



(Carden, 2011)

Care of the Whole ~~Person~~ Campus

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Abstract

In this proposal, I will discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) safety and how to improve it on college campuses. Through exploratory research, I learned that LGBTQ students are more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual students. To prevent this, I would like to implement a few suggestions on improving the climate of college campuses.

My suggestions are to strengthen school policies that deal with bullying and discrimination. I also, highly suggest having gay-straight alliances, at the college-level, wherever they are allowed. The cost of this project would cost no more than \$5,000.00. And the time allotted would be two years at the most.

In order to carry out this plan, college campuses need to raise awareness. They need to let the students know that LGBTQ suicide is a problem and that it does exist. I think once students, faculty, administrators, and staff are educated when it comes to this problem, they will be more willing participate in fixing the problem. Therefore, this issue must be addressed this issue must be addressed with time, patience, and effort.

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“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance in the completion of this assignment. All work contained herein is my own. All referenced work is cited correctly.” –

Introduction

The purpose of this proposal is to come up with solutions that will increase safety for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) youths, at the college level. Depending on the environment, LGBTQ youths may be more susceptible to violence and/or verbal abuse. This treatment can have drastic results such as feelings of isolation, depression, self harm, or even suicidal ideations. My goal in writing this proposal is to bring about more awareness on the issue, and propose possible solutions that will result in the safety of LGBTQ students. The audiences I would like to target are: my peers and professors; the LGBTQ communities, so that they can continue to raise awareness; school systems and administrators, so that they can work towards making the schools safer; and local legislators, so they can move towards making policies that directly deal with this issue. The solutions I am proposing are making gay-straight alliances (GSA) mandatory and introducing policies in the school system that deal with anti-bullying and anti-discrimination. These are only small steps and they are loosely in place already, but these solutions need to be firmly enforced and the policies need to be effectively drafted.

I am looking to keep the budget under \$5,000.00. And I am looking to keep the timeline within two years. I want you, as readers, to do everything that you possibly can about that issue, even if it is something as small as teaching your kids the proper way to treat their peers, at a young age, or befriending that one kid that is always alone. What may seem like a small step may mean the world to an LGBTQ youth who feels alone, unwelcome, and unsafe.

Background

Throughout the process of writing my exploratory essay, I learned many things about LGBTQ youths and their levels of safety. Specifically, I realized that LGBTQ youths are more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. According to one of my exploratory findings, located in “Social Developmental Factors affecting Lesbian and Gay Youth: A Review of Cross-National Research Findings,” gay and lesbian youths are “three times more likely to reported attempted suicide” (Rivers and Carragher, 2003, p. 377). My exploratory research supported this statement, as well as the fact that LGBTQ youths are more susceptible to bullying and discrimination. This is what leads to their vulnerability and feelings of unsafety. This is a very important issue because it can ultimately result in the death of a young person.

At the very least, LGBTQ youths need better environments to grow up in. According to a climate survey done by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), which spans from

1999 to 2009, “Nearly two-thirds (61.1%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (39.9%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression” (glsen.org). However, this statistic is based on students in high school and middle school, attitudes do not change that much once they reach college. However, Loyola University is considered safe, by one of the administrators of Spectrum (the gay-straight alliance on campus) and a member of Spectrum. I learned this through interviews that I conducted with the two of them. While, it is a fairly safe place, I would still like to propose a few ideas, a few things that can very well improve Loyola’s climate.

Research Methods and Findings

In this section I will discuss the type of research I did and what I found; for this proposal, as well as the exploratory essay I wrote prior to this.

Exploratory Research Methods

In my exploratory essay, I conducted most of my research using *Seeker*, through the Loyola Notre Dame Library website. I found four articles and they are located in scholarly journals. They are called: “Queer presences and absences: Citizenship, community, diversity – or death,” “The Closet: Psychological Issues of Being In and Coming Out,” “Social-Developmental Factors Affecting Lesbian and Gay Youth: A Review of Cross-National Research Findings,” and “Homophobia and Acceptance of Stereotypes About Gays and Lesbians.” These sources helped me support my hypothesis, which stated that LGBTQ adolescents are more likely to attempt suicide than their straight counterparts because they may feel vulnerable and more susceptible to violence and/or disapproval.

I chose these articles for a few different reasons. “Homophobia and Acceptance of Stereotypes About Gays and Lesbians” connected homophobia and stereotypes. “Social-Developmental Factors Affecting Lesbian and Gay Youth: A Review of Cross-National Research Findings” directly talks about how and why LGBTQ youths feel vulnerable. “The Closet: Psychological Issues of Being In and Coming Out” gets into the mind of those who are not openly LGBTQ. This source was useful because it is difficult to understand how a closeted individual is feeling. “Queer presences and absences: Citizenship, community, diversity – or death” showed different homophobic attitudes displayed by different adults in higher positions and the effect that has on the LGBTQ youths. These articles are all credible because they are located in scholarly journals.

I also used articles from *The Baltimore Sun*. The two articles were called “For gay kids, ‘it will get better’ – but only if we help” and “A Matter of Life and Death.” These sources are different from the others, in that they address actual suicides that occurred due to unsafe environments for LGBTQ youth and they talk about the anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that are

implemented here, in the Maryland school systems. They have a more emotional impact than cold-hard facts do.

For my exploratory paper, I conducted an interview with a Loyola student. I wanted to survey the climate of Loyola's campus, according to someone who is experiencing it.

Exploratory Research Findings

Overall, I found that LGBTQ youths are more susceptible to bullying in school; Loyola University, on the other hand, is considered a safe place, and there is still a lot that can be done by the school systems.

These sources provided me with a large amount of information that I could cite in my essay. The scholarly journals, in particular, were statistically factual and included a lot of background information on my topic. I found a lot of statistical data on bullying targeted at LGBTQ youths. I found out, in an experiment that was conducted that:

“80 per cent of participants reported having been verbally abused, 39 per cent said they had been threatened with physical attack, 17 per cent had objects thrown at them, 13 per cent had been sexually assaulted, and 33 per cent had been threatened with disclosure of their gay identity.” (Rivers and Carragher, 2003, p. 378)

This study was not the only one of its kind that I saw, while undergoing my research. I also found sources that explained how difficult it is to positively change school environments for LGBTQ students. There is still a lot that can be done to improve the school systems, and it takes time and effort.

In my interview, with first-year student Albert Agar (who is openly gay), I learned that verbal abuse of LGBTQ students is much more pertinent than physical abuse. It is very difficult to control because there is not a sure way to stop it, or even control it. In high school, Agar experienced verbal abuse. But because of the open-mindedness on Loyola's campus, he does not experience that as much. Agar says that Loyola's campus is safe because the people here are open-minded.

We should take this open-mindedness and make the campus an even safer, more comfortable place for LGBTQ students.

Empirical Research

I conducted two interviews, with members of Spectrum, for my empirical research. Spectrum is Loyola University's gay-straight alliance club on campus. It contains LGBTQ students and allies, as well as two moderators: Dr. LoPresto and Dr. Vaan. Specifically, I interviewed one moderator and one member of Spectrum.

First, I interviewed Dr. Charles LoPresto. He is psychology professor, who has been at Loyola University Maryland since 1986. He is also, as mentioned before, one of the moderators for Spectrum. Second, I interviewed Maeve Speigler. She is a first-year transfer student, who came to Loyola in September. She transferred from College of Saint Rose, in Albany, New York – a coeducational, private college. Speigler considers herself a lesbian and is a new member of Spectrum. During the two interviews, I asked generally the same questions, which will be addressed below.

I also would like to include information from a survey that was done two years ago, by members of Spectrum, for Sexual Diversity Awareness Week 2010. The video is entitled, *Hey Loyola, What is Sexual Diversity?* and runs about three minutes. The video is found on Loyola Spectrum's *Vimeo* page, which is a website for sharing and watching videos. There are three questions asked to the four interviewees: what does sexual diversity mean to you, do you/have you had any gay teachers, do you have any gay friends, and what does LGBTQA stand for. These questions are asked to four students: one sophomore, two seniors, and one junior.

Empirical Findings

Overall, I found that Loyola, once again, is a safe environment; the consumption of alcohol can contribute to homophobic comments; Loyola wants to be more accepting; LGBTQ vulnerability is a result of ignorance and a fair percentage of Loyola's campus is not knowledgeable when it comes to LGBTQ concerns.

In the two interviews, I acquired very useful data.

In my interview with Dr. LoPresto I learned a few things. First, I asked Dr. LoPresto if he thought Loyola was a safe place for LGBTQ students. He responded with a yes. He talked about Spectrum's prominence on campus and all of the events the organization hosts. He also says, "I think kids get the message that there's room at the table for all of our kids" (C. LoPresto, personal communication, April 23, 2012). Generally, he suggests that Loyola has a very welcoming environment, at least from the faculty's point of view.

When answering another question, he stated that "whenever minorities start to gain acceptance and a level of normativity, there's always going to be reactionary folks, who find that very threatening, and a lot of times when you're going along thinking things are really fine and okay, all of a sudden the whole prejudice thing rears its ugly head" (C. LoPresto, personal communication, April 23, 2012). Because of this Loyola, or anywhere, may not be completely safe. The fact that it is a religious institution also impacts how LGBTQ students are treated, which can sometimes be negatively.

Dr. LoPresto feels that the consumption of alcohol can also contribute to the occasional comments that are aimed at LGBTQ students. He says, "if there's any kind of prejudice, a lot of

times, it'll come out at those particular times or moments" (C. LoPresto, personal communication, April 23, 2012).

Next, Dr. LoPresto talks about different ways that can improve the safety of LGBTQ students on campus. I will address those suggestions later, in the Recommendations section.

In my interview with Maeve Speigler, I also gained insight on the issue. Being a transfer student, Speigler was able to compare the environments of Loyola University Maryland and College of Saint Rose. She did not consider herself a lesbian during the time she spent at the College of Saint Rose, so she did not have any personal experiences to compare. However, she said that "the students were more accepting at the College of Saint Rose, but the whole campus wanted to be more accepting, or wants to be more accepting, here at Loyola" (M. Speigler, personal communication, April 24, 2012). However, she does say that some individuals are "freaked out" by the idea of people having different sexualities.

Speigler feels that the reason for LGBTQ vulnerability (or feeling as if one is not safe) is ignorance. She feels that close-mindedness contributes to ignorance.

Next, Speigler talks about the different ways she thinks will improve LGBTQ safety here at Loyola. I will address those later, in the Recommendations section, along with Dr. Lopresto's suggestions.

I would also like to use data from 2010, which is the *Hey Loyola, What is Sexual Diversity?* video. The findings in this video support Speigler's comments about the ignorance of students when it comes to this issue. When the interviewers ask the first student what sexual diversity means to her, first she asks a friend what it means and then when her friend does not know the answer she fumbles for words for a couple seconds. She finally answers saying, "People's, like, what people do; and like, I don't know it's different" (*Hey Loyola, What is Sexual Diversity?*). Throughout the video the answers continue to sound like this. However, at the end of the video, another student answers the same question. He says, "I guess being open to, and understanding mainly, different viewpoints in regards to sexuality" (*Hey Loyola, What is Sexual Diversity?*). The student accompanying him says, "Yeah, I think it's, umm, accepting all sexual orientations and, I guess, not stereotyping one over the other" (*Hey Loyola, What is Sexual Diversity?*). This shows that the answer did get progressively better. If this video were to represent Loyola's overall knowledge of LGBTQ concerns, there would be at least 25% of students who did not know much about sexual diversity.

Recommendations

My initial recommendations were to make mandatory gay-straight alliances, at the college level, and firmly enforce anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies.

Making gay-straight alliances mandatory would be beneficial. However, this can be a lot more difficult than it seems. Only in federally-funded schools, such as public high schools, do the students have to right to legally form clubs without objections. This is all stated under the Equal Access Act, which was passed in 1984. Because colleges are not publicly funded, they can legally disband any clubs that are created on campus, i.e. gay-straight alliances.

Gay-straight alliances should be available because they create a safe space for LGBTQ students, where there may not be one. It creates a sense of belonging and provides a place for students to share stories and make friends. It is important that LGBTQ students feel like they have someone that they can talk to, so that they do not experience psychological distress, especially if they are being verbally abused or feel unsafe on their college campus.

Having a club that is full of students makes talking about things less formal and less tense. If a student has to go to an administrator about an issue he or she may be afraid or completely avoid doing so. But if he or she has a strong support group, he or she may feel the courage to speak up and talk about what is happening. Having gay-straight alliances is beneficial, especially for this reason.

Because of the legal restrictions, I encourage students reach out to each other. If colleges are not allowed to have a GSA on campus, that should not stop them. If there are students who are in leadership positions, have important connections, or are just very passionate about LGBTQ safety, I propose that those students keep fighting. The school has no power when it comes to breaking up groups of friends; they cannot moderate who is friends with who or how often they meet up with each other. My suggestions are: meet often, recruit other interested students, spread the word to other students in a way that will not hurt your group, search for a faculty or administration member who would be willing to moderate your group, and raise awareness with the help of your possible moderator once there is faculty support.

Firmly enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-bullying is something I suggest looking into. It may be satisfactory that these policies exist, but those who are not somehow affected by the bullying or discrimination, do not realize how ineffective they are.

Because the policies are not enforced well enough, that results in more bullying and an unsafe environment. There need to be greater consequences. If there are greater consequences, students will be less likely to repeat their actions.

Loyola does not differentiate between anti-bullying and anti-discrimination. At the university, they are referred to as the Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures. The policy begins with the purpose. It states:

Loyola University Maryland does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other legally protected classification in the

administration of any of its educational programs and activities or with respect to admission or employment. (*University Policies*, 2012)

The flaw in this policy is that it is very general. I think the policy should be more specific. There are too many different things being considered in this document. I think it would be more effective if there were separate sections of this policy addressing each issue.

In addition to enforcing the policies, there should be a workshop. In this workshop, faculty and administration should learn how to spot bullying and discrimination and how to deal with the situation. Of course, this can only go so far, but it can take care of issues in the classroom and outdoor areas of the campus. This workshop should also be required for the campus security guards; they would be more responsible for outdoors and would know what to do if they were called with a problem. This workshop would last only three to four days. Not only will this teach them how to fix the problem, it will also shed light on the fact that there is a problem and that something needs to be done about it.

Fixing this issue does not require a lot of money; it requires raising awareness and gaining support. That can be done by having educational forums, rallies, and events on campus, often. What it does require is time, effort, and patience.

Interviewees' Recommendations

In this section I would like to address the suggestions that were given to me by my interviewees. They suggested they campuses should have an LGBTQ office on campus and that campuses continue to raise awareness and continue to educate.

When speaking with Dr. LoPresto, he suggested there be more done at the institutional level. He says “there needs to be an office for sexual minorities on campus with a real person heading that office. That sends a message, institutionally, that we support sexual minority kids here” (C. LoPresto, personal communication, April 23, 2012). This is an important resource to have on campus, because of Loyola’s “mission and identity as a Jesuit school, the importance of access to equal education, the care of the whole person (*cura personalis*), and the need to provide necessary resources for all students, including at-risk populations” (Taylor and Mahoney, 2012, p. 45). This quote is from an article, in *Conversations*, that addresses the implementation of a LGBTQ Resource Center at Georgetown University – which is also a Jesuit university.

When speaking with Maeve Speigler, she suggested that campuses continue to raise awareness. It would be beneficial to have events, maybe sponsored by Spectrum. It is important to encourage the attendance of students, students that are not a part of Spectrum. Speigler was talking about an experience she had, during Sexual Diversity Awareness Week. A friend would not come to any of the events, “she said ‘No, I don’t want to go. I’m not gay.’ You don’t really have to be gay” (M. Speigler, personal communication, April 24, 2012). Speigler says, “I think it needs to be talked about more and I think, just getting it out there that, being gay isn’t really a choice and you fall for who you fall for” (M. Speigler, personal communication, April 24, 2012).

One of the solutions to improving LGBTQ safety could be as simple as just talking about it. That could be done during classes, during Sexual Diversity Week – as Speigler suggested.

Budget and Timeline

Budget

The suggested budget is \$5,000.00 maximum. It should not cost this much to implement these suggestions. This cost would really only cover the cost of salary for people working as moderators for gay-straight alliance clubs, if they do not choose to volunteer their time, and salary for those who are drafting the policies.

The bulk of it would be spent on the workshop, as well as advertising the issue. This can be done by selling things outside of Boulder Café or outside on the quad, even encouraging people to attend meetings. Flyers would need to be made – however, that would not be much of an expense.

A lot of the money can come from doing fundraiser. Selling things like T-shirts, pins, or even selling tickets for small events that can be put together.

Item:	Cost:
Workshop-	
Space	\$0.00
Facilitators/Speakers	\$900.00 (\$100 an hour)
Schedule	\$40.00 (100 schedules, \$0.40 per schedule)
Flyers	\$30.00 (150 flyers, \$0.20 per sheet)
Takeaways: literature, pencil, etc.	\$750.00 (100 people, \$7.50 per person)
Food and Drinks	\$750.00
Events-	
Space	\$0.00
Band or DJ (local)	\$500.00
Games	\$250.00
Flyers	\$30.00 (100 schedules, \$0.20 per sheet)
Freebies: sunglasses, pins, bracelets, stickers, etc.	\$275.00
T-Shirts	\$500.00
Grand Total-	\$4,029.00

Table 1

Timeline

The amount of time spent on this project is debatable.

The workshop would only take about five months to organize and about a week to actually take place.

The policy making depends on how much controversy arises from the issue. However, given that there are already policies now, it should not be too difficult to go through with. About a 10 months should be allotted for the re-drafting of these policies and the implementation of greater consequences. Extra time allotted for detailed planning and possible conflict.

Making the gay-straight alliances can take weeks or it can take years. It took Saint John’s 25 years, just to get some form of a gay-straight alliance up and running. It really depends on the school’s position.

Total amount of time (excluding GSA): about 17 months.

With the implementation of gay straight alliances, about a year should be allotted. Nothing needs to be mandatory; this just gives enough time to create student-run alliances where they are allowed.

It all depends on the amount of support there is. If students, faculty, administrators, and staff are willing to take part in fixing the issue, then it should not take very long. However, if there is opposition, which is likely, there must be a considerable amount of time spent on getting those who are opposed to, at the very least, compromise.

This being said the 13 weeks that I suggested begins once the compromise is in place. There is no definite amount of time that I can give for how long that will take.

Here is a version of the timeline in graph format:

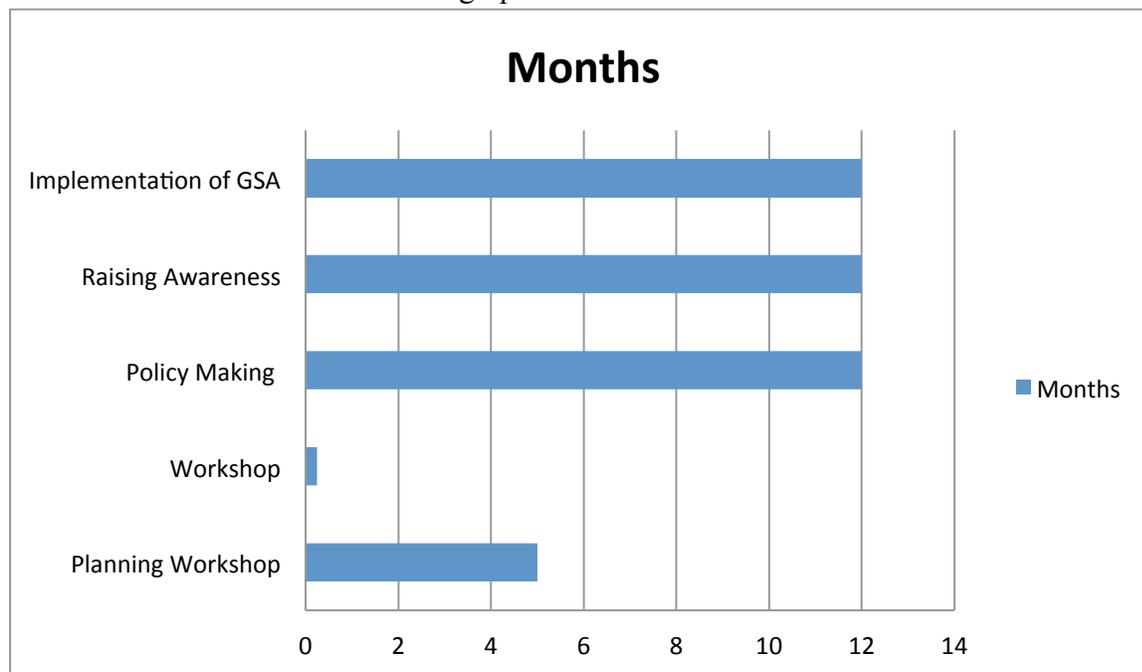


Table 2

This chart shows:

- 1 year for the implementation of GSA, raising awareness, and policy making.
- 5 months to plan the workshop
- One week (3 days) to have the workshop

Staffing

I believe that I am well qualified to suggest solutions to improve this issue. I have had a lot of experience/interaction with LGBTQ students. I went to an arts magnet high school – everyone there was, for the most part, accepting of sexual minorities. It was a very small school; there were only about one hundred students in each grade level. Because of this, the school was fairly tight-knit.

Coming to Loyola was a different experience for me, primarily because it is so much bigger. I do believe it is still close and community-based, it just expands over a much larger horizon. I have been waiting for the feelings of closeness to translate from high school to college level. But it is different. From my experiences, over the past few years, I have a good sense of what works and what does not.

I am also a psychology major and I plan on specializing in children and adolescents. This topic would be very relevant to the field I am going into. Also, last semester I did take an introductory psychology course.

I am not a member of Spectrum, but I do go to their events and take part in things that they put on. There were events like Denim Day, during the first semester, and Sexual Diversity Awareness Week, which took place a couple weeks ago.

Lastly, I have a large amount of research experience on this topic. Starting with my exploratory essay, I have been researching this topic since the beginning of March – about two months.

I also know a lot about the subject – a general knowledge.

Conclusion

The fact that LGBTQ students often feel unsafe is a serious problem. I have proposed a few ideas as to how this can be fixed. They are making GSA clubs on college mandatory campuses, if possible, and enforcing anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies. During my research, I came across a few more ideas. The first would be to have an office on campus for LGBTQ students and to have events that raise awareness and educate people when it comes to sexual diversity.

What initially needs to be done is, educating the people on campus about sexual minorities. This needs to be done before anything else because many people do not understand what it is like or what certain things mean. There is generally a certain level of ignorance in regards to LGBTQ issues and sexual minorities, in general. I think that issue needs to be addressed, first and foremost.

The amount of money that would be allotted to fix this issue is around \$5,000.00, at the most. As I stated above, however, money is not what is needed to fix this issue. The amount of time spent at the least would be about a year. This time is spent actually implementing to suggestions I listed. Prior to that, however, people wishing to implement these ideas will need to convince their superiors to let them. Because the issue is a bit controversial, I cannot say exactly how much time will be needed for that.

If you are looking for support or assistance, there are a few projects already being initiated. For example, there are the *It Gets Better* project and the *Trevor Project*. These would be great references. It is also beneficial to look into what other colleges have implemented on their campuses. If you would like to contact me with any questions or comments, I can be reached at kcsabbakhan@loyola.edu. In order to improve the safety of our sexual minority students, we need to have time, effort, and patience. The issue will not go away on its own.

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Appendix

Interviews

Interview with Maeve Speigler:

Keyana Sabbakhan: Is Loyola's campus safe for LGBTQ students?

Maeve Speigler: I would say that, on the whole, it is. In that, nothing physical is going to happen. There's not going to be any, you know, you hear all those stories about physical bullying, in high school. Not going to happen on this campus. The only thing I think I'd say is that, sometimes people look at you weird. But, people are going to look at you weird, no matter whether you're on campus or not. So, yea I would say nothing physical. It's definitely safe; I feel safe walking around – being openly gay.

Keyana Sabbakhan: How long have you been here?

Maeve Speigler: I started this year. So, like eight months? Eight months. Something like that. So, I did the beginning of the 2011/2012 year.

Keyana Sabbakhan: So, you're a first year student?

Maeve Speigler: Yes, I'm a transfer student.

Keyana Sabbakhan: Where'd you transfer from?

Maeve Speigler: I transferred from College of Saint Rose, in Albany, New York – which is another really tiny Catholic college.

Keyana Sabbakhan: How would you compare the two?

Maeve Speigler: I would say, well I wasn't really lesbian, at the time. I'm really just in my first relationship with a girl. So, I don't know how I count, but I had my best friend on that campus was lesbian. She had a fine time of it. She was, she told all of her friends and it was fine. I don't remember if she had any little rainbow flags or anything that would do anything like that. But generally, the people that you're close to are generally more accepting. And honestly, I think, they're more of a liberal college because they're not technically Catholic anymore. So, I feel as though there are fewer devoutly Catholic people on that campus. I would almost say that their campus was...the students were more accepting, but the whole campus. The whole Jesuit thing, they like to be really accepting of other people; so, I would say that the students were more accepting at College of Saint Rose, but the whole campus wanted to be more accepting, or wants to be more accepting, here at Loyola. And it's just some individual students, that I've run into, who are... it just freaks them out.

Keyana Sabbakhan: What do you think the main reasons for LGBTQ unsafety are?

Maeve Speigler: I would say ignorance and not knowing that just because someone is of a different orientation and they're your friend doesn't mean that they're going to hit on you or going to be attracted to you. And just some, close-mindedness also would just because...I know I was, I was straight when I got here. And then I fell in love with a woman; so, I started dating her. And then, when I told some of my friends, they just couldn't understand how I could go from being straight to being lesbian. It was just that I had fallen in love with this one person. And she's amazing; I don't know why you wouldn't fall in love with her. (Laughs). But, just like, that's what I ran into: just not being able to accept something that had just happened. So, it's ignorance.

Keyana Sabbakhan: My suggestions: I think that colleges should be required to have some kind of place where students of different orientations can meet and have someone that is like them, like a safe space. And, that anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies should be firmly enforced, because they exist, but they don't do much. Also, the consequences for offenders should be more serious. Yeah, those are mine. So, what do you think?

Maeve Speigler: I think those are really good. I've never had, like, one person be a bully to me on this campus, so far. Maybe it'll happen, hopefully it won't. So, I wouldn't know how to go about catching the bullies. I think a lot of rules are there and not enforced. I mean anywhere, it's just really hard to govern this many students. It's difficult. But I think the bias reporting is a really good, even if you don't target one specific person. If you let people know that it's not acceptable and that it's happening on campus, then they'll be aware of it and, hopefully, they'll change their actions. Also, I was thinking about ideas for Spectrum next year. One of the things I was thinking about, to solve the ignorance issue, would be having like in the Coming Out Week, we're going to do an entire week of coming out appreciation. Appreciation for how hard it is to come out. And I honestly think we should just have a group, like a night, where (it'd be hard to do) all of my friends who didn't understand necessarily that being gay isn't a choice and you just fall for who you fall for. I really want them to come and just be able to explain that to them and be like "Look, here are all these people who feel the same way as I do" and just to educate them. I have one friend in particular, who just didn't get it, and I feel like I, and this semester I feel like I've been more distant because I didn't want to freak her out and I really didn't want to be hanging out with someone who wasn't a supporter. It's just weird. It's very weird. She wouldn't come to any of the sexual diversity awareness week. She came to one of them because it was for extra credit. But then all the rest of the stuff, she said "No, I don't want to go. I'm not gay." You

don't really have to be gay. Andrea Gibson is amazing. She was so cool. So I really just want to sit her down and be like "Alright, here's the deal," but I feel like I have already kind of tried and it didn't work. So, I think that to solve that kind of ignorance issue, which is hard to get somebody who doesn't want to learn about it to sit down and learn about it, I think that's an important piece. And you could do something in class with a teacher. Just having them bring it up and be like "Let's have a discussion about it. I know it's weird, but this is sexual diversity week and let's talk about it." I think it needs to be talked about more and I think, just getting it out there that, being gay isn't really a choice and you fall for who you fall for. My mom was like, when I told her, I was like, "Ah, I'm dating a girl" and she was like, "Oh, that's great!" Then, she called me the next day and she said, "So, Maevey, how's the first day of being lesbian?" "It's going well, Momma." She said, "Maevey, I'm laughing at you – because I said "I'm not really a lesbian; I just feel in love with this girl" – she said "I don't love every guy that walks down the street; I really just only love your father." And so, that was kind of, you know, being heterosexual, you don't love every man or every woman. You just tend to love who you love. So, yea, that's what I'm hoping to do this semester.

Keyana Sabbakhan: Do you know about the Day of Silence? Do you know if Loyola takes part in that?

Maeve Speigler: You know? I don't. Since I didn't get a reminder for Spectrum and I think it was on a..

Keyana Sabbakhan: It was Friday.

Maeve Speigler: Friday? Right. And I know that I was so excited that it was Friday; I don't think I would've been able to keep quiet. I thought we did, but then I didn't get any reminder of it and

Ashley (president of Spectrum) didn't send out anything. So, I don't know. I would suppose that we did.

Keyana Sabbakhan: Do you think that something like that, Loyola doing things like that, to raise awareness?

Maeve Speigler: I think so. I definitely think so. I remember doing it high school and people asked me why I was being quiet. I had a pin and I think our teachers said something about it. The Day of Silence commemorating that some people can't speak for themselves. I think just wearing a shirt that said "National Day of Silence" and then on the back saying something like "we're silent for those who can't speak for themselves." It takes a lot of courage to saying something. I mean, it's a big, I've always been an ally and I didn't realize how big of a deal it was to be like "Yea, I'm with a woman. I know that's not societally preferred, but it's the truth." And it is, like even when I walk around campus and I hold her hand, people are looking at us and yea we are weird, we are all of the sudden not normal. So, I think it would definitely be a good idea. I mean, you don't really need to talk in your classes – I usually do – it's not going to take away from anyone's learning experience. Having a forum that night to break the silence.

Interview with Charles LoPresto:

Keyana Sabbakhan: In your opinion, is Loyola a safe environment for LGBTQ students?

Charles LoPresto: I think that for the most part, yes. I've been around since 1986 and I've seen just a lot of growth, and a lot to kind of educate students. I think there's an atmosphere here. Spectrum is pretty prominent, Sexual Diversity Awareness Week. We have Denim Day. So, I think kids here get the message that, you know, that there's room at the table for all of our kids.

You know and that any kind of intolerance, will not be met with kindly. That just didn't make sense, but you know what I'm saying. Yea, so, I think they get it.

Keyana Sabbakhan: Is it safer now than it was in the past?

Charles LoPresto: I do think it's gotten safer, but let me just add something in there. Something there would be that whenever minorities begin to gain acceptance and a level of normativity, there's always going to be reactionary kinds of folks who find that very threatening. And a lot of times when you're going along thinking things are really fine and ok, all of a sudden the whole prejudice thing rears its ugly head. So you know that I don't think it's an absolutely safe place and I think we still have to be careful. It's a religious institution and some people, under the mantra of religion, believe that they have a right to kind of discriminate. So, I think you have to be careful still.

Keyana Sabbakhan: What do you think are the main reasons for LGBTQ vulnerability?

Charles LoPresto: I think they still, some kids from what I understand will still get comments. Will still, especially on a Friday night, when you throw alcohol into the mix and stuff. So, if there's any kind of prejudice, a lot of times it'll come out at those particular times or moments. And there have been isolated incidents on campus, where there have been some problems.

Keyana Sabbakhan: My suggestions: I think that colleges should be required to have some kind of place where students of different orientations can meet and have someone that is like them, like a safe space. And, that anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies should be firmly enforced, because they exist, but they don't do much. Also, the consequences for offenders should be more serious. Do you have any suggestions?

Charles LoPresto: Well, I do, in addition to what you have -- which I think are excellent. You know, I think we've got some of that in terms of Spectrum being on campus. And I know that Student Life is very, very serious about educating and communicating and confronting issues of bullying. They really don't tolerate it, but I like the way they approach it. It's more from an educative point of view. I mean, point in fact, when some of the instances have occurred, Student Life will call me and say, "Charlie, will you work with this guy? Just educate him a bit." I love that. You know what I mean? Because it's like I'm going to show him the light. (Laughs). But they're usually pretty good about it. I just think maybe we need to do more of those things and continue having sanctions against that behavior. On another note, I think we need to do more at the institutional level. Like, there needs to be an office for sexual minority students on campus with a real person heading that office. That sends a message, institutionally, that we support sexual minority kids here. So, that's what I would like to see done. Loyola's pretty good, but I think we still have a little bit more we can do.

Keyana Sabbakhan: How much time do you think it would take? And how much money would it cost?

Charles LoPresto: I think we should see something, probably within the next five years. I don't think (it would cost that much), I mean even if we had somebody part-time. The point is that you create the office. So, it's like there is this position. It doesn't have to be a lot of money, doesn't have to be a luxurious office. As long as it's there, because that says we welcome any of those kids and we're here for you.

Hello Dr. Brizee,

I apologize for taking so long to get back to you. I realize I should have emailed you before, to let you know I was interested. However, I have finally gotten around to editing both papers. So, here they are. I'm completely fine with the papers having my name on them, despite the subject matter.

Thanks again! I really appreciate your interest in putting these on the Writing For Change page.

Have a great summer,

Keyana Sabbakhan