Colleagues,

On February 14, 2009, our community gathered together to remember and honor the five students we lost on that date one year ago. I am grateful to everyone involved in the tremendous effort of planning and carrying out this day-long commemoration. As we move forward, I hope that you are all taking care of yourselves. Spring is right around the corner, and with the rising temperatures and the melting of ice, we have much to look forward to.

Our division continues to assist our students and build upon our mission statement by inspiring intellectual, personal, and civic growth through our programs, events, and day-to-day interaction with students. This spring we’ve worked hard to continue to create collaborative relationships that meet the needs of our students, including partnering with other campus and community resources to develop a financial literacy campaign for students, and heightening the dialogue related to military veterans. It is also important to mention that our programs for outreach efforts, such as Winter Wonderland and NIU Cares Day, continue to flourish. Although this is not a comprehensive list of the programs and campus-wide initiatives that we are pursuing, it is a demonstration of our innovative strengths as a division to meet the continued and current demands of our students.

The Annual Recognition Program will take place on Thursday, May 7, at 2:00 p.m. in the Altgeld Auditorium. This is a chance to look back on our accomplishments for the year and to recognize our colleagues and friends for going the extra mile for students, their departments, and for the Division of Student Affairs. Last year’s event was full of excitement and laughter, and I’m sure this year’s program will be enjoyable and spirited, as well. Be sure to mark your calendars now for this division-wide celebration. I look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,
Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

NIU Cares Day

NIU Cares Day, the campus-wide day of service, is back for its third year! Coordinated by Student Involvement & Leadership Development, NIU Cares Day brings students, faculty, and staff members together to complete service projects that benefit the surrounding communities in order to thank them for their support of the university. NIU Cares Day 2008 brought almost 2,000 participants together to complete work at 40 project sites in the area.

NIU Cares Day 2009 will kick off at 9:00 a.m. on April 18 at Chick Evans Field House. Students can sign up online at http://niucaresday.niu.edu as individuals or with other students (student organizations, residence hall floors, groups of friends, etc.).

The NIU Cares Day committee is currently looking for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants to serve as Project Site Leaders (PSLs). Each PSL will serve as a resource for students at their project sites, as well as ensure that students have the best experience possible. If you cannot help on April 18, the committee is also seeking support for our fundraising and donation events in the coming months. Details can be found at http://niucaresday.niu.edu.

All questions regarding NIU Cares Day may be directed to Becky Harlow at rharlow@niu.edu
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center

"Can you help me? My brother just told me he’s gay. “My daughter came out to me, and I don’t know what to do.” “My best friend is lesbian, so I’ve seen up close the things she had to deal with. I want to get involved to educate others.”

These comments, from individuals who have contacted the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center, show that the Center’s services can be valuable to everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Our mission is to be a connecting point where LGBTQ individuals can find a sense of community, and everyone can learn about LGBTQ identity and culture. Two premiere educational programs help us accomplish this mission.

The Ally Program is a campus-wide initiative that fosters a welcoming and supportive campus environment for LGBT individuals by creating a visible network of allies. In six years of activity on campus, the Ally Program has trained over 500 volunteers on strategies for integrating LGBT people into activities and services, as well as on ways to provide support to LGBT individuals. The program has also served as a model for similar programs at colleges and universities across the country. NIU faculty, staff, and students who want to participate must attend a two-part training workshop to learn more about how to be an effective ally. To sign up for a workshop, you can complete our online Ally Training Registration Form at http://dev.niu.edu/LGBT/resourcecenter/programs/allyprogram/allywaitregistration.shtml

The Straight Talk Speakers Bureau offers panel discussions featuring NIU students who volunteer to speak about their experiences as LGBT individuals or heterosexual allies. The Speakers Bureau is available for student groups, in classes or residence halls, or for other appropriate engagements. Last year, panelists made 11 presentations, with audience members rating the presentations as excellent or good more than 90% of the time! To request a panel presentation, use our online Speaking Engagement Request Form available at http://dev.niu.edu/LGBT/resourcecenter/forms/electronic/speakerrequest.shtml

Visit our Web site, http://www.niu.edu/lgbt/, or stop by our resource room in Holmes Student Center 706, to learn more about our vibrant community and all that we have to offer!

Statewide Latino HIV network

Since beginning her directorship of the Latino Resource Center in 2007, Dr. Emily Prieto has been working with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Center for Minority Health, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the Chicago AIDS Foundation to establish the Illinois Statewide Latino HIV Network (ISLHN). These organizations are working to identify critical priorities in prevention and care and to promote the diffusion of culturally and linguistically effective interventions aimed at Latinos in Illinois.

In September 2008, the ISLHN held a press conference at the State of Illinois Thompson Center to release the Needs Assessment of HIV/AIDS Services for Latinos Report. The objective of the assessment was to determine gaps, strengths, and utilization of HIV care and prevention services by Latinos.

Medical Mobile Unit Spring Update

During the fall semester, partners across the Division of Student Affairs and the Tri-County Community Health Center developed a collaborative partnership to bring a mobile medical unit to campus. Immunizations and health check-ups were provided to children of Northern View residents and the surrounding community for a nominal fee.

The success of the event in the fall has resulted in a continued partnership, and these services for our students will be offered again during the spring semester.
Target Corporation Awards Grants to Career Services and Asian American Center

Two departments in Student Affairs, Career Services and the Asian American Center, are recipients of a grant from the Target Corporation.

Career Services received $15,000 to present events that encourage student athletes and students with diverse backgrounds to explore self-motivational techniques and enhance the characteristics necessary to ready themselves for dynamic leadership roles.

The Asian American Center’s nationally recognized “Ohana!” Peer Mentor Program received $5,000 to implement a joint peer mentor training retreat, which includes collaboration among five NIU diversity centers. Expansion of the original program will include training 120 student leaders in the methodology and process of peer mentoring.

Transfer Student Welcome Lunch

Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services recently launched a new collaborative program with the Transfer Center. On Tuesday, January 13, 2009, the two departments hosted a Transfer Welcome Lunch for new spring semester transfer students. All new transfer students were invited to the lunch to meet other students and speak with staff members from Academic and Student Affairs. The lunch was held in the Diversions Lounge in the Holmes Student Center and provided a comfortable space in which new students could gather.

Dr. Kelly Wesener, Assistant Vice President for Student Services, gave a welcome address to those in attendance. The students had opportunities to learn about various resources on campus, as well as to have personal conversations with staff members and student leaders.

Plans are underway for similar new efforts to reach out to transfer students during summer orientation programs and during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters.