

National Coming Out Day provides information, support for students

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Published: Monday, October 12, 2009

Updated: Monday, October 12, 2009



In celebration of National Coming Out Day, representatives from the Sexual Gender Diversity Resource Center, and other campus organizations, set up tables in front of Corbett Center to share information about safe places for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students to seek information.

Sharna Horn, coordinator for SGDRC, said National Coming Out Day, which fell on Sunday, is a day for awareness, and SGDRC members hosted the information table to get the word out about programs for students.

Other organizations present included the Wellness, Alcohol, And Violence Education program; University Counseling Center; American Civil Liberties Union.

Debra Darmata, WAVE program coordinator, said students do not often know about certain issues, such as LGBT students being more susceptible to certain addictions and diseases.

The SGDRC was created with the purpose to provide a safe place on campus for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning community, Sharna Horn, coordinator for SGDRC, said.

New Mexico State University recognized the need for such a center, and it officially opened on April 23, 2007, Horn said. This is the third year the program has been fully funded by the university, Horn said. One of the program's main goals is to inform the campus and local community about the program.

"We're trying to be more visible throughout the community," Horn said. "A lot of times, people don't know we're here."

SGDRC is in the process of expanding into more rooms in Regents Row, said Megan Hernandez, office assistant for SGDRC.

"[The expansion] will help students get connected to people in the community," Hernandez said.

The group is expanding from two rooms to four in Regents Row and provides computers, books, DVDs, magazines and other resources for student use, Horn said.

"[SGDRC wants to tell people] the program is a safe space for everybody without judgment," Horn said. "It's a place for people to come and be themselves."

Horn said more than 1,000 people have come into the SGDRC since its opening in Regents Row in 2007. Horn said the number will continue to grow with each day the SGDRC is available for LGBT and straight students alike.