

**From:** Frank Bramlett  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2017 8:31:01 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Safe Space training required for WGS instructors

Dear colleagues:

I'd like to publicly thank Karen Falconer Al-Hindi for her very strong, supportive words regarding the Safe Space/Ally Training program at UNO. I agree with her sentiment, and I'd like to take this opportunity to offer some additional commentary on it.

Last spring, I was invited to give the keynote address at the 2017 UNO Lavender Graduation, which was a great honor for me. As many of you know, I have been deeply dedicated to LGBTQ+ concerns since I came to UNO in 1999. For example, I was the faculty advisor for the UNO Queer Student group for about a decade, when the group went from GALO to ABC Soup to Queers & Allies. As I was preparing my remarks for the ceremony, I realized that 2017 marks 10 years since Ally Training was first offered at UNO. All of that work started in 2005, when I agreed to chair the brand-new Safe Space Initiative. I had the great fortune to work with a wonderful group of staff members, including **Charlene Wilcox, Tracie Anderson, Nicole Naatz, Marcia Adler, Erin Cron, Joe Price, Cathy Pettid**, and many others. For two years, our committee developed a three-hour training program, piloted it a few times to get feedback from a wide variety of university and community members, and began offering the program regularly in 2007. Once the Ally Training program was up and running, other faculty members joined in as facilitators, like **Nancy Kelley** in Social Work and **Peggy Jones** in Black Studies. Our work was supported by **Rita Henry** and **Sharon Ulmar**, among others in the administration.

Fast forward to Fall 2016, and I attended an Ally Training session facilitated by Jay Irwin and Jen Skidmore. I was very happy to see that the program we designed in 2005-2007 had been revised to include essential, updated information about trans\* identities and issues. And I was also very pleased to see that the core of the program had remained unchanged. All the hard work and hundreds of hours that our committee had put in had paid off. The committee designed an excellent program, and I'm glad to see that UNO still values the work that we did. I would be remiss if I didn't articulate how much sacrifice the committee members made. All of the committee (except for me) were full-time staff members. They worked over their lunch breaks, they sometimes stayed late after work, and they tirelessly researched best practices from across the country to design the best program we could. Without the extraordinary work of those volunteers, we probably would not have Safe Space/Ally Training today.

We're fortunate to work in a university environment where the issues that are important to us are both valued and supported. When I first started teaching at UNO, I didn't imagine that we'd ever have something like a Gender and Sexual Orientation Resource Center, or full-time staff members, like Jessi Hitchens, who are tasked with developing and achieving a vision for what UNO can be.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the history of UNO Safe Space and Ally Training. This is as important now as it ever was.

Best,

Frank