

Intersections

A Publication of the Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness | Volume 1, Issue 1

BACK 2 SCHOOL! PROMOTING INCLUSION AT BRADLEY UNIVERSITY



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COMING OUT
AS AN SA
PRO IN

1976



MY NAME IS:
Robert - Alton
I AM ENDING THE SILENCE BY:
Reading, Arise Church, 10/13/16, 10/13/16



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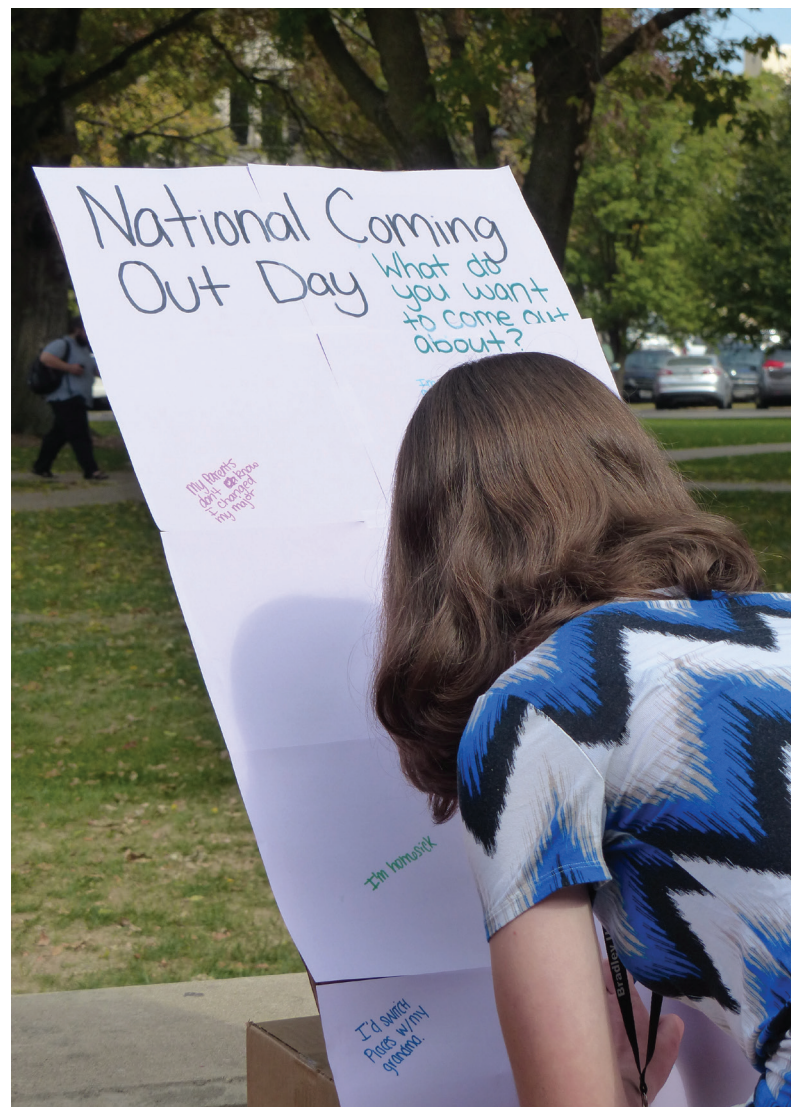
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YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 70s Coming Out
- Midwest Queer Indigenous and People of Color Conference

PROMOTING INCLUSION

Bradley University makes moves toward educating and raising awareness about the experiences of students within the LGBTQ community.



INTERSECTIONS is a quarterly online magazine produced by the CLGBTA. Articles as well as information may be submitted at any time. Please contact Dennis Hicks for more information dennis.hicks@gmail.com



THE THING ABOUT PRONOUNS

<http://shop.spreadshirt.com/CLGBTA>

The CLGBTA is excited to announce that they have created a line of merchandise that focus on the importance of pronouns. Purchase one of more items and begin the dialogue with colleagues and students with these eye catching designs.

Click on an image to shop each pronoun category.





CALL FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS AND REVIEWERS

The call for program proposals and program reviewers for the 2017 Annual ACPA Convention in Columbus, Ohio is out and we hope you respond! If you have a program idea directly related to the strategic priorities of the CLGBTA (listed below), we invite you to indicate "Yes" to the Sponsored Program Option, and then choose the Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness. If you're interested in becoming a program reviewer for the upcoming Convention, we invite you to join CLGBTA in reviewing the sponsored program submissions.

Before writing your proposal, feel free to visit the Program Preparation Resources on ACPA's website for tips on strengthening your proposal. We are actively seeking programs that utilize the following elements and strategic priorities from the CLGBTA:

- Have clear and concise learning outcomes
- Supported by research and data in the body of your proposal
- Apply relevant theory
- Include outline of session agenda with time frame for each element
- Engage the topic of dominance within social identities and its impact on underrepresented groups with a focus on gender & race (i.e. impact of white dominance on people of color, etc)

To submit a proposal, please visit the ACPA program proposal page. All program proposals are due by September 9, 2016.

In order to participate as a Program Reviewer for the CLGBTA Sponsored Programs, please email Paige Davies at paigehollydavies@gmail.com no later than Monday, August

29, 2016. More information will follow, including how to sign-up, and training resources. As outlined by ACPA, Program Reviewers are expected to:

- Be available to evaluate and review programs between September 19 – October 5, 2016
- Complete the online Program Review Training to ensure understanding of evaluation tools and process
- Provide approximately three hours of service by reviewing up to eight program proposals
- Use a rubric to consistently review all assigned program proposals
- Consider how the proposals connect to the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies, the #ACPA17 vision, and to relevant contextual and/or theoretical perspectives
- Provide constructive, thoughtful, professional, inclusive, and helpful feedback to the coordinating presenter

We look forward to your submissions for programs! If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.



FORWARD: The Campaign for the CLGBTA is a fundraising campaign to increase awareness about the history and achievements of the CLGBTA and to raise money for the CLGBTA grant (which benefits colleges and universities' efforts to provide resources and support for LGBT communities).

Our goal is that at least 500 donors across the lifespan of the campaign will donate a total of \$30,000. The campaign will conclude at the 2017 ACPA Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

Read more at MyACPA.ORG

FROM SAFE SPACES TO SAFE PLACES: ALLIES & SAFE ZONE TRAINING AT IU SOUTHEAST

Submitted by Jason L. Meriwether, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management
& Student Affairs
Indiana University Southeast

In April of 2016, the Indiana University Southeast (IUS) Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs took another step toward our goal of creating student experiences that are bias-free and healthy in physical and intellectual spaces. Our team's intention is not to limit safe zones to a few offices or special occasions. We thrive to create an environment where quality of place at our university is reflected in all interactions in every campus service office, classroom, and residential or recreational space for each student.

As part of our strategy to achieve this goal, all 70 of our professional team members participated in an Allies & Safe Zone training, led by the talented duo of Alan Acosta and Danielle Morgan Acosta. Traveling to New Albany from Florida State University, Alan and Danielle demonstrated their proficiency as educators, passion for developing a community of thoughtful leaders, and their astute knowledge of the Allies & Safe Zone program. The student affairs power couple led a dynamic and engaging workshop that resulted in 100% of our division's educators in practice becoming Safe Zone certified. The Allies & Safe Zone training was followed by a robust extended session where a dozen of us became certified as trainers as well.

Alan & Danielle focused on pedagogical themes of dialogue and authentic engagement rather than lecture or lofty pontification. "Team Acosta" led us to increased knowledge in a plethora of competencies, including teaching the continuous nature of allyship and intersections of oppressions on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer,

Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and Pansexual-identified (LGBTQ+) identities. Other learning outcomes provided by our guest educators included:

1. Promoting acceptance and support of LGBTQ+ people and understanding of contemporary issues that affect them;
2. Providing a space to discuss gender, sexuality, and allyship and to explore how we can make our campus a safer and more inclusive place;
3. Confronting personal biases and increase understanding for participants at every level of knowledge and allyship; and
4. Pushing participants to examine the roots of their assumptions about gender and sexuality in hopes they will continue to do so in everyday life.

While we are proud of our selection by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* as one of the Most Promising Places to Work In Student Affairs for the last two years, we are not resting on these accolades. Our Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Division will continue to facilitate a safe environment by including faculty and student leaders in future Allies & Safe Zone trainings. Our ongoing first-year student bias-language reduction program will continue, as will our enthusiastic support for the IUS Gay-Straight Alliance. Assessing

impact of these strategies on the student experience will generate data to inform our future practices. By working assiduously to turn every campus space into a safe zone, IUS will provide a quality experience and safe place for all of our students.



Have an idea for what the CLGBTA can do for you? Feel free to tweet it with #SCLGBTA! If you haven't already, follow the CLGBTA on Facebook at facebook.com/ACPASCLGBTA

SIUE GRADUATES HEAD SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

Submitted by Vicky Dean
Vice Chair for Advancement, CLGBTBA
Assistant Director of Residence Life, SIUE Housing
Former Safe Zone Chair, SIUE

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) sponsored their first ever Rainbow Graduation for graduating seniors who identify as LGBT and allies on May 27, 2016. The event celebrated twelve undergraduate students, who received recognition in the form of multi-color cords to wear at commencement ceremonies. Graduates were provided with the opportunity to recognize their faculty, staff and friends who served as advocates during their time on campus. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr. Jeffery Waple and Interim Chancellor Dr. Stephen Hansen gave some remarks, in addition to keynote speaker Jaimie Hileman, the Director of the Metro Trans Umbrella Group, a non-profit that supports the trans*, gender queer, androgynous and intersex community in greater St. Louis.

This year's Rainbow Graduation was the result of several years of advocacy and support across the SIUE campus. In 2012 the Safe Zone committee created a strategic plan based on factors measured in Campus Pride's Climate Index. Co-sponsorship from the Kimmel Involvement Center, Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion helped make the event possible. The event was well-received by the greater campus community, with key university staff member in attendance, such as the Provost, Director of Retention as well as several Student Affairs unit directors. It's clear that this event made a positive impression on various constituents. Event planners hope that this event will continue in the future!



CONVERSATIONS

COALITION FOR LGBT AWARENESS HIGHLIGHTS ACPA'S OPPOSITION OF ALL PUBLIC POLICIES AND LAWS THAT SANCTION DISCRIMINATION

The Coalition for LGBT Awareness is disappointed and outraged with the number of legislative initiatives and policies in several states that target and openly discriminate against LGBT people. The Directorate Board of the CLGBTBA stands in solidarity with leadership of ACPA in opposing these laws and policies and calls on all individuals and institutions to take a stand to educate yourself and take action.

The Coalition for LGBT Awareness encourages our members and all higher education and student affairs professionals to utilize the articles below as a tool to become more educated about the current anti-LGBT bills and laws and what impact they have on our students, ourselves, and our institutions. We have compiled a list of articles that have captured the anti-LGBT legislation and laws that are actively promoting hostility and discrimination of LGBT people across the United States:

- [Attorney General on North Carolina Lawsuit](#)
- [Everything You Need To Know About The Wave Of 100+ Anti-LGBT Bills Pending In States](#)
- [Fourth Circuit Court confirms: Title IX protects trans students from discrimination](#)
- [UNC President: Campuses Must Follow Transgender Law](#)
- [U.S. Says Bathroom Bill Violates Title IX](#)
- [North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory Faces Monday Deadline on LGBT Law](#)

Outside of the articles above, we would like to provide information about how ACPA has taken action and information about a Change.Org Petition that is currently active:

- [Change.org Petition- ACPA Opposes All Public Policies and Laws that Sanction Discrimination](#)
- [ACPA Update: Discriminatory Bathroom Bill and the United States Department of Justice](#)
- [ACPA Moves Student Affairs Assessment Institute from North Carolina to Maryland](#)

The CLGBTBA serves as an additional support system for you as you engage in upholding and enacting inclusion on your campuses.

Please contact the CLGBTBA via email or social media for any LGBTQA+ questions, comments, concerns, and/or resources. You can contact us via email at scrgbta@gmail.com or contact us via Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/ACPASCLGBTBA> or Twitter at [@CLGBTBA](https://twitter.com/CLGBTBA)

In Solidarity,
The Coalition for LGBT Awareness

TRANS*FORMING STUDENT RECORDS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Submitted by Cindy A. Kilgo and Jodi L. Linley

“Before I got to campus, I emailed my professors to let them know my name and pronouns, but I had to have a couple of beers before I could send that email.”

“Having preferred name and pronouns on a class list would solve the problem of ‘What’s the best way to bring this up in class?’”

These two quotes were from current students at the University of Iowa (UI) who attended a focus group we held in September 2015 about the importance of the UI student records systems including name of reference and gender pronouns. At that time, the UI student records system included student sex (listed as “gender”) and name of reference, which had to be inputted by a faculty or staff member, not the student. UI records did have a field for student gender pronouns. This lack of data meant that UI students had to “out” themselves each semester to faculty and other instructors and in every interaction they had with faculty or staff on campus related to student records (i.e., advising, student conduct meetings, financial aid, etc.).

In a recent publication in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Beemyn and Brauer (2015) alluded to the overall lack of college and university student records systems meeting the needs of trans* and gender non-conforming students. While over 100 institutions have – at the time of publication – the option to use a name of reference different than legal name, very few institutions offer gender pronouns as a part of student records systems (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015). More specific to the UI, we conducted benchmarking using data collected from Big10 affiliated campuses as well as secondary data from the Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse. These analyses only further supported Beemyn and Brauer’s (2015) findings that most colleges’ student records systems are sorely lacking in their ability to adequately capture name of reference and gender pronouns. All but one Big10 institution (excluding UI) responded to our inquiry for

information. Of those institutions, all reported having name of reference within student records, and only one reported at that time having gender pronouns within student records.

All of these items – the UI student focus group findings, the existing research by Beemyn and Brauer (2015), the benchmarking findings related to the UI’s peer institutions in the Big10, and a Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness (CLGBTA) grant – allowed us to foster and garner support and resources at UI. Specifically, we were able to catalyze change at UI’s campus trans*forming the ways the UI collects and uses students’ sex, gender, name of reference, and gender pronouns. We briefly outline our process for creating change at UI and provide recommendations for ways others can implement change on their campuses. On the opposite page is our method for trans*forming UI student records.

Starting fall of 2016, UI students will be able to update their name of reference and gender pronouns in the MyUI (records) system, and new applicants to the University of Iowa will be able to tell us their preferred name and pronouns alongside their legal name and sex assigned at birth. This data will transfer into MAUI, which is the faculty/staff records platform at UI. This system will allow name of reference and pronouns to be available on course rosters, for advising meetings, and easily accessible for faculty and staff who meet frequently with students on UI’s campus.

In closing, we provide some tangible ways that others can enact student records and gender trans*formations on their campuses in order to better serve all students.

- Educate yourself! If you have cisgender privilege, reflect and learn about it.
- Remove the gender binary from campus websites (i.e., he or she).
- Conduct benchmarking that can provide

Discuss	Grant	Focus groups	Bench-marking	Approval for MAUI	Admissions Proposal Created	Co-signs	Admissions Proposal Approval	Educational Videos
What are your thoughts on this issue? What would be ideal if this were to be updated and revised? How do you envision this moving forward? What do you see as challenges in this plan?	Identified need for funding. Identified funding source. Collaborative effort across units on campus.	Faculty and staff –How do you currently navigate this issue in MAUI? What changes would be ideal for your work? Students – What have been your experiences with navigating name and gender pronouns with faculty, staff, and peers at UI? What would make this issue easier for you?	Bench-marking collected at Big10 institutions and through the Campus Pride's Trans Policy Clearing-house on AAU-affiliated campuses that the UI considers peer and aspirational institutions.	Approval for changes to MAUI. How can we move UI even further?	What would be necessary to change to filter into every student records system? Changes needed on UI admissions applications. Incorporated all other parts of work. Added information about federal student data reporting.	25 campus entities co-signed in support of the proposal for changes to the UI admissions application to: (1) decouple sex and gender, (2) add name of reference, and (3) add gender pronouns.	Approval for UI application for admissions. This approval will make the UI one of the first colleges in the nation to ask for students' gender pronouns on an application for admissions, which is often the first interaction a student has with a college.	Created an educational video that will be released in summer of 2016 to serve as a precursor for future changes to the ways UI collects and uses data on students' gender, sex, name of reference, and gender pronouns.

administrators with incentive to create change based on peer and aspirational institutions.

- Add gender pronouns and name of reference to student and staff nametags.
- Discuss the importance of name and pronouns during key institutional events (i.e., orientation, teaching assistant trainings).
- Garner widespread campus support by collaborating on proposals for institutional record changes (i.e., student affairs offices/units, academic departments, student organizations).
- Do not rely on students to have to “out” themselves to you. Ask during informal and formal meetings what name they prefer and what pronouns they use.
- Let students use their name of reference in any non-legally binding document.
- Put your pronouns and name of reference

in your email signature and in office bios.

- Correct yourself when you make a mistake and move forward.

This list is not an end-all and we encourage you to continue to interrogate your privileged identities in ways that allow you to create change on your campuses and provide more affirming and supportive learning environments for trans* and gender non-conforming students.

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BY NORRIS CHASE

Executive Director

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Bradley University

Using Nationally Recognized Days to Promote Inclusion

APRIL 15, 2016
GLSEN DRY of SILENCE
RESPECT
MY NAME IS: Alice
I AM ENDING THE SILENCE BY: being
Proud and outspoken about
LGBTQ+ identities

APRIL 15, 2016
GLSEN DRY of SILENCE
RESPECT
MY NAME IS: Kaitie
I AM ENDING THE SILENCE BY:
treating all people with Res

APRIL 15, 2016
GLSEN DRY of SILENCE
RESPECT
MY NAME IS: Jenna
I AM ENDING THE SILENCE BY:
Teaching about equality

The plight of LGBTQ communities on college campuses is still a sore spot for higher education administrators across the nation. Although, [in a 2013 survey](#), 92% of adults who are LGBTQ believed that society had become more accepting of members of the LGBT community over the past decade, students within the LGBTQ community still face tremendous barriers on college campuses each and every day. Barriers such as unsafe conditions for students subjected to physical and verbal harassment, campus environments that perpetuate homophobia, or the online harassment or public outing that contributes in many ways to gay students committing suicide, all challenge the inclusive environments that institutions boast regularly. The only way to continue to combat this issue is education and awareness.

This writing will briefly highlight recent efforts at Bradley University to educate and raise awareness about the experiences of students within the LGBTQ community. Using two nationally recognized days as platforms, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion—in collaboration with Bradley’s Gay Straight Alliance, also known as Common Ground—provided students with the chance to learn about current trends and issues within the LGBTQ community. Annual celebrations provide unique learning opportunities to encourage cross-cultural engagement and learning.

The first program was planned in October to recognize National Coming Out Day, an annually recognized day to celebrate the coming out of LGBTQ members and allies. Created in 1988, this day celebrated its 27th year of existence. During the program, students were invited to share personal secrets publicly as a method to better understand the coming out process that students who are LGBTQ may face. Students were encouraged to publicly “come out” by



stepping into a box and writing a personal secret on a public board. This event was held on the university quad during lunch, the most highly trafficked area and time on campus. Students shared statements highlighting themes of mental illness, isolation issues, academic challenges, or family related challenges publicly for the entire campus to review. This was a high risk activity that required an extreme level of vulnerability. By sharing personal stories publicly, participants gained a marginal understanding about the emotional, mental, and relational risks associated with the “coming out” process for members of the LGBTQ community. The feelings of being judged, vulnerable, and sharing private information publicly were all results of this activity. Many participants walked away from this activity with more perspective and information about the coming out process and the challenge of being vulnerable in a public setting. After their submission, each student received a handout with information about this day and available resources on campus

The next program focused on the National Day of Silence, which is a student-led national event that brings attention to anti-LGBTQ name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools celebrated in April. During this program, students were invited to take a pledge—and a selfie with their pledge—to demonstrate their commitment to educate and inspire their peers to take a stand for students within the LGBTQ community who experience bullying and silencing as a result. Program facilitators were silent to illustrate the silencing effects of bullying with their peers. This program, like the previous one, was planned on the university quad during the normal lunch period. Following a brief explanation about the program’s purpose, participants were given fliers with information citing alarming statistics about the LGBTQ community and oppression. This



resource also included campus resources on them for students who wanted to learn more.

Both events provided educational opportunities for hundreds of students to quickly learn about the current trends and plights of the LGBTQ community. And while it is impossible to replicate the feelings associated with the “coming out” process or the silencing effects of bullying, this purpose of these programs were to provide a simple and quick exercise to raise awareness about the challenges that are unique to students within the LGBTQ community. As a result, students were empowered to become active participants in promoting inclusion. Through education, it is possible to create more accepting communities on college campuses.

To conclude, annually recognized days are great tools for educating campus communities quickly,

easily, and inexpensively. Programs like this will not solve not impact everyone on the same level. However, much like tutoring alone doesn’t help students achieve good grades, these programs must be paired with additional resources and programming to better engage and support students who are LGBTQ. My challenge to you is to be creative, use some ingenuity, and meet students where they are to educate and engage them. Everyone benefits from more awareness, and programs like these are low hanging fruit that could create more inclusive communities for all. If you are interested in more information about these programs, please feel free to contact me at nchase@fsmail.bradley.edu. Thank you for your time and attention.

COMING OUT IN 1976

Submitted by Chuck Rhodes
Retired Student Affairs Professional
Masters of Divinity (anticipated May 2017)
Interdenominational Theological Center

My first ACPA was in 1977 in Chicago. This was also the first time that ACPA and NASPA met jointly, with several thousand delegates in attendance at the old Conrad Hilton Hotel. Eons before the internet and cell phones, we relied on “message boards” to keep people informed. A day or so into the conference, hand-written signs appeared on the message boards and on the walls around meeting rooms, proclaiming that there would be a meeting for Gays and Lesbians on the last night of the conference. Someone had received permission to use one of the larger meeting rooms. While this room could accommodate several hundred, approximately thirty people showed up, gathering on the side of the room furthest away from the door. Lights were dimmed so that no-one looking into the room would be able to see who was there. What I remember was that one could hear the door opening often, but no-one came into the room. There was no music; just people taking the opportunity to meet each other. Even in this room, we were protecting ourselves from the public

I had come out professionally the year before; 1976, one of the very first housing people to do so. Housing was one of the most homophobic of the student affairs’ professions. When my supervisor informed the Director of Housing, Newell Smith, Bill was asked if he wanted to retain me on staff. When Bill had said yes, Newell replied that it was good that I had been promoted to central staff and was no longer a live-in professional. The belief was that gay and lesbian staff would use their master keys to go into students’ rooms and molest them. At the very least, we would hang out by the shower rooms and check out the residents. It was commonly believed



that we were molesters or would “convert” students. When I decided to leave UW-Madison a couple of years later, Newell told Bill that it was okay to give me a reference, but not for any position working with younger people, such as the Boys Scouts. They had known me for thirty years, yet still did not trust me as a homosexual. A few years later Newell apologized for his comments.

When I came out in 1976, it was only seven years after the Stonewall riots and three years after homosexuality had been declassified as a mental illness. Many educated people still held a lot of stereotypical beliefs about what being homosexual meant: child molesters, emotionally unstable, and sexually indiscriminate. It was extremely difficult to find positive information about homosexuality; most libraries kept these sorts of books in a secure section, and required identification before they would issue them. The term lesbian was incorporated with the term gay and the concept of transgender had not yet reached consciousness in either the same-gender loving or heterosexual communities. The majority of gay-themed movies had some type of tragic end. Few mainstream movie houses showed any of the positively-themed gay movies such as “Boys in the Band.” The few “suspected” gays on tele-

vision could be pretty camp, such as Wally Cox and Paul Lynne. Many of us watched Billy Crystal in the program *Soap*, the first multi-dimensional portrayal of a gay man, but by the early 1980s he was practically heterosexual.

A few months after the 1977 ACPA conference, there was a second meeting in Chicago, the theme of which was something like “Being out in Student Affairs.” Some thirty to thirty-five showed up for this two-day meeting held in one of the public schools. We discussed the challenges of being out. At this time it was still a crime to engage in same-gender sexual behavior. Furthermore, just being rumored to be gay or lesbian led to people being treated as if they had committed a crime, resulting in the loss of jobs, housing, and families. My department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison actually funded me to attend this workshop.

In the 1970s, going out to a gay bar could be very risky. Police would often send attractive undercover officers into the bar to initiate a “pickup” conversation with a man. If the man responded, he could be arrested. Acts of entrapment happened all over the country, in big cities and small. Police would frequently cruise through the parking areas near gay bars and copy down license numbers. In cases where a “hookup” had gone bad, ending in a robbery, attack or murder, the police would randomly use this list to “interview” suspected gay people who had absolutely no connection to the crime. This level of harassment was common. Most states and locales had ordinances against fraternizing/socializing with “known” homosexuals. These vague laws were used to destroy lives. If one was arrested, one’s name would appear in the local paper, along with home address, occupation and employer. In my home state of Virginia, when one went to purchase alcohol in the state-owned liquor store, there would be a list posted of those to whom sales were prohibited, and this list included “known homosexuals,” along with the mentally ill and felons. The challenges to coming out reached way beyond coming out professionally. In *Me and Bobby McGee*, Janis Joplin sings, “Freedom is just another word for nothing else to lose.” By the time I came out, this was the place

I was in. I had to choose freedom. Having been involved in the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, I was not willing to hide another part of me. Within a year of coming out, I became the Director of the Gay Center in Madison WS, one of about twenty-five such centers in the country at the time. Still working at the University and a part-time job, serving as Director was an incredible experience. Remember these were the days before cell phones and the internet. We received calls from all over the country from men aged 16 to 70, covering all issues related to coming out. Teachers, ministers and yes, even wives called us.

It was during this time that singer Anita Bryant began her “Save Our Children” campaign to repeal Miami-Dade County, FL’s gay rights ordinance. Not only was her Florida campaign successful in 1977, but it sparked similar efforts around the country, including Wichita KS, Eugene OR and St. Paul MN, all of which were repealed. More closet doors were shut as this new wave of anti-gay fever spread across the country. The momentum caused a local pastor in Madison to attempt to recall its gay rights ordinance. I was called upon by the United to be one of two spokespersons to defend our ordinance. I was now meeting with the Governor, Mayor, and various religious, labor and elected leaders. Frequently appearing on radio and television, I knew I had one major bridge to cross: coming out to my mother. That warrants a separate story, and while she didn’t understand all of the aspects she embraced me with love.

Much to my surprise, my supervisor and the Director, Newell Smith, were supportive of my civil involvement, which took a lot of time away from work. I will never forget the day a television crew complete with cameras showed up at my office. I am pleased to state that in June 1978, because of our organizational efforts, the opposition withdrew its attempt to recall Madison’s gay rights ordinance; the first successful stop in the country.

A month later, I left my position at the University and moved to California at the height of the gay male influx. One of the reasons for the massive move by gay men to San Francisco, Los



Angeles, Houston, Chicago and New York City was the hostility toward gay people around the country at this time. Not only the religious right, but politicians had rallied in California to push Prop 6: The Briggs Initiative, which not only prohibited gays and lesbians from teaching, but could result in the firing of anyone who was supportive of gay rights. While working on the “No” to the 6 campaign I had the opportunity to meet Harvey Milk just few weeks before his assassination. During this time, I began a life-long friendship with Cleve Jones, who is the co-founder of the Names AIDS Quilt.

During my last year in San Francisco, 1979-80, I served on a sub-committee of the San Francisco Unified School District, the first group charged with introducing gay awareness into schools in San Francisco. In 1980, I moved to Sonoma State, where I began a thirty-one year career. In 1981, I attended my first ACUHO-I conference at Boulder. At that conference, the association voted not to include sexual orientation in its affirmative action clause. It would be years before the association would expand its affirmative action. In 1988, I approached the Executive Committee to approve a Task Force on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexuals interests. It was approved and I became the first chair.

Back in the early 1980s, before the ACPA standing committee was formed, a number of us started staying together in gay suites: six to eight of us would organize to share a suite. Before long there were two or more suites. Staying together evolved into suite parties. Conference programming on gay issues tended to revolve around a couple of areas a) a doctoral student sharing their research and b) working with gay students. Many of us returned to the same sessions every year, not for the content, but to see who was in attendance. Here invitations were given out to the suite parties. In attendance were always several heterosexually married men.

After the standing committee was formed, for the first few years the ACPA socials tended to attract about 40-50 people, networking while music played on a boom box or cassette player. The gay men’s suite parties continued for a few more years. During the early years, Michael Hughes was the master party organizer; sometimes two to three parties during the conference. Many friendships were formed in

those days that carried us through the academic year, and with some of these people I am still friends. Some returned to ACPA each year, not for the content of the program, but for the fellowship and the chance to be free. And yes, some inappropriate choices were made.

Coming out in the 1970s was not just about coming out professionally. One also had to deal with laws and discrimination that occurred nationally, in one’s community, family and religious organization. Through our connections in ACPA, we provided support, not only for each other, but for our staff and students. We not only got ideas, but the courage to do programming, provide counseling and yes, the courage to come out ourselves.

When I come to ACPA and see the hundreds, if not thousands of out LGBT persons in attendance, I feel a great sense of satisfaction. I think back to 1977 when about three dozen people crowded together in a dimly-lit room risking careers and lives in order to make connections. Who would guess the role that LGBT members would take in the association? Who would have guessed the diversity of LGBT programming that would evolve over the years?

The journey that began in the 1970s had predecessors even before the starting point of this article. Many of those names may well have been lost. The forefathers and mothers include Mary McGhee, Jamie Washington, Vernon Wall, Michael Hughes, and Kathy Obear.

MIDWEST QUEER INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE

Uplifting Each Other: Toward a Collective Liberation

For and by queer indigenous and people of color (QIPOC) communities in the St. Louis and Midwest region, the second annual Midwest QIPOC Conference sought to empower marginalized communities through education, advocacy, and community building. The Midwest QIPOC Conference ensured vital space is held for QIPOC communities in the Midwest to access and share their voices, lived experiences, and stories. The vision is to set the platform for a future that transforms the life chances and choices of queer indigenous and people of color. The Midwest QIPOC Conference built and builds community by understanding the critical importance of shared knowledge, best

practices, and education to overcome challenges to bring excellence to the communities where we work, live, and learn.

The conference was founded by two visionary leaders, Jason Jackson and Xay Yang, from the University of Minnesota. Together, Jason and Xay formed an advisory board and steering committee of local and regional representatives to host the inaugural conference in Minneapolis, focusing on “Accessing Ourselves.”

The theme for this year’s second annual conference was, “Uplifting Each Other: Toward a Collective Liberation,” broadening the scope of queer justice and radically addressing complex, intersecting issues of race, class, gender, indigenous rights and other inequities that exist locally and globally. Hosted at Washington University in St. Louis, April 8-10, 2016, we worked to incorporate our host city and the needs of our communities into our vision. Though this conference has been hosted on college campuses, this conference welcomes students, student affairs professionals, and all community members. In fact, the St. Louis community is at a pivotal moment in history

in regards to inequalities among our city and country. In the Black Lives Matter movement, many of the leaders at the forefront identify as LGBTQIA and indigenous and/or people of color, yet their work and stories are not always uplifted. Hosted in St. Louis, the steering committee embraced the opportunity to highlight their leadership and offer a space for our communities to gather and heal.

The co-chairs, a Washington University in St. Louis student and a leader in QTPOC:STL, the queer and trans people of color community in St. Louis and organization under the Metro Trans Umbrella Group, led the steering committee of graduate and undergraduate students and staff at Washington University, staff and undergraduate students from St. Louis University, and community leaders from the Metro Trans Umbrella Group and QTPOC:STL. As a way of centering the voices and experiences of QIPOC com-



Midwest QIPOC Conference Steering Committee. Photo credit: Izaiah Johnson

munities, every member of the steering committee identified as an LGBTQIA indigenous person and/or person of color. Additionally, we drew approximately 150 attendees from across the region, and each attendee self-identified in their registration as an LGBTQIA indigenous person and/or LGBTQIA person of color.

The planning process centered on healing our QIPOC St. Louis communities through fostering relationships. Building trust among university staff and students and members of our city’s communities was a revolutionary and radical act of protest. We have aligned ourselves with the mission of cultivating these relationships for the benefit of our students and city first and foremost, and we have been cautious of relationships for the sake of politics that only benefit our institutions’ images.

Applying Theory to Practice

As student affairs educators, we approached this project from a developmental lens, encouraging student learning throughout the process. While the decision to host this conference came from

a place of seeking to center our St. Louis and Ferguson community activists, we were eager to empower students to lead this project with community activists and to engage as leaders (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and self authors (Baxter-Magolda, 2001). While of course one of our main goals was to host a successful conference, we also focused just as much on student learning and reflection throughout the process of planning and ritual of building community and cultivating chosen family.

With enthusiasm and fresh energy, students returned from the inaugural conference in Minnesota and declared they were certain they wanted to host the conference in its second year. After applying for and receiving the bid to host, Jason and Xay came to Washington University to meet with the steering committee and share their learning and their processes. We witnessed students in the first “Following Formulas” stage in that transition meeting and in the first few meetings we held as we began planning. Asking us how to host a conference, seeking the rules they could use to follow, and wishing there was a path laid out to follow along as they created something fresh and still new, we encouraged them to think outside the box. While this path was leading them to plan this conference, their personal and identity development were intimately folded into the way that they imagined the conference. There were moments when we saw students move toward the “Crossroads” in meetings, feeling a bit clearer about their ideas and vision, but hesitating to speak openly out of fear of what others think. They began to understand this conference as an opportunity to explore themselves and ground their QIPOC identities in power, politics, and their values. As they began establishing and voicing their own beliefs, they began learning the role of relationships with St. Louis community activists in their shared sense of identity and meaning-making. Many of these community members became mentors, lanterns, and possibility models for the students who were cultivating their confidence as QIPOC people, activists, and organizers.

Over time, the mentorship and growing self-confidence led the students who remained in the process to understand the context of and challenge their own belief systems around the politi-

cization of being a QIPOC student engaging at a predominantly white university in St. Louis. They chose to begin to trust their voice after self-reflection throughout the planning process. Their values began to clarify as they articulated a strong mission for the conference, as we watched them “Becoming the Author of One’s

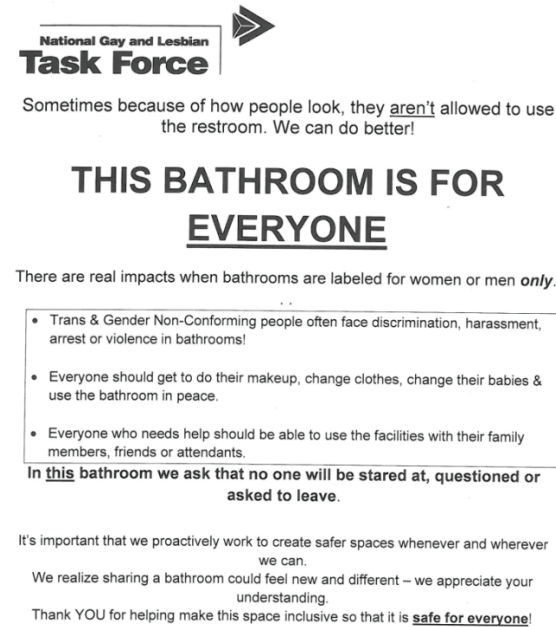


Photo credit: LGBTQ Taskforce
Life” and begin to establish “Internal Foundations.” By the week of the conference, student leaders were grounded and accessing their inner strength. When needing to make fast-paced decisions during the conference, we witnessed them accept ambiguity and be open to changes in the original plans. We were proud to watch them trust their intuition, rise to believing in themselves as leaders and organizers, and act from a place of knowing themselves.

There were moments when students were faced with the challenge of what was, at times, a very overwhelming project, and they were forced to decide whether or not to engage the ambiguity. The process of planning a conference gave students the opportunity to develop competence and autonomy, and navigate and establish comfort in ambiguity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Planning the Conference

In brainstorming the needs of the conference, the steering committee ensured that the process aligned with the mission of providing a collective liberation for all attendees through creating

subcommittees in charge of logistics, keynote speakers, marketing, fundraising, educational workshops, volunteers, and assessment. While each sub-committee was working on their respective delegated assignments, the steering committee made sure that the conference was accessible for all. The registration fee for attending the conference was an optional \$5 per person, recognizing that several attendees identified as college students and non-profit representatives. The logistics subcommittee worked with a few local hotels to block some rooms at lower rates for conference attendees. Furthermore, we also established an apartment-sharing system for individuals who could not afford lodging costs. In conjunction with QTPOC:STL, we contacted local QIPOC-identified individuals who were willing to host conference attendees free of charge, which led to building strong relationships and a sense of collectivism within the community. Other components of accessibility included providing a queer woman of color American Sign Language Interpreter, all-gender restrooms throughout the host facilities (see image below), elevators, automatic doors, providing information about public transit, as well as ensuring available parking. We modeled our restroom signage from those used at Creating Change by the LGBTQ Taskforce.

Undoubtedly, it was crucial for the steering committee to work collectively around the financial responsibilities in order to provide a great experience to the conference attendees. After budgeting the projected expenses, it was decided that we needed to collaborate with local businesses in an attempt to obtain enough funding and donations. Our fundraising efforts did not lack creativity and included initiatives such as seeking for sponsorship from local business owners, negotiating donations, applying for grants, profit shares with dining venues, as well as selling local art work featuring QIPOC activist and pioneers from history. In an attempt to motivate sponsorships, we created different sponsorship levels from platinum down to bronze levels. The steering committee



Midwest QIPOC Conference Steering Committee. Photo credit: Izaiah Johnson

was even successful in collecting funds from mason jars labeled “white guilt” in an attempt to invite white allies to engage and support this gathering. Fundraising efforts were centered on local collaborations in providing visibility to the talent within the St. Louis community with an emphasis on QIPOC communities in St. Louis. Throughout the fundraising process, the steering committee meticulously worked through the logistical components in planning the Conference. The steering committee was able to make significant collaborative partnerships with the host institution, Washington University in St. Louis, as well as the multi-focused LGBTQIA student organizations. However, the conference could have been better resourced, bigger, and in a capitalized space. The steering committee intentionally worked from a grassroots angle to ensure all who led this conference were QIPOC-identified. In doing so, this general notion helped in providing greater access, leadership, and empowerment to marginalized populations but also assisted in navigating white-dominated and privileged spaces as a form of resistance and collective liberation.

The chances for QIPOC individuals to find possibility models are slim considering the white-dominated heteronormative spaces in which we often situate ourselves. The steering committee deliberately selected QIPOC speakers to provide attendees with role models who look



Picture taken after the closing vigil. Photo credit: Izaiah Johnson

and sound like them. La Loba Loca was a keynote speaker for the conference, opening with abuela healing and self-care techniques from Indigenous traditions and practices. She has facilitated knowledge shares and learned from several abuelitas, tias, plants, communities, lands and institutions. La Loba Loca is invested in disseminating information with the hope that self-knowledge and (re)cognition of abuelita knowledge will create a future where we can depend on ourselves and communities. La Loba Loca's core philosophy is based on (re)claiming and (re)membering Abuelita Knowledge and learning how to use our roots as a tool for liberation and transformation. Another keynote speaker was Holiday Simmons, a Black Cherokee transmasculine two-spirit activist, athlete, and lover of babies, soccer, and the ocean. Simmons has worked with youth in foster care, taught GED, has managed education initiatives, and has facilitated numerous creative writing and spoken word workshops with groups of youth, queer and trans people, women, and African and Latinx communities both in the U.S. and abroad. Holiday currently works at Lambda Legal where he focuses on transgender rights, dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, police misconduct, and amplifying the voices of LGBT Native Amer-

icans and two-spirit people. Additionally, the conference hosted a panel of young Black queer and trans activists who have been leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement in Ferguson and St. Louis. The panel provided space for them to discuss their unique experiences within the larger moment that does not always center the interest of queer and trans people. The panel also explored how movements for justice could be more intersectional, in this case being Black and queer and/or trans.

Other Components of the Conference

Due to the historical and present climate for QIPOC populations, the steering committee also put together a response plan for any potential bias incidents (more specifically related to racist, homophobic, and/or transphobic situations) occurring during the conference. Fortunately, none of these aforementioned incidents took place this year, to our knowledge. In attempting to go beyond the preventative care for QIPOC conference attendees, the steering committee was also intentional in creating space to foster a caring environment for conference attendees to practice self-care for themselves and their loved ones. In

promoting this endeavor, the steering committee hosted conference-long childcare and art spaces. We partnered with the Anti Racist Collective to provide the volunteer staffing for the childcare space. The art space was created in an attempt to provide a venue for conference attendees to decompress or take a break from the conference, if needed. We also housed a few licensed counselors on-call throughout the duration of the conference. The steering committee thought that the presence of and accessibility to counselors would be of great benefit to individuals who are triggered or experiencing trauma symptoms.

During the conference, the counselors were part of a larger group of volunteers. Most volunteers identified as White. Although the attendance at the conference was centered on QIPOC-identified individuals and groups, we did not limit nor prevent others identifying outside of these identities to attend the conference. In fact, several White-identified folks volunteered to make the conference a success. In assigning volunteer shifts and responsibilities, the volunteer sub-committee was intentional about more giving visibility to volunteers of color to prevent potential trauma or challenging experience triggers to attendees. However, leadership roles were assigned to all volunteers putting them in the forefront of having a successful conference. The most important piece of the puzzle was the marketing and advertisement of the conference. The steering committee collectively contributed to updating social media, contacting local newspapers, contacting regional gender and sexuality centers in higher education institutions as well as non-profits dedicated to serving and assisting LGBTQIA populations. We also trusted the power of communicating word-of-mouth in attracting QIPOC communities. We were strategic in identifying a timeline to release any type of communications, reminders, and announcements to the larger public.

The steering committee also focused time and effort on making the conference accessible by providing meals during the daytime. In partnering up with local and IPOC-owned businesses, we were able to obtain meals free of charge from two local food establishments, namely Northwest Coffee and Taco Circus. We are indefinitely grateful to

Northwest Coffee for providing caffeinated beverages throughout the conference and to Taco Circus for providing lunch for approximately 150 attendees. Due to the initial fundraising efforts, we were also able to accommodate catering services to cover the remaining meal from Frida's, a healthy lifestyle dining establishment in St. Louis. Our most economical efforts regarding providing food to conference attendees were to purchase breakfast items in bulk.

Educating our QIPOC communities was crucial for the steering committee to execute. The conference would not be as educational and learner-centered without the intentional workshops accepted to be presented. All workshops reflected the conference theme of "Uplifting Each Other: Toward a Collective Liberation." The call for workshops was released in December in an attempt to provide enough time for conference presenters to give thoughtful brainstorming to their submissions. Proposals could be categorized under education, teaching, and learning; health, vulnerability, and well-being; issues, advocacy, and empowerment; and community outreach and involvement. These options were offered not only to provide a plethora of choices for proposals to be submitted but also to gauge different types of interests and values for attending the conference. In turn, the steering committee reviewed the workshops and communicated to the individuals and groups submitting proposals on their acceptance and otherwise. In alignment with the educational workshops, the steering committee also provided intentional space for three categories of identity caucuses in which the underrepresented groups attending the conference could share their shared experiences, life challenges, success stories, and build a powerful collective. It was a venue in which personal narratives were the center of the concept. The identity caucuses were sectioned into three groups, race, gender, and sexuality, while being inclusive to overlapping and intersectional identities. For each educational workshop and caucus, there were assessment forms collected at the end. For the scope of the conference, the steering committee did not create a white nor heterosexual caucus but instead centered the energy and space on the underrepresented voices

at the conference. The assessment was satisfaction-based as well as gauge the learning that took place. Overall, we received very positive feedback from all the educational workshops. The caucuses were talked about as empowerment venues for conference attendees in which they were able to find community and collectiveness.

Challenges and Limitations

The journey to organizing a regional conference has not been without challenges and roadblocks. We had several successful stories and accomplishments but we also wanted to provide some space to talk about what could have gone better. Organizing such a large-scale event could be daunting and time-consuming. It was a one-year process that required significant commitment and investment from all members participating in the organization of the conference. It was through challenging times that we recognized that individuals on the steering committee and subcommittees had other priorities and engagements. It was crucial for the co-chairs to be able to keep others accountable throughout the entire process while practicing self-care, simultaneously.

Expected and Unexpected Successes

The Midwest QIPOC Conference was centered on the theme of “Uplifting Each Other: Toward a Collective Liberation.” The conference attendees provided great anecdotal feedback to the steering committee in passing that they felt like the goal of creating a collective liberation was met during the conference, especially after the closing vigil. The closing vigil occurred in honor and memory of all the lost souls within QIPOC communities. It was an empowering moment for conference attendees to gain confidence and ownership of their own intersectional identities. Institutions such as the Midwest QIPOC Conference, which intentionally create a space for folks with several marginalized intersectional identities, can be empowering in several ways, depending on community needs. We were able to create networking channels among conference attendees. Several of the attendees were able to exchange contact information in order to keep in contact after the conference. The power of witnessing possibility models and role

models was very empowering to younger attendees.

As a team, we were intentional in providing educational workshops and caucuses relevant to QIPOC experiences. Several topics were in correlation with the current societal events and issues targeting QIPOC communities which led to personal growth and education on how to navigate systematic oppression. These sessions were imperative for assisting conference attendees in their journey to “Uplifting Each Other: Toward a Collective Liberation.” In the same vein, by allowing conference attendees to present on QIPOC related matters, we were able to provide leadership opportunities to those who usually do not have access to these set of circumstances.

Lastly, much of the success of the conference planning was attributed to the relationships created and sustained with local businesses. Without their support and assistance, we would not have been able to execute organizing a regional conference. This process provided visibility and created access for QIPOC communities in the regional and local geographical areas. We were able to obtain press coverage from the local media as well as attention on a national level. All in all, the steering committee thought the Midwest QIPOC Conference was a successful achievement in creating space QIPOC communities. Since the University of Minnesota conceived of this conference in 2015, this has been a special gathering for QIPOC folks in the Midwest region to come together, celebrate, build community, and heal. We, in St. Louis, found planning this second year’s conference to be a truly gratifying experience, cultivating growth opportunities for us as individuals and community members to build relationships.

We are excited to pass this important project onward to the next eager community! If you are interested in hosting and/or simply attending the conference in 2017, please email us at midwestqpoc@gmail.com.

The Authors



Mark Chung Kwan Fan (He/Him) recently started in a new position as the Assistant Director of the Spectrum Center at University of Michigan. Since starting a career in student affairs, He has been involved with the ACPA Coalition for LGBT Awareness Directorate Board, the Midwest QIPOC Conference, and NAFSA Rainbow SIG. Mark finds empowerment in working with different subcultures within LGBTQ communities, more specifically queer international students and queer students of color, while assisting others in their holistic development.



Dolan (they/them/theirs) recently started a new position as the Associate Director of the Resource Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They are currently serving as the Transgender and Genderqueer (TGQ) Chair on the executive board of the Consortium of LGBT Resource Professionals in Higher Education. Dolan most recently worked as the Coordinator of LGBT Student Involvement & Leadership at Washington University in St. Louis, and they harness much of their energy from connecting with students one on one, most often over a warm mug of tea.

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