

1-1-2010

Out and About, January 2010

Colgate University. Office of LGBTQ Initiatives

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Recommended Citation

Colgate University. Office of LGBTQ Initiatives, "Out and About, January 2010" (2010). *Out and About: Newsletter of the Office of LGBTQ Initiatives*. Paper 8.

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January, 2010

Special points of interest:

- Emily Blake moves on
- Alumni profile
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- Intern update

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Out & About

Christian and LGBTQ Communities Unite by Teesa Bahana '11



On the 4th of November at 7pm, Colgate Christian Fellowship (CCF) and Advocates got together to host “Love is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation between Christian and LGBTQ Communities” a talk by Andrew Marin, founder of the Marin Foundation and author of the book “Love is an Orientation”. Andrew Marin described himself as a straight, white, conservative, Bible-believing, evangelical male” who “wanted absolutely nothing to do with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. His opinions radically changed when in the period of three months, all three of his best friends came out to him. Marin then proceeded on a self impose mission: to immerse himself in the gay community in Boystown Chicago. A few years later he set up the Marin Foundation, an organization that works to build a bridge between the religious and LGBTQ communities in a non-threatening,

research and biblically oriented fashion. His experiences and more were the subject matter of his book and his talk.

The talk was incredibly well attended with members and friends from both organizations filling the seats of Alumni 111. His talk was both humorous and elucidating, never accusing and yet challenging. Here is some feedback we received after the talk:

"I think that tonight's conversation went deeper than the traditional back and forth between the two communities and was very enlightening."

"It was wonderful. :) A brave and necessary conversation."

"My God, my mind is blown. I have been waiting for a collaboration like this for a lifetime. I am so grateful for this conversation."

A week later, CCF and LGBTQ Initiatives held a breaking bread in ALANA. On the menu: Wild Rice Soup, Chili and Cornbread, brownies and pumpkin cookies. About 20 people came, cooked, laughed and stole cookies from the tray before they were put out on the table. We played a game of telephone and chatted about Colgate and talked about how we wanted to not just collaborate with events but to actually build community by going bowling or playing wii. For us showing each other and Colgate that there is hope for community.



Alumni Profile: Heather Dockstader '04



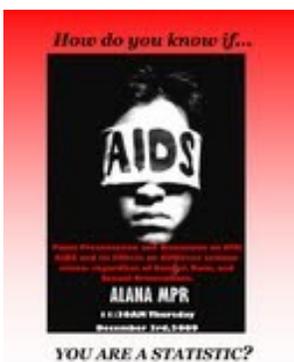
Five years later, I am back at Colgate, working in the very space that fostered who I knew myself to be but of which I had no understanding, no history, and no community. I was a queer, feminist student, and the Center for Women's Studies was the queerest space on campus, besides our beloved rainbow room. Yes, you can smile, too. The rainbow room was, and still is for current students, that special evening reprieve during the week that would provide the queer fix needed in order to survive another 6 days of being a minority on campus. You see, I came to college with the naïve expectation that I would be liberated to explore the suppressed dyke identity that I had buried and shared with only a handful of individuals before Colgate. I was from the South after all and head to the liberal Northeast. But, let's be real. A university in rural New York with around 10 out and active students and even fewer faculty/staff was not, to say the least, the ideal environment for a baby dyke. And, yet, I look back through the murkiness of the homophobia/heterosexism I experienced at the hands of my athletic team and peers and professors and cherish my "early years" due to the support network I did find. They were amazing individuals, and the conversations, friendships, and adventures we shared eased my passage through those challenging times. So, thank you to my "elders" who have long since graduated and left and to those true elders who are still here, working to make change at Colgate. It is my hope that I may prove to be a supportive "elder" for the newer members of the Colgate LGBTQ Community.

Heather D. Dockstader '04, Women's Studies Program Assistant

Internship Project by Benae Beamon '10

With new sexual misconduct and bias-related conduct policies in place, it was important to make sure that it is representative of the student body. After the recent addition of sexual orientation as a characteristic that is covered in the policy and the results of the Colgate Campus Climate Life Survey, it was clear that the addition of Gender identity and Expression is necessary to make it truly inclusive. The results of the Campus Climate Life Survey will hopefully help because it shows that there are in fact several students who identify as non-gendered, demonstrating a need for this among Colgate's current students, and certainly need could present among prospective students.

I am currently working to examine the new policy and get Gender Identity and Expression included. Under the new policy, although gender identity and expression are not explicitly stated, they are technically covered. I have crafted a proposal that I plan to present to different administrators throughout the upcoming semester.



AIDS Awareness Day on December 3, 2009 was highlighted by a Brown Bag luncheon.

A Colgayte Education, Pat Weaver '13

I almost didn't come to Colgate. I had signed up for a brand-new class being offered by a brand-new minor: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. When my dad asked for what classes I had registered, I told him, and he subsequently decided that he was no longer subsidizing my education (in case it wasn't obvious, he does not approve of any sexuality that isn't straight). He eventually changed his mind when he saw that it was better to send me away to school than to deal with me sitting around the house for another four years, but in this conversation wherein we "discussed" (argued about) my class choices, he said something along the lines of me having to choose between "our" religion and my sexuality, and I said that I still didn't know what I was. I said this, knowing he would interpret it as insecurity with my sexuality, a fault to be exploited, and being too tired of arguing to clarify that I was referring to my religious beliefs, not my sexuality. He said the class would only serve to confuse me more. It has, and I loved that class for this very reason.

This class questioned everything I knew about sex, gender, and sexuality on the first day, by having us explore what LGBTQ Studies even is. As I continued through the semester, I discovered themes, struggles, theories, ideals, and unexplored territories that I had never considered before. It was not what I had thought before I entered the classroom; a series of names, dates, and places that told me about the history of "my people". It was more than that; it was a discovery of what I am and from what I came. In conjunction with this, I underwent Safe Zone Training, which augmented my now blossoming queer vocabulary in a way that my understanding of sex, gender, sexuality, and even society as a whole became so much clearer. This was of course after I realized that I knew next to nothing about sexual issues, which was sad, as I understood the most about queer studies out of anyone in my high school. But I have learned so much at Colgate about what it means to be a gay man in America and in the world.



Colgate also taught me outside of the classroom what it means to be a gay man among other people. In high school, I was the only out queer kid for at least two years. By the time I graduated, I had become aware of about 6 other queer students, many of whom were already my friends. Only three of them were out by the end of senior year, and one of those wasn't even queer (he's got a very interesting story behind him, but he's very straight). Obviously, I had very little experience interacting with other queers. In very stark contrast, here at Colgate, over half of my friends are queer, a good number of them are out, and they understand as much about sexuality as I do, if not more. This came as a huge culture shock to me, dealing not only with the stresses of being a first-year, but navigating friendships, not-quite-friendships, relationships, enmity, miscommunications, closet etiquette, and other things I had never expected to experience in a town so similar to home. Back home I was the token gay. Here I am one of many. Making this transition has changed so much about how I view myself, others, and the world, and it's an education I wouldn't trade for anything. Yes, I almost didn't come to Colgate. But I'm here, I'm queer, and I'm learning.

A NEWSLETTER FOR COLGATE
LGBTQ ALUMNI

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Campus Climate Survey by Dena Robinson '12

In early November, the Colgate Campus Life Survey came out with results concerning numerous aspects of the Colgate Community. The survey was given to Colgate students in late 2008 in order to gain viable information on students' thoughts of the Colgate community.

The survey polled students during the spring semester of 2008. It was intended to be a "climate" study that described and analyzed student satisfaction and how it was affected by student characteristics (i.e., race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc.) and institutional characteristics (i.e., academics, social life, etc.). The Colgate Campus Life Survey provided some startling results for the Colgate and Hamilton community. Specifically, the survey highlighted the pervasiveness of sexual assaults in the Colgate community. What particularly struck me were the high rates of sexual assault against members of the LGBTQ community. The survey asserts that, "34.4% of homosexual students and 43.2% of queer students have reported being sexually abused."

On November 11, a speak-out organized by senior Angelica America '10 and fellow Colgate students took place on the Chapel steps. The speak-



out/ walk out was designed to raise awareness among students, faculty, staff, and community members. Organizers of the speak-

Blake leaves Colgate

Emily Blake, who has served as Colgate's Assistant Director of Student Life and Academic LGBTQ Initiatives for several years, has decided to accept a new position with Semester at Sea. Colgate University, and especially the LGBTQ student and alumni community, will surely miss Emily. We wish her the best of luck and a hope we will hear from her again soon!

The CLSI Office will continue to support LGBTQ Initiatives and follow through on the progress made in these critical areas.

The Office of Student and Academic LGBTQ Initiatives is dedicated to supporting our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning students by enhancing diversity and visibility throughout the greater campus community. We are located in the Center for Leadership and Student Involvement in the O'Connor Campus Center.

The office serves as direct support for individuals, as an agent for LGBTQ and its supportive programming, and as a network for LGBTQ faculty, staff, students and alumni, including their respective support groups.

out sought to share the anonymous stories of victims that had been posted on Angelica's webzine, Intuit, and also sought to encourage other members of the Colgate and Hamilton community to voice their concerns about sexual assaults and rapes at Colgate University. Effectively, the speak-out was a grassroots initiative that brought members of the Colgate and Hamilton community together, in solidarity. Many stories concerned women being sexually assaulted by men. However, what often went silent were the stories pertaining to queer students and sexual assault. In my speech, I made it a point to highlight the statistics of the CCLS that pertained to the queer community at Colgate. I highlighted these words because no voice should ever go unheard. I felt it also important to speak about because when one thinks of sexual assault, one often does not stop to think

about the ways in which the queer community can be affected.

The results of the Campus Climate Survey do not surprise me. Colgate is not the most queer-friendly campus although it is seeking to make improvements. Amongst sexual assault, the survey also displayed students' feelings towards sexuality on campus and the isolation that some queer students feel. As a fierce ally of the queer community at Colgate, I believe it is important for these issues to be brought to the forefront. I also believe that it is important for queer and allied alumni from Colgate to be notified of these issues, their complexities, and their ramifications. I hope that you will all pick up a copy of the CCLS (if you are able to, that is) in order to see the raw data for yourselves.