DIRECTOR’S WELCOME

Welcome to the Winter 2012 issues of Tufts LGBT News!

When a semester comes to an end, it is often mindboggling to consider just how much was crammed into a 15-week period. This past semester was no exception for the LGBT Center. In September we took an amazing group of 16 students to Provincetown for Team Q peer-educator training, and since then Team Q has been working non-stop, offering ‘Safe Zones’ and other LGBTQA-related trainings for the Asian American Center Peer Leaders, the entire staff of TUPD and Health Services, and assisting in other events with Tufts’ Queer Straight Alliance (QSA), Greater Boston PFLAG, Boston’s Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC), and local schools and churches. As a whole, the LGBT Center offered fewer ‘traditional’ (event-focused) programs, and shifted much of our focus towards connecting with other Tufts entities and taking on projects that would have more of a lasting effect, such as:

- Completely updating the Tufts’ Gender-Neutral Bathroom List
- Putting the newly organized LGBT Center’s Video Library list online
- Beginning an ongoing LGBT health video series, the first installment already being complete (on WSW, or women who have sex with women—you HAVE to check it out!)
- Making a “Welcome to Tufts LGBT Center” video (will go live 12/17/12)
- Creating a Gender Identity/Gender Expression Workshop which Team Q will be able to offer as a follow up to the LGBT “Safe Zone” training they currently offer
- Creating a “Tufts LGBT International Study Abroad Guide” (with information regarding the climate, laws, resources, etc. for LGBTQ people in countries where Tufts sends students to study abroad, expected completion date March 2013)

We also kicked off a contest titled “How were you ‘born this way’?,” asking individuals to record themselves answering that exact question and submitting their video for us to post online. Each student who does so is entered into a drawing to win 2 tickets to see Lady Gaga perform in Boston this February…we encourage everyone to submit their response between now and February 13th!

Finally, I just want to say how excited I am for Spring semester, particularly since we will be celebrating the LGBT Center’s 20th Anniversary on the evening of Saturday, April 6th! It is going to be an incredible event, where we will be transforming the Campus Center into a decked out venue where students, alumni, faculty and staff will gather together to share in this joyous occasion. Please remember to save the date—an official invitation with more details will be sent out very soon!

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season, and I hope that you enjoy this newsletter.

~Tom Bourdon, Tufts LGBT Center Director

Inside this Issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directors Welcome</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Spotlight: Stacy Vasquez</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSW Health: Dr. Margaret Higham, MD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Spotlight: Matt Wood, ’88</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicultural &amp; LGBT: 3 students’ Perspective</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent LGBT Events at Tufts

- Kate Borenstein
- Presidential Debate & Election Viewings
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- World AIDS Day Events
- Grindr Founder & ’98 Alum, Joel Simkhai
- LGBT Center Family Thanksgiving
By Margaret Higham, MD

There are well developed national guidelines for routine health care of all women, but WSW and Bisexual women are less likely to receive the recommended screenings than heterosexual women. Many WSW have experienced homophobia in health care—providers who are insensitive or have created negative experiences. Even if they aren’t actively negative, providers may be so heterocentric that it is very difficult for a woman to speak honestly about her sexual orientation and sexual behaviors. If you are a WSW, knowing your health risks will help you advocate for yourself, and help you be more likely to seek recommended care. This article focuses on reproductive and sexual health concerns that are particularly relevant for WSW.

WSW should get a routine yearly “well woman” examination, just as heterosexual women do starting at age 16. There has been a misconception among both the public and health providers that WSW are not at risk for cervical cancer, unplanned pregnancy, or sexually transmitted infections. This is not true! The well woman examination is not just for a pap smear; it is a time to assess general health habits and to discuss any needed STI screenings based on sexual behavior history. A pap smear should be performed according to current national guidelines. New national guidelines no longer recommend Pap smears on a yearly basis. Because HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer, often resolves on its own in teenagers and is a very slowly progressive infection, testing only needs to occur every 3 years for most women. The first Pap smear should be no sooner than age 21, and is repeated every 3 years after that, extending to every 5 years after age 30. HPV can be transmitted from woman to woman through skin to skin contact, or skin to genital (hand to genital, hand to anus, etc) contact. All girls and women should receive HPV vaccine at the recommended age. Because many WSW have not had routine pap smears in the past, they are at risk of presenting for care when cervical cancer is further progressed and miss the window when cancer can be prevented by early treatment.

WSW are at higher theoretical risk for breast and ovarian cancer than heterosexual women, another reason for regular examinations and recommended screenings as they age. One of the risk factors for breast and ovarian cancers is number of pregnancies and menstrual cycles over a lifetime. The fewer menstrual cycles, the lower the risk. Lesbians are less likely to use oral contraceptives (which block regular menstrual cycles) and have fewer pregnancies, and thus have more regular cycles.
made a point to stop to hug us, ask how we were doing and talk about how the
repeal efforts were going while she was on the road. Before we got into the car to
go to the VMAs, where she would be the center of attention in front of the whole
world, she told us that she was most worried about making sure she got it right for
us. I was overwhelmed by her generosity, concern and kindness throughout the
course of our work together.

What work are you currently doing with the government?
Prior to coming to Tufts I served as the Deputy Director of the Homeless Veterans Initiative in Washington, DC. Our mis-
sion was to develop a 5-year strategy to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. The plan has caused the US to reduce
homelessness by over 40 percent since 2009. My involvement with homeless Veterans was incredibly rewarding. I still re-
main a government employee but my next assignment after Tufts has not been determined yet. No matter where it is in the
Department of Veterans Affairs, it will be rewarding because we had the best customers -- Veterans and their families.

What advice do you have for LGBTQ students interested in government or military work?
The government is a fantastic place to work. Serving the American people is a great honor whether it is in the military or as a
civilian. The opportunities to excel professionally, travel, meet people and make a difference in the world are endless. My
best advice is to work hard and do something you believe in. Our sexual orientation does not define who we are; it is
merely one aspect of us. What we give back to the world defines us.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Matt Wood is a Tufts alumni ('88) now working at Transgender Law Center in California. In the Fall 2012 newsletter, Matt had replied to the call for Alumni Notes regarding a recent landmark case won. Transgender Law Center brought this case on behalf of Mia Macy, a veteran and a former police detective who was denied a job as a ballistics technician at the Walnut Creek, California laboratory of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). After coming out as a transgender woman midway through the hiring process, Ms. Macy was suddenly told that funding had been cut for the ballistics expert position she applied for. She later learned that someone else had been hired for the job. Matt and Transgender Law Center helped Ms. Macy file a discrimination complaint with ATF, arguing that Macy had been discriminated against in violation of Title VII, the federal sex discrimination law. ATF refused to process the complaint properly, asserting that, in its view, Title VII did not cover discrimination against transgender people. Transgender Law Center appealed this determination to the EEOC, which issued its groundbreaking decision in April 2012. As a result, transgender employees throughout the United States now have strong support against workplace discrimination. Transgender Law Center is based in San Francisco.

What did you study at Tufts, and what have you been up to since graduating?
I was inspired by Jeanne Dillon, who was in American Studies at the time and later became a Dean, and by Saul Slapikoff who was the American Studies Department Chair, to become an American studies professor. I wanted to teach LGBT Studies. I received an MA from William & Mary in American Studies in 1990, and a PhD in American Studies from the University of Minnesota in 2000. I’ve always been very interested in the intersections of law and culture, and my dissertation was on lesbian detective novels. However, somewhere along the way I became more interested in practicing LGBT rights law, rather than researching and teaching about sexuality and gender. I left academia and started working at the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission before heading off to law school at age 40. I received my JD from Golden Gate University school of law in 2007 and passed the California Bar shortly thereafter. Being a staff attorney at Transgender Law Center is my dream job.

What was the climate like for LGBTQ students during your time at Tufts?
In the mid and late 1980s there was a growing LGBT presence on campus, but only a few courageous people were really out in every aspect of their campus lives. I remember April was gay awareness month and there used to be an event, “blue jeans day,” where you were supposed to wear jeans if you were gay. Of course everyone wore jeans, which was the point I guess – that LGBT students were just like everyone else. But I remember some students going back to their dorms to

(Continued on page 6)
BICULTURAL AND LGBT IDENTITIES

A bicultural identity refers to when more than one culture influenced an individual as they were growing up—having parents of two different cultural backgrounds, home culture differing from school or societal culture. Individuals with bicultural identities who also identify within the LGBT community are often faced with multiple marginalized identities, receiving varying degrees of acceptance from different family members and friends. It is important to recognize the interplay of bicultural identities within the LGBT community because of intersectionality. Raising awareness can help students better support each other and begin to understand each other. As the LGBT Center’s graduate center, I was able to reach out to all members of Team Q asking if anyone would be interested in sharing their experiences as a member of the LGBTQ community and raised in a bicultural context. Three male students responded and I was able to sit down with them to talk about the cultures they experienced while growing up and how their LGBT identity fit into those contexts.

Their cultural backgrounds...

**Barton** is a first-year Chinese-American student. He attended an American school in Hong Kong where many fellow classmates were children of ex-pat Americans. Barton’s parents are from mainland China and he described them as traditional.

**Darius** is a fifth year Peruvian-Japanese-Iranian-Jewish-Sikh-American student. His parents divorced and remarried when he was very young, and his step parents would interact with him as often as his respective biological parents. His mother is Peruvian/Japanese and his step father is Sikh. His father is Iranian and his step mother identifies as ethnically Jewish. Darius attended very different schools near the Los Angeles area.

**John** is a first-year South Korean-American student. He spent much of his younger childhood attending public schools and living with his parents in South Korea. For high school, he attended a boarding school in the Northeast region of the U.S.

Family cultural impact...

B: As a child, his parents would always talk about “when you grow up and get married to the right woman.” Barton describes his home atmosphere as implicitly heteronormative. In Chinese culture, topics such as sex, sexual orientation, and gender were simply not openly discussed. He never received “the talk” from his parents and it would be uncommon to see same sex couples expressing affection for each other publically.

D: He “received varying degrees of understanding and acceptance” across his four parental figures. His stepmom had grown up in the suburbs of New York City and some of her longtime friends were the first positive gay role models who Darius encountered. She has been very supportive of Darius, but is not very conscious of the role that race/ethnicity plays on LGBT identities. His Iranian biological father has been accepting, even though he never encountered openly gay or lesbian identifying people until moving to America as a young adult. Darius has received inconsistent messages from his mother and stepfather. He says his mother’s childhood in a Latino culture fostered silence regarding gender or sexual orientation. While she does not directly condemn his identity, he remembers her expressing that “being gay is a lonely life.”

J: South Korean culture strongly emphasizes family. Carrying on the family name through biological children is extremely important to his father and Korean culture views adopting a child more as charity than building a family. After coming out to John’s mother, he discovered she had never heard of the term gay marriage before. She asked, “Why can’t you have a boyfriend the rest of your life?”

Impact outside the home...

B: While at the American school in Hong Kong, Barton felt comfortable discussing general LGBT topics with fellow students, though it was not brought up often. Barton shared that Hong Kong does recognize same sex couples in terms of legal consent, but age 16 for heterosexuals until recently, Hong Kong law had the age of consent for heterosexual couples as 16 but it was 18 or 21 for same sex couples. Barton remembers attending an annual pride parade in HK while in high school. While there, he spoke with a German tourist who pointed out that parades in Germany focused completely on pride whereas the Hong Kong gathering was much more political in nature, demanding rights and recognition.

D: Until high school, Darius attended a Catholic school and was ostracized by classmates after coming out in 8th grade. He lost all his friends and was told to “go back to San Francisco.” His dad and step mother actively

(Continued on page 6)
There is little data on STIs among WSW. In general, chlamydia testing is recommended yearly in all sexually active women age 26 and under. This guideline was developed for the heterosexual population, and is recommended for the WSW population too. We know that infections can be transmitted through sharing of vaginal secretions via mouth to genital contact, hand to genital, genital to genital, and use of sex toys. Other testing, such as HIV and gonorrhea would be individualized, based on a specific sexual behavior. The one genital problem that seems to be more common among WSW is Bacterial Vaginosis (BV). This is a mild vaginitis that can cause odor and discharge but does not lead to any significant health problems except in pregnancy. Although it is not considered a sexually transmitted infection among heterosexuals, it is likely sexually transmitted by WSW. Thus partners should be treated.

The majority of WSW have been sexually active with men at some point in their life, and are less likely to have planned for it. Unintended pregnancy is not uncommon, particularly in adolescence. WSW need to know about Emergency Contraception (EC), how to access it, and the importance of taking it as soon after unprotected intercourse as possible. EC is now available free with a prescription under most insurance plans, or over the counter for a cost.

In summary, all women, whatever their sexual orientation or sexual behavior, should get regular medical care, and regular screenings. Medical providers are becoming increasingly comfortable with LGBT health issues. Try to find someone you trust and communicate with. While you are here at Tufts, come to Health Service!

***********

Check out the LGBT Center’s website for intern Katie Hegarty’s sexual health video: “WSW, or, a Lady on Ladies-on-Ladies”

WSW (CONTINUED)

(Cautioned from page 2)

There is little data on STIs among WSW. In general, chlamydia testing is recommended yearly in all sexually active women age 26 and under. This guideline was developed for the heterosexual population, and is recommended for the WSW population too. We know that infections can be transmitted through sharing of vaginal secretions via mouth to genital contact, hand to genital, genital to genital, and use of sex toys. Other testing, such as HIV and gonorrhea would be individualized, based on a specific sexual behavior. The one genital problem that seems to be more common among WSW is Bacterial Vaginosis (BV). This is a mild vaginitis that can cause odor and discharge but does not lead to any significant health problems except in pregnancy. Although it is not considered a sexually transmitted infection among heterosexuals, it is likely sexually transmitted by WSW. Thus partners should be treated.

The majority of WSW have been sexually active with men at some point in their life, and are less likely to have planned for it. Unintended pregnancy is not uncommon, particularly in adolescence. WSW need to know about Emergency Contraception (EC), how to access it, and the importance of taking it as soon after unprotected intercourse as possible. EC is now available free with a prescription under most insurance plans, or over the counter for a cost.

In summary, all women, whatever their sexual orientation or sexual behavior, should get regular medical care, and regular screenings. Medical providers are becoming increasingly comfortable with LGBT health issues. Try to find someone you trust and communicate with. While you are here at Tufts, come to Health Service!

***********

Check out the LGBT Center’s website for intern Katie Hegarty’s sexual health video: “WSW, or, a Lady on Ladies-on-Ladies”

BICULTURAL & LGBT (CONTINUED)

sought an accepting high school environment and he attended a progressive polytechnic school. While he felt there was acceptance at face value, there were still obvious signs of underlying misunderstanding and ignorance regarding LGBT identities.

J: While in South Korea, John was never aware of discussions regarding sexual orientation at his grade school. The perception of gay characters in television shows were often as comedic or shock factors, though John admits there is a noticeable shift towards acceptance. While in high school in the U.S., John encountered a Gay-Straight Alliance for the first time. The perception in his high school was that only gay people were members of the group, so John opted to join the Asian Student Alliance. Picking the ASA over the GSA made him feel how he had to keep separate his Korean and gay identities.
The programs and services of The LGBT Center support the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and ally students, faculty, staff and alumni of Tufts University. The Center is available to anyone on campus interested in learning more about LGBT-related subjects or issues of sexual and gender identity. The Center is committed to maintaining LGBT visibility on campus and providing campus-wide education on sexual and gender identity and the effects of homophobia.

Our services include advocacy on behalf of LGBT students; counseling and referrals to students in need; information about resources available to LGBT people on and off-campus; research assistance with topics relating to sexuality; a student outreach and education team (Team Q); a peer-support network (Queer Peers); trainings and workshops for faculty, staff, or student groups; email lists networking people affiliated with Tufts University; and programming that reflects the diversity of students at Tufts.

The LGBT Center works collaboratively with many groups on campus, including the Dean of Students Office, the Women’s Center, the Asian American Center, the Latino Center, the Africana Center, the International Center, Greek Life, the Office of Residential Life and Learning, the Hillel Center and the Tufts Chaplaincy.

Drop by the Center and enjoy a comfortable and safe space dedicated to supporting and celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer identities.

A VIEW OF THE SEMESTER

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

- STUDENTS GET WORK DONE IN PTOWN DURING ANNUAL RETREAT
- KATE BORNSTEIN SPEAKS AT TUFTS
- MEMBERS OF THE ENTIRE TUFTS COMMUNITY ENJOYING THE CENTERS ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER
- FOUNDER OF GRINDR/ALUM JOEL SIMKHAI ('98) SPEAKING AT TUFTS