

## On Building a Sustainable Dickinson Community

In the Fall Semester, I took an environmental studies course entitled, “Building Sustainable Communities” with Dr. Neil Leary, the Director of the Center for Sustainability Education. Throughout the course, we discussed all the facets of what makes a community vibrant and sustainable. We had conversations about affordable housing, health care, food access, and natural disaster resiliency. At the core of each of these conversations was equity and justice. It became fundamental to my understanding of sustainability and community sustainability that all members of a community must be treated equitably and justly. In order for a community to reach its fullest potential and become truly sustainable, all identities must be represented and celebrated. In the rapidly changing world of 2014, hegemonic communities are unsustainable.

Thus, when I began thinking about how to frame the Spring issue of *Connect*, I couldn’t get away from the idea of community. In fact, the more I thought about the Office of LGBTQ Services and community, the more I realized that institutions like our office and the Popel Shaw Center for Race & Ethnicity are intrinsically about sustainability. By providing resources and a safe space for marginalized groups of people, we strengthen the Dickinson community and make it more sustainable.

It seemed fitting that at the end of our second full year, we devote an entire issue of *Connect* to community. It is time to celebrate the wonderful work we have done to make our community a more safe and sustainable space for all Dickinsonians.

—Nick Bailey ’16

*News and Digital Resources Pride Coordinator*



## (Re)Defining Community

Throughout the last two years, the Office of LGBTQ Services, along with our campus and community partners, has worked to foster and broaden our concepts of “community.” As I sit and reflect on the last two years and the amazing work that the Dickinson College community has accomplished in terms of gender and sexuality work, I want to encourage us to stop and reflect on “community.” What does it look like? How do we define it? Are we part of one? If so, what one(s)? Are we happy in those communities? What work can we still do within and outside of our communities?

I think these are important questions. I think these are the questions that continue to move us forward and assist us in thinking about our next steps—our next steps as a movement, our next steps as an Office, and more importantly—our next steps as a community of people working to raise awareness, support, educate, and advocate for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (...etc., etc.) community. There has been much movement during this academic year nationally, but also within our own limestone walls.

Reflecting on the spring semester, I am reminded of the privilege I have to hold this role at Dickinson. Over the last two years, I have had the honor of working with students, faculty, staff, and community members—but also the opportunity to share in their journeys through this place. This spring in particular has brought new paths and new directions for our community, with those paths bringing us to deeper reflections of “building and sustaining community.”

As Bell Hooks writes in *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, “There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.” I believe the work we have and continue to do on campus is our “practical model” for social change. It’s our way of engaging “the other,” while

also transforming our community. Thinking and reflecting on our work, I wanted to take a moment to share how we have and continue to strive toward a stronger, more visible, and prideful Queer presence in the Dickinson community.

Starting off the semester, the Office connected with the departments of Music, Theatre, and Dance, the Office of Diversity Initiatives, and the Division of Student Life to sponsor Artist in Residence Bill Bowers. Through collaborations with Spectrum, Dickinson's Queer Student Organization, we were able to host a discussion on the infusion of identity and the arts. Students were able to engage with Mr. Bowers in a discussion how they too can express their multifaceted selves in various ways through artistic venues and create communities and conversations around the various identities they hold.

During our 7th Annual GSA Leadership Summit, we added a Pre-Summit experience focused on creating Queer community engagement through Mentorship and Leadership. The pre-summit workshop challenged students to think about how to integrate their Queer identities alongside their leadership and mentorship experiences.

Alongside our amazing Wellness Center staff, we have created a new group, called QD2—Queer Dickinson Discussions—focused on building a stronger LGBTQ community at the College. QD2 is a space for LGBTQ and ally students to informally discuss concerns and to create community at Dickinson. The group has grown slowly over the semester, but we have had some wonderful discussions that have assisted us in planning our next steps as an Office. We have some great ideas for “taking it on the road” as we welcome new students in the fall. If you are an accepted student reading this column, stay tuned for more details as we plan for next year!

One of my most moving personal and professional experiences also occurred during this semester. Partnering with the Office of Community Service and Religious Life (CSRL), we held our first ever LGBTQ Service Trip and Immersion experience in New York City. While there are very few of these trips that occur across the country (more specifically—service experiences dedicated to LGBTQQIA issues), Dickinson students were challenged to create the experience from start to finish. While it was not only exciting for many of our students to see New York City for the first time, it was incredibly moving for them to see and discuss the cultural challenges that we still face as a movement. During our trip, we learned about LGBTQ history in New York City, we provided assistance to the Metropolitan Community

Church in Manhattan—the largest LGBTQ serving religious denomination that also houses the only LGBTQ specific homeless youth shelter in New York City. We networked and shared our experiences with some regional New York alumni, attended an LGBTQ specific worship service, and met with the Executive Director of the

Global Justice Institute to discuss the dimensions of human trafficking in Central Pennsylvania and the specific LGBTQ connections to that work. The trip was truly an amazing experience and one that I hope we can continue to offer as an Office working to “pay it forward” to all those advocates and activists that have come before us. I must personally thank all those who made our trip possible and all those who supported us in this process.

With our spring distinguished speaker, Faisal Alam, we explored the intersections of Islam and LGBTQ identities. Faisal aimed to highlight the many struggles and challenges facing sexual and gender minorities within the Muslim world and examined the complex intersections of Islam, sexuality and gender. While aiming to dispel common stereotypes and

***“Before you tell your life  
what you intend to do  
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intends to do with you.”***

***—Parker J. Palmer***



**GSA Leadership Summit 2014**



myths about Islam, his presentation also explored the history of the queer Muslim movement in the United States and the suppression of LGBT rights around the world under the guise of the “war on terror.” Using his own life experience and by exploring the complex history of the Islamic world, Faisal brought new light onto the lives of an often invisible and silent community.

On April 11th, as part of the National Day of Silence, over 100 students, staff, and faculty chose to participate in a day of action in which students across the country call attention to the silencing effects of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools, colleges, and universities. Our Office, along with Spectrum, “Broke the Silence,” later in the day in a small vigil gathering where we recounted stories of those who have been silenced, but also celebrated the work of those advocating to end the silence.

After our vigil, we held our 2nd Annual Lavender Reception Ceremony celebrating the achievements of graduating students and alumni in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and ally (LGBTQQIA) community from Dickinson College. The Lavender Reception is our chance to celebrate the achievements of the past year and honor the strength and resiliency of this community. With over ten students recognized and over one hundred and twenty people in attendance, the reception was a tremendous success! I cannot fully express my gratitude in writing for the continued support that this Office and our students continue to receive from the larger campus community. We wish all of our graduating students continued success as they navigate their life journeys outside the limestone walls.

Through our work this year, we have engaged with parents and families, local community members, as well as faculty, administrators, and staff. We have seen movement in policies and procedures related to students who may be gender non-conforming, transgender, or gender queer and officially launched gender-neutral housing for all students at Dickinson

– a policy that has now been recognized as one of the best in the country and one that I believe will continue to open our doors toward creating a truly inclusive residential community for members of the Queer community!

As I shared with students during our Lavender Reception ceremony, we all can contribute to developing stronger communities and commitments to this work – wherever we are—whatever we do. It doesn’t necessarily depend on “what you do,” but it’s important to do something. As author Parker J. Palmer writes in his book, *Let Your Life Speak*, “Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent. Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.”

It is this “authentic service in the world” that helps us to create true and meaningful connections. It is this “authentic self-hood” that allows us to engage in deeper ways. It is through these connections and ways of engagement that allow us to create community.

As the spring semester ends and we think about our next steps, I challenge us all to continue thinking about the community we have created, the work we have done to make it better, but the work we can still do. Thank you for a wonderful year and we look forward the 2014-2015 academic year.

Enjoy a restful and rejuvenating summer season!

Warm regards,

**Brian Patchcoski**

*Director, Office of LGBTQ Services*  
Dickinson College



## Bridging the Gap

It is imperative that at this time we reflect on the past LGBTQ movements here at Dickinson as a means to bridge current divides and come to understand each other and each one's place in the "community." Apart from my role as the Faculty and Departmental Outreach Pride Coordinator, I also take an active role as the president of Spectrum: Dickinson's LGBTQ+ group. As such, I can say within my last three years of involvement in the organization, we have surely had our fair share of highs and lows; and I find that now, more so than ever, we need an active student front interested in building this community.

I know that we will never be able to please the entire LGBTQ+ community on campus, nor the greater community, but we must find it within ourselves to try. Much too often we think to divide and create a new space to fit the image of what we desire, and though there may be a need for that here, I challenge us all to develop new means within the current system. We must educate ourselves on the strife of our fellow students and those most marginalized to make them feel welcomed, as this failure is the root of the divisions. We are selfish and can't see beyond ourselves and our problems to identify the person next to us as what they are, simply a human trying to navigate the meaning of their place in this world. I am certain that this and more can be achieved in time, even now Spectrum as an organization is still trying to find a means to make a space that allows us to see beyond ourselves and see those in the larger community.

This road will not be easy, no one ever said it would, but together there might be a chance and I'll hold on to that chance because I want to see it at Dickinson and beyond.

**Martin Alvarez '15**

*Faculty and Departmental Outreach Pride Coordinator*

## Breaking the Silence



The National Day of Silence is a day of action in which students across the country vow to take a form of silence to call attention to the silencing effect of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools, colleges, and universities.

This year, as pride coordinator for Programming and Events, I had the privilege to work on the Day of Silence (DOS). It was the first year that LGBTQ Services organized specific programming for the DOS.

I believe that the Day of Silence is an incredibly important activity for allies. Their participation, as allies, is vital because they gain an understanding of the impact that silence has on an individual due to anti-gay bullying and harassment. This day of recognition creates safer environments, because those participating begin to understand the struggles that LGBTQ individuals face on a daily basis.

Since the Day of Silence can be such a powerful experience, I wanted it to be a collaborative project, enriched by the participation of many organizations and students. As this was the first time that I had organized and planned for the Day of Silence, I wanted this day to raise awareness of the everyday silencing that members of the LGBTQ community experience at Dickinson. Along with Spectrum members Liam Fuller '17 and Martin Alvarez '15 (Spectrum's president and a Pride Coordinator at the LGBTQ Office), we tabled in the HUB for many days leading up to the Day of Silence and encouraged over fifty people to participate. Three of them were professors! We also distributed stickers to be worn on the DOS that gave a brief paragraph about their participation in the day and why they felt it was important. I was so very happy to see that so many people were excited to participate - whether that meant being completely silent until the "Breaking of the Silence" vigil at the end of the day or spreading awareness by speaking about the event.

I believe that expanding the DOS beyond a single day—educating the community in advance about the purpose and importance of the DOS, creating a collaboration between LGBTQ Services and Spectrum, and notifying participants' professors in advance—were all incredibly important steps toward making our recognition a tremendous success. By participating in the DOS, we are actively working to create a better environment and community on campus that can be sustainable beyond a yearly DOS observance. I was happy to see a strong community of people coming together and advocating for safer environments.

**Mana Shaw '14**

*Programming and Events Pride Coordinator*



# LGBTQ Services in NYC

Dickinson's Offices of LGBTQ Services and Community Service and Religious Life recently partnered on the College's first ever LGBTQ Service Trip to New York City. From Friday, March 21st until Sunday the 23rd, twelve Dickinsonians learned, worked, and served in New York City. The learning experience began Saturday morning with a tour from Rick Landman, a gay rights activist who helped found the Gay Liberation Front. Landman took us through Greenwich Village, taking the group back in time and illustrating how much things have changed for the LGBTQ community. Landman contended that while Stonewall was important, he still does not understand why it became the catalyst and everlasting memory that it did. Landman, a former New York University professor and Real Estate attorney, discussed the impact of gentrification on the LGBTQ community, along with gay marriage, religion, sex, and politics.

After the tour, the group sped uptown to the Metropolitan Community Church, a LGBTQ Protestant Church in the city. MCC, with only sixteen beds, houses the largest emergency homeless shelter for LGBTQ youth in the city. As a group, we helped repaint and refinish a large swath of the church and shelter. Even though there were no clients present as we were working in the afternoon, we were all moved by the shelter, its

mission, and volunteers. Lacking windows, as the shelter is in a basement, the cavernous room houses folded up cots in the back, wire shelving holding clients' bags, showers and toilets, a kitchen area, a computer, and an office. This barren space is the best New York City has to offer for its homeless and runaway LGBTQ youth. We were all proud to be able to make a little difference and to help the church and shelter.

On Sunday, we attended a service at the church and then spoke with Reverend Pat Bumgardner about her work in the church, shelter, and with victims of human trafficking. Rev. Pat emphasized that a majority of homeless and LGBTQ youth had been victims of human trafficking, even if they did not identify as such. Rev. Pat mentioned Carlisle and its status as one of the East Coast's human trafficking hubs. Personally, this experience has encouraged me to work with homeless and runaway LGBTQ youth in the future, as they are some of the most disadvantaged members of the LGBTQ community. I'm looking forward to seeing this trip develop further in the coming years.

**Peter Shapiro '14**

*Training and Education Pride Coordinator*





# SECOND ANNUAL *Lavender* RECEPTION A SENIOR'S REFLECTION

I was not “out” before I was a student at Dickinson. Make no mistake about that. I was still identifying as “straight...ish” and literally hiding from womyn I found attractive because I did not even know how to deal with the attraction that I have been raised to be ashamed of since I was literally four years old. But somehow, even before Dickinson became as LGBTQ-friendly as it is now, I was still able to come out during my first year to a small group of friends that later became my core support system here. They provided me with the safety net that I needed to be fully out; and without their friendship, I would have been too afraid to apply to work for the office of LGBTQ Services, let alone Lavender Reception. So you have to understand, my being in Lavender Reception was a pretty big deal for me.

During the first few minutes of my arrival, I could not believe that I was one of the students being celebrated. I worked as the Events Coordinator during the last one, which was safe for me because I could enjoy it from a safe emotional distance. Although I have been out for about three years, I was not ready to be a part of the actual ceremony. I was not “queer” enough, I did not experience any real homophobia or anything of that nature during my time here. I felt like I did not deserve

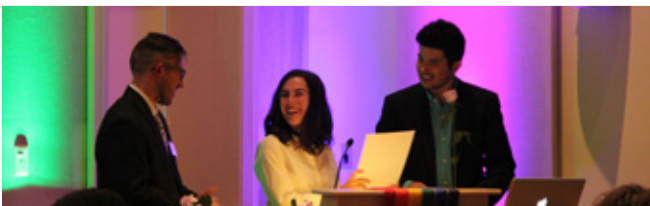
that sort of recognition. I was even afraid of donning on the nifty rainbow tassels and stole we received during Lavender Reception to wear during the campus-wide commencement ceremony.

Now, by the grace of the rainbow that rose out of the office of LGBTQ Services, I’m not afraid of being my most authentic self anymore. Stern Great Room was so lavishly and tastefully decorated that I could not help but feel like it was for me. It was as if Brian, Sara and the other Pride Coordinators recognized just how much work I had to do in order to be proud of who I am. It was as if they were there for every personal battle that I have had over coming to terms with my sexuality and they wanted to celebrate my personal accomplishments. I am not ashamed to say that I cried big, gay (as in happy!), tears during the ceremony. I am not ashamed to even wear my beautiful rainbow stole during my commencement ceremony. I earned it. I cherish it like I cherish my Dickinson education overall.

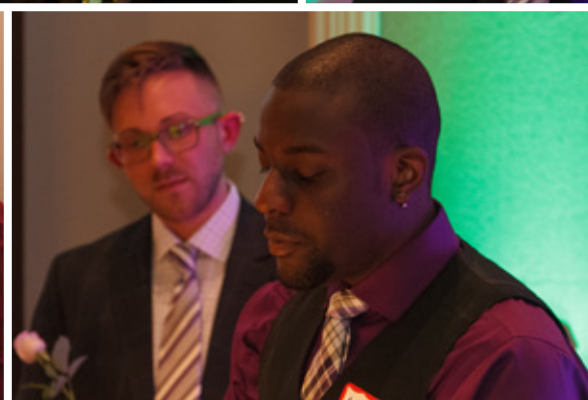
Looking back at my four years here, I have come to realize that a lot of my personal growth came from working with the beautiful, passionate people at the office of LGBTQ Services. They loved me and accepted me during every moment of my time there, from my running around the Social Hall with a rainbow flag attached to my already flamboyant outfit during “Out on Britton” to my crowning moment of receiving my rainbow stole during Lavender Reception. It is amazing how what I experienced in two years has literally changed my life for the better. I could not have asked for a more loving, familial environment and I will sincerely miss working for them.

**Chalise Saunders ’14**

*Programming and Community Outreach Pride Coordinator*











## Alumni Spotlight

### Ted Martin, Class of 1987

**MAJOR:** Political Science Major and English Minor

**CAMPUS INVOLVEMENTS:** President and Treasurer of Student Senate

**Q.** What did you do following graduation from Dickinson?

**A.** After graduating from Dickinson, I went to Washington D.C., and I started out as a Lyndon Johnson intern with my congressman from the Western side of the state. I stayed with him for the next eight years. I worked very briefly in his personal office, and then I worked on the Subcommittee on Labor Standards. I began my work there as the deputy clerk, which is kind of an intern with a nicer title. And, eight years later when I left, I was the deputy chief of staff.

**Q.** What do you do now?

**A.** I am the executive Director of Equality Pennsylvania, the statewide LGBT advocacy organization. I am responsible for the administrative function of the operation, and there are three parts of the organization. The Equality Pennsylvania Educational Fund, which is our 501(c)(3), educates the public on nondiscrimination. I oversee a staff of nine, and we essentially work throughout Pennsylvania to educate people on the lives of LGBT citizens. I also oversee Equality Pennsylvania, which is our 501(c)(4) that is involved in politics. We get involved in lobbying, and I lobby individual legislators. We also have professional lobbyists who help legislators come around on these issues. We help with candidates, and we get involved with political races: getting out the vote, phone calls, and those sorts of things. We also have the Equality PA PAC (Political Action Committee), which is the financial side of politics. We use that to campaign.

**Q.** How do you think activism and advocacy contribute to building community?

**A.** I think that the more people talk about the issues, the more they care about them, and the more they build community around those issues. For example, I think for many, many years LGBT people didn't talk about their issues. LGBT people didn't talk about their issues to their families, let alone their elected officials. I think as people have begun to talk about the issues, how laws [or the lack there of] impact their lives, it bonds them together, because it's a common struggle. People can understand, for example, in Pennsylvania you can still be fired for being gay in the vast majority in the state. That builds the closeness. People learn the issues, people learn to look out for each other, and people learn what they need to talk to legislators about and what they need to talk to the public about. I think that absolutely builds community among LGBT people, but also among allies: the people who think it's the right thing to do, who have coworkers and family and friends. The conversation of being an activist, which is really just people who talk a lot about the issue, makes people aware and bonds them together in the common knowledge.

**Q.** What advice would you give to a young Dickinsonian who aspires to become an activist or work in advocacy?

**A.** Don't expect to become a millionaire. Know that it takes some time. I think that you can't start out changing the world right away. This is hard work. I've never worked for a for-profit anything, so you have to understand that this is really grinding. You don't always make a ton of money, but you're making people change. You're changing the world, which is the most important part. And, I also think that everyone should do this at least one time in the life. People go through their lives saying, "Gee, I wish things were better" or "Gee, I wish that was different." And, you really can do it, you can really make change. I think it happens with the simplest things. There are times when just speaking up and calling attention to a problem can lead to change. That's as simple as getting a stop sign put up at an intersection to changing the law. My advice is to not be afraid, to show a little courage, and always be willing to call out people in authority.

**Q.** Do you have any final comments?

**A.** You never stop realizing that you have to be true to yourself. You never stop realizing that you have to do something that makes you feel good about yourself, about what you're contributing. I think that too often, you get caught up in trying to make sure that everything is great financially or that life is comfortable. But, I think what's important is that you really be true to those issues that make you, you.