

Spring 2016

Out and About Spring 2016

Colgate University. Office of LGBTQ Initiatives

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Out and About

A Joint Newsletter of LGBTQ Initiatives & LGBTQ Studies

Christian Kemp-Delisser Letter from our LGBTQ Initiatives Director

Whether holding a sit-in, creating a human chain, covering up gendered bathroom signs, or enrolling in intergroup dialogue courses, Colgate's students have been sending the message that we are not valued unless our full, complicated, radical, and not-so-radical stories are told.

This semester, Colgate joins a movement of colleges and universities across the U.S. by allowing individuals to share personal pronouns through the Colgate portal. This changes the way the university portrays people as a collection of demographic info and numbers (phone number, student ID, address, etc) and offers a chance for students in particular, who are often at

the leading edge of change, the chance to share an important part of their personal stories with faculty, deans, and other service providers.

I invite you to share your pronouns, whatever your gender. I want to hear your story.

Suzanne B. Spring Letter from our Interim Director of LGBTQ Studies

I write with deep thanks to have had the chance to come home for a year to a program that, when I first arrived ten years ago, existed only in the abstract, only in

our collective imagination, and yet fully in our hopes for a different future. We're still working toward that different future, and it is a hard and beautiful work, here on campus, in this nation, and in the larger world. I am so grateful to be joined in that work by friends and colleagues—students, staff, faculty, and administrators—across many different programs and departments. I am so pleased to say that one of those colleagues—Danny Barreto—will join LGBTQ Studies as our first Visiting Assistant Professor for 2016-2017. It is a gift to look forward to a program with so much promise.



THEY, ZE, ME BY DEBBIE KRAHMER

When I was first learning about how to come out as trans, somewhere in the late 90s, I was taught about gender-neutral pronouns. There was always a physical movement involved, visual cues for explaining that these pronouns were "sie/zie" (point to your eye, saying "see") and "hir" (point to your ear, saying "hear"). It was a way of recognizing the humanity in a person who does not conform to mainstream expectations of gender—to state clearly that I see them, I hear them, and I accept them.

Gender-neutral pronouns are not a new thing, though the creation and use of gender-neutral pronouns in the modern context is often a very personal—and political—way to signify your identity to the wider world. A very feminine-presenting person can choose to be referred to by masculine pronouns in order to bring attention to the strangeness of a gender binary. Leslie Feinberg's book, *TransLiberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*, is an excellent example of this.

When Feinberg died in November of 2014, her obituary in *The Advocate* stated, "She preferred to use the pronouns she/zie and her/hir for herself, but also said: 'I care which pronoun is used, but people have been disrespectful to me with the wrong pronoun and respectful with the right one. It matters whether someone is using the pronoun as a bigot, or if they are trying to demonstrate respect.'"

Feinberg perfectly captured and stated the core of what using preferred pronouns involves—respect. One can use gender-neutral pronouns as a weapon to hurt someone, or as a way of welcoming them into the conversation. If a person has a pronoun that they prefer to be used, it is a basic tenet of respect to use that pronoun. If we can normalize the process of asking or announcing one's preferred gender pronouns, it means that we trans people can spend less time trying to explain ourselves and more time actually interacting with others.

Meet the new LGBTQ Interns



Kyle Griswold
(he/him/his)


I applied to be an intern because the LGBTQ community has done a lot for me and I wanted to reciprocate that good service.



Vanessa Escobar
(she/her/hers)

I became a part of the LGBTQ+ Interns on campus because it's a place where I can be myself with no fear of judgement and where we are provided resources to lend out a helping hand to our queer people on campus.

Find us online

 Colgate LGBTQ Initiatives

 @ColgateLGBTQ

 lgbtq@colgate.edu



Fun Home

by Ashleandra Opoku

In November I went to a showing of the play *Fun Home*, a Broadway musical adapted from the book by the same name written by Alison Bechdel. The trip was a collaboration between two academic courses, LGBTQ Initiatives, and LGBTQ Studies. The play overall was excellent. I appreciated the ways it demonstrated

and deconstructed ways of doing gender and I admired the vulnerability Bechdel developed to let us all into her life.

I was the only person there that who wasn't a part of a LGBTQ Studies class or an LGBTQ Intern, but I has been invited because I was the new multicultural and LGBTQ Intern for WMST and it was an opportunity to broaden my knowledge base on LGBTQ experience and literature. That difference was most apparent from my personal reaction to the storyline about the father's identity. I couldn't stop thinking about Bechdel and her relationship to her father. At the end of the play she feels a sense of connection with dad because they are both gay. But her dad never says he's gay; he is just caught having sexual relations with younger men and minors, which I questioned; "was it a matter of his sexuality or just him expressing dominance?"

While many of my friends watched the play teary eyed and receptive, I sat at the theatre feeling a little shaken. I sat silently trying to deal with all of the triggers and alarms that were going on in my head. As an intern and educator, I felt I couldn't let go of that aspect of the storyline. I kept remembering how uncomfortable certain scenes made me; how much I despised her father and how I was angry about the way the Allison glossed him over. I hope future stories allow for deeper and more critical looks at the ways society still stigmatizes LGBTQ people by associating them with deviance and criminality.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS AND LGBTQ STUDIES KEN VALENTE

How have you managed to combine two disciplines (mathematics and LGBTQ Studies) that are not often associated with each other?



Combining mathematics and LGBTQ studies is unusual, but history is the link between them. In examining the history of science, I became interested in the medicalization of (homo)sexuality in the nineteenth century. This led me to consider LGBTQ history more broadly. In fact, one of my most recent publications focuses on the work and life of Alan Turing. Turing is an important historical figure owing to his work in mathematics and persecution as a homosexual in 1950s Britain. He was the subject of the recent film called "The Imitation Game." Since writing on Turing, I've consciously started to adopt a 'queer' perspective in writing the history of mathematics. That is, I'm interested in the disruptive potential of mathematical innovations and what these disruptive aspects expose in terms of understanding mathematical knowledge and practices.

What's your vision for the LGBTQ Studies program?

Our interdisciplinary program in LGBTQ studies has grown in significant ways since I served as its first director (2009 - 2012). But my vision of the program is much the same. Affecting positive change in terms of the campus climate and diversity is essential work we undertake through our program. Providing students with opportunities for critically examining intersectional identities is an equally important aspect of the work we do.

CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHT: FALL 2016 COURSES

- LGBT 227A: Machismo & the Latin Lover with Professor Barreto
- LGBT 350A: Sexuality Gender and the Law with Professor Sprock
- ANTH 315A: Gender and Culture with Professor Nicolae
- ENGL 363A: Culture and Counterculture in Contemporary British Fiction and Film with Professor Connor
- FSMT 230A: LGBTQ Cinema with Professor Maitra
- FMST 350A: Hollywood Cinema and the World with Professor Simonson
- WMST 202: Intro to Women Studies. Three sections with Professors Serna, Thomson, and Barreto



Julia Angueira
Homecoming Tailgate
Fall 2015

