The Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity (CLGBTE) commends former student Jennifer Harris for coming forward to discuss her experiences while she was a member of the Penn State women's basketball team. Jennifer's allegations, which are currently under investigation by Penn State's Affirmative Action office, suggest that homophobia and heterosexism not only exist, but continue to be tolerated within the women's basketball program at Penn State. The CLGBTE is committed to challenging such harassment and/or discrimination.

The commission stands ready to do all that we can to ensure that Penn State upholds its non-discrimination policy within the context of the University, including Intercollegiate Athletics, in general, and the women's basketball program, in particular. We are aware that this is a highly sensitive situation and respect the due process of an investigation to which all people are entitled. Thus, the CLGBTE offers its assistance to university administrators as they investigate this situation. Additionally, the CLGBTE offers its full support to all LGBT individuals, their allies, and to all constituencies involved throughout this difficult endeavor, and encourages everyone within the Penn State community to do the same.

Over the years, the commission has worked diligently to improve the climate for members of the LGBT community at Penn State through examination of current policies and practices and through the initiation and promotion of programs that will result in a more equitable and supportive environment. This is in line with *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09,* Penn State's diversity strategic plan, as well as the University's general strategic plan. Accordingly, over the past few years, the CLGBTE has successfully worked to achieve full domestic partner benefits, to establish an LGBT Support Network, and to develop the LGBTA Resource Center, to name only a few of our accomplishments. During 2005-06, our plans include reviewing the non-discrimination policy for its

protection of all members of the Penn State community, working to develop educational programs that will break down stereotypes related to sexual orientation and gender expression, and continuing to work toward curricular integration of LGBT issues.

During this extremely difficult time within the Penn State community and the women's basketball program, the CLGBTE asks that all members of our University examine "The Penn State Principles" (www.psu.edu/ur/principles.pdf) to ensure that we are doing our part to make Penn State a welcoming place for everyone. We also hope the alleged situation in Intercollegiate Athletics will encourage each of us to become more respectful of those who are in some way different from the majority within our University. Simply tolerating people who are perceived to be different is not enough; we have to learn to respect one another.

Please consider using this unfortunate turn of events as an opportunity to help make the climate at Penn State more welcoming for those who may be perceived as being LGBT. If each person within the Penn State community became a bit more sensitive to the needs of those who are in some way different from the majority, we would be a much stronger, more productive, and more positive institution of higher learning. We are Penn State, too.

The commission also invites questions or concerns about climate or other LGBT issues. Meetings are open to the public and the schedule can be found at www.clgbte.psu.edu. Highlights of the meeting minutes will be posted soon.