

# **KAREN BENSEN**

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**Administrator/Director/Educator** with a proven record of outstanding results for both new and established programs.

- Program Management and Growth
  - Teaching/Public Speaking
  - Student Advising/Mentoring
  - Commitment to Social Justice
  - Collegiality/Team Work
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## **EDUCATION:**

Masters of Social Work, Concentration in Children, Youth and Families, University of Denver, 1991

Bachelors of Social Work, Concentration in Gerontology, Syracuse University, 1984

Certificate, Academic Management Institute, Denver, CO, 1996-1997

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**Director, Partners in Learning**  
**University of Denver, Denver, CO**

2005-present

- Created over 50 opportunities per year for all DU students to engage with faculty outside the classroom with a \$30,000 budget. Utilized creative learning techniques and reached a diverse spectrum of student interests and developmental needs.
  - Selected examples of educational opportunities created:
    - DU Dialogues – a current issue of student interest is paired with an interest model of dialogue for an evening of student/faculty discussion. Topics included – the race and class issues that arose after Hurricane Katrina, patriotism and the war in Iraq, immigration, the two party political system, the future look of education at DU, diversity at DU, and Stem Cell research. Dialogue models included – World Café, Fishbowl Dialogues, Storytelling Circles, Chalk Talk, and Human Sculpture.
    - Hot Topics – faculty led discussion on current issues over a meal in the residence hall dining halls.
    - Open Mic Nights – students, staff, and faculty share their poetry and prose in the campus pub. Each year culminated in a Poetry Slam competition with prizes. Local guest poets were also highlighted.
    - Let's Do Lunch – students invite faculty or faculty invite students to share a meal in the dining halls to continue classroom conversation or share academic interests – meals are paid by DU. Climate Change Teach-In – a day of interdisciplinary, faculty-led, short presentations/discussions for the DU community to learn about climate change.
    - Mini Courses – faculty led a two hour workshop of their popular course.
    - Consuming Misogyny Symposium – a day long event designed to educate the DU community about the many ways that society consumes the mistreatment of women. Held in conjunction with the Sexual Assault Awareness Week events.
    - A Mile in Their Shoes – a week of educational events to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts.
- Programmed with a commitment to diversity and intergroup dialogue.

- Supervised 2-3 student employees each year and a higher education graduate intern for one year with mentorship style relationships.
- Developed learning outcomes for events to assess student learning.
- Managed all aspects of program development, budget, annual reporting, and administration of office.
- Reached out to new and seasoned faculty to enlist and motivate their involvement in the program – nearly 200 different faculty in three years.
- Coordinated Emerging Leader Program for four cohorts of 15 students in 2005-06
- Collaborated with approximately 65 different campus and community groups over three years.

**Director, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Services at Auraria** 1997-2005  
**Coordinator, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Services at Auraria** 1994-1997  
**Metropolitan State College of Denver, Denver, CO**

- Developed and implemented programs and services for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) and ally students, staff and faculty at all three Auraria campus institutions.
- Served as advisor for students who have experienced discrimination or harassment.
- Provided educational programming to raise sensitivity/awareness level for the non-GLBT students and staff.
- Managed the operational, administrative development, program budget and annual reporting accountability.
- Served a diverse, urban campus community and programmed events incorporating that diversity.
- Supervised up to six student employees each year, focusing on their student and professional development.
- Conducted ongoing program evaluation and hired consultant to perform needs assessment.
- Coordinated the development and maintenance of several databases.
- Developed/managed over 30 special events per year, including 2003 statewide student leadership conference.
- Collaborated with more than 50 groups, departments and off-campus organizations.
- Served on multiple campus-wide committees and attended numerous networking events.
- Created the GLBT Student Services Speakers Bureau and Safe Zone Program.
- Facilitated efforts to receive a \$32,000.00 grant for GLBT scholarships and raised matching funds.

**Coordinator, School-Based Counseling Program** 1993-1994  
**Counselor, Stein Elementary School Outreach Program** 1991-1993  
**Jefferson Center for Mental Health, Lakewood, CO**

- Assessed needs of school communities and developed program initiatives with grant funding.
- Provided long and short-term therapy to individuals, families and groups.
- Conducted client assessments regarding physical/emotional illnesses of a diverse population.
- Wrote grant reports on a quarterly basis to funding authority.
- Authored a monthly newsletter that was translated into Vietnamese and Spanish.
- Expanded program from one to twelve elementary schools in Jefferson County.
- Supervised 10 professional counselors placed at the schools we served.

**PAST WORK HISTORY:**

**Counseling Intern, Lincoln High School-Based Clinic, Denver, CO** 1990-1991

**Family Services Advocate, Parent Child Services, Portland, OR** 1987-1990

**Medical Social Worker, WestMont Home Health Inc., Helena, MT** 1985-1986

**PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:**

- “Partnering with Faculty”, *web seminar for Coalition of Colorado Alcohol and Drug Educators*, Denver, CO - February 2008
- “Teachable Moments: Owning and Operating as a Diversity Educator Regardless of Your Title”, *DU Diversity Summit* – May 2007
- “Crossing the Bridge . . . All the Way! Involving Faculty in Student Life”, *National Association of Student Personnel Administrator*, Little Rock, Arkansas – November 2007
- “Civic Dialogue as Public Good”, *Public Good Conference: The Theory and Practice of Public Good Work*, University of Denver – February 2007
- “Crossing the Bridge . . . All the Way! Involving Faculty in Student Life”, *College Personnel Association of Colorado Conference*, Denver, CO – January 2007
- Yearly presentations to academic chairs about Partners in Learning – 2005-2008
- Safe Zone Training for the DU Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate Network volunteers – Nov. 2006
- Safe Zone Training for the DU Health and Counseling Center – August 2006
- Over 100 GLBTSS Speaker’s Bureau presentations, Denver, CO - 1995-2005
- “The GLBT Experience”, *Workplace Learning Project Diversity Summit*, Denver, CO – May 2005
- “Race, Gender and Lifestyle: Myths, Beliefs and Challenges in Higher Education” *Workplace Learning Diversity Seminar Speaker Panel*, Community College of Denver, Denver, CO – March 2005
- “The Ins and Outs of Being In or Out – At Work”, *The Working Women’s Wellness Summit*, Breckenridge, CO – June 1998
- “Faculty Connections: Myth or Reality”, *1<sup>st</sup> Annual Student Services Conference*, Denver, CO – May 1997
- “Improving Campuses for Gays and Straights”, *1<sup>st</sup> Annual Student Services Conference*, Denver, CO – May 1997
- “Pastoral Skills in Dealing with Young Gay and Lesbian Youth”, *Catholic Conference*, Colorado Springs, CO – December 1994
- “Designing a Leadership Program for GLB Students”, *Region IV NASPA conference*, Aspen, CO – November 1994
- “GLBT Student Services at Auraria”, *Downtown Denver Business and Professional Women*, Denver, CO – October 1994
- “Parenting in the Elementary Years”, *Helping Kids Thrive II & III Conferences*, Lakewood, CO - 1992,1993

- “The Role of a School Counselor”, *MSCD Elementary Education class*, Denver, CO- 1992,1993
- “Spotlight on Innovation: Stein School Project”, *the Golden Light Bulb Award presentation*, Arvada, CO – June 1992
- “Incorporating Affective Education With Physically Challenged Children Into the Classroom” for district teachers of physically challenged students, Denver, CO – May 1991
- Public speaking to area family agencies to promote Head Start. Portland, OR - 1990

### **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:**

- White Privilege Conference, Colorado Springs, CO – April 2007
- “Changing Racism: A Personal Approach to Multiculturalism” (VISIONS 4 Day), Denver, CO - Feb. 2002 & Nov. 2004
- 4-day Mediation Training by Rick Olshak from the Campus Mediation Project, Denver, CO – May/June 2000
- Denver “Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity Project”, Denver, CO – October 1999-May 2000
- “Principles of Good Practice” by George Kuh, Denver, CO – May 1999
- “Assessment in Higher Education” by John Schuh, Denver, CO – June 1999
- 3-day “Multicultural Leadership Institute: Making Community Leadership Inclusive”, Colorado Springs, CO - April 1993
- 5-day training on Child Abuse and Neglect presented by the Kempe Center, Denver, CO - January 1992
- 3 courses in Play Therapy, Portland State University, Portland, OR - 1988-1989
- Numerous workshops/trainings on technology, ADA, sexual harassment, substance abuse, racism, oppression, child development, leadership, parenting, stress management, AIDS and sexuality.

### **SERVICE TO CAMPUS:**

- DU Queer University Employees, founding advisory committee member (2007-08)
- Student Life Faculty Connections Committee (2006-08)
- Student Development (2006-07), Inclusive Leadership (2007-08), internal assessment (2006-07)  
Sub-committees for Student Life Diversity Action Team
- Planning committees for campus-wide events: MSCD MLK Peace Breakfast - chaired, MSCD Cinco de Mayo, MSCD Fall Fest, MSCD Disability Awareness Day, MCD Students to Watch Awards, MSCD’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, MSCD *Voices of Discovery: Intergroup Dialogue*, DU Women’s Conference – chaired, DU Diversity Summit, DU MLK events, Peace Jam (1994 – present)
- DU and MSCD search committees – chaired four, served on six others (1996-2008)
- Queer and Ally Commission and sub-committee to revise the curriculum for Safe Zone Training (2006-2008)

- Multicultural Resource Center Advisory Committee (2000-2005)
- Student Problem Action Network (SPAN) Advisor (1995-2005), Interim Coordinator (11/04-2/05)
- Tuition Appeals committee (1998-2004)
- President's Budget Task Force (2003)
- Supervised SPAN (Student Problem Action Network) GSSW social work student intern (2001-2002)
- Student Retention, "Follow-up 40 Cohort Group" (2001)
- Served as Advisor on the Student Advisory Committee to the Auraria Board (1999-2000)
- MSCD Diversity Task Force (1996)

### **AWARDS:**

- "National Residence Hall Honorary Member" 2007
- "March 2007 Spotlight of the Month" The National Residence Hall Honorary at DU
- "Outstanding Staff Award 2005-2006" DU Center for Multicultural Excellence
- "2005-2006 Kate Buckley Jubilant Spirit Award" Residence Hall Association at DU
- "Vagina Warrior" Auraria V-Day Alliance (Vagina Monologues). 2005
- Honorary member of the Golden Key National Honor Society. 2000
- "Outstanding Woman of the Year" Metropolitan State College of Denver. 1999
- "The Golden Light Bulb Award" Colorado Association of Community Mental Health Centers. 1992