still felt an enormous sense of gratitude that UWA would do this and that I could be myself at work.

What impact has the Ally Network had so far?

The majority of survey respondents and interviewees were unanimous in their praise of the Ally training and its effectiveness in raising the awareness and changing the behaviours of participants. The qualitative responses in interviews and the survey were full of contextual examples of how Ally training had affected individuals' work at the university.

In my teaching, I am able to draw on what I have learnt from people involved in the Ally training. The discussions and contact has allowed GBLTI issues to become more real to me, as I don't have any personal and first hand experience. I feel less uncomfortable now talking about GLBTI experiences and issues. (Academic Staff)

Several staff members expressed a sense of value in being part of a university-sanctioned network that advocated institutional change, which in turn encouraged their own advocacy.

I am more vocal if the situation needs it. I know I have back up and support if required and there are many references to refer to so I know where to go to get some more info if I'm not sure of a situation... I'm proud to be an Ally, but I still have a lot to learn! (Professional Staff)

Staff members also reported changes in their own awareness of the normative culture that was going on around them in their own work contexts:

I have observed interpersonal interactions in the students I deal with frequently, in which I have been able to discern a dynamic that I now attribute to sexuality where previously I would have been less likely to consider this [possibility] as actively. (Research Staff)

There were also specific comments about the general institutional change that Ally training had brought about in terms of its effect on reception staff dealing directly with students on a regular basis.

It is general staff who have underlined what a difference the Ally training has made for them and I think just a different approach, just not an assumption that the person you are talking to is not a part of the norm in terms of sexuality. (Academic Staff)

Respondents were positive about the Ally Network fulfilling their own objectives in taking the training, with 88 per cent of respondents agreeing to some degree to the question: 'Has becoming an Ally fulfilled these objectives?' as evident in the following quote:

Yes. The program has equipped me with a structure with which to counter homophobia in the university environment. (Research Staff)

At the staff forum a lesbian staff member described her delight at discovering so many rainbow flags on individual homepages on the UWA website when she was considering accepting a position at UWA. While initially she thought there must have been a lot of gays and lesbians on staff, eventually she realised the significance of the Ally logo. It gave her an increased sense of confidence in making the move interstate with her partner to take up a new appointment.

Allies were also asked how effective the Ally Network had been in raising both individuals' and institutional awareness regarding the issues GLBTI staff and students face. At an institutional level, 81% of respondents saw the Ally Network as being 'effective' in raising awareness (52% 'moderately effective', 29% 'very effective'). On raising awareness in individuals it was also seen by 80% of respondents to be effective (66% 'slightly effective', 14% 'very effective'). This sentiment was reflected in some of the qualitative responses in the survey and interviews.

The ALLY project has succeeded in demonstrating an institutional awareness of GLBTI issues. I wanted to support this project and, where possible, its individual initiatives. (Academic Staff)

What are the key components that made it effective?

In her discussion of the Ally Network in *Ivory Basement Leadership*, Eveline (2004) notes:

The alliance model includes recognition of the need for commitment from the top, the collaborative force of the network, the taking of responsibility, and the value of gaining formal [organizational] legitimacy for a specific network. (p. 52)

The elements that made the Ally Network effective as suggested by interviewees in this study can be grouped in four main categories:

1. design of a training process that promotes advocacy and awareness;
2. commitment, expertise and awareness of the people who created the Ally Network and its training;
3. equity-minded nature of the people that are recruited or join the Network; and
4. support and resources of the university executive.

This section explores each of these important components for success.

Training to encourage advocacy and further awareness The development of a training programme that promotes advocacy and further develops awareness is the first main component that could be said to contribute to the success of the Ally Network. The survey data clearly shows a marked increase in advocacy that Allies themselves self-identify (see Figures 2 and 3).

The importance of the personal experiences of GLBTI staff and students who presented in the training program has already been noted. These staff and students were able to talk about aspects of university life that were hidden from many others. Recognising the invisibility of a problem also constitutes a growth in awareness and was reflected in the survey responses on discrimination, with some Allies noting that they didn't see evidence of a problem in their particular workplace while acknowledging that didn't mean one didn't exist. The very absence of visibly 'out' GLBTI staff in some sections may be an indication that the culture is not perceived as safe or that recruitment practices somehow act against GLBTI applicants.

One of the staff respondents drew attention to the new conversations that were now occurring.

I think the training got us to talk about, in groups, stuff that we had never before felt comfortable talking about, except behind closed doors.
(Academic Staff)

One interviewee gave a good general sense of the ongoing process of change following Ally training.

It is the kind of training that makes you consider why you are committed to doing particular things, or how you do things in a classroom, so it's certainly not like I finished the training and I thought that I had finished the training and I could now put the sticker on my door, it wasn't like that at all. It was more like an opportunity to think through 'right, how do I teach my courses', or 'how do I operate in the university environment', or 'how does the university environment continue to perpetuate prejudices often kind of smuggled in under other kinds of things', you know those kinds of issues were in the fore. (Academic Staff)

In this case the training operated as a catalyst for a growing awareness.

In the section where Allies were asked to identify their own objectives in taking Ally training and whether these objectives were fulfilled, there were several responses that further highlighted the awareness- and advocacy-raising training process. All of the following examples went on to say that these objectives were fulfilled in taking the training.

To become more aware of GLBTI issues and to become more active about challenging the heterosexist rhetoric in society. (Student)

Increase my own understanding and knowledge of GLBTI issues/problems etc. Feel able to express my unhappiness with inappropriate jokes, language or actions. (Professional Staff)

Becoming more educated and aware of the issues. Learning more, becoming more sensitive to heterosexism. (Student)

Network had aware and committed staff developers The development of the Ally Network had the benefit of founding members who not only had the expertise as excellent staff developers, but could also strongly draw upon their own experiential background to provide a lively and accurate knowledge base for the Ally trainees. Responses to the survey acknowledged access to the personal experiences of GLBTI people (presenters and panel members) as one of the most important aspects of the training. The stories contextualised the experience of a GLBTI person for non-GLBTI participants.

Hearing personal stories of staff and especially students is a powerful part of the training and I think has most impact. It provides motivation to be more proactive because you realise that GLBTI people are taking risks in coming out and any action on your part is a minor risk in comparison. (Professional Staff)

One interviewee further highlighted the significant professional and personal commitment of the developers of the Ally Network and how this then attracted trainees.

Most importantly, [the developers'] commitment and courage and leadership to getting the programme off the ground and pushing it through the system, people respond to that. This then attracts a certain kind of people. (Academic Staff)

The relationship between individual commitment to the initial development of the Network, its goals and the informal networks that already existed or were being created because of this commitment cannot be overlooked when reflecting on why the Ally Network has succeeded on many levels in the first stage of its growth.

The recruitment of equity-minded people to the Ally Network Responses to the survey and interviews drew attention to the fact that many people who self-present for training are people who are already interested in GLBTI issues and advocacy. The advocacy data presented in Figure 3 further supports this idea. Such an Ally is essentially looking for more tools, more awareness to tackle the issues that they already see as important. One interviewee said:

I guess that I'm left with the impression that most of us who are Allies didn't come to the programme unaware, and subsequently were made aware, it may have refined our thinking The training is really an 'awareness-raiser' amongst those who were reasonably aware in the first place. (Academic Staff)

One survey respondent went as far as saying that they had no change in behaviour or awareness which they could attribute to Ally training; that they came to the training with this outlook already as default.

Being an Ally necessarily calls on people to be aware of, sensitive to, and active in the service of GLBTI issues. Many people who volunteer to be Allies are often already engaged with these issues for personal, social and professional reasons, and the Ally network consolidates as well as supports these interests and concerns. (Academic Staff)

While it could be expected that many Allies would be starting from a high base, this is not to say that a small increase in awareness, even if it is occurring at the positive (top) end of the scale, is not significant. At the Ally Forum, one participant argued that a small change for the already aware trainee was very significant. Furthermore, even if there wasn't a change in this kind of trainee's awareness and/or behaviour, their advocacy skills and support for the aims of Ally make them a valuable member of the Network.

You've got a specific kind of person that signs up to do the programme, I mean they're not going to be your average 'troglodyte' out there... and I think that you could argue that a small change for this kind of person could be significant, and secondly that the people who are NOT answering 'small change' are also significant. (Academic Staff)

It should be noted again that some respondents may identify as GLBTI and therefore they may not register a change in awareness or behaviour. It could be argued that the most significant change that Ally training can continue to make for the 'already aware' trainee is to give them the tools to become an active Ally in the context of their own workplace.

I don't think there has been any change in my personal attitude or values, the biggest change has been my confidence to discuss issues in my work and workplace. (Academic Staff)

Good support and resources from the top Amongst the first recruits to the training were the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor (who subsequently became the Vice-Chancellor) and several senior and prominent staff. The participation from senior staff was so strong in fact that it warranted the following comment on perception from one survey respondent:

Someone commented that it [Ally training] looked like I was doing the 'executive pathway' training. I can only think this is because most people with the Ally sign on their door are senior staff - directors and DVC. (Professional Staff)

As Eveline (2004, p. 52) points out, the participation of senior staff was vital to the success of the Network, not only because of their support in terms of resources, but also their visibility as high-status role models, as echoed in the following survey response.

Leadership of the Vice-Chancellor sets the tone for the institution bringing a confidence which would not otherwise be apparent. (Professional Staff)

One respondent noted the importance of continuing the Network's strong recruitment record with senior staff at the university.

Recruit more high profile staff - there has been a lot of changes amongst Deans, Executive and maybe some could be encouraged to attend training. (Professional Staff)

Directions for further development

Despite the almost unanimous agreement that the Ally Network has been successful, there was a sense of uneasiness in some responses. Some respondents and interviewees had misgivings and concerns about the future of the Ally Network.

In some cases, the problem was the very success of the Network and its visibility. One interviewee spoke to this.

... I'm just wondering if it's like unfortunately the feeling that some people have about feminism, that it's a 'battle that has been won', and perhaps this is a factor in the Ally programme as well, in that perhaps people aren't joining the Network because they think the battle has been won. The most blatant and obvious discrimination has been put away, but that certainly isn't the end of it. I worry that in the absence of blatant discrimination that less people see the need to advocate or train as an Ally. (Academic Staff)

There was also a general sense that compared to the professional areas of the university where most of the Ally cohort is from, the Network is relatively invisible to the undergraduate student population.

I'm not sure that undergrads know about it - it's not obvious to me that they do. (Academic Staff)

Might Ally publicise itself more widely to the larger undergraduate student body? GLBTI students are aware of the network, but are other students informed? Yes, the network is designed, to a degree, to support GLBTI students and staff, but it would also be good to inform other students. Do new students receive Ally information in their orientation packs? Might flyers pinned around departments detailing Ally and its purposes be useful? (Academic Staff)

There was also repeated sentiment that more effort should be made to offer some kind of undergraduate-specific training/engagement with the Ally Network.

Ally training should be offered more widely to UWA students and the network could be promoted more to students so they are aware it exists. (Professional Staff)

I am not sure if 'student only' programs have been run, but this may be a possibility. I think increased promotion of the service may also be useful,

especially to postgraduate students. (Professional Staff)

Responses from students echoed this sentiment. Students recommended that more training sessions be conducted just for students as some students may feel intimidated attending training with staff. Training for students to date has been for specific cohorts, such as the Blackstone Society and the Guild executive.

Concern was also expressed regarding the patchiness of the network - lots of Allies in some locations and few in others. For one Ally there was a sense that the personal wasn't enough; more could be done to strengthen and extend the advocacy role.

Yeah, I mean if you go to see another Ally film screening, then what are the consequences of that, I mean you might feel good about yourself, (laughs), or might think that you are showing solidarity, or creating new networks and friends, but that may not create all of the things that the Ally Network could do, and I suppose that in one sense we need to ask the question 'what are we actually here for' at least to give us a spectrum of what people want to do, I mean do we want to change the structure, or make small changes, or is a really an either/or proposition, just having those questions posed to itself (Ally) is important I think. (Academic Staff)

One interviewee spoke of the problem with the 'small wins' approach adopted in this study as a way of identifying broader institutional changes, and how this broader institutional change through Allies should become a new focus of the Network.

My only concern about that small changes model is that it doesn't then transform structural things in place – I'm not saying that there is overt discrimination at UWA, I'm sure that some people would suggest that there are kind of covert, or, implicit 'structural' things in place. We can hope to change Allies, but that's not going to change policy, which in turn speaks to Government, you know, all those kinds of things. (Academic Staff)

Another respondent hinted at the need for further exploration amongst Allies of their own advocacy in the context of their own workplaces – how they could start to approach institutional change from their own position in the University structure.

I wanted to know more about these issues especially in relation to my managerial role and help/support for students. (Professional Staff)

One staff respondent pointed to the problem of perception of Allies in some work contexts as a hindrance to their own advocacy. There were a number of responses where Allies felt that not being GLBTI themselves but being strong advocates created a kind of cognitive dissonance for their colleagues who did not fully understand the process of alliance. A response to illustrate this feeling was:

I would like to raise the consciousness of GLBTI issues in both staff and students in the school... I don't think I have managed much. I guess there is also the perception of me by others when I am happy to support, but personally don't identify as GLBTI. (Professional Staff)

The survey question '*Are there any experiences/incidents/remarks that have occurred as a direct result of people knowing you are an Ally?*' received a mixed response, with some good individual examples of people's presence as Allies making a difference, but also a general feeling amongst some responses that their presence as an Ally was somehow unfulfilled in the way that they thought it would be in doing the Ally training. This was coupled with the 90% 'No' response to the question '*Have you been directly involved in some form of grievance resolution that would relate to your ALLY status?*'

These responses all pointed to an expectation (that was unfulfilled) that more direct contact with GLBTI people would be an outcome of their training. One forum participant commented on the topic of direct participation in grievance resolution as not being a core part of being an Ally:

I think that an important thing that the survey data brings out is that it is about self-education - it's not about grievances, it's about interactions and conversations and symbols. (Professional Staff)

This response is extremely important as it acknowledges the relational aspects of alliance, that the process of alliance is one where the Ally engages in a particular kind of discourse (in this case, one of sexual diversity) in their own contexts which may not have existed prior to their presence as an Ally.

Discussion

The data collected through the online survey, interviews and Ally Forum provide much rich information that describes the development of the Ally Network and individual Allies' personal development. The Allies also provided invaluable reflections on the successful elements of the program and suggestions that could extend it in both scope and uptake. This discussion draws on their insights, summarising themes that arose from the data that point to ways forward in the maintenance and future development of the Ally Network. As noted in the introduction, it is hoped that this discussion will be useful not only for the UWA Ally Network but also for those external to UWA who are looking to start or further their own networks. It must be noted that this evaluative study covers up until 2005 when the Ally Network was incorporated into the broader diversity initiatives of the Equity and Diversity Office. Some suggestions put forward may already have been considered and implemented.

Off to a great start

The survey data shows clear and positive differences in people's levels of personal and interpersonal awareness with greater advocacy occurring in their workplace. This is further confirmed by the self reported changes in position in the alliance process. While the magnitude of this change varied, the overall result is extremely positive, with 50% of the Allies surveyed moving to a positive and active positive and joining the 27% that were already there. The training and related activities are clearly achieving the desired result in creating a network of active advocates for GLBTI staff and students on campus.

Institution as Ally

Allies commented positively on the public face of the Ally Network noting changes in their own workplaces. The Ally Network, in this sense, acts as an enabler by opening up a legitimate space for people to be advocates. The existence of a program in and of itself makes a strong statement to all in the University community. For those responsible for equity concerns within the University, this provides leverage and support. The Ally Network sets a community standard, raising expectations that UWA will respond positively to issues of sexuality and gender identity.

Ongoing education about the Ally Network

Further clarification of the objectives of the Ally Network and nature of the Ally role would benefit some Allies who encounter confusion in the workplace. There is an ongoing need to clarify that the Ally Network is not a grievance network but a network for Allies to develop and increase their advocacy skills within a supportive structure and with an organisational imprimatur to do so.

Under-utilised resource

The general feeling that Allies are a resource that are somehow under-utilised is encouraging, suggesting that Allies wish to push their advocacy further. This could be facilitated by working with experienced Allies and exploring broader institutional-change strategies. Allies are located in enormously differing work contexts around the university and a focus and dialogue on how individuals can try to change the institutional structures within their own professional contexts would be a logical next step. The notion of institutional heterosexism was explored in initial training and Allies were challenged to explore ways in which they could make a difference in their workplace, be that in teaching, policy areas, student contact and so forth. Some survey responses however suggest that this may have been lost amongst the training overall. Allies who are now more aware of their own journey of 'alliance' and less concerned with issues regarding their role, such as concerns with anticipated inadequacies if they ever had to deal with a grievance, may be well placed to take further steps. Academics, for example, could gain from sharing initiatives exploring heterosexism in the curriculum and ways of ensuring inclusive content and language. Rather than relying on the instigators of the Ally Network, Allies themselves may be able to push these issues, given some support from the Equity and Diversity Office.

Extending the network

Concerns regarding the uneven spread of Allies across the University and the patchiness of the profile of the Ally Network led to a number of suggestions for future focus. This unevenness is a logical result of the self nominating process for training. Mainstreaming of the Network could logically be expected to lead to a more strategic coverage approach which would result in training people who are nominated in terms of their role or their location. However, the voluntary linkage between training and nominating as an Ally is preserved. Training does not guarantee a willingness to become an Ally. The voluntary nature of the role must be respected otherwise it will not be possible to distinguish the Ally Network from other forms of awareness training undertaken by the Equity and Diversity Office. Likewise, targeting specific work areas may also raise the same dilemmas. There are obvious advantages in terms of visibility, coverage and raised awareness in training a large number of people in a specific workplace. In the case of the Law School the number of people attending training has led to a raised awareness of

sexual and gender diversity. While this was initiated by members of the Law School staff and Blackstone Society, this can also be seen by some to dilute the voluntary nature of the role. It is probably a little early to tell if having a critical mass of Allies in one place leads to improved outcomes.

Student involvement

Insufficient focus on student engagement was raised by a number as a weakness requiring more attention. This was raised by both staff and students. Student participation in training was lower than staff and turnover is greater, resulting in low student Ally numbers. Many Allies were, however, unaware of the Ally training that was occurring with the Guild. While students do graduate and leave the university, thus not remaining on the list of Allies, they do move into the workforce and the broader community with a heightened awareness of the GLBTI experience and issues that may translate into change within their professional and personal environment. Nevertheless, student involvement is clearly a weakness that needs to be addressed.

The nature of the Network

A number of Allies suggested that all staff and students should be involved in this kind of awareness raising training. While this would be enormously difficult to accommodate and contravenes the voluntary nature of the Ally Network it does identify a gap in awareness that does need to be addressed. Sexuality has increasingly been highlighted in all areas of diversity training and in this sense is imbedded in more broadly focussed offerings. For students however, there is no foundational way of addressing this and other equity concerns in any kind of broad brush approach. However, encouraging and assisting academics to embed diversity in the curriculum by being inclusive in their language and curriculum content is one way to address this issue. This approach will reach the broadest range and number of students. There has been efforts on this front both by individual academics directly and indirectly reflecting GLBTI issues and diversity more generally in their individual units; by addressing diversity and equity in staff development programs such as Foundations of University Teaching and Learning offered to all new academic staff; and through publications such as *Issues of Teaching and Learning (ITL)*, in particular *GLBTI friendly classes* (de Vries & Goody, 2003).

Making connections

The Allies identified an ongoing lack of contact with GLBTI persons on campus. Ally Network training had provided much appreciated contact with GLBTI staff and students but further Network activities did not necessarily build on this. The Pride Parade was one such opportunity. However this was primarily attended by staff Allies, those involved in setting up the Ally Program and Queer students. GLBTI staff members were largely absent. The staff network, *Connections*, is no longer active and consideration could be given to re-vitalising this and creating more active connections between the two networks. However, the need for ongoing reflexiveness around the question 'what are we actually here for?' which was raised by one of the interviewees, is one which can always be gainfully re-visited.

Sustainability

As facilitators and supporters of the program it was obvious that much more could be achieved with greater resources and availability of staff time. Such resources would make possible an expansion of the Network by, for example, the provision of training

for the residential colleges that were interested in targeted training sessions, targeting postgraduate students through their association, inviting new senior staff to be involved, forging links with other student societies, having a more visible presence at Orientation Day and various student events such as Link Week and Uni Expo. A fresh marketing campaign was also needed. Visibility in student publications was also dropping. Extension of sexuality issues into the curriculum was another area identified by members of the Ally team and a project to initiate this was put forward in a 2006 Diversity Initiatives Fund grant that was unsuccessful.

By the end of 2005 the facilitating team were beginning to burn-out. All aspects of the Ally Network were an addition to normal work loads. Many attempts were made to increase the team of facilitators with queer students and straight staff primarily targeted. This was not successful due to workload, people moving on, lack of facilitation skills and reticence on the part of straight allies to facilitate. The facilitation of Ally training has almost exclusively been by GLBTI identifying staff. While this was considered desirable in the early years of the Network, it is not now as critical. There are Allies with a deeper understanding of the GLBTI experience and the experience of being an Ally who could co-facilitate training with a GLBTI person. However, there is the danger that the training could become just another 'diversity training workshop' if there is no GLBTI presence. The diversification of the facilitators towards a more team based approach is still an issue that needs addressing to ensure sustainability of the Network.

Been there, done that

Allies raised concerns regarding the 'been there, done that' phenomenon which sometimes attaches itself to successful endeavours well before the long-term change process is complete. While the initiation stage attracted considerable support, this may be harder to sustain in the maintenance or mainstreaming phase. This also calls attention to the need to educate Allies and others regarding the long-term nature of the culture change process.

The nature of change

Several Allies queried the nature of the expected benefits of the Ally Network - was a small wins model ever going to be enough to significantly challenge and change the organisational culture? The ideas of 'small wins', collective 'companionate leadership', the process of alliance - these are ways of understanding change processes that are unfamiliar to organisations and to the Allies themselves. This evaluation has explored the ways in which these different kinds of leadership are occurring, whilst highlighting the need for Allies to more clearly see what their contribution is. This query called attention to the need for sharing and publicising the small wins that have occurred of which most Allies would be unaware. Allies were in most part ignorant of other initiatives being undertaken through the Network, suggesting an increased need for communication and feedback through the email network and the website. It is easy to under-estimate the whole, when only being privy to a small part of the whole. This report in itself should provide useful feedback to the Allies who participated in the research and are committed to making a difference in the workplace.

Conclusion

The Ally Network was groundbreaking as the first program in a tertiary education institution in Australia to address issues of sexual diversity. As a grass roots initiative of a small group of committed staff and students, it had the flexibility to be creative and take risks, to focus on the personal and to engender trust and commitment in the people who attended training and chose to become Allies. The 'small wins' model fits well with this structure allowing Allies a sense of empowerment in individual acts of advocacy.

What is apparent from the responses to the survey and from the interview data is that the Ally Network has successfully gained momentum, snowballing and contributing to a broader cultural change process. The Ally Network has been an extremely positive initiative, harnessing the energies of those who voluntarily became involved in raising awareness on campus and thereby raising the bar for what is considered acceptable on campus, and changing the image of the University for GLBTI staff and students and the GLBTI community more broadly. As an interviewee noted, the Ally Network "tapped into the goodness of people, it was not about stamping out homophobia, but about making inclusivity flourish. In this regard it was a great leap forward from the law". This grass roots approach, based on the energy of a number of key players put sexuality issues on the map, allowing members of the institution to engage with it in very positive ways.

Highlights of the Ally program during the first 'grass roots' phase include:

- Executive/senior staff support
- Training program and resource development
- One hundred and eighty staff and students completing the training
- Partnership model
- Setting a new standard
- Putting sexuality on the agenda
- Broader engagement - interest from other institutions

An unforeseen and extremely positive consequence of the successful development of the Ally Network at UWA has been the establishment of Ally Networks in other Universities based on the UWA model. In this respect UWA has been a fantastic role model. The presence of an Ally Network at a Group of Eight sandstone university gave both legitimacy and courage to others in higher education. This again exemplifies the notion of 'Institution as Ally', this time in the broader higher education sector. All at UWA who have been involved in the Ally Network can take pleasure in this achievement – particularly those who provided the imprimatur from the top, which was one of the essential elements of success. The take-up of Ally by other universities that began in the period covered by this report has continued to grow.

We conclude that there have been clearly recognisable benefits from the development of a network of Allies, both for the participants and for the University. The next stage in this development is to continue to expand the Ally Network, especially to students and to those areas of the University where there are currently few identified Allies. The current Ally Network is an important resource and action should be considered to re-engage Allies with the Network. A sense that the battle has been won, a concern raised by one respondent, is a valid reason to continue to promote the Ally Network energetically and keep its profile high on campus.

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Appendix A: The Ally Evaluation Survey

The 2006 Ally Network survey

Thanks for taking the time to fill out the 2006 Ally Network Survey, an important part of the 2006 Ally Network evaluation. Allies are central to an organisational change process. It all starts with you and radiates out from there. The following questions focus on changes that may have begun as part of the process of becoming an Ally. We are also interested to explore how you may have continued your own development in relation to GLBTI issues after completing Ally training.

The Survey is in three general sections:

Section 1: Your observations of changes on an **internal, personal level**.

Section 2: Your observations of changes on an **interpersonal and professional level**.

Section 3: Your observations of the **broader university community**.

This is an anonymous survey.

Some Introductory Questions

What best describes your role at the university?

- General/Professional/Technical Staff
- Academic Staff
- Research
- Student

What area (School/Faculty/Administrative) of the university are you from?

How long have you been an Ally?

How did you find out about the Ally Network initially?

Section 1: Personal Change

The following series of questions are to be answered in parallel with each other - if you answer 'Yes' to the activities in the left hand column, answer how significant a change in behaviour this reflects in the right hand column.

Since becoming an Ally, have you engaged in any of the following activities?

Attend workshops on GLBTI topics?

Yes No →

Read about GLBTI issues?

Yes No →

Attend a GLBTI cultural or community event?

Yes No →

Watch a film, documentary or TV show with gay/lesbian characters or themes?

Yes No →

Join a Gay-friendly organisation other than Ally?

Yes No →

Actively support political causes that are friendly to GLBTI persons?

Yes No →

Read news or other print media differently?

Yes No →

If yes, how much of a change in your behaviour since becoming an Ally does this reflect?

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

If you have identified any change, do you attribute it to being an Ally?

Yes No

If you can, please give some concrete examples from your own experience of this change in awareness, values or attitudes.

Section 2: change on an interpersonal and professional level

As in section 1, the following series of questions are to be answered in parallel with each other. If you answer 'Yes' to the actions in the left hand column, answer how significant a change in awareness/attitude/behaviour this reflects in the right hand column.

Since becoming an Ally, have you done any of the following things in your own workplace/at the university:

Challenged homophobic jokes?

Yes No →

Confronted inappropriate language and behaviour?

Yes No →

Used more inclusive language in your conversations (i.e. partner rather than spouse, wife or husband).

Yes No →

Had conversations about GLBTI issues with your colleagues?

Yes No →

Encouraged colleagues to join the ALLY Network?

Yes No →

Had more contact with GLBTI staff?

Yes No →

Had more contact with GLBTI students?

Yes No →

If Yes, how much of a change in your awareness/attitude/behaviour since becoming an Ally does this reflect?

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

Been directly involved in some form of grievance resolution that would relate to your ALLY status?

Yes No →

if yes

- No change
- A small change
- A significant change

Do you display your Ally Logo somewhere in your workspace?

Yes No

Do you do anything else to publicise to those around that you are a safe and trustworthy person for GLBTI persons?

Do you wear your Ally badge around and, if so, when and where?

Do you think that people have questioned your sexuality because of your involvement with Ally?

Yes No

Do you feel that sexual orientation is an issue in your workplace? (Please give examples to support either answer.)

How would you rate your advocacy or activism in your workplace as an Ally on the following scale? (Please make two marks, one for before becoming an Ally and one for now.)

Negative (-) Active 1-3: Includes behaviour that is openly hostile and oppressive towards GLBTI people.

Negative (-) Passive 4-6: Includes the attitude that being GLBTI is something that needs to be 'tolerated' and 'accepted'.

Positive (+) Passive 7-9: Includes being supportive and having a 'fair go' attitude towards GLBTI people, but will not take a stand or speak out.

Positive (+) Active 10-12: Includes active appreciation and willingness to speak or act in support of GLBTI issues.

Before becoming an Ally

(-) Active (-) Passive (+) Passive (+) Active
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 >>>>>> Level of Advocacy/Activism >>>>>>

Now

(-) Active (-) Passive (+) Passive (+) Active
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 >>>>>> Level of Advocacy/Activism >>>>>>

Are there any experiences/incidents/remarks that have occurred as a direct result of people knowing you are an Ally?

Section 3: The broader university community and the public face of Ally

How effective has the Ally Network been in raising individual awareness regarding issues GLBTI staff and students face?

Not effective Slightly effective Moderately effective Very effective

How effective has the Ally Network been in raising institutional awareness regarding issues GLBTI staff and students face?

Not effective Slightly effective Moderately effective Very effective

How visible is the Ally Network in your area?

Invisible Slightly visible Moderately visible Very visible

Do you have any suggestions regarding the further development of the Ally Network?

Do you think discrimination exists for GLBTI staff in your area?

- No discrimination
- Some discrimination
- A great deal of discrimination

Do you think discrimination exists for GLBTI students in your area?

- No discrimination
- Some discrimination
- A great deal of discrimination

If you are aware of discrimination in your area, in what ways do you see it occurring?

Do you feel that UWA is an exemplary, gay-friendly place when compared to other workplaces?

Some Final Questions...

Did you have any objectives you were hoping to fulfil through becoming an Ally?

Has becoming an Ally fulfilled these objectives?

Postscript

Growing Ally – 2005 and beyond

UWA Equity and Diversity Office

The aim of the preceding evaluation was to research and document the early foundational years of the Ally initiative, 2002-2005. The initiative has, since then, continued to experience strong growth and maturation both across UWA and in the wider sector. It was considered that a summary of the Ally Network's more recent achievements between 2005 and 2008 would add to the overall picture, assist in shaping future directions as well as inform the wider body of 'practice'.

The institution as ALLY

Perhaps the most defining feature of the UWA story has been the fact that ALLY leadership was demonstrated in a contradictory manner to the norm where legislative reform generally precedes attitudinal change. There has been clear evidence of a cultural 'shift' around sexual diversity which has occurred in tandem with, and in some instances preceding, structural changes (e.g. raising the Rainbow flag during Pride month, inclusive policy and practice around reaffirmed graduates, inclusive Collective Agreements). The institution has been a strong Ally in the sense that it has been proactive in its response to sexual and gender diversity thus rendering this '*indiscussable*' subject visible both across campus and in the wider higher education sector. The University provided a context that was personal, local and immediate for this initiative and 'surfaced' sexual diversity specifically while acknowledging the broader diversity landscape.

The Evaluation describes the 'grassroots' phase which involved key individuals across the institution, both GLBTI and heterosexual, mobilising in a spirit of 'alliance' to implement various components of the Program. It is worthwhile noting these individuals performed this role in a voluntary capacity and the main driver was the sense of social responsibility – that it was 'the right thing to do'. This commitment and sense of purpose is clearly illustrated in the Evaluation which scopes points of 'connection' between the individual and collective stories of members of the UWA community and those of the 'institution' itself.

Since mid-2005, the ALLY Program has been managed by the Equity and Diversity Office (the Office) which could arguably be viewed as the 'mainstreaming' phase in that it is currently regarded as an ongoing program within the Human Resources portfolio. All aspects of program management – training, resourcing, development and promotion – are now explicitly within the Office's mandate. The major achievements in this second phase of the journey can best be described under two areas of focus, namely, across the UWA campus and sector-wide.

Across UWA

Members of the UWA community interested in becoming potential Allies have continued to be offered the 'induction' session and the five sessions offered since mid-2005 have seen more than 100 additional Allies being trained. All the sessions have been fully subscribed, feedback received extremely positive, and many new Allies have been active in assuming their role and further promoting GLBTI visibility across campus and beyond.

Buoyed by the high level of ongoing interest from the 'majority' world to better understand a 'minority' world, the Ally training program has, since 2006, been extended to offer existing Allies further development sessions as a follow up to the induction session. Of two hours duration, and accompanied by a modest lunch, these developmental sessions frequently include a panel of speakers from the wider GLBTI community. Topics covered have included gay unions and the recent controversy around 'gay marriage' as well as exploring more deeply the social and sometimes legal exclusion experienced by members of the Trans and Intersex communities.

Another exciting development has been the foray into the teaching and learning sphere. The Office has been working with members of academic staff who are Allies to embed sexual diversity perspectives within the curriculum, and broader student experience. An excellent example has been the discussion of the legal framework surrounding GLBTI unions within a fourth year unit (*'Social issues in contemporary Australia'*) in the Faculty of Law. The session was complemented by a panel of GLBTI speakers who gave 'life' to the notion of diverse relationships and the need for their recognition at law. Feedback received from the students at the end of the course indicated this session had been the most stimulating and many participants reported a significant gain in awareness off a low base.

There have also been positive spin-offs in the recruitment area. In times of a shrinking and competitive labour market positioning the institution as an 'employer of choice' becomes an increasingly important organisational priority. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that some academic staff from interstate have, amongst a range of other features, explicitly noted UWA's progressive diversity climate as a factor of 'attraction'.

Sector-wide

The three other public universities in Western Australia have officially adopted the Ally Program and inaugural training sessions have been conducted by UWA. UWA has also developed a Train the Trainer model for the Ally workshop and initiative, and the skills and knowledge developed over the six year of running the Ally program are being shared and built upon.

Similarly, five other Universities in the east have or are currently in the process of implementing the Ally initiative. These institutions have sought guidance from UWA in shaping the Program to fit their local context. Assistance has been provided both in the form of conducting the training (on a *'consultancy'* basis) for the inaugural Allies as well as providing feedback and expertise around the implementation of the program. UWA has also commenced preliminary discussions with a diversity leader in the private

sector, IBM Australia. IBM has expressed significant interest in this initiative and is seeking guidance from the University around its implementation across their national network to complement a GLBTI advocacy and support group established within the organisation.

The theme of *'Institution as Ally'* has also been given life in the industrial relations sector where the UWA initiative has served to encourage members to reflect on issues of sexual diversity and gender identity, further promoting GLBTI visibility. The Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Worker's Union (LHMWU), keen to develop a meaningful response to this issue across both their workforce and the members they represent, also invited UWA to showcase this strategy to their organisation. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Union (CFMEU) also approached UWA with a view to profiling this issue across their male-dominated constituency. The Ally initiative was of particular interest to this Union who also saw the positive benefits to be gained by members and staff when the institution became an Ally in forging cultural change in a traditional sector perceived to be resistant to the message.

This effort has been mirrored along the east coast of Australia where a proactive campaign run by the NSW Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) has seen five NSW Universities publicly announce their intention of developing a sexual diversity initiative along the lines of Ally. These NSW universities join five other non WA universities Australia wide who had already adopted the program in recent years.

UWA has also been working in close partnership with a community-based advocacy organisation GRAI, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Retirement and Ageing Incorporated, which is exploring the 'issues' nexus between sexuality, ageing, housing and lifestyle options. The research clearly indicates that people of diverse sexualities and gender identities are ageing at an increasing rate (as is the heterosexual population) but, regrettably, their needs and desires continue to remain largely invisible or disregarded. UWA hosted, in partnership with GRAI, three community 'conversations' during Pride 2005-2007 to 'enrol' relevant stakeholders in the debate. The inaugural GRAI forum was addressed by the Hon. Justice Michael Kirby who delivered a powerful message around the theme of initiating 'courageous' conversations to stimulate positive social and cultural change. The University, in its ongoing association with GRAI, is also participating in a comprehensive needs analysis of the social and accommodation needs of older GLBTI persons in Western Australia. The participation of a visible institution such as The University of Western Australia in surfacing and discussing the wider social and legal issues still to be addressed around the real inclusion of sexual diversity is important, and reinforces the message that 'inclusion' is both an individual and organisational responsibility.

Finally, there has been a recent exciting development with respect to re-examining the fundamental bases of the initiative and the use of 'language' in particular. Following feedback received from an experienced member of the university community in Newcastle (NSW), the Office is revisiting the content and positioning of various GLBTI terms presented in the Ally Training Manual and in the program itself. While it may be said that the current analysis of sexual diversity is somewhat binary and possibly fraught with the difficulties of 'labelling', it may be opportune to broaden the debate by examining the various nuances inherent in a framework that is conceptualized on the

basis of diversity in sexual identity formation and gender expression. This framework would clearly scope the differences within and between gender and sexual identity, thus allowing for a richer appreciation and deeper understanding of sexual diversity.

Some final thoughts

In 2008 the Ally program is to be delivered into the University Halls of Residence for the first time. Student representatives from all five Colleges will be invited to attend, with a particular focus on inviting students with a leadership role within the College. This is an important next step for the Ally initiative given that Colleges provide both academic and social support to their diverse residents. It is also a way of redressing the service delivery gap identified in the preceding evaluation.

It remains undisputed that, in implementing this initiative, UWA has witnessed the emergence of new and varied forms of leadership demonstrating a model that is shared and devolved whilst still being framed within an hierarchical institution with cherished and long held traditions (Eveline, 2004; Stewart, 2006). The process of rendering 'visible' the often ignored area of sexual diversity through the Ally initiative has forged new territory on the higher education 'cultural' landscape in Australia. Changing behaviours and attitudes involves a transformative process where people are challenged and exposed to issues of gender, race, sexuality, religion and the wide range of diversity issues we are facing in this new century. As Justice Michael Kirby of the High Court put it at the opening of the International Gay Games (2002):

'...the best way to get to people is through an understanding of the nature of human sexuality, of it's variety, of it's indelible existence, of it's universality throughout the world and all time and that it's no big threat to other people. And if this can be accepted then we may have a chance of changing things.'

UWA must rise to the challenge of continuing the sexuality 'conversation' in a courageous and innovative manner, thus fulfilling its social responsibility in leading for diversity and inclusivity.