

! 2018 BROOKINGS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OVERVIEW

The mission of the Brookings Human Rights Commission (HRC) is to improve human relations in the Brookings area by fighting discrimination through education and a complaint resolution procedure. The Commission seeks to protect the rights of and prevent and eliminate bias and discrimination against individuals or groups because of their sex, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, disability, familial status, national origin, age, marital status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or political affiliation, with respect to employment, labor union membership, housing accommodations, property rights, education, public accommodations or public services. The Commission promotes educational activities to make Brookings an inclusive and welcoming community.

Commission members were Steve Bayer (chair), Maggie Ownes (vice-chair), Lawrence Novotny (recorder), Laura Renee Chandler (resigned in May), George Hamer, Penny Hauffe, Hanna Holmquist, Meaghan Irvine Miller (student representative through May then appointed to fill out Chandler’s term), Wren Murphy (student representative appointed in September), Erinn Osborne Thomas, Shafiqur Rahman (county representative), Kas Williams (non-voting SDSU liaison)

Budget of \$4284 for regular operations plus \$5000 for Community Common Read.

Key Projects

Description	
	COMPLAINT RESOLUTION – Employed a mediator to resolve a complaint
1	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR CONTEST – Gave 6 prizes to winners in the essay contest and 7 prizes to winners in the poster contest; Posters displayed in downtown businesses
	MEI SCORECARD – Submitted a scorecard with a score of 102 and received a perfect score of 100; worked with the Human Rights Campaign to organize a public announcement and reception
	HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS – Presented the Butler Human Rights Award to Al Branum; presented the Youth and Ally Awards to Gail Klinker and Dan Berg
	COMMON READ – The selected book was <i>Wrecked</i> by Maria Padian; organized a Take Back The Night Walk on October 24 that had four stops with speakers
	DIVERSITY POTLUCK – Spring potluck on April 15 featured the winners of the King essay contest; October 21 potluck attended by 80 people and featured Lawrence Novotny talking about the MEI score
3	BHRC INCLUSIVITY TEAM - Working with teachers in Brookings to bring inclusivity programs to the schools; Ordered 240 more <i>You Are Welcome Here</i> signs which were made available to the public
	WORKFORCE ALLIANCE – Have a representative (Novotny) on the Brookings Economic Development Corporation Workforce Alliance
	STRATEGIC PLANNING - Participated in revising the city’s Master Plan and 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

Successes

- Brookings was the first city in South Dakota to be awarded a perfect 100 Municipal Equality Index score by the Human Rights Campaign for LGBTQ inclusive ordinances and policies. Staff from the HRC came to Brookings to recognize this accomplishment at a public reception on October 10 that was attended by approximately 180 people. The *Brookings Register*, *KSFY-TV*, and *KELO-TV* covered the event. HRC made a video of this accomplishment.
- BHRC received the SDSU Honors College Outstanding Community Partner Award in February for our cooperation on the Common Read Program.
- Mayor Corbett signed onto the National Coalition of Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination.
- We obtained a \$750 private donation which BHRC matched to purchase 240 *You Are Welcome Here* signs.
- The Human Rights Youth and Ally Awards were created.

Challenges

- A continued challenge is working within confines of state law on some efforts related to the MEI scorecard, but efforts by the City Council and City staff have helped overcome these challenges.



The photo above contains a link to the video that was produced by the Human Rights Campaign following the announcement of the 100 MEI score.

Looking Ahead

{FAIR HOUSING}

Partner with Disabilities Committee to review housing ordinances and provide training to renters and landlords—especially regarding service animals. Update and translate Renters Rights brochure.

{COMPLAINT RESOLUTION}

Review the City discrimination complaint process, educate the public on the process, and train city staff and HRC members as needed.

{OUTREACH}

Continue support of campus and community events, such as the Common Read. Renew efforts to connect with the Brookings School System and members of the international community.