



Making our Connection

This newsletter marks the end of a year, the end of an academic year, the end of our first year, and the end of a year full of connections. When Brian asked me to create this newsletter for the Office, there was no structure and pretty limited direction. But, with that came the opportunity for creativity and freedom in showcasing all the fabulous work our Office has done over the course of the last nine months. We set out to create something lasting and, although the content of this newsletter will change from semester to semester, the title of this publication became top priority.

After a rather drawn out research process, I landed on the title that you see above: **Pride@Dickinson: Connect.** For me, this title symbolizes the broader mission of our Office, that of connecting queer members of the Dickinson community with resources to make our community a better and more inclusive environment. The Office of LGBTQ Services serves as an intermediary between all levels and departments of our campus: students, faculty, staff, alumni, and even prospective students. We are a literally a connection to all pockets of campus, and now with the publication of this newsletter we have the opportunity to reach even further.

—Nick Bailey '16

Pride Coordinator for News & Digital Resources

A Knowledgeable Campus, a Safe Campus

In my job as Pride Coordinator, I have had the task of coordinating two programs for the Office of LGBTQ Services – the LGBTQ Mentorship Program and the Pride @ Dickinson: Safe Zone Program. The Pride @ Dickinson program just wrapped up its second round of trainings, and we have already trained almost ninety students, faculty, administrators, and staff members. These individuals are trained on how they can better create a safer and more inclusive campus for students who may be grappling with issues of gender identity and/or sexual orientation. They will learn to better empathize with these students, by coming to understand the hardships those students must endure and the privileges they are denied. The Safe Zone members are taught, first and foremost, to respect personal identity, rather than make assumptions, with the understanding that identity is our most important possession. They are forced to confront their own biases, ignorance, and discomforts by pushing them to ask more questions and to always seek more information. They become part of a visible support network for these students, through advertisement on our website, visible stickers designating them as safe zone members, and a very lengthy, ever developing resource guide.

This program functions on the principle that we will never know everything. Identities are ever changing, but this program has united people who seek to understand those identities. People who listen and support people as they discover who they really are. Finally, it provides this community with a wealth of resources through which we can better help this precious group of individuals. This network can only grow with each round of training, and maybe we could one day create a campus knowledgeable enough to dispel heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Not sure what these issues are? Come join our network and find out. Know what these issues are? Join the network anyway. There is nothing as powerful as positive encouragement as we seek to discover who we truly are.

—Josh Davis '13

*Pride Coordinator for Pride @ Dickinson
and LGBTQ Mentorship*

A (First) Year in Review



As I sit at my desk and reflect on the last nine months at Dickinson College, I cannot believe the progress we have made and the work that has been accomplished. I sit in awe of the support the new Office has received and the excitement embodied by the Dickinson community, past and present, about the new initiatives offered by the Office.

Over the last year, we have created programming for prospective and current students as well as our alumni community. We have engaged 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 we have created a cohesive image of the LGBTQQIA community at Dickinson College. Over the past nine months, we have surely capitalized on the great momentum in the Dickinson community—and we continue to move forward.

While reflecting on this article, I decided to review our accomplishments and celebrate our collective work on campus. The work that has occurred over the last nine months has not been accomplished alone, but rather as a community effort to make change and move toward a framework of inclusive excellence. It is with this in mind that I believe we can also frame our future work.

During the summer and fall of 2012, the Office connected with constituencies through Alumni Weekend in June, Homecoming and Family Weekend in September, and LGBTQ History Month and National Coming Out Week during the month of October.

Since October is recognized nationally as LGBTQ History Month, Dickinson honored this month with a visible display of notable LGBTQ figures across campus. For the first time in our history, Dickinson was recognized as a national collaborator of the month. As we continue this momentum, we hope to make this a project where we can highlight our own LGBTQ faculty, staff, and alumni across campus and make this initiative uniquely Dickinson.

In addition to LGBTQ History Month, the Office also celebrated National Coming Out Week in honor of National Coming Out Day on October 11th. Out on Britton began the official celebration with a purpose and primary goal to raise awareness and visibility around LGBTQQIA issues at Dickinson and within the surrounding community. Many individuals shared their courageous stories of coming out and identifying as LGBTQQI as well as supportive stories from allies and their experiences. National Coming Out Week continued with Ally Trainings for faculty, staff, and students as well as the first publication of the Ally Support Pledge, which attracted more than three hundred and fifty names for its first publication in

the Dickinsonian.

The Office also hosted a film series throughout the fall semester highlighting bisexuality and non-monosexual identities, LGBTQ history, gender identity and the intersections of culture, and the historical narratives surrounding AIDS/HIV.

During the spring semester, several of our core initiatives were launched. These new endeavors are dedicated to increasing awareness of LGBTQ issues across campus. The Office also created four new Pride Coordinator positions for undergraduate students interested in learning more about LGBTQ advocacy. These positions assist students with the practical application of curricular explorations in sexuality and gender while also providing much needed support and assistance with programming offered by the Office.

With these new student positions, the Office launched the LGBTQ Mentorship Program connecting prospective students with current students and current students with alumni, faculty, administrators, and staff. The intended outcome of the program is to create a sustainable network of engagement and support for many prospective and current students while also engaging our alumni to make Dickinson a better place for future generations.

We also piloted the new LGBTQ Pride @ Dickinson Safe Zone program for the entire College community. The program seeks to create a safer and more inclusive campus environment for all members of the campus community by reducing heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia through education and visibility. Through the training program and the display of Pride @

Dickinson stickers, the program creates a visible and supportive network of LGBTQQIA members of the campus community who have a basic knowledge about issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Safe Zone program also ensures that participants are able to provide support and make appropriate referrals to members of the campus community. Over 100 members across campus took part in trainings offered this past spring and many more are interested in upcoming training opportunities.

While working to provide new core programming, we also offered the 6th Annual GSA Leadership Summit in collaboration with the Office of Diversity Initiatives, LGBT Community Center, and Planned Parenthood of Central Pennsylvania. The event was an opportunity for students, teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators and community members to meet, network, and participate in workshops designed to help everyone better understand and advocate for LGBTQ students in central Pennsylvania and beyond.

During the month of April, the Office is celebrating Pride Month at Dickinson College. While the Pride celebration began as a week-long event, it has become a month of celebration focusing on LGBTQ student identities, health and wellness within our community, and the diverse representations of LGBTQQIA individuals in our world.

On April 19th, Dickinson’s first Lavender Reception will celebrate the accomplishments of graduating LGBTQQIA

students and will invite alumni back to campus to join in this celebration of strength, resiliency, and courage. We hope to make this part of the Dickinson culture and honor the experiences of LGBTQQIA individuals past and present.

As the Office continues to move forward, we will be continuing conversations on campus around Transgender and gender non-conforming identities and how we as a community can support these members of our community in policy and practice. We have made some major strides over this last year and next year will offer all students the opportunity to live in gender-neutral spaces. We also plan to launch a new gender non-conforming guide to Dickinson late this summer.

Although this work is now coordinated in one office, the work on LGBTQQIA issues is institutional in nature. Dickinson College is in a place of tremendous innovation and has the opportunity to make an impact in the larger scope of higher education. As one of only one-hundred and ninety LGBTQQIA related offices/centers in a country of nearly five-thousand universities/colleges, Dickinson can and should be a leader in LGBTQQIA initiatives in higher education. It is our hope to continue the momentum around this initiative and make Dickinson a leader and top recognized college supporting LGBTQQIA issues in higher education.

As this first year nears an end, we offer our gratitude for the support, recognition, and commitment of the Dickinson community toward this new Office and the new initiatives created on campus. I continue to be honored and humbled to hold the role of Director of this new Office. The interactions I have had, the conversations that I have been privileged to engage in, and the work that has been done is bigger than one person—it showcases the wonderful community that is Dickinson. I came to Dickinson because of the tremendous energy I felt while interviewing on campus, and I continue to sit in awe at the wonderful community that we continue to form here. I am excited for what the future holds, but I remain engaged in our past while building for our future. Thank you for a wonderful first year!

—Brian Patchcoski
Director - Office of LGBTQ Services



Self-Care, Wellness, & Our LGBTQ Community



When considering topics in health regarding the LGBTQ community, issues involving the overall “wellness” of those who identify as LGBTQ often go unnoticed. It is because of this that Dickinson centered our health awareness week on the wellness of the members in our community.

During this week long, campus wide event, we explored how to navigate between being an activist and still caring for oneself when overwhelmed with fighting for the rights for one’s identity. There were two film screenings, “How to Survive a Plague”, which is a documentary about the activist work done by young people against the medical establishment and “The Invisible War”, which explores sexual assault in the U.S military. There was also a panel discussion presented by Alder Health Services and our own Wellness Center about the unique physical and mental health care needs that the LGBTQ Community faces. LGBTQ Health Awareness week began an important conversation pertaining to self-care, a conversation the Office of LGBTQ Services hopes to continue as we grow. (For more details about LGBTQ Health Awareness Week, please contact LGBTQ@dickinson.edu or Aryela Levy at levya@dickinson.edu.)

—Chalise Saunders ’14
Pride Coordinator for Programming and Events

Perspective

My first semester at Dickinson was an eye opening lesson. I am from a small suburb of Pittsburgh where the word diversity is rarely used. There, the only acceptable term connected with “homo” in it is homogeneous, considering that meeting anyone who is not White, God fearing, and heterosexual is pretty much like meeting a unicorn.

Naturally, coming to Dickinson after experiencing that for 18 years was a bit of a culture shock. In my book, being able to go to class without hearing “faggot” was an ultimate success. That is why I was so surprised to hear from my friends that, in their minds, Dickinson was not ready to call itself truly LGBTQ friendly.

It has taken me some time to learn some lessons that seem inherent to others. For example, I never learned how sexism, racism, or homophobia could manifest. I always thought that hateful expressions had to be violent and obvious. I never considered the subtle influences that accompany injustice. I thought that just because there were not grand gestures of hate that meant equality was implied.

I have come to understand that for this campus to become truly LGBTQ friendly, we cannot simply aim for tolerance. Acceptance has to be our goal. We cannot merely be allowed to coexist without question, but we have to make sure that there is real understanding. If not, we risk ostracizing those within our community who do not fit into convenient stereotypes.

I have learned a lot about the world and the LGBTQ community since starting at Dickinson, and I am excited to continue. Most importantly, I have learned that I deserve to be more than just tolerated. I deserve to be loved.

—Michal Cohen ’16



Gender Inclusivity at Dickinson

As this month marks two and a half years since the start of the gender-inclusive facilities initiative at Dickinson, we thought it may be a good idea to talk about this initiative, why it's important, how far we've gotten, and where we are looking to go.

Gender-Inclusive Facilities? What's that?

Gender-inclusive facilities, sometimes called gender-neutral facilities, are, put simply, spaces that are not segregated by gender—spaces that are inclusive to all people. Currently, there are three types of facilities on college campuses that are segregated by gender: residence hall rooms, multi-stall bathrooms, and locker rooms. Making facilities gender-inclusive would entail opening these spaces to all people. For example, a gender-inclusive housing policy would be one that would let a student choose the gender they feel most comfortable rooming with, instead of automatically assigning them a roommate just because they share the same gender assignment (which we are excited to announce that Dickinson has recently adopted). Gender-inclusive bathrooms are essentially bathrooms that do not exclude anyone on the basis of their gender expression or assignment.

Why is it important?

Believe it or not, safety in bathrooms and residence hall rooms is a huge issue for many transgender, gender-nonconforming, gay, lesbian and bisexual students. Many transgender and gender-nonconforming students are faced with harassment and even violence in gender-segregated bathrooms by people who insist that they do not belong. Gay, lesbian and bisexual students are often accused of being predators in these spaces, because many people believe that gender-segregated spaces ensure that no one in the room will be attracted to anyone else in the room. With gender-segregated residence halls, similar things happen. Most of us are familiar with the Tyler Clementi tragedy, when a Rutgers University student committed suicide after harassment and humiliation from a homophobic roommate of the same gender. Shortly after, Rutgers realized how important the option of gender-neutral facilities really is, unfortunately too late for Clementi. Since Dickinson is the home to many transgender, gender-nonconforming, gay, lesbian and bisexual students, we believe it is important to recognize the issues that arise within gender-segregated spaces and work to protect our community proactively rather than retroactively. LGBTQ students make our community the vibrant, colorful one that it is today, and we are committed to ensuring an inclusive environment for our LGBTQ community.

Past, Present, and Future at Dickinson

While Dickinson students have expressed a need for gender-inclusive facilities for quite some time, the first official campaign for such facilities began in October of 2010. Through conversations with Student Development and Joyce Bylander, who serves as the special assistant to the president for institutional and diversity initiatives at Dickinson, action plans, conversations about Pennsylvania law, and the creation of the LGBTQ Task Force occurred. Through the Task Force's work, the momentum for the creation of an Office of LGBTQ Services at Dickinson gained institutional support. During the initial campaign, students had various advocacy days where they made the bathrooms in the HUB gender-inclusive, students signed petitions for gender-inclusive facilities, and the community worked together to post facts about gender-inclusivity around campus in order to dispel myths and communicate why such facilities are important. The community also screened Toilet Training, a film that discussed the issue and held a panel discussion after with Dickinson faculty and staff. Before the next academic year started, the group worked to have all single-stall male and female bathroom signs on campus changed to gender-neutral ones. Gender-inclusive housing was endorsed by Student Senate that spring, thanks to a proposal initiated by Lia Choyce (student worker at the Office of Campus Life) and Juan Carlos Flores (Student Senate President), both Dickinson seniors at the time. Unfortunately, despite this endorsement, no formal changes occurred during that time.

This year, however, thanks to work by the Division of Student Development, the Office of LGBTQ Services, the Office of Campus Life, and the Enrollment and Student Life Committee (ESLC), gender-inclusive housing will now be available to all students during room draw this spring. Next year, we will be able to evaluate the impact this will have on Dickinson students.

—Devin Beaugureau '13

Pride Coordinator for Programming and Community Outreach



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