



GLBTA Pride Center Fall 2011 Newsletter

Bridgewater State University – Fall 2011

Great Minds Think Alike, and Together

by Kelly Neufell

workshops run by a schedule with topics that included “How to Emphasize your Words” or “How to Combine Rhythm and Rhyme to Create the Perfect Poem.” They were very camper driven and involved, with portions of writing, listening, and performing for each other. Kit had a way of posing questions and themes that helped someone put into words what it was they were thinking. For me, it solidified that being part of the LGBTQQIA community (or alphabet soup, as we called it) was something that I thought about often and influenced my actions day to day, even dictating my career choice. I realized that this was something that was a very large part of me, even if to others it seemed muted. During that week, there was an open mic night that was run by Kit, and I performed a poem written in five minutes and polished the night of based on an activity the camp participated in. It was probably one of the best pieces I ever wrote and certainly performed, because he provided me with the courage to tap into things I really wanted people to know and talk about instead of perpetuating it by silence.

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Something to talk about:

- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the ban on gay and lesbian service members, is officially repealed.
- After months of legal review, the Department of Defense announced that military chaplains may officiate in same-sex wedding ceremonies of service members in states where gay marriage is legal. Such ceremonies can be performed on military bases.

Every once in a while, you experience something that you know you will remember for the rest of your life. Something you will look back on and say “this was truly life changing.” Fortunately for me, I had the opportunity to have a week’s worth of mind boggling, emotionally moving, mentally challenging, and most importantly, transformative events. I would argue, even, that this transformation began months before I even stepped on the plane with Nashville, Tennessee as my final destination. It is one thing to have to pay out of pocket to attend a conference, but it is entirely different when a school offers to send you to a “camp” based around one of the most controversial topics in the United States, and even the world, today. Knowing that I was chosen to represent my campus on something that is so close to my heart and life was actually where my inspirational journey began.

Though it didn’t happen until later in the camp, a unique chance to work with the trans slam poet, Kit Yan, arose on two separate occasions, both of which I took advantage of. They weren’t merely

Preferred Name Option in the Banner ID System

by Lou Johnson

Through the efforts of The Diversity Council, Dr. Dave Ostroth, the Pride Center Ambassadors, The Pride Coalition, and Student Government Association, Bridgewater State University now offers students a preferred name option in the Banner ID system. By utilizing this option, students can change the first name that appears on their

Connect Cards, class rosters, and email.

Although any student can change their preferred name, one of the main groups this option benefits is transgender students. Previously, transgender students who had not legally changed their names risked being unwillingly outed in classes during roll call, in dining halls while purchasing food, in

the library while checking out books, or in many other everyday situations. It was an issue of comfort and safety. Transgender people face more violence and discrimination in society than many other groups. Being able to choose who to disclose one's transgender identity with helps reduce the risk of violence and discrimination and eases anxiety.

Dr. Dave Ostroth, Vice President of Student Affairs, sent out information to the campus community detailing how to change your first name on class rosters and grade lists, on your Connect Card, in Blackboard, and in Moodle, as well as how to change your display name for your email. Please visit www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/PreferredName.cfm for details.

To Come Out or Not to Come Out

by Diana Ramos

To come out or not to come out, that is the question. When stepping onto the college campus for the first time, everything seems to hit you at once: different school, different people, and different class schedules. It sometimes feels like the only thing constant is you. But when it comes to being yourself, it can be a challenge for

those of us who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or any other identity that is typically excluded in discussions of sexuality and gender. You begin to ask yourself questions from “What will people think of me?” to “Will they treat me differently?” and even “Will I be denied services or attacked because of expressing who I am?” But you are not alone, not only are there offices, depart-

ments and clubs to support you, there are many students

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To Come Out or Not to Come Out

who are currently in or have been in your situation. I should know, I am one of them.

In high school I knew what it was to be straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and had a vague idea of what transgender meant. What I also knew was that I didn't really identify with any of them, but I also didn't identify as straight. I heard another student in home-room throw around the word "asexual" to describe me and I decided to look for more information. I found out that there many more people who, like me, experienced a romantic desire to be with someone, but didn't experience sexual attraction. Over the summer I searched the Bridgewater State website to find the [GLBTA Pride Center](#). I saw the center had many resources, books and movies, and they also hosted events. When I moved on campus and classes started, the GLBTA Pride Center became my home away from home; a place where I could be me comfortably. Through the other people

who hung out at the office I learned about [AWARE](#), a student run club that promotes GLBT issues on campus. Through the center's director I learned about the university's non-discrimination policy and that any instance of discrimination should be reported to the [Office of Affirmative Action](#).

As I was trying to learn more about
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LGBT History Month Keynote

“Hidden Voices: The Lives of LGBT Muslims”

October 17

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Moakley Auditorium

www.bridgew.edu/GLBTA/glbHistory.cfm



Faisal Alam

To Come Out or Not to Come Out

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myself and who I am, I also took advantage of the free services from the [Counseling Center](#). And all around campus I was able to identify staff and students who were allies because of posted signs that showed they went through [Safe Zone Training](#) on how to best support GLBT students. As I attended events and hung out in the Pride Center I began to gain more confidence in talking about GLBT issues and that not only made me a more effective ally, but helped me to better understand myself. Now instead of fearing what people will think of me when I tell them I hang out at the Pride Center, I say it proudly and help educate people about issues that face the sexual and gender minority communities.

Everyone's experience coming out on campus is different. While I hope that everyone's experience coming out on campus is as rosy as mine, that isn't always the case. If you yourself are debating whether to come out on campus or not, consider attending the [Coming Out Discussion Group](#), and know that there are many other resources on campus to help you with the process and are here to support you.

Great Minds Think Alike, and Together

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Another thing that struck me was how fast I was meeting people from all over the country. I didn't leave the airport without meeting three of them; one from New York state, another from Miami, and one more from South Carolina. I would realize later, as we somehow all met at the airport before parting for our home states, just how broad the scope of the students' reach was. Flights were being called to California, Georgia, Texas, Michigan and more, and every time we would lose one of our group members. I mention this because being surrounded by so many people from such a variety of backgrounds can really impact someone's perspective, as it did mine. I learned to look past the rights my state allowed me to see from the eyes of those less fortunate. Actually, being able to provide support to those people through their struggles, rejoice in their victories (a couple of which occurred while they were at camp), and advise to the best of my abilities was one of the most beneficial experiences. I know that as I continue on my adventure of working in this field, I can turn to them, and they to me, in times of need, support, and celebration, just as we did every day at Campus Pride, where our great minds, together, spoke, thought, and fought for the LGBTQIA (alphabet soup) community.

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