



**Tufts**  
UNIVERSITY

**Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Center**

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## Directors Welcome

Dear Reader-

This has been such a successful year thanks to the students, staff, alumni, and faculty who have supported our efforts at the LGBT Center to make Tufts a more inclusive, more just campus for LGBT people. LGBT Center students did incredible work leading discussion groups, hosting town halls, working in solidarity with other groups on campus, and planning events that focused on important social justice issues related to gender and sexuality. I hope you'll read about some of these exciting endeavors in this newsletter!

I spent much of this year facilitating workshops on pronoun fluency, gender identity and expression, and LGBT vocabulary and identity. At each workshop, Tufts community members demonstrated their commitment to learning, self-improvement, and self-critique. I witnessed community members investigating their own privileges and doing the assessment necessary to create more intentional spaces for all students in classrooms, residence halls, and university offices. If you would like to book a workshop, e-mail me at [nino.testa@tufts.edu](mailto:nino.testa@tufts.edu) and we can discuss the needs of your group, office, or class.

When I began the year, my goal was to create spaces for students to explore their relationship to gender and sexuality through personal, academic, and activist lenses. I couldn't have done this without the work of my exceptional staff. I thank them as we begin planning to make 2015-2016 even better. Congratulations to all of our seniors and those completing their graduate work. Stay in touch!

Nino Testa, Director  
LGBT Center  
Tufts University  
Pronouns: He, Him, His

# Tufts LGBT Center

would like to thank

**June Goldstein, AG07 & A18P**

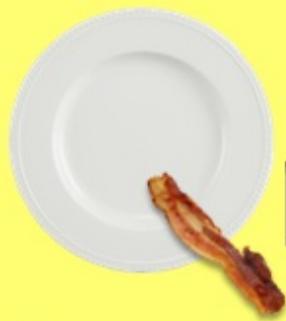
**Ralan Hill, E00**

**Ajit Joshi, A94**

for their generous donations



If you would like to support the LGBT Center,  
please contact [Nino.Testa@tufts.edu](mailto:Nino.Testa@tufts.edu)



# runch.

(a queer brunch convo series)

## **Qrunch: Trans and Gender-Related Resources at Tufts**

*by Ariel Watriss, Health Services*

In February, I had the pleasure to partake in a Qrunch event that focused on Trans healthcare and resources available for students. The panel consisted of staff members from multiple departments including: Residential Life and Learning, the Health Service, Counseling and Mental Health Services, Athletics, Admissions, Student Affairs, and the Office of Equal Opportunity. The meeting offered an opportunity for the various offices to share what they are doing to help shift awareness and increase access around resources for trans and gender non-conforming students. More significantly, the meeting offered students the opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity. There were a number of questions about what the student health insurance plan covers and the steps being taken to help facilitate safe and engaging health care on campus. As part of the health service staff, this meeting was a great opportunity for me to hear directly from the students about their concerns. One question was raised about why more staff don't ask about

## **Qrunch: Beyond Beyoncé: Race, Gender, and Cultural Appropriation**

*by Jonathan Jacob Moore*

As a panelist during the second Qrunch of the year, "Beyond Beyoncé: Race, Gender, and Cultural Appropriation," I was ecstatic to engage members of the Tufts community about gendered and classed racism inside Queer communities on campus and beyond. Critical conversations about how the bodies and identities of QTPOC (queer and trans people of color) are disrespected and 'dealt with' must happen more often in both queer and POC spaces and I was happy to contribute my own personal experience to that conversation. As a co-leader of LOQSOCA (Loving Ourselves as Queer Students of Color in Action), I appreciated the genuine interest many students showed in becoming aware and actively pushing against violent behavior and rhetoric. Developing community spaces that not only respect intersectional realities, but center them, is the future of improving campus climate at Tufts; and I'm pleased that the LGBT Center remains on the frontier of this important work.

preferred gender pronouns and I realized that is something we can be working more on at health services.

There is no doubt that there is a commitment on campus to facilitate change and also no doubt that there is more work to be done; But I think we are on the right track.

## Student Spotlight: Kristofer Siy, '17

### Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm a sophomore at Tufts hailing from Hong Kong. I'm majoring in mathematics, but I've also been involved with some math education research and do some music on the side - I compose and play the ocarina (but no, I didn't get into it through the Legend of Zelda).



### Can you talk about the Mental Health Climate @ Tufts event that you hosted?

As someone who encountered some mental health issues prior to coming to Tufts, I was very conscious of the mental health climate when I came to campus. I'm willing to talk about my experiences and find that often manages to open up a more destigmatized space; however, I found that many of my peers - especially within the queer community - had encountered negative experiences regarding the mental health climate, stigma, and resources on campus.

From my position as an individual, I might not be able to make direct changes to the system, but I found that I could at least create a platform where these concerns could be discussed. Hence, I organized a discussion-based event in early March addressing a few topics in particular: stigmas surrounding mental health issues on campus, and what can be done to reduce them; what spaces are needed for better mental health support; and what can be done to address the particular mental health needs for queer students at Tufts.

Overall, the event was rather successful. There was a lot of great discussion and practical suggestions for improving existing mental health resources on campus, some of which are already in the process of being implemented. More importantly, simply opening a public dialogue about the mental health climate at Tufts helps to destigmatize

mental health issues on campus, and I hope that this conversation can inspire others to have similar conversations of their own.

**How else have you been involved with the Center in the last two years? What are you looking to see in the future?**

I've been a part of Team Q for the last two years. In addition to hosting this most recent event, I've been fortunate enough to be part of several panels and training sessions that Team Q has hosted. As Team Q changes direction and becomes more focused towards being peer mentors and leaders, especially for incoming freshmen, I'm very excited to see what impact it creates on the queer community at Tufts. In particular, I'm hoping that it can serve to strengthen the community, especially within incoming classes, and that the people involved would then be able to make a larger impact on the Tufts community through activism, education, and outreach.

I'm also a Rainbow House resident this year. I'm both glad to be living with this group of people and grateful that we've managed to form a great community within the house over the course of the year. We've also managed to host some events which have been well-received by the larger queer community, such as the queer women's mixers. As I stay on for another year, I'm hoping that we can keep these trends going as we continue to foster the sense of community within the queer student population at Tufts.

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## **Staff Spotlight: Deirdre Judge**



Hi everyone! I'm Deirdre, the new staff assistant at the Latino Center and LGBT Center. I'm very excited to be working here and to be surrounded by such a vibrant community. I love to dance, either in the studio or in my kitchen while cooking up some good eats. From watching "Top Chef" to trying the strangest sounding flavor combination on the menu (peanut butter burgers anyone?), I love anything that has to do with food. Although I'm an avid watcher of television, I really enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, camping, and kayaking and am excited to spend my summer weekends escaping the city hustle to commune with nature. I'm really interested in street art, especially

collaborative murals and graffiti, and spoken word.

I graduated from Northeastern University in 2014 with a BA in Human Services and International Affairs, and a minor in Social Entrepreneurship. I am passionate about social justice, public health, human rights, and international conflict. Before coming to Tufts, I worked in Greece with first-year study abroad students,

facilitating discussions about oppression and privilege as a teaching assistant. Travel is a passion of mine, and I constantly have a sense of wanderlust. As an undergrad, I attended a month-long faculty-led trip to Benin focusing on HIV prevention and I studied abroad in Chile for six months focusing on Human Rights in Latin America. In the past, I worked as a sexual health educator and HIV/STI tester at an LGBTQ youth center, where I also led a healthy relationships discussion group, and as a college access counselor for first-generation college students. I have also facilitated gender-based violence workshops with Boston high school students as a part of a bystander intervention course. For my senior thesis at Northeastern, I wrote about the barriers to accessing care for trans\* survivors of intimate partner violence.

I'm looking forward to getting to know students and talking about what's going on in the world with them. I love to hear different perspectives about what students are learning about in class, hearing on the news, or experiencing in their own lives. I'm excited to be in an environment where people are working towards social justice and creating inclusive environments for their peers and the greater community around Tufts. I want students to know that they can always come to my office to chat, vent, ask for advice, or give me a new TV show recommendation. I hope that you'll stop by to introduce yourself to me and my orchid, Lola (if I can keep her alive...)!

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## Alumni Spotlight: Katherine Nittman, A12

### Can you tell us about yourself?

I am originally from Ft. Collins, Colorado, the home of Colorado State University. I grew up in this college town near the beautiful Rocky Mountains and was heavily involved in academics and music throughout high school. I am a graduate of the International Baccalaureate program and I was a major band geek, playing trumpet and euphonium in school and piano outside of school. I was also involved in an awesome organization called Peace



Jam which was founded in Denver and emphasizes nonviolent social action through the model of former Nobel Peace Prize laureates. This introduction to nonviolence and social justice inspired me to enter the Peace and Justice Studies program at Tufts. High school is also where I first explored social justice in terms of the LGBTQIA community. I was President of our Gay/Straight Alliance for three years.

### What are you involved in right now?

Currently I am pursuing my master's in Higher Education at the University of Denver. I am enjoying being close to my family and living in the city. I love the field of higher education because it intersects with my appreciation for diversity, integration, and structural change, especially at the university level. I was inspired to go into this field by

my time at Tufts and my experiences with student programming through the LGBT Center specifically. In addition to school, I am a volunteer translator with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network and a volunteer with the syringe access program of the Harm Reduction Action Center.

**Either in your career or in your free time, are you involved in anything related to gender, sexuality, or related identities?**

I am so excited to be in Denver where I can begin to be more formally involved in the LGBTQIA community once again! For the first couple years out of college my involvement really dropped off, as I moved across the country and lost the ties to organizations I was formerly involved with. However, I am in a place now where I can cultivate new relationships. While I am not explicitly involved in anything LGBTQIA professionally, I am an Inclusive Excellence fellow at my school, which gives me the opportunity to do a lot of diverse programming. I am planning on doing something around faith and sexuality, having had the ability to experience how powerful this type of programming could be at Tufts. In my free time I try to attend events in Denver, such as the Trans Day of Remembrance ceremony held at Metro State University, and I am volunteering for Creating Change this year (soooo excited!)\*\* . In general, I am always on the lookout as to how I can incorporate my knowledge and background in LGBTQIA work into the other things I am doing and places I am volunteering or working, because I love the intersectionality of this community and try to infuse all of my work with recognition and respect for the queer community.

**Can you talk about your time at Tufts?**

At Tufts I majored in Sociology and Peace and Justice Studies and spent tons of time at the LGBT Center! In addition to working at the Center I also worked as a Music Event Staff member which was a blast (I was able to see lots of performances for free, and hang out in Granoff which is a gorgeous building). In addition to the great educational opportunities Tufts provided, I appreciate that being there gave me the chance to explore Boston. I lived in the city one year (while attending Tufts), right in between the New England Conservatory and the Museum of Fine Arts, which gave me the chance to situate Tufts within the city of Boston more generally. As a total newcomer to the East Coast, this opportunity was priceless.

**Were you involved in the LGBTQ community while at Tufts?**

Truly, my time at Tufts is colored by all of my experiences at (or related to) the Center and I couldn't be more grateful for that. From the moment I arrived on-campus as a scared, homesick freshman, the LGBT Center lent me support in so many ways. It was a comfortable place to hang out and just generally feel accepted, and it became a source of employment and even a connection to my academic studies. I was a member of Team Q since my freshman year, and became the student coordinator for my sophomore, junior, and senior years. I was also a member of Queer Peers, and I lived in the Rainbow House my sophomore year, where many good memories were created. I am so happy I was able to be involved with the LGBTQ community at Tufts

through formal and informal means. My most powerful memories are from the annual Team Q retreat to P-town and hearing the stories of the year's incoming freshmen. The students who showed up every year with a desire to be a part of the LGBT Center and to tell their stories in a highly visible way left me in awe, inspired, and humbled, every time. I am absolutely amazed by the bravery, resilience, beauty, and wisdom of our community and I am forever grateful to have been a witness to it.

### **Anything else you would like our readers to know? Or any advice?**

I hardly feel qualified to give advice, but I will say this: it is OK to pause and appreciate where you are. After being in such an energetic, highly charged atmosphere as Tufts and being so busy and productive for several years, my first years after college were difficult and confusing. I felt unsure as to my next steps, which felt very weird since I had spent the last 16 years or so of my life focused on 'getting through' school. Some people know exactly what they want to do after school, which is great. But if you don't know, that's OK too. The time to pause and take stock of all that is around you is a blessing in itself.

\*\*This spotlight was written prior to Creating Change, which took place on February 4-8, 2015

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## **Anthony Meyers, A95**



Passing it on...

As an out gay man of African and Latin descent, my world at Tufts and beyond felt especially challenging. While Tufts had been an incredible institution whose motto was diversity, I felt that my intersecting identities still left the institution with the challenge of understanding how to best serve my

needs. My journey was bumpy; I turned to structures that always seemed to be insufficient to addressing my full self that was racial, gendered, and sexual.

My economic background would have been considered to be middle class but with VERY modest income. I struggled each year to make tuition from a unique combination of small government grants, big loans, family gifts and major anxiety.

Despite my struggles, I managed to complete my undergraduate degree fulfillment at Tufts. In addition, I was privy to an incredible collection of personal, academic, artistic and political experiences that helped shape my identity and how I learned to move through the world.

One of those experiences included an evening of poetry by the late black gay brother in arms Essex Hemphill. Essex was brought to Tufts and introduced to me by my artistic

comrade and the co-founder (along with Heather A. Simms) of Tufts Black Theater Company co-founder Robert O'Hara. After meeting Robert, I performed in Tufts productions of *The Colored Museum*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Day of Absence*; I also began integrating performance across drama and dance.

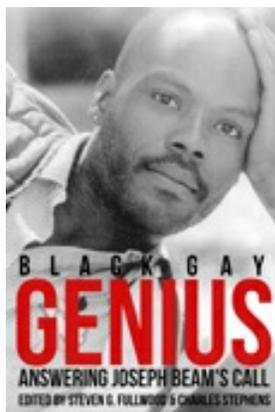
Robert introduced me to a book called "In the Life," an anthology of works written by, for and about Black gay men and our experiences. The work exposed me to a vibrant, joyous and painful world of people like me. It was also one of the first times that I heard about the impact of HIV/AIDS on black lives.

The day that I met Essex, my world changed. At the time, I was still timid about identity disclosure, and more importantly, timid about taking pride in who I was and owning my life's experiences that shaped who I'd become. Essex had a small frame, but his words were as expansive as the universe and validated a black gay existence that was complex and exquisite. Essex delivered verse after verse about love and self-hate, evolution and implosion, reaction and revolution, otherness and the ongoing ignorance of diversity.

Essex, Robert and others along my path inspired me to find my political as well as intellectual and artistic voices. A year after leaving Tufts, I joined the planning committee of Black Nations/Queers Nations?, a groundbreaking conference in 1995 that brought together Black voices across sexual identities and explored health, spirituality, nation and political action.

In 2014, I joined 50 other writers, poets and artists in contributing to an anthology called "Black Gay Genius: Answering Joseph Beam's Call." Celebrating the 25th anniversary of "In the Life," the contributors not only responded to the original work and how it shaped our being and becoming, we were given a platform to speak in tongues that are native to many and unfortunately, still foreign to many.

My essay, "For My Own Protection," chronicles the impact of Essex Hemphill's visit to Tufts on my creative and personal journeys.



I encourage all who want to understand an approach to American gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer experience that is multi-gendered, multi-cultured and multi-political to read these works. You can purchase [Black Gay Genius here](#).

You can find "In the Life" on Amazon and other retail booksellers.

And most importantly, pass the knowledge on...

