

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



IBM manager of GLBT issues to help launch positive space program *Laurier program offers visibility and support its queer community*

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WATERLOO – An IBM manager who has long championed queer rights, both within his company and across Canada, will outline the importance of creating a positive environment at the official launch of Laurier’s positive space program.

Brad Salavich, global program manager of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) workforce diversity at IBM, will deliver an address entitled Positive Spaces and Roadside Fences at 4 p.m. on January 24 in Laurier’s Paul Martin Centre. The talk will explain why organizations need to include GLBT issues in their diversity programs.

“I see it as a global discussion about issues that face GLBT people and what we can do locally to maximize the participation of all people in society – and specifically in business,” said Salavich. “It’s such a large issue. The talk will cover a number of interesting items, and demonstrate why corporations are creating strategies to better integrate GLBT employees into the workforce, worldwide.”

The talk coincides with the launch of a positive space program at Laurier. The program brings visibility and support to Laurier’s queer community. Participants post a positive space sticker at the entrance of their work, living or study area, indicating that they are queer-positive and able to provide information and referrals. The presence of the stickers raises awareness of the differences that exist on campus and sensitizes others to both subtle and overt forms of heterosexism, and sexual and gender discrimination.

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“This program reflects our commitment to welcome and include all members of the community,” said Kimberly Ellis-Hale, member of Laurier’s sexual diversity committee. “It’s just one of many initiatives designed to ensure we have a campus that is free of discrimination based on gender and sexual identity.”

In his current role, Salavich is responsible for implementing IBM’s global non-discrimination policies for GLBT employees and directs the work of the GLBT executive task force. He is also the case manager for IBM employees who are transitioning their gender while on the job.

Prior to this assignment at IBM’s headquarters in New York, Salavich was the manager of campus programs for IBM Canada. He had responsibility for IBM’s campus recruiting efforts and university relations in Canada as well as its student internship programs. He was one of the founding members of the GLBT employee resource group at IBM Canada and was instrumental in obtaining same-sex benefits for IBM Canada employees in 1993.

Outside of IBM, Salavich was the media strategist for the campaign to obtain equal marriage rights in Canada and was one of the co-ordinators of the first same-sex marriage in Canada in January 2001.

Salavich is a graduate of Lakehead University and has taken post-graduate courses from Santa Clara University. He is an alumnus of the LGBT executive leadership development institute at UCLA, where he continues to lecture each year.