WELCOME

In this issue, we discuss the LGBTQIA+ community and provide steps that NGP faculty and students could take to improve their allyship. Readers are referred to our resources list at the end of the newsletter for more information!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

LGBTQIA+ individuals in STEM are more likely to be their authentic selves when they perceive their environment as welcoming and supportive (Figure 1). So let’s make it that way!

Figure 1: Taken from Yoder & Mattheis, 2016. In a study on Queer individuals in STEM, participants’ openness to colleagues varied based upon their perceptions of the safety, welcoming climate, and employers’ support for LGBTQ needs. Find the study here!

REPRESENTATION BUILDS CONFIDENCE

“It wasn’t until I was 22 in my first internship post-grad did I meet another openly queer scientist. This interaction changed my life in many ways, but importantly it helped me feel comfortable being who I am and discussing my sexuality in a way that normalizes it. Only in retrospect can I see how foundational it was to have a mentor in science. Even just by being their self they showed me the importance of having people in positions of power hold minority status.”

- NGP student

THE HISTORY OF PRIDE

LGBTQIA+ Pride, a movement known by the general public for its fill of colorful parades and street parties, is much more than a celebration. Following civil unrest at New York City’s Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street, a group of LGBTQIA+ activists convened to establish “Christopher Street Liberation Day,” which has since evolved into the modern Pride parades experienced worldwide every June.
The name “Pride” was originally adopted to promote both equity and visibility of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as to defiantly reject the societal shame directed at this community before the early 1970s. Yearly Pride celebrations remain to be a source of joy and freedom where members of the LGBTQIA+ community celebrate their identity, remember the history of the movement, and create a welcoming space for people new to the community.

MYTHBUSTERS

- We know that gender isn't a binary... Neither is sex! This opinion article explains it well.
- Gender nonconforming individuals can classify themselves as gay or lesbian. (see "Helpful Definitions")
- Anyone in a relationship with a gender nonconforming person can still be heterosexual
- People who are bisexual or pansexual are not automatically attracted to everyone.

HIS EXPERIENCE: "I know what it feels like to be the only queer person in an entire and very large department. It can get lonely. To gauge whether the institution and location are a good fit for you as an LGBTQ+ person, request to meet or speak with someone at an office (or person) that handles diversity, equity, and inclusion. It may be best to hold conversations about sexual orientation with people not connected to the search committee or hiring process. Doing so risks triggering implicit and explicit bias in interviewers. This highlights a difficult truth – there are still people scattered throughout academia who are not supportive of LGBTQ+ people. Negative beliefs about LGBTQ+ people, whether conscious or unconscious, live on in academia because they still exist in our culture. Heteronormativity is embedded into all our institutions, even the most liberal of places. The best strategy is to connect with as many people as you can."

- Dr. Leo Taylor, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion leader & evolutionary biologist @OSU

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

- **Homosexual**: When a person experiences sexual attraction to the same or similar gender. This term is offensive to some, who prefer the terms "gay" or "lesbian."

- **Heterosexual**: When a person experiences sexual attraction to a gender different from their own. Also known as "straight."

- **Bisexual**: When a person experiences sexual attraction to more than one gender.

- **Pansexual**: When a person experiences sexual attraction to a person regardless of their gender.

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WHAT CAN WE DO?

Allyship is a composite of daily decisions. Therefore, identifying situations in which visible allyship can be enhanced is critical to an
WHAT CAN WE DO?

inclusive and healthy lab culture. Here are few functional ways to improve your allyship with the LGBTQIA+ community every day, both within and outside of the lab. Frequently applying these practices will foster a more inclusive environment.

1. Improve the language you use in presentations, writing, and everyday conversation.
   i. Use “person” or “people” rather than “men” or “women.”
   ii. Use neutral honorifics such as “folks” rather than “ladies & gentleman.”
   iii. Use “partners” or “significant others” rather than “husbands” or “wives”
2. Politely correct colleagues/peers when they make hetero- or cis-normative assumptions.
3. Use fill-in-the-blank options under “Sexual Orientation” or “Gender Identity” when writing surveys. Speak out when you see improper/outdated terms for gender on registration forms!
4. Introduce yourself with your pronouns and use pronouns in your email signature and Zoom name.
5. Include the most updated progress flag in your office space decor (see Graphic 1).
6. Ensure that students know the ombudspeople for their program.
   i. NGP’s are Dr. Ruth Barrientos and Dr. Liz Kirby.

RECOMMENDED READS & RESOURCES

The following resources were used when constructing this newsletter and are recommended to further the reader’s education on LGBTQIA+ individuals in STEM.


