A Task Force on Sexual Orientation was appointed by Chancellor Clinton B. Jones in early 1992. The group was charged with implementing recommendations found in, “From Invisibility to Inclusion: Opening the Doors for Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan” (1991). Among the report’s recommendations for the Flint campus was, “. . . designating one person with responsibility for overseeing further efforts on behalf of lesbian and gay students, faculty, and staff at UM-Flint.”

The Chancellor’s Task Force recommended in March 1993 the establishment of a half-time position to address lesbian and gay concerns. Members of the Task Force approached Interim Dean for Student Services Dr. Mary Jo Sekelsky in Spring 1994, and she authorized funding for the appointment of Flint’s first LGBT Advocate, Ellen Bommarito.

Dr. Sekelsky continued to advocate for the needs of students served by the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center in her subsequent capacity as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. She established the Mary Jo Sekelsky Critical Difference Fund to provide emergency grants to students facing financial crises.

The Mary Jo Sekelsky Critical Difference Fund is intended to help students overcome emergency situations so they may remain in school and stay on track for graduation. Examples of emergency needs that may qualify for assistance include paying for automobile repair or securing reliable transportation to school, providing food for family, preventing imminent shut-off of a vital utility service, or covering childcare expenses.

Eligibility Guidelines:

1. Applicants must be participants in programs, events, or services offered by the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center.
2. Applicants must be currently enrolled, either full-time or part-time, at the University of Michigan-Flint.
3. Applicants must be in good academic standing.

Application Process:

1. Applications are available at the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center or Office of Financial Aid.
2. Complete the application, attach supporting documentation, and submit to the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center. Applicants receiving financial aid should also attach a copy of their financial aid award notice.
3. Applicants will be notified about an award decision within three to four business days following application submission. Grant recipients may pick up award payments from the Cashier’s Office within one week.

For additional information, please contact the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center at (810) 766-6606.
Mary Jo Sekelsky Critical Difference Fund  
Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center

Name_______________________________________________UMID___________________________________
Address___________________________________City/State/ZIP___________________________________
Phone____________________________________Email__________________________________________

University Standing (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) ____________________________________
Major(s)/Minor(s) ____________________________________________________
Credits for Current Semester _____________________________ Current UM-Flint GPA ______________

Date of application _________________
Amount you are requesting ($250 maximum) $_______________
How did you learn about the Critical Difference Grant?__________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Please explain the circumstances which prompted you to apply for the Critical Difference Grant. Describe why you need this aid to remain in school. Please attach any relevant documentation such as an estimate or receipts. Attach separate sheet of paper if necessary.
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Please submit completed application to the Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center, 213 UCEN

For Office Use Only:
Date Received: _________________       Action Taken: ________________________________