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Out and About, Spring 2013

Colgate University. Office of LGBTQ Initiatives

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Last semester, Christina Liu ’13 directed an original play entitled “This is Not a Play about Sex.” Based on hundreds of hours of interviews she performed with Colgate students, the play featured intimate true stories about many aspects of Colgate culture, including LGBTQ life. The play was widely received and has sparked many important discussions here on campus. The following is an interview with writer and director, Christina Liu.

What was the inspiration behind the show?

The initial inspiration came after directing Vagina Monologues last year and seeing how empowering it was for people to talk so openly about their bodies and their sexualities. I realized how dire of a need we have at Colgate to have these types of conversations. Many times, we aren’t asking each other the questions that “matter”. I started interviewing students in spring 2012 - I wanted to use our own stories and experiences as the basis for a new show. I tried to capture as many different identities, sexualities, experiences and attitudes as possible to try and show a complex portrait of what it means to be a sexual (or non-sexual) while being at Colgate, to show that nothing is black and white, and that we should never feel alone. There are people who feel what we feel and want what we want.

Was the final product what you expected it would be? Did your vision of it evolve over time?

A big shift came over this past summer when I was working on the show (I received an Undergraduate Research Grant from University Studies). I realized that under all this talk about sex and pleasure and love and intimacy there was a resounding undertone of dissatisfaction. That’s when I started taking a much more activist approach to this process. The play, in my mind, became not about sex anymore (aha! the name of the show!) and much more about fulfillment and happiness — this is why it seems we’re having such a hard time in this very privileged institution in our very privileged positions obtaining it. I’d like to think the final product of the show achieved this sentiment I was feeling.

What was the most rewarding part of this whole process?

Hearing people’s responses after they watched the show. I could not be happier with how the play was received because it started a ripple effect of conversations. I had friends tell me that after seeing the show they wrote a letter to their parents coming out to them, I heard people say that it was the push they needed to finally approach a friend about something they had been avoiding for a long time, people told me that the show became the topic of conversation for all of Family Weekend (and someone told me Thanksgiving too!)... and that’s exactly what I wanted the show to achieve, I wanted it to get people to talk to each other and to themselves.

What now? Where do you see the show going? Will the conversion continue?

We have an encore performance this Sunday Dec 2nd followed by a film screening of the show later that evening. I’ve been having ongoing conversations with some of the Deans at Colgate who are very interested in taking the conversation further in terms of future programming and possible workshops based on the show. We especially want to work it somehow into the first-year experience - the earlier we have these conversations the better! I’m also working on putting together a “This Is Not A Play About Sex” manual which will give suggestions about how to start these discussions with their own friends / groups / organizations / families.
### Weekly Family Dinner

- **Every Tuesday 6:00p**  Frank Dining Hall

### Film Screening: KEEP THE LIGHTS ON
- **Fri., January 25th 7:00p**  Golden Auditorium
  - Skype interview with Director Ira Sachs
  - Co-sponsor with Film & Media Studies

### Queerfest: Celebrating All Identities
- **Week of February 12-16th**
  - **Tues., Feb. 12th 4:30p**  27 Persson Hall
  - **Wed., Feb. 13th 12:15p**  Center for WMST
  - **Sat., Feb. 16th 2:00p**  Cotterell Court
  - **Sat., Feb. 16th 9:30p**  HOP
  - **Fri., January 25th 7:00p**  Golden Auditorium
  - **Director Ira Sachs**
  - **Keynote: Robyn Ochs “Bisexuality & Social Justice”**
  - **Co-sponsor with Film & Media Studies**

### Colgate against Hate: Men’s Basketball game!
- **Join the Raiders to celebrate LGBTQ awareness and show your Colgate pride**
- **Sat., Feb. 16th 2:00p**  Cotterell Court
- **Teledvised game against Lehigh University**

### DragBall Amateur Drag Show
- **Week of February 12-16th**
  - **Tues., Feb. 12th 4:30p**  27 Persson Hall
  - **Wed., Feb. 13th 12:15p**  Center for WMST
  - **Sat., Feb. 16th 2:00p**  Cotterell Court
  - **Sat., Feb. 16th 9:30p**  HOP

### Moral Judgment & Disgust Sensitivity
- **Tues. March 19th 4:30p**  27 Persson Hall
  - Dr. David Pizarro, Cornell University professor, will discuss the link between our social consciousness, conservatism and physiological response

### HIV/AIDS: Effect of stigma on blood donation
- **Thurs., March 21st 5:00p**  Shaw Institute
  - Co-sponsor with Shaw Wellness Institute

### LGBTQ Families & reproduction
- **Tues., March 26th 11:30a**  Center for WMST
  - Co-sponsor with Women's Studies Brown Bag Series
  - Special guests from New York Pride & Joy Families

### The Naked Truth of homosexuality in the Caribbean
- **Thursday, March 28th 11:30a**  Center for WMST
  - Co-sponsored by WMST, ALST & CSA

### Lavender Graduation
- **LGBTQ & ally seniors recognized for their accomplishments.**
- **Awards presented by LGBTQ Studies faculty**
- **Wed., April 24th  4:30p**  ALANA Cultural Center
Hate Speech Incident Rattles Colgate

By Nate Lynch '14 and Caroline Main '15

On Thursday morning October 18, students, faculty and staff received an email from Vice President and Dean of the College Suzy Nelson and Provost and Dean of the Faculty Douglas Hicks reporting that several of the “Coming Out” doors posted around campus by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Initiatives had been vandalized with insulting and threatening comments. The messages included six names intended to “out” students without their knowledge as well as hateful anti-gay messages. The remarks were written on the door displays in Reid Athletic Center, Frank Dining Hall and the O’Connor Campus Center (Coop), which were promptly taken down and then reinstated with the hate speech removed. The doors are a way for students to express support for LGBTQ students as part of a National Coming Out Month celebration. “These coming out doors stand to show solidarity with the LGBTQ community,” reads a message on the door in the COOP. “We have blacked out those messages, and highlighted the positive messages surrounding them,” said senior and co-President of Lambda, Steve Dickinson ’13. He was shocked by the messages. “I became very upset because I’ve known this campus to be a very accepting place, and a few individuals tarnish that wonderful reputation I’ve come to expect of Colgate,” Dickinson said. Vice President and Dean of the College Suzy Nelson strongly condemned the messages. “Acts of bias and hate fundamentally undermine what we stand for as an institution: openness, dignity and respect ... they hurt all of us.”

The community response to the events was overwhelming. Over 80 students, faculty and staff met in the Center for Women’s Studies to discuss the incident and potential responses on Thursday, October 18. As a result of this gathering, on Friday October 19, hundreds of supporters made posters to show community support. These were hung in Residence Halls, campus offices, and Broad Street windows. On Monday October 22 in the Coop, students wrote their reactions to the messages and what they have done to stop bias on large posters and over 600 people chose to wear blue to show their support for the LGBTQ community. Some of these posters will be permanently hung in the Center for WMST and ALANA. Junior Mitchell Tucci ‘14, an LGBTQ Initiatives intern, believes that the outpouring of community support after the incident helped him put it in perspective. “As an individual, it just reminds me to be more appreciative of the people I have in my life that are accepting,” Tucci said. He added, “It makes them that much more important to me. I’d also say that the huge amount of people I saw wearing blue on Monday shows that a few ... hateful remarks don’t represent an entire community.” Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and Associate Provost for Equity and Diversity Lyn Rugg reports that while nobody has been found responsible for the messages, there are programs in place to deal with bias incidents of this nature. “If there are people who know who is behind this, absolutely they should come to me,” Rugg said. “The harassment policy lists the members of the equity grievance panel, and if they wanted to talk to them certainly they can do so.” Later Rugg said in an email that Associate Dean of the College Scott Brown had directed Campus Safety to investigate the messages. However, Dickinson felt there was more for the administration to do to ensure these sort of incidents do not happen again. “I don’t feel that the emphasis of the bias policy has actually helped because there is no recourse for the actions that were taken,” Dickinson said. “I would also like to see a letter to the entire Colgate community from President Herbst regarding the incident to emphasize the significance of what happens and to ensure that it is never happens again.” As a first step, the Student Government Association passed a unanimous resolution denouncing any act of homophobia or bias against LGBTQ individuals as a campus wide student response. SGA President Matt Ford ’13, along with the entire senate body, presented this resolution during an Open Meeting in October.

Sophomore and co-President of Lambda Nicholas Grunden ’15 felt that the focus should not be on the incident, but rather on positive interactions between the LGBTQ community and other students. “Personally, I’m not the sort of person to get too fired up. It’s one person out of 2,800. What I tried to do is spin it as a positive opportunity to raise awareness. I went to the Thursday meeting ... My ideas were how we could learn from this, increase our outreach, and make Lambda more present ... the more we’re out there, the less likely things like this will happen again. It’s about making connections.” Assistant Director of LGBTQ Initiatives and CLSI Jamie Bergeron finds Colgate’s support to be inspiring. “The response was so positive, so united — we can take this opportunity to gather and create a plan of action. We’ve seen that begin in the last few days and we have to ask what can we do to make sure we aren’t only responding to these types of incidents? We can work to prevent hate speech in the first place.” Bergeron said. “I feel so inspired by the way campus has come out in support of LGBTQ issues. It is clear that this is a place that people take gender and sexual orientation equality seriously.”
Considerations for students going abroad

With three of our own LGBTQ Initiatives interns going abroad this spring, we decided to educate ourselves about what was in store for us in our travels. We became aware of a range of rights and laws around the world that will directly affect LGBTQ travelers. Working with the Office of Off-Campus Study, we did extensive research about anti-homosexuality laws, laws of public decency, homo-criminalization laws, and medical resources abroad that affect the level to which one can be out and find welcoming queer communities in their host country. With this new research, LGBTQ Initiatives created a pre-departure presentation which was given to all outgoing Colgate students. The presentation was well received from both queer and ally students. “I never even considered how different being an open ally could be for me in Madrid next semester!” said Tara Nahill ’14, co-leader of Advocates. One of our office interns shares her reaction, “To be honest, I was really surprised by how many places around the world I could potentially be killed or imprisoned for life. I knew it was an issue worldwide, but I never really thought about it when I was thinking about going abroad. Being out is important to me, so I have to gather information so I can understand how it may be different for me in Jamaica.” Although global rights for LGBTQ people have come a long way, there is still much progress to be made—especially when it comes to rights for trans individuals. So are you planning to travel soon? Educate yourself about the potential risks where you’re visiting.

By Mitch Tucci ’14

LGBTQ Alumni Associations build legacies

Colgate’s GALA (Gay and Lesbian Alumni) group serves to maintain connections between LGBTQ alumni and current Colgate students. Many alumni utilize GALA to keep updated on current events, participate in social events in their cities, and get together for Reunion. Colgate’s GALA stands as one of only 75 other LGBTQ serving alumni associations in the country. These groups range from small networking groups to large scale boards with voting power and endowments aimed to support continual administrative commitment to serving LGBTQ student life on campus. The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource professionals recently released a report outlining the nature of these 75 clubs across the country, and encouraging all universities to keep connections with LGBTQ alumni strong. This report serves as a timestamp for Colgate’s progressive and committed service to LGBTQ students. “Colgate is among the best in many categories, but continues to increase focus on diverse perspectives. It is a testament to Colgate’s commitment to students that LGBTQ issues are a priority, and especially that the alumni-community has embraced this for some time.” says Jamie Bergeron. Thinking into the next 10 years and beyond, LGBTQ Initiatives will continue to work with students on campus to reach out to Colgate alumni.
Meet the New LGBTQ Initiatives Interns!

Chimebere (Chi-Chi) Nwaoduh '15 is in her sophomore year at Colgate. Coming from Newark, New Jersey, and after attending an all-girls’ boarding school in Connecticut, Chi-Chi was very excited to come to Colgate’s co-ed university. Chi-Chi is a member of SORT, Mantiphondrakes (Colgate’s newest “awk”-capella group), BSU, Advocates, and CSA. Chi-Chi is very passionate about LGBTQ issues and activism. Chi-Chi wants to ensure that Colgate is a safe, comfortable place for every member of the community. She aims to use her internship through LGBTQ Initiatives to become a SUPER ALLY and promote social justice and equality for everyone.

Evan Chartier ’14 is a sociology, anthropology, and women’s studies major who lives in the Positive Sexuality house. Evan was not active in the LGBTQ community growing up, but he has been desperately trying to make up for his absence over the last three years. Evan’s LGBTQ activism took off concurrently with his involvement in the positive sexuality movement. Evan has worked with Advocates and LGBTQ Initiatives previously, he started the group Colgate Advocates for Positive Sexuality, and he student facilitates the five week Yes Means Yes seminar every semester. Evan is also a co-President of the Jewish Union, a Benton Scholar, on the Student Conduct Board, and an Outdoor Education staff member. As one of the newest interns for LGBTQ Initiatives, Evan looks forward to building bridges between LGBTQ allies on campus and the various other groups that he is involved in.

Alumni Spotlight: Dominique Hill ’05

If you are reading this you have taken a vested interest in LGBTQ issues in general and the lives of LGBTQ students at the ‘Gate in particular. For these reasons, I say thank you. I’m Dominique Cacine Hill, a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am passionate about issues of equity, identity, and cultural awareness as related to girls’ educational and life experiences in K-12. I am a dancer, poet, educator, performer, education consultant, researcher, and more!

In reflecting on my Colgate experience, I surprised myself. There was racial tension on campus, unfair treatment by professors and staff, and an overwhelming social scene (in which I did not fit). Of course, I wanted to keep my degree, mentors, professors, traveling abroad and other experiences such as DanceFest or serving as chairwoman of SORT. But imagine attending “Multicultural” visit days with the illusion that non-white students made up at least 30% of the student body, and then having to search for non-white faces on the quad. Or imagine “coming out” to your mother at the local Pizza Hut, or being told by a white gay male that you couldn’t be a lesbian because you were Black. It was overwhelming! I learned so much about life, about coalition building, and about how to connect with people who seemed so different from myself. My experience at Colgate prompted me to stay on an additional year as the first Programming Coordinator for the ALANA Cultural Center. I learned to troubleshoot with students and staff issues of social injustice, discrimination, and the lack of collaboration across student groups, especially those who have similar goals related to different identities. I carried my passion for helping students locate and heighten their voices and self-awareness into graduate school and now am entering the job market in the Baltimore/DC area with an interest in curriculum development with foci in identity, self-awareness, voice, and cultural affirmation. I am committed to celebrating students as full selves in the classroom, to educate them and in turn learn from them.
Faculty Spotlight
Dr. Mark Stern is Queering Education

1) This is a brand new course offering. Can you tell us what the class is about?

The class is called Queering Education, and I’m playing on the word queer in a few different ways. First, and playing on the sound of the words, the class is going to be an inQUEERy into K-12 education in the United States. Using queer theory as a theoretical foundation, we’ll examine and ask questions about how normal and normative practices within schools—curricular, ritual, social, and otherwise—can be viewed as homophobic and/or heterosexist. Second, and a bit more literally, the class will look at issues that queer kids and teachers deal with in schools on a daily basis. We’ll think through things like bullying, sex education, and what it means to be out in schools and classrooms. And third, and a bit more figuratively, we’ll think about what it might mean to queer education—not necessarily in the sexual sense, but in the etymological sense of turning or twisting. In other words, and thinking about the prospects of social justice both in relation to questions about queer youth in schools and about questions of capitalism/privatization of everyday life, the militarization of schools and society, and the destruction of the environment, we’ll think about how queering education might fit into an idea of radical justice.

2) Were you involved in the conception of this class?

I wrote the proposal for this class last spring. I had a colleague at Syracuse University, where I was before Colgate, who taught a course called Queer Kids, Straight Schools, and I knew I wanted to do something like that here. (Aside: her name is Elizabethe Payne and I want to plug her very important research center/think tank: The Queering Education Research Institute—http://www.queeringeducation.org. I will invite Elizabeth and her team to the class at some point during the semester.) I had conversations with Ken Valente, the program director of LGBTQ Studies, and he was excited about and supportive of the idea. Then a few faculty members—myself, Melka Loe, Melissa Kagel, John Connor, Lesleigh Cushing, Eliza Kent, Casey Sprock, Ulla Grapard, Jessica Graybill—had a workshop where we helped each other develop courses for the LGBTQ program. There are tons of books on the topic I’ve been wanting to read and proposing a new course gives me a chance to read new stuff at the same time the students are—and I’ve got fabulous students registered for the course. I’m not an expert on this topic, which always makes for a better class. We’re all going be teaching and learning from each other both in relation to the texts and our experiences—queer pedagogy in practice.

3) Why do you think the material covered in this class is relevant to today?

Well, I guess the obvious and immediate answer has to do with the violence experienced by queer kids in schools and in society today. We don’t have to look very hard to find suicides and bullying and homelessness and just some really awful and tragic things going on in the queer community. Schools are places where a lot of exclusionary practices take place. This is antithetical to a theory of democratic schooling in which schools are spaces where democratic ideas are both explored and experienced. Schools need to be on the forefront of action against heteronormativity and leading critical discussions about things like gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, nation, and so on. If not schools, then where? This is at least partly why we have compulsory education laws in this country—we don’t fully trust parents to raise their children in preparation for the demands of democratic life. Schools are places that should provide counter-narratives and alternative ideas about our social worlds so students can become autonomous thinkers and make their own informed decisions. I just want to be clear here that, for me, I’m less interested in ideas of tolerance. I think that we should teach kids about difference and how we are all different and how certain differences are punished and others celebrated, etc., and we should teach about how the discourse of tolerance is infused with power and problematic. I don’t necessarily have faith that we are going to educate all kids to be accepting of everyone, though we should try. What I am interested in is making sure that, regardless of acceptance, we educate students about rights and freedoms. You might not like who that person is (hate the sinner), but you darn well better respect the fact that that person has the same rights, liberties, and freedoms as you do no matter what (love the sin!). That sounds like a cop-out, but that’s where I’m at with things now. I starting thinking about these types of questions a few years ago when Ann Pellegrini, an NYU professor, came to campus through an invitation from the Religion department and spoke about gay marriage during a Women’s Studies Brown Bag. Ann was/is awesome, I think.
And, moving on just a bit from there, and since I brought up gay marriage, my class is also going to ask critical questions about contemporary gay rights movements. We are going to read Dean Spade’s book *Normal Life* and excerpts from Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore’s *Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Other Faggots* and think about who is really benefiting from the push for gay marriage or “rainbow culture.” Thinking about what Jasbir Puar calls “homonationalism”—that gay rights is really about nice, upper/middle-class white people who don’t question the status-quo all that much, don’t question war, or corporate capitalism, who go to the gym, who dress nicely, in other words, people who pass for the straight/power community—we’ll ask questions about who is excluded from gay rights legislation and education. For example, would Dan Savage be embraced in the way he is if he was transqueer? If he was black or brown? This isn’t an attack on Dan Savage or anything, but we need to question why and now, gay rights going mainstream. Is it really about a generation gap? Or is the gay rights movement actually pretty benign in what it’s asking for from the straight community? Who is an acceptable queer and who isn’t? And this question needs to be asked within the queer community as well—which is why we are reading Sycamore’s new anthology.

4) Is this your first class with the LGBTQ Minor? Have you incorporated LGBTQ issues and topics in any of your other courses?

This is my first course with an LGBTQ prefix (it’s cross-listed EDUC/LGBT 241) and that’s important for me. I could have just proposed the course and had it in Educational Studies and the LGBTQ committee could have decided if it would count in the minor, but it’s important for me, and I think to students on this campus, especially those who are a part of the LGBTQ community, to see institutional representation/legitimation. Though we are constantly working on making Colgate a more, I don’t know, maybe a less heterosexist environment, we’ve still got a long way to go as evidenced by the event on campus this semester. In my opinion, there actually aren’t enough faculty who take these issues seriously, who bring them into their classrooms, and who try to have these types of difficult conversations. I don’t think it’s because of a lack of will or care, but more a lack of not quite knowing how or feeling capable of it. Not enough faculty take advantage of the on-campus resources, like Jamie Bergeron in the office of LGBTQ Initiatives, in order to work on their own pedagogical skills to be able to incorporate queer issues (or racial issues, or ____ issues) in to the classroom. As much as the students and the administration have a responsibility to make Colgate a safe space for everyone so that critical learning and exploration can occur, faculty do, too, and perhaps even more so. And so I see the course as being a part of that shared responsibility.

I do bring in LGBTQ issues into other courses. I do about a week on queer issues in *The American School* (EDUC 101). I have the students read a bit from C.J. Pascoe’s *Dude You’re a Fag* and they read some David Sedaris and we think about how things like abstinence-only education institutionalize heterosexism (not to mention doesn’t work). And in *The Challenges of Modernity* (CORE 152), John Connor, my colleague in the English department, and I teach Samuel Delany’s *Times Square Red/Times Square Blue*—which is, among other things, ridiculously brilliant. Delany makes an argument in the book about how, given the stage of capitalism in which we are in, we might think to call on eros to create what he calls “contact” across racial and class lines. He uses the Disney-fication of Times Square over the past 20 years as a backdrop for thinking through the relationship between politics and pleasure. This book, however, is not part of the required reading list for 152, and so not all the students have a chance to read it. Save for a failed/almost/fantasized-lesbian experience in *Mrs. Dalloway*, which Clarissa reminisces about at one point, sexuality is not taken up in earnest in the curriculum of 152 and, as a faculty, we are thinking about how we might think to include it more formally.

Thanks for giving me some space in the newsletter to talk about these issues and my experiences.

If anyone reading this has any questions or wants to get in touch with me, please feel free to drop an email: mstern@colgate.edu
Alumni Points of Interest

Help us build our Alumni Database!

The best way to stay connected upon graduation is to join the GALA listserve via Alumni Relations. We send out notices for local LGBTQ Colgate events, invitations and newsletters!

Simply email your full name and class year to LGBTQ@colgate.edu with the subject "Alumni database."

Interested in giving back to LGBTQ life at Colgate?

Alumni donations sponsor the student internship program, scholarship funds for local & national conferences.

Giving back helps us keep moving forward!

Make your gift by contacting Sara Groh of Colgate Annual Fund at sgroh@colgate.edu

Like LGBTQ Initiatives on Facebook!

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