

# LGBTQ+ Culture Center Annual Report

## 2017-2018



LGBTQ+ Culture Center staff members pose with drag performers at the September First Thursdays Festival

*Photo provided courtesy of the IU Arts and Humanities Council*

## Executive Summary

One of the things the LGBTQ+ Center has done consistently is welcoming the opportunity to collaborate with students on various initiatives, whether they be a class assignment of an individual student, a program request for cosponsorship from Union Board, or an effort to improve the campus or the larger community. Sixteen years ago, two students walked into our office requesting assistance with an assignment in their Fine Arts class; they wanted to do something with gay films. That request led to what has now become the Bloomington Pride Film Festival, an annual event attended by hundreds. Laverne Cox, star of *Orange Is the New Black*, came to campus and spoke to a packed audience at the IU Auditorium about her experience as a transgender African American woman and her time as a male student here at IU; this event happened thanks to the initiative of students on Union Board. And an LGBTQ+ Alumni Association was formed years ago because of the idea of one of our student volunteers. That organization has raised thousands of dollars for student scholarships for students achieving academic excellence and for those cut off from financial support when they come out to their families.

This past academic year, a student from the Kelley School of Business stopped by the Center with the dream of establishing a mentoring program that will assist incoming students who identify as LGBTQ+ by pairing them with older students who are out and proud. These mentors will be able to help new students find resources on campus that will enable them to live openly and authentically. More than twenty students, many who have served as Orientation Leaders, have signed up to be mentors and will be trained this fall and available to offer guidance and friendship to first-year students.

Other highlights of the year include the addition of Michelle Powell in a postdoc position. She developed, distributed, and analyzed a student survey to determine the needs of current LGBTQ+ students. Michelle will be teaching an eight-week course on LGBTQ+ issues through the Sociology department this fall. We participated, once again, in the Provost's First Thursdays celebration with a look at the role and value of drag in United States culture; our tent featured two drag queens who posed for photos with students, staff, faculty, and administrators. And, in consultation with colleagues in the office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs, we streamlined five separate gift agreements through the IU Foundation. These gifts will provide travel expenses for students attending workshops or doing research on LGBTQ+ issues, as well as increasing funding for students seeking scholarship support.

## Goals

As we look to 2018-2019, we will continue our many efforts to serve students even as we begin making plans for the celebration of the Center's twenty-fifty anniversary in November 2019. We will also be developing a transition plan to replace Jamie, who anticipates leaving IU in 2019, and Doug, who will be retiring in December 2019.

## The Year in Review

At the end of every month, we highlight a few of the contacts we have made with students, staff, faculty, administrators, colleagues on other campuses, and people from the larger community. The list below provides a brief glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes on any given day.

### July

- A visiting graduate student from Egypt who identifies as gay visited the center on several occasions over the summer and discussed issues of relevance to his culture. The student was very impressed with our center. The Director has maintained contact with the student via Facebook.
- A retired staff member who had reached out to the center in recent years had a massive stroke and moved from intensive care to hospice, where he died a few days later. Having provided him with some personal support, the Director helped to arrange a memorial service attended by former colleagues.
- The Director of Veteran's Affairs visited us to offer his support in the light of the President's stance on transgender individuals serving in the military. We are always grateful for the strong relationships we have with others campus offices.
- The managing editor of the *Indiana Daily Student* requested a meeting with the directors from each culture center to discuss with newspaper staff the nature of reporting on diversity issues. The directors arranged a panel for *IDS* staff in the fall.

### September

- The Director met with the IU Student Association President to discuss the coming year and to share the work of the center. This is a tradition going back to the year that the GLB Office opened and IUSA was one of the lone student organizations to support our establishment.
- Center staff participated in a dozen resource fairs, several pre-Welcome Week open houses, a Pride Festival, the annual East 7th Street Block Party, and the Student Involvement Fair to reach out to students who might benefit from our services.
- The Director met with a faculty member in the Gender Studies department to discuss potential development of a Queer Studies program at IU. Gender Studies faculty plan to offer a Queer Studies minor within a year. The Director reported this to the LGBTQ+ Culture Center Advisory Board in September.
- The Director of Outreach at the IU Auditorium requested our assistance in developing a preshow lecture on drag the opening night of *Kinky Boots*. Our Library Coordinators developed a presentation for the opening night of the show and gave an informative talk that was enjoyed by the preshow audience.

## November

- A graduate student was referred to us by a faculty member. This student was struggling to integrate her sexual orientation and gender identity with her conservative religious background after experiencing abuse from a church. The Director met with this student and invited her to a program being sponsored by an open congregation in town, where she was welcomed and able to raise questions and consider issues in new ways.
- Upon the death of Chancellor Emeritus Ken Gros Louis, one of his former aids sent us a copy of remarks he had made as we celebrated the renovation of the Center. The speech was entered into our current collection of memorabilia, which is stored at the IU Archives.
- Our center, in conjunction with La Casa and the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center, celebrated *Día de los Muertos* (the Day of the Dead) with a collaborative neighborhood celebration.
- The Director met with students who sought scholarship funds after losing financial support from their parents. These meetings enable students to access funding that allows them to continue their education without interruption in spite of a lack of family support.

## January

- A member of the student group Connections was interested in organizing an LGBTQ+ book club. Library coordinators, along with the Office Supervisor, worked with students to offer support in the creation of this new group, which met several times over the spring semester.
- The IU President's Office requested nominations for the President's Board of Acons. A student who has a close relationship with the LGBTQ+ Culture Center was nominated, interviewed, and offered a position on the Board.
- An undergraduate student and intern with the IU Bicentennial Committee sought information on the LGBTQ+ Center. The Director provided historical information and granted an in-depth interview.
- Center staff worked in conjunction with Board members of the LGBTQ+ Alumni Association to host the Distinguished Alumni Award ceremony. A former Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate student, now on the staff of the NCAA, received the award and was delighted to return to her alma mater.

## March/April

- A member of the IU community met with the Director to discuss a host of personal issues related to an upcoming. Community resources were provided, and ongoing personal support was promised.
- A staff member at the Kinsey Institute requested cosponsorship of a lecture by noted gay author Armistead Maupin. We agreed and also suggested that the Kinsey Institute collaborate with Union Board and IU Cinema.
- The Director wrote a letter to a judge on behalf of a gay graduate student whose acts of vandalism became widely known due to publicity in local newspaper. In meeting with the student on several occasions, the two developed a creative response to his actions in the hopes of restoring justice. The letter was shared during the student's trial, and jail time was prevented.
- Staff in Enrollment Services sought our input on giving students the option of identifying their sexual orientation and/or gender identity when applying to IU. Enrollment Services continues to work toward the addition of this identifying information in application materials.
- The Director contacted twenty former students to request their collaboration with the author of the upcoming book *There All Along*, which will chronicle LGBTQ+ history at IU and in Bloomington. Many agreed to be interviewed over the summer. The book is anticipated to be finished in 2019.

## Programs, Events, and Initiatives

- Once again, the LGBTQ+ Center, in collaboration with colleagues from IU's other four cultural centers, participated in Culture Fest, distributing hundreds of popsicles. The following day, we welcomed scores of students to the center during our annual Welcome Week Block Party.
- Center staff worked in collaboration with our counterparts at IUPUI and sponsored a group of students who attended the annual Harvey Milk Dinner. Cleve Jones, the founder of the NAMES Quilt Project, was the featured speaker.
- During one of our monthly Brown Bag events, we hosted an IU alum and former White House intern, who shared stories of his government service with a number of students.
- Working with the School of Public Health, we cosponsored the annual Ryan White lecture series and assisted Union Board in bringing panels from the Names Quilt Project to display on campus.
- A variety of student groups were supported by the Center, including Connections, Men Like Us, Gender Warriors, Out@Kelley, OutLaw, Grad Queers, Nothing Is Binary, Out in STEM, and GloBaL Talks. Support was also extended to the Spectrum floor in Residence Life.
- The LGBTQ+ Alumni Association hosted its annual Distinguished Alumni Ceremony and Silent Auction during the Pride Film Festival. Both the Alumni Association and the film festival are a result of student initiatives supported by the center.
- Assembly Hall hosted its annual Pride Night during a women's basketball game. The event celebrated and recognized a local lesbian business owner who is a supporter of women's athletics.
- An interactive workshop, Queering Pedagogy and Curriculum, was attended by students from the School of Education in March.
- The Center's social work intern facilitated a well-attended workshop at the daylong First Year Experience conference. This event featured diverse students who have experienced success at IU.
- In collaboration with the IU Cinema, the center brought the film *States of Grace* to campus, as well as the film's star, Dr. Grace Damman, and director Helen Cohen. Grace cared for hundreds of AIDS patients in the early years of the crisis, and after a near-tragic auto accident that paralyzed her body, she now serves as a well-respected medical and disability consultant.

## **2017-2018 LGBTQ+ Culture Center Personnel**

- Doug Bauder, Director
- Jamie Bartzel, Office Supervisor
  
- Danielle Hernandez, Graduate Assistant
- Emily Kidwell, Counseling Intern
- Xavier Chavez, Social Work Intern
- Leah Cover, Library Coordinator
- Emily Thomas, Library Coordinator
- Sydney Ziegler, Office Assistant
- Michelle Powell, Postdoc