

## Change

College is a weird place. It operates in world of its own, with its own language, weather patterns, and clock. For Dickinson students, that means we call a couple couches outside the cafeteria the “cushies,” we sometimes (often) go to bed at 3 a.m. and wake up at 8 a.m. for class, and all weather is extreme, whether it’s drizzling or pouring. And, unlike most other places, college is a place that changes often and rapidly. The student body turns over every four years, and with it, the interests, perspectives, and values represented on campus change too. This semester, we’ve chosen to focus on change, because it is salient and palpable at this point in the lifetime of the Office of LGBTQ Services.

In July, we welcomed our new Interim Director, Erica Gordon, and in September, it was exciting to bring three new pride coordinators on board (Noah S. Thompson ’17, Kitson Smyth ’17, and Liam Fuller ’17). Having worked in this office for nearly two years, these new faces and new energy made the office feel different. It was clear a change was underway, and I’m glad I was here to take part.

As you flip through this issue, you’ll find some of the usual updates from around the office and an overview of the work we’ve accomplished. But, you’ll also find a distinctly different set of voices, values, and perspectives. From Kitson’s work on increasing visibility amongst “out” faculty and staff, to Liam’s work on ensuring we use the most up to date and sensitive language in training and educating our community. The direction of our work has changed, because we have changed. We’ve found new partners and allies, but we’ve also continued to work with old friends to educate, advocate, and initiate dialogue around LGBTQ+ issues, which you’ll read more about in a featured article from Sarah Rose ’15 about bringing transgender actress, Laverne Cox, to campus. This semester, we have changed, but our goals are still the same, and like always, there is still plenty of work to be done.

—Nick Bailey ’16

*Pride Coordinator for News & Digital Resources*

## A Letter from the Director

It may be cliché to say, but change can be a scary thing. It was over the summer that I was approached by Dean of Students, Joyce Bylander, to step in as the Interim Director of LGBTQ Services. I was overwhelmed with a wide range of emotions at the prospect of moving to such an office with such a valuable and essential purpose. I must admit, the emotion of fear was palpable, since I recognized what the founding of the Office of LGBTQ Services meant to so many people, including myself. I was, quite frankly, terrified to let anyone down. In addition, I felt scared to let go of the position I had held at the College for the past 6 years. Working in Student Leadership & Campus Engagement since 2008 is what helped me find my connection to the wonderful Dickinson community. I felt comfort and confidence in my daily routine and, although there were certainly challenges, most days were relatively predictable. Ultimately, I was afraid of the unknown. Yet as I wrestled with the offer put in front of me, I began to realize how privileged I was to have such an opportunity. Sure, there would likely be a learning curve and some bumps along the way, but I imagined that through these challenges, I would become stronger and more confident, both personally and professionally. So here I am, one semester into this incredible journey of heading the Office of LGBTQ Services. I have found support and encouragement from the group that made me fall in love with Dickinson from the beginning: the students! Dickinson College students are special and, I might argue, my Pride Coordinators are the most special of them all! This semester would not have been as successful as it was without the hard work, determination, and thoughtfulness of my five Pride Coordinators—and, for that, I am quite grateful.

Heading into this year, I was keenly aware that I undoubtedly had huge shoes to fill as Brian Patchcoski worked tirelessly over the past two years building a strong

foundation to support a community dedicated to issues of gender and sexuality. His excitement, passion, and energy was contagious and he lit the fire under many people to realize how essential this work really is. I wanted to carry his light into this year, continuing many of the signature and core programs that were created, while at the same time providing a fresh set of eyes and new perspective. We have continued to offer the Pride @ Dickinson Safe Zone Program and trained faculty, staff, administrators, and students during the month of September. As we ran the trainings, we started to examine the content, activities, and format to see if there was anything that could be updated. The Office is excited to roll out a slightly modified version of the presentation this spring. With that, we also completely updated our Safe Zone Manual, which will now only be available electronically on Moodle. In addition, we created brand new, from scratch Ally 101 and Trans 101 trainings. We presented the Ally 101 training in October and received very strong reception from those individuals in attendance. Finally, we decided to refocus our Mentoring Program specifically on current Dickinson students as we launched “Queer Peers,” a peer-to-peer mentoring program. We wrapped up mentor interviews this semester and hope to start meeting formally in the spring.

During the fall semester, we held our annual Pride Reception during Homecoming & Family weekend, where we enjoyed delicious food and mixed and mingled with students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, family, and friends. October was busy, as always, as we publicized and educated the community about LGBTQ History month. On October 16th, the Dickinson community went purple for Spirit Day in a stand against bullying and to show support for LGBTQ youth. We continued the month encouraging an increased awareness of LGBTQ issues on campus as we celebrated “Out on Britton” on October 9th. This year’s event was extra special as we welcomed Dickinson alumna, Emily Newberry ’66 to campus to deliver the keynote address. After a long spiritual journey of inner truth seeking, Emily came into acceptance of herself as a transgender woman. She writes and performs poetry about the human condition and advocates on behalf of transgender equality. Her speech resonated strongly with the Dickinson community and, in addition to attending our event, she spent the week visiting classes, conducting poetry readings, and holding casual conversations with students. Emily has not been back to campus since her graduation, and it was an honor to finally welcome her back “home.” We wrapped up October with a screening of the iconic documentary, “Paris is Burning,” after which Professors Sarah Kersh and Zacharie Baque engaged participants in a discussion.

November was packed as well and we started it off with our very first LGBTQIA Student, Faculty, and Staff Mixer.

We welcomed over 30 people as we dined over a pasta dinner, shared stories, and engaged in conversation. It is our goal to host events like this at least once a semester. We also held our first Gay Blood Drive with support of students in Alpha Phi Omega. Because of an FDA ban, men who have had sex with men (at any time since 1977) are banned from donating blood. During the event, eligible allies could donate blood on behalf of a gay or bisexual man who is legally unable to do so. In 3.5 hours, 36 individuals donated blood, symbolizing the fact that 72 individuals could have given blood if this ban was not in effect. November came to close with National Transgender Awareness Week. Along with Spectrum, we enjoyed apple cider and a screening of “Solider’s Girl,” a film about the true story of the price a young soldier paid for falling in love with a trans night-club performer. The next day, members of the Dickinson community gathered in Britton Plaza for a vigil, as we read the names of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who have died as a result of hate and discrimination during the past year.

Finally, we ended the semester with one of the most anticipated events of the semester, as we welcomed outspoken transgender advocate and critically acclaimed actress, Laverne

Cox, to deliver her keynote address “Ain’t I a Woman.” We were all moved and inspired by her words, as Laverne spoke to a standing-room-only crowd in ATS. It will certainly be an event that is remembered for years to come. On a final note, I wanted to thank each and every one of you who have supported me in my transition as Interim Director. This work cannot be done alone, and I recognize how

very lucky I am to be part of a Dickinson community that is so committed and dedicated to social justice. As I mentioned previously, change can be scary but, at the same time, it can also be a powerful mechanism for harnessing one’s inner strength and power. There is still lots of work to be done, but, on behalf of the Office of LGBTQ Services, I can strongly say that we are ready! We have a lot to look forward to in the spring, including our 8th Annual GSA Leadership Summit, our 2nd LGBTQ Service Trip, and our 3rd Annual Lavender Reception.

Have a restful and peaceful holiday season!

Best,

**Erica Gordon**

*Interim Director, Office of LGBTQ Services*  
Dickinson College





Gay Blood Drive

November 17, 2014

# Updates from Around the Office

## Students, Faculty, Staff: Changing the LGBTQ+ Community from the Ground Up

When I arrived on campus last year, one of the first things I was excited to do was develop a support system of LGBTQQIA+ identified people and allies on this campus, as I had done in high school. I connected with Brian Patchcoski on my first day here and learned about Spectrum meetings, Spectrum house, and the Office of LGBTQ Services at Landis House. One of the first conversations I had with Brian actually touched on the topic of Pride Coordinators as he said he wanted to see me as a Coordinator one day given my enthusiasm for LGBTQQIA+ issues and student leadership.

This year, as the Faculty and Departmental Outreach Pride Coordinator, I have worked on improving visibility among the faculty and staff here, ensuring that it is as facile to find LGBTQQIA+ identified and allied professors and staff on this campus for other students in the community as it was for me. Visibility is important. Not only should our campus be visibly diverse in both the student, faculty, and staff population, but students should also be aware who on campus is an ally or a member of the same community that they themselves identify. It is important for any college to ensure that all students feel safe and accepted on their campus and Dickinson is no exception.

In previous years, the easiest way to determine if a faculty member was LGBTQQIA+ friendly was to look for a “Safe Space” sticker on their door, indicating they had completed the Safe Zone training with a Pride Coordinator in an earlier year. I found myself comforted by the fact that every professor whose office I visited last year had this sticker, even if they were not a member of LGBTQQIA+ community. This semester, I have worked on a more clear-cut way inform students about allies on campus through an Out Faculty Visibility List. I have worked closely with members of the faculty to create the list, and we hope to publish the list on the student private online portal by the end of the year. This list will allow all individuals with a Dickinson email account to see a full list of self-identified LGBTQ+ and allied Dickinson community members.

Additionally, I worked in a similar vein coordinating the LGBTQQIA student, faculty, and staff Mixer on November 10th. The Mixer was a casual dinner and conversation with students, faculty, and staff who self-identify as LGBTQQIA to give students the chance to meet some out faculty and staff as well as other out students. We hope to make this happen every semester in the future.

— Kitson Smyth '17

*Pride Coordinator for Faculty and Departmental Outreach*

## New Beginnings

One of the projects I have worked on this semester that has proven to be both a restorative and fulfilling is the Trans\* 101 and Gender Non-Conforming Training. What I really love about this project is that I had the chance to start from scratch, and the process has really made this presentation a labor of love. Let's be real, being a gay DMAB (designated male at birth) individual is still difficult in the United States but, being a transgender individual is even more challenging, from a cultural, structural, and institutional standpoint. I was already somewhat clued in to the injustice transgender individuals face from a legal point of view, but my research has shown me that every stage of life is made incredibly more complicated when you have a transgender identity.

One of the challenges of the program was to communicate the appropriate terminology and richness of the transgender community in a way that is comprehensible for cisgender people, who have never questioned their gender or sex. One of the methods to overcome this challenge is to clearly define terminology, so everyone has a similar foundation in the beginning of the training. We provided a list of terminology for each participant's reference, clarifying words they may not have known or refresh their memory.

We continued the presentation with a discussion of how the sex and gender binary are both colonial constructs. Many different gender expressions existed before colonialism and continue to thrive around the world. This in particular makes cisgender people realize that transgender identities are beautiful, valid, and should be celebrated. Another strategy we implemented was a shift in language. This semester, the Office of LGBTQ Services is beginning to shy away from words like homophobia and transphobia and move towards words like heterosexism, cissexism, and transmisogyny. We feel this change is necessary because the latter words connote more of a sense of an active oppression and institutionalized injustice, whereas the former words convey a sense of fear. We feel words like homophobia and transphobia simplify and play down heterosexist, cissexist, and transmisogynist actions.

We also wanted to make two separate presentations of these materials, one for faculty and staff, and one for students. We felt that faculty and staff needed a separate session, enabling us to tailor the material to help them make a more trans affirming classroom environment and implement trans friendly policies. We hope this training makes ripples on campus, and that people start to make the Dickinson community more trans affirming and celebratory. I think we have done great work this semester, and I can't wait to see what working in the office has in store for me in the spring.

— Liam Fuller '17

*Pride Coordinator for Training and Education*



# Our Shift to Trans Education and Programming

Given that this is my first semester serving as the Programming & Events Pride Coordinator, I wanted to ensure that whatever work I undertook would provide the campus community with a new perspective in regards to LGTBQQIA issues. With the theme of transgender and transition that encapsulates the work here at the Office of LGBTQ Services, it was a great pleasure to have Emily Newberry '66 come back to her alma mater to talk about her life and journey of self-discovery. Her visit to Dickinson was extraordinary, and having her present at Out on Britton was even more phenomenal. Out on Britton is the office's annual event in Britton Plaza to celebrate personal identity, as well as to share stories of coming out. While I worked contacting groups and preparing speeches, it was Emily who truly made the experience one to remember.

Emily is the first alumna to speak at the event, which helped to bring a large amount of awareness to transgender issues on campus. Throughout the rest of her stay here in October she continued her work on campus in educating the Dickinson community. She engaged with students in classes and spoke about her collaborative artists' book *Water* in the Library. Her arrival on campus had impeccable timing, since it was LGBTQ History Month. The poetry she writes focuses on the human condition, which in part is influenced by the intersectionality of all our lives, and we are glad to have had her

return to Dickinson and enrich our lives with her story.

Among other project regarding transgender issues, one of our final student events of the semester is a candle light vigil on November 20th, the Transgender Day of Remembrance. In the past there has been a vigil to remember the importance of the riots and protests at the Stonewall Inn in New York City; however, this year we took a different approach, taking one night to pay our respects to the victims of transgender violence. The Social Justice House as well as Spectrum and Yes Please! were in attendance, as we hoped to raise awareness for the injustices faced by transgender individuals all around the world.

In addition to all of the events hosted by the Office of LGBTQ Services, the Multi-Organizational Board sponsored Laverne Cox, transgender activist and actress on the hit Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* to visit campus for a public presentation. She spoke in the beginning of December, which marked the last of the LGTBQQIA affiliated events for the semester. In the spring we hope to develop more programs and events to educate the community on transgender issues, as well as partnering with other departments on campus for more inclusive projects.

— Noah S. Thompson '17

*Pride Coordinator for Programming & Events*



# Around Campus

## As We Keep Moving Forward

Recently during my work with other organizations, as our Programming and Community Outreach Pride Coordinator, I was reminded by my fellow peers that mostly due to our setting many within the community are capable to understanding the LGBTQ+ or Queer movement academically, but they have difficulties putting text into practice. Much of the literature that they were referring to were those that empower us to be more inclusive in our work as part of a greater LGBTQ+ movement, and those deconstruct some of the structures that continuously effect our most marginalized members. As the president of Spectrum: Dickinson's LGBTQ+ group this fall, it weighed on me heavily that there are those that understand these academic works yet continue to perpetuate systems of oppression. Systems that continuously affect and marginalize myself and other students of varying identities, races, ethnicities, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, religions, cultures, etc. As a movement that is rooted in social, individual, and political

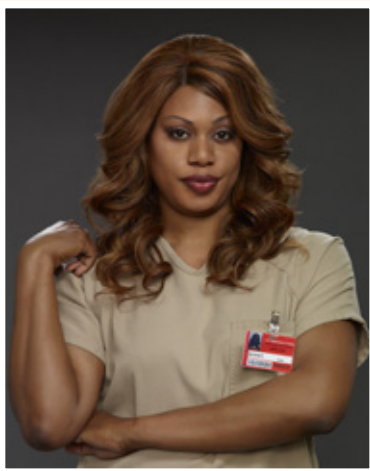
ideologies we should not be perpetuating systems of hierarchy that marginalize others, rather we should be inclusive of our fellow peers, especially during this period of change in our presence on campus. We should aim to be a united front, and I'd like to believe that we can achieve this. Otherwise, the necessity of unification will change us.

How far the LGBTQ+ movements will venture is not yet clear, and as it stands, many components of the movement are not encompassing and inclusive to the needs of our marginalized members, friends, and family. Yet despite our limitations and fallibilities, I'd like to think that we and this greater movement are still capable of greatness. It will not be this LGBTQ+ movement that reaches these goals but one very similar to ours, with more of our strengths and fewer of our weaknesses, but we have the ability to establish what is needed for this future and try our hardest to realize it now.

— **Martin Alvarez '15**

*Programming and Community Outreach Pride Coordinator*

## Laverne Cox at Dickinson



The idea of bringing Laverne Cox to Dickinson was originally brought to the Multi-Organizational Board (MOB) over the summer by Erica Gordon, Interim Director of LGBTQ services. MOB has a history of working in conjunction with the Office of LGBTQ Services to sponsor an event for National Coming Out Week, and our organization wanted to continue that tradition of

collaboration this year.

Each year, MOB strives to provide a broad spectrum of diverse entertainment and programming to the campus community. Thus, we were looking to bring a keynote speaker to campus this year who would not only capture the spirit of National Coming Out Week, but also would attract members of the community who might not normally have attended similar events in the past.

Though we considered many possibilities, Cox seemed like a perfect option. As a transgender actress featured on the popular show *Orange is the New Black*, she provided the perfect cross-section of notoriety and relevancy that we thought would generate widespread interest at Dickinson, LGBTQ+ or not.

However, availability and cost seemed to be working against us. As an incredibly high demand speaker these days,

Cox only had one potential date available this semester and her honorarium far exceeded MOB's budget for events of this nature. Additionally, as much as we wanted her to come speak, we could only validate spending such a large amount of money if the event was going to sell out.

After numerous roadblocks, much deliberation, and extensive solicitation of other clubs and departments for co-sponsorships, we decided we felt strongly enough about Cox and that her message would resonate strongly with the campus community that we wanted to take the chance.

Had it not been for the support of Dean Bylander, Spectrum, the Women's and Gender Resource Center, Student Senate, and the Office of LGBTQ Services, booking Cox to come speak at Dickinson would not have been possible. Their support and the fact that event is completely sold (with an overflow room in the works) out are testaments to what Laverne Cox stands for and the Dickinson community's embracement of topics that may on the surface seem a bit controversial.

In her talk, Cox addressed moving beyond traditional gender expectations to live more authentically. It will be exciting to see how her words continue to influence campus dialogue and nurture our community to amplify acceptance and understanding of transgender and gender identity issues.

— **Sarah Rose '15**

*Multi-Organization Board Chair*