

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER EQUALITY (SOGE) COUNCIL



History of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality Council at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®)

Cuyahoga Community College's Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality (SOGE) Council was established in fall 2015 as an employee resource group (ERG). A small faction of dedicated College employees worked with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to form a coalition of faculty and staff who would build on the momentous change occurring in sexual and gender minority rights.

During a time in our nation's history when the LGBTQ+ population's civil rights are contested in the courts — as well as in the court of public opinion — the SOGE Council seeks to position Tri-C as a leader in inclusive policies and procedures while fostering a culture of inclusion and acceptance across its campuses and broader communities.

An early initiative set forth by the SOGE Council was Tri-C's inclusion in the national database of the Campus Pride Index, the leading national nonprofit organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create safer, more LGBTQ-friendly learning environments. In spring 2017, Tri-C became the first community college in Ohio to complete requirements for inclusion in the index.

SOGE also sought to increase College-wide promotion of Safe Zone Ally Training, a two-hour workshop that builds awareness of topics related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Both of these ongoing initiatives reflect the College's need to offer continual educational opportunities and provide institutional resources.

The SOGE Council's mission is to educate the College on issues of sexuality and gender in order to create a secure and inclusive community that embraces all forms of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This mission was designed with a number of long-term programs and initiatives in mind. These include supporting the student-led Lambda Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) groups on each campus as well as promoting and collaborating with the Safe Zone Ally Training program. Lambda and Safe Zone, which both began as student initiatives in spring 2004, exemplify SOGE's core mission of creating a more inclusive and supportive campus.

In 2018, SOGE worked with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Tri-C Foundation to establish an annual LGBTQ+ Student Scholarship, which builds on the council's goal to increase student recruitment and retention. Other long-term initiatives include a mentorship program wherein students can benefit from the counsel of SOGE members to advance their personal and professional goals as they pursue their degrees.

The SOGE Council also seeks to work with other ERGs and organizations within the College to create more inclusive and intersectional collaborative events and policies. The council's fall 2019 restructuring is designed to meet those goals, including increased membership and participation and greater awareness of SOGE's purpose and function across all College sites and campuses.



SOGE

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