

See what the LGBT Center has been up to this Fall!



FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

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Director's Welcome

Dear Readers,

The recent events at the University of Missouri and on college campuses across the country have put a spotlight on problems that many college students of color, including many at Tufts, have experienced and articulated for years. The actions of student activists urge all of us to take a look at our own positions in perpetuating or interrupting violent systems of oppression. As a white director of an LGBT Center, I take their call seriously. I hope that we are creating a space that belongs to the most marginalized at Tufts and that where we fail to do so, students feel comfortable calling out and helping us move toward a more just space.



We have had an incredibly busy semester—from our annual Provincetown Team Q retreat, to our newly annual Halloween screening/performance of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, to our ever-popular Grunch series (a queer brunch convo series focusing on issues important to queer students at Tufts). As you will see throughout this issue, students at the LGBT Center have found creative ways to engage with issues of gender, sexuality, and identity in their personal, academic, and social lives.

We have also spent time meeting with colleagues across campus to ensure that Tufts lives up to its title

as one of the [Top 25 Colleges and Universities for LGBTQ students](#). While we are far ahead of many of our peer institutions, we still have work to do to bring us in line with the [Consortium of LGBT Higher Education Resource Professionals guidelines for Best Practices for Supporting Trans Students](#) . Working with partners across campus, we are improving our systems and letting students know what their resources are. In addition to this advocacy work, we have facilitated dozens of workshops and trainings for faculty, staff, and students on sexuality, gender identity and expression, and the importance of language and vocabulary in creating safer spaces for LGBTQ folks. Our Pronoun Fluency Training helps participants better understand issues related to pronoun usage and gives people practical tools to create safer spaces for all students through their use of pronouns and names.

In January, we will send two Tufts students to the LGBTQ Taskforce's annual Creating Change conference in Chicago, IL. This 5-day trip has been life-changing for students who have attended in the past, introducing them to new concepts of social justice and new frameworks for doing LGBTQ activism. Students are able to meet a wide range of queer educators, non-profit workers, and activists from across the country to further their personal and professional development. In addition to being an inspirational event for students to attend, it is also an opportunity for them to think about how social justice issues impact the Tufts experience. I know that the two students we are sending-senior Renee' Vallejo and first-year Elise Sommers-will have a transformative experience and that they will use their knowledge to better our campus. Look for a report back from Renee' and Elise in our spring newsletter!

If you would like to support our effort to send students to Creating Change this year and in the future, or if you would like to support Tufts students through the LGBT Center in another way, please reach out to me directly at nino.testa@tufts.edu to discuss making a gift to our alumni fund.

A special thanks to our intern Christin Mujica for putting together this snapshot of LGBTQ life at Tufts this semester! We hope you enjoy it and that you have a restful and fulfilling holiday season!

Sincerely,
Nino Testa, PhD
Director
LGBT Center
Tufts University

Provincetown Retreat

The Provincetown Retreat is a yearly trip that Team Q takes to bond and learn more about themselves and each other. We explore how gender and sexuality impact our lives at Tufts and beyond.

Here are some thoughts on the retreat by Team Q members:



"In addition to being a bonding experience with Team Q mentors and mentees, the Provincetown retreat was a great opportunity to reflect on my personal identity. I appreciated the opportunity to reflect on aspects of my life, oppressions, and privileges that I don't think about on a day to day basis."

- **Bruce Bausk**

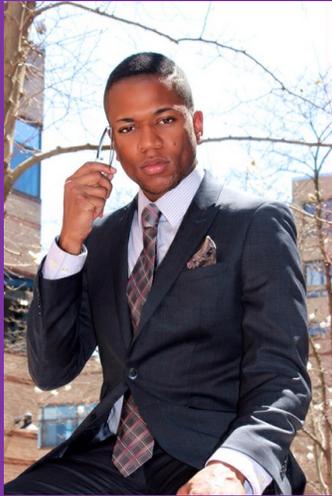
"I loved being able to go out and explore P-Town with Team Q! I especially loved watching the

sunset with everyone. I'm thankful for all the Alumn that have made this trip possible and I hope it will continue to happen for years to come."

-Christin Mujica

"I have gone on the retreat 3 out of 4 of my years here at Tufts. It's always such a wonderful experience getting to know everyone and having the opportunity to reflect on the ways that my various identities intersect and how my journey through life has shaped me into the person that I am today."

-Shakura Cox



Alumnus Spotlight: Tabias Wilson

*In September, 2015, Tabias Wilson (A'13), gave an LGBT Center-sponsored talk called "What's Sex Got to Do With It?: HIV Criminalization, Racial Justice, and Black Lives Matter." **Wilson spoke to an audience of 50 students, faculty, staff, and community members. We caught up with Wilson after the talk to learn more about his work and his life since graduation.***

Tell us about your life since Tufts.

Since Tufts I've done a variety of things. Immediately after leaving, I took a job as a world history teacher with Teach for America. I first taught gifted, low-income high school students in Harlem at Democracy Prep. I later taught freshmen and coached cross-country in a 100% minority school, with most of my students being undocumented, in the community of little Haiti in Miami. Afterwards, I took a job as the Corporate Relationship & Foundations Coordinator at the AIDS Action Committee of MA in Boston. During that time, I became a member of the National HIV/AIDS Planning Committee, which advises the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services on health issues facing gay, bisexual and trans* men of color in the U.S. and territories. I've since started a blog called BlaQueerFlow: The Griot's Pen, published work at Gawker, TheBody and other publications and been named a National Thought Leader. I'm currently in law school at Howard and working at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as well as working on my new book *Godless Circumcisions: A Recollecting & Re-membering of Blackness, Queerness & Flows of Survivance*.

What was your involvement in the LGBTQ community while at Tufts?

At Tufts I was the President of Queer Students of Color & Allies, as well as the Pan African Alliance. I also worked at the LGBT center, was a TCU Senator--the first Diversity Officer--and a brother at Theta Chi. I created a series of events, such as the LGBTQ intercollegiate dances, the LGBTQ-Ally Soulfood dinner (often hosted in partnership with Theta Chi). In my position as President of PAA, and as a TCU Senator, I led the protests and organizing effort to the Africana Studies Program and made sure that it had a strong queer component. I also helped to create the cyber-bullying taskforce, after a series of anti-gay actions occurred online and across campus. In addition to that response, I also collected and distributed over 1K flags across the campus to note and mark the safe spaces on campus, giving a chance for allies to out themselves as such, and showing widespread solidarity for LGBTQ members of campus.

What inspired your talk "What's Sex Got to Do With It?: HIV Criminalization, Racial Justice, and Black Lives Matter"? Why is this topic so important?

HIV is one of the greatest issues facing LGBTQ people and people of color, not because it is a death sentence--it isn't--but due to the stigma and cloud of inaccurate information and legal violence around it. Discussing this topic, in light of the Movement for Black Lives, is not only important but deeply necessary. We have entered a silent era of viral apartheid, whereby some folks are discriminated against, prosecuted as sex offender, biological terrorists/weapons and attempted murder, simply for having normal consensual sex, while surviving HIV.

What advice do you have for current Tufts students especially queer people of color?

There is a violence in mere survivance in a space where the nature of your existence is questioned. However, there is liberation in your truth--your articulation of self--to yourself. Be whole. Refused to undergo cultural & social circumcisions for anyone, but especially for yourself and those that come after you. Recall your hopes, your fears, your dreams--always. In all that you do, take your "self" with you, your ancestors with you, your love--strong and whole--with you and you'll always be who, where, how and why you need to be.

Alum Updates

Nick Salamone married his partner of seventeen years, Clay Storseth, in NYC on August 17. Nick is an actor and a playwright. His play, *Sea Change*, through four voyages on a fishing boat off the coast of Provincetown, chronicles the lives of 5 gay and lesbian students at Tufts from their college years in the mid-seventies to the close of the 20th century.

Ralan Hill was recently assigned to the U.S Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he will work for a year on behalf of the U.S. Department of State.

Michael Goldrosen, who received his Masters in Public Policy and Citizen Participation from Tufts in 1987 (part of the Urban and Environmental Policy program) has taken on a new position in Washington DC for the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), as the Deputy Director of the Division of State HIV/AIDS Programs for the HIV/AIDS Bureau. In this role Michael oversees Part B of the Ryan White Program and oversees \$1.4 Billion that funds 59 states and territories to provide a continuum of services for People Living with HIV. Michael took on this role in May after 17 years overseeing HIV funding at the Boston Public Health Commission and after 30 years of living in Boston.

Brian Ganson (Fletcher '88) has been named Head, Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement (ACDS) and Extraordinary Associate Professor at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. ACDS is a hub for research and reflection at the nexus of business, conflict and development.

Brock McCormack (A'02) this year celebrated the 5th anniversary of marrying his husband Gary Lowman. Since 2009, Brock and Gary have lived abroad with the U.S. Department of State. Their postings have included China, Dominican Republic, and now Mozambique. Brock is always surprised how many Jumbos he runs into overseas!

Noa Lisa Padowitz GSE'03, Dean of Students & Community at Suder Montessori Magnet School, is celebrating the 5th anniversary of Chicago GSA Prom, a 501c3 organization Padowitz founded that organizes an annual prom for LGBTQ high school students and their allies. The dance is open to all Chicago area youth grades 9-12 and is hosted and endorsed by Chicago Public Schools.

Adam Pulver LA'05 is an attorney in the Office of the Solicitor at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, DC, where he works on LGBT and other civil rights issues. He was recently named one of the nation's top LGBT lawyers under 40 by the National LGBT Bar Association.

Staff Spotlight: Dr. Nandini Talwar, Counseling and Mental Health Service liaison to the LGBT Center



Can you tell us about the work that you do at CMHS?

My entire professional career has involved working with LGBT and at-risk youth in a variety of settings. Beyond my primary role of consulting with students about medications, my interests include working with students to learn about or to expand their practice of mindfulness, to understand and integrate issues of culture and identity, and to help students be successful in their college careers. I also enjoy working with students who have concurrent medical illnesses.

As an immigrant to the United States, the first member of my family to attend university and a lesbian parent with a teenage daughter, my work at Tufts is closely tied to very important aspects of my own personal identity.

What is the role of the CMHS liaison to the LGBT Center?

The CMHS Liaison Program is designed to educate students, faculty and staff about the range of services that we provide, to help students access the support and resources that they need, to make our services as accessible as possible to all populations, to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues and help seeking, and to open up discussions about what the barriers are in seeking help.

Over the years, some of the things I have done in this role have included my annual attendance at the LGBTQ Open House on Matriculation Day to welcome new students and their families, attending programs to educate the student body about the services provided by CMHS, training for LGBTQ Peer Leaders, being a panelist at a Queer Family forum at the Center and attending part of the Team Q retreat in Provincetown. I am currently working with Nino on his plan to revitalize the Thanksgiving Dinner to create a forum for supporting students who are returning home to their families of origin for the holidays, which can be a stressful time for LGBTQ students.

What are some of the particular mental health needs of LGBTQ students?

LGBTQ students are at a higher risk for a variety of mental health problems, substance abuse, and suicide. Until the time when we can transform our society to be safe for all of its members by ensuring

equal rights and social justice for all, we will continue to be diligent about finding ways to reach out to and support LGBTQ students. The good news is that, according to data from the Healthy Minds Study, an anonymous national survey of college student mental health, Tufts LGBTQ students utilize the services at CMHS at a rate that is more than double that of their non-LGBTQ counterparts. As we work towards a more just world for LGBTQ people, it is my hope that over time we will reduce this risk for LGBTQ youth and young adults.

Do counselors at CMHS have training on issues related to gender and sexuality, in particular?

Training in gender and sexuality is an integral part of the training of mental health professionals across all the disciplines. CMHS counselors choose to work in a university mental health setting because, like me, they have a particular interest in working with students around the development and evolution of identity. In addition, each of us recognizes that the work of eliminating bias and creating social justice for all is an ongoing process. We are keenly aware of the particular risks that are unique to the LGBTQ college age population as well as within other traditionally marginalized groups. As such, we engage in regular staff trainings and team discussions focused on topics of gender and sexuality, as well as other aspects of human diversity.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about my role as the LGBT liaison and I look forward to seeing so many of you at future events!

LGBT Center Staff Assistant

Deirdre Judge

I'm excited this year for the LGBT center to continue planning intersectional events and also for the opportunity to continue to be a space where people come to relax and build community. I love growing relationships with the folks that stop in and I look forward to doing more of that this year.



LGBT Center Undergraduate Staff

Christin Mujica

Programming Intern

Junior studying Clinical Psychology and Community Health.



Her favorite queer play is *Angels in America*. She first read it her Freshman year at Tufts and has been in love with it ever since!

Leroy Chan

Graphic Design Intern

Senior studying Architectural Studies

His favorite queer book is *I Am Not Myself These Days* by Josh Kilmer-Purcell. It's a memoir of a drag queen with goldfish tits who falls in love with an escort.



Maya Zeigler

Social Media Intern

Senior majoring in Anthropology and minoring in Film Studies and Dance

My favorite queer place around Boston is Diesel Cafe (i.e. it's run by Lesbians!) and a goal I have for the center is to see it operate as a more welcoming space for underclassmen. I would like to see Tufts allocate more resources (starting with a house) to making Rainbow House more functional, and also improve its gendered housing policies.

Zoe Jeka

Resources and Archives Intern

Junior majoring in American Studies

A goal she has for the center is to update the queer history archives on the LGBT center's website so they're more current. She also hopes to see Tufts improve the number of all-gender bathrooms and housing available on campus, because there is currently a HUGE lack of these facilities.



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STAY CONNECTED:

