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Safe School Training Offered at Governors State University

University Park, IL, December 18, 2007 - The challenge for every educational institution is creating a safe and tolerant environment in which students learn, share, and grow. The difficulties in creating this environment are many and varied and require unique insight and special skills.

The Metropolitan Institute for Leadership in Education (MILE) and the School of Extended Learning at Governors State University is sponsoring a Safe Zone Workshop on January 11, from 2 to 4:30. Dr. Patrick Finnessy, professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, will present a training program designed to help educators create safer, more civil schools and communities in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students feel supported, encouraged, and safe.

"Students can't learn or reach their potential if they feel alienated from their peers and teachers or if they feel threatened at school," said Alicia McCray, Director of MILE. "Often issues of sexual orientation and gender identity are ignored or appear too difficult for the institution to address. Dr. Finnessy will provide the tools and skills needed to cope with intolerance in our schools."

Specific workshop topics include terms and definitions in sexuality and gender identity, a statistical review of affectional orientation and gender identity of youth in high schools, colleges, and universities, and effective methods of improving school climate. Participants will have the opportunity to learn, network, and problem-solve with other educators, and receive resources and tools to use and share when they return to their schools. Workshop attendance also earns participants two and a half Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) if applicable.

"We are encouraging teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, professors, and university students to participate in this free and important workshop," said McCray. "Educators at all levels need greater understanding. Our job as a university is to provide the information we all need to do our jobs better."

Governors State University is located at 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois. For more information or to register for the free workshop, call [\(708\) 534.4099](tel:7085344099).