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Existing Together: What Does It Mean to be an LGBT Alliance on a Catholic Campus?

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EXISTING TOGETHER: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN LGBT ALLIANCE ON A CATHOLIC CAMPUS?

Christina Everett, Dan Parker, Paul Fitzpatrick
Faculty Advisors: Jack Downey, Julie Regan, and Vince Kling
A Quick Show of hands...

How many people know someone who is LGBTQ?

How many people know a friend that is LGBTQ?

How many people know a family member that is LGBTQ?

How many people know someone on campus that is LGBTQ?

How many people aren’t sure whether or not someone they know is LGBTQ?
Leelah Alcorn
1997–2014
Rates of suicide attempts:
4 times greater for LGB youth
2 times greater for questioning youth

40% of transgender adults have reported making a suicide attempt in their lifetime
92% of those individuals made an attempt before they were 25 years old

1 in 6 high school students nationwide considered suicide in the past year (less than 17%)

LGB Youth with rejecting families: 8.4 times as likely to attempt suicide than other LGB peers.

All students, regardless of sexual orientation, reported less depression, suicidal feelings, drug use, and unexcused absences from school when they were 1) in a positive school climate and 2) not experiencing homophobic teasing
WHAT IS AN ALLIANCE AND WHO IS LA SALLE’S ALLIANCE?
Question

When do you think the first college Gay-Straight Alliance was formed?

When do you think that the first attempts to form an alliance were made at La Salle?
The History of Students for Individual Rights 1971-1973

- 1971- SIR’s Constitution written
- Feb 18, 1972- Br. Daniel Burke’s statement on SIR, limiting existence
- Late Oct 1972- Ad for SIR appears in Philadelphia magazine
- Nov 3, 1972- Thomas McCarthy VP of Student Affairs rescinds SIR’s use of university facilities
- Throughout Nov 1972- Student response: calls to protest by Timothy Dlugos, Student Action Coalition
- Mar 2, 1973- Letter from McCarthy to Burke about establishing new guidelines for SIR, keeping this low profile
- After March 1973 - ???
majors with a 3.00 or greater cumulative index and an interest in medicine, (we are often warned that if we don’t have at least a 3.00 then alternate careers should be considered), 17 are already in medical school, (74 percent). The other 6 students are on hold at various medical schools.

Louis Capecchi
Senior biology class representative
Signed by 36 senior biology majors

“Princess Palace”?

Dear Editor:

In the past several weeks there have been several rather eloquent and revealing letters printed in the paper with regard to the whole question of homosexuality on La Salle’s campus. We have had the emergence of a new organization calling itself Students for Individual Rights, and the raising of the question of recognition by the administration of this group with the attendant implication that the administration is taking a stand against the moral and religious values of the Catholic Church.

The other point to be made is that it is almost incredible that a minority such as this is able to gain concessions from an administration that is so Christian oriented as to be concerned with the morals of its heterosexual resident population (the majority anyway). It was pulling teeth to gain parliametal concessions from a board of trustees that is so worried about the reaction it might receive with a new liberal look, especially from a conservative number of past contributing graduates.

I cannot help but wonder what the reasoning and ease with which this new group gains recognition, and how the administration can rationalize its recent simple statements of policy with regard to homosexuality. It would appear to the normal “Christian” that the implications of homosexuality run contrary to the aims of a Catholic educational institution. One can only wonder.

It remains only for me to say
The History of the current Alliance
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CATHOLIC STANCE IS ON HOMOSEXUALITY?
“Always Our Children”
From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Distinction:
- Sexual intercourse should only occur in a marriage between a man and a woman and must be open to the conception of life.
- A homosexual orientation is not immoral in itself, but homosexual behavior is...
“Always Our Children”

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- “One’s total personhood is not reducible to sexual orientation or behavior”
- Respect the dignity of ALL people and recognize human rights and responsibilities
- “The human rights of homosexual persons must be defended... all of us must strive to eliminate any forms of injustice, oppression, or violence against them”
“We call on all Christians and citizens of good will to confront their own fears about homosexuality and to curb the humor and discrimination that offend homosexual persons. We understand that having a homosexual orientation brings with it enough anxiety, pain, and issues related to self-acceptance without society bringing additional prejudicial treatment.”

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
The community of a Catholic University should include:

- A spirit of freedom and charity
- Mutual respect
- Sincere dialogue
- Protection of the rights of individuals
- Unity
- Inclusion and responsibility for all members

(1.21)
A Catholic University serves the Church and Society through:

- Promotion of social justice
- Commitment to the growth of all men and women
- Promotion of the development of minorities and those who are marginalized
- Contributing to the progress of the society in which it works

(1.34)
Statistics on Support of Same-Sex Marriage

From the Pew Research Center

- As of 2016, 55% of Americans said they support same-sex marriage

- While less than 50% of Baby Boomers were supportive, about 74% of Millennials said they were supportive

- 58% of Catholics said they support same-sex marriage, as compared to 40% in 2001
HOW DO LASALLIAN VALUES COME INTO PLAY?
The Values of Association

- Stresses “the relevance of human nature and the value of education” in the massively interconnected global context we now live in.
- Specifically speaks out against discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.
- Educating the whole person, and recognizing human dignity in every face.
- Unity in Diversity: The need and call for everyone to be at the table for the Kingdom of God.
“As a Lasallian university, named for St. John Baptist de La Salle, patron saint of teachers, La Salle promotes excellence in teaching and scholarship, demonstrates respect for each person, nurtures mentoring relationships, and encourages authentic community... All members of our community are called to maintain a heightened sensitivity to those marginalized within society as they practice civic engagement, provide leadership with a global perspective, and contribute to the common good.”
Other Lasallian Values which the Alliance lives out

*Faith*

*Service*

*Community*

Seeing a Problem, Proposing a solution (pg 42)
Educating the whole person (Pg. 58-60)
What does the Pope say?

Good:
“If a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?”

“In my pastoral work, there is no place for homophobia.

Not So Good:
There is a “world war to destroy marriage and the family.”

“Gender theory is ideological colonization.”
Some Questions to Consider

■ What responsibility does La Salle have to support the activities of the Alliance?

■ What can we do as an Alliance to better serve the LGBTQ and wider campus community?

■ Would you be comfortable attending Alliance events--such as a queer dance party? If not, what would make you feel more comfortable participating?

■ Do you have any questions for us?
Saints or Sinners?
the Alliance presents an evening of Film and Conversation about the contributions of LGBT Catholics to the modern Church.

Monday, April 3, 6:00 pm in College Hall 404


“Saint of 9/11” (90 min.) is the story of Father Mychal Judge, who lost his life ministering to the rescue workers in the twin towers in 2001. This film tells the story of his spiritual journey to saintliness as a committed priest who ultimately came to terms with his sexuality as a gay man and supported the early community of lesbian and gay Catholics known as Dignity.

“Owning Our Faith” is about several LGBT Catholics from New York who launched a project concerning the relationship between the Catholic Church and people of sexual and gender minorities. The goals of this project are to foster dialogue about and encourage greater inclusion and acceptance of LGBT people in the Church.

Pizza will be provided

Join us for our next event!