TO:  SPEP Membership  
FROM:  LGBTQ Advocacy Committee  
RE:  Proposal to add a Graduate Student Member to the LGBTQ Advocacy Committee  

September 30, 2019

PROPOSAL

The LGBTQ Advocacy Committee membership will be amended to include one graduate student who will serve for one year on the committee.

If this proposal is adopted, future LGBTQ Advocacy Committees will consist of a Chairperson, two at-large members, and one graduate student. We are proposing that our committee membership be increased in number by one person. We take our role as an “advocacy” committee seriously and, after considerable discussion, we have concluded that our responsibilities cannot be responsibly executed without graduate student input and representation. Though we are only proposing that the membership of the LGBTQ Advocacy Committee be amended, it is our view that graduate students deserve representation on other SPEP sub-committees, such as CSW and Race and Ethnicity, as well.

Graduate students are the future of our profession. They are, as a group, considerably more diverse than the general membership of our organization. In many instances, current graduate students’ needs and concerns are quite distinct from the needs and concerns of the general membership even when the latter were graduate students themselves. For these reasons and many others not articulated herein, we are resolved that the LGBTQ Advocacy Committee requires the input of a graduate student representative.

In our estimation, graduate student service on the SPEP LGBTQ Advocacy committee could be a relatively low-impact responsibility with extremely high-impact returns. It would give graduate students a way of establishing professional relationships and connections, learning the inner workings of advocacy committee work, influencing the ongoing development of the SPEP organization, and being officially recognized for their service by being able to list their service on their CV. The LGBTQ Advocacy Committee is committed to ensuring that our graduate student representative is mentored and protected, and that the benefits of their service are never outweighed by the time or work expected from them.

While the three non-graduate student members normally serve for a total of three years (two years as members and one year as chair), we propose that the graduate student member serve for only one year. This time limit will ensure that more rather than fewer graduate students can be formally involved and receive credit for their advocacy. Moreover, the committee believes that a shorter term will also ensure that longer term and more time-intensive tasks cannot be delegated to the graduate student member.
Thank you in advance for your attention to these matters. We look forward to discussing this proposal at the SPEP Business Meeting on November 1, 2019.

Best,
LGBTQ Advocacy Committee

Yannik Thiem (Chair)
Leigh M. Johnson
Andrea J. Pitts