Career Center Welcomes Director

By Kate Borger

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Michael Shutt, the new director in the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Life, hopes to upgrade the technology in the Office of LGBT Life, discover the needs of the LGBT community on campus and effectively meet the needs of every LGBT individual among the “continuum of identity development.”

Shutt assumed his post on June 16 and is the second director of Emory’s Office of LGBT Life, filling the space left by Saralyn Chesnut, who acted as director for 15 years.

The Office of LGBT Life was established in 1991 without a full-time director. Chesnut’s position was created after two gay freshmen were harassed in a residence hall in December 1991. After protests came against an administration response that some deemed inadequate, then-University President James T. Laney appointed a task force that recommended ways to improve LGBT life at Emory, including expanding the LGBT student life office and hiring a full-time, professional director.

Shutt said he spoke with Chesnut and was able to get her perspective on the past and future of LGBT life.

“We need to know where we’re coming from so we have a better idea of where we’re going,” Shutt said. “I’m very excited to follow in her footsteps.”

Shutt completed his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Michigan State University before achieving his doctorate at the University of Georgia (UGA).

Shutt served as a health educator at UGA from 2000-05.

In 2005, Shutt became the assistant dean of students and was the founding director of the LGBT Resource Center at UGA.

“Just opening the center was a major accomplishment,” Shutt said. “UGA is the first and only public institution that has a LGBT office in the state of Georgia. It was amazing to be a part of that.”

In addition to UGA, Emory is the only other institution in the state of Georgia to have an office of LGBT life, Shutt said.

“This office is one of the first of its kind in the Southeast and one of the pioneers in the country,” Shutt said. “It was nice to come to an office that was already established to take it to the next place it needs to go.”

Shutt said that the Southeast is “very much a growing region” for LGBT Life and that he is excited to be a part of this growth.

— Contact Kate Borger