

Campus to celebrate gender and sexual identities during Sex Education and Exploration Week

By Ben Fuller '21
News Editor

The Office of Gender and Sexuality Programs will be encouraging students to explore and educate themselves about sexuality and gender outside of the “binary and linear” context they may be familiar with.

Sex Education and Exploration week, hosted through the Office of Gender and Sexuality Programs, will feature a lineup of events celebrating the diversity of experience of Lafayette students.

Grayson Thompson, the recently appointed Assistant Director of Intercultural Development and Coordinator of Gender and Sexuality Programs, was the primary organizer for the events. Sex Education and Exploration week is part of the ongoing Women’s History Month, which lasts throughout all of March.

Thompson noted the importance of Sex Education and Exploration week in educating students on a variety of topics that may not have been introduced to them prior to coming to college. He wrote that while some states like California are pushing for more expansive and inclusive sex education in schooling, many other states are taking longer to adopt these measures.

In addition to education in schools, Thompson also noted that many students

come from communities that don’t talk about sexuality at all, or do so only in a very “binary and linear way.”

“I think there is an assumption that all students come to college with sexual experiences and that they have had appropriate sex education,” Thompson wrote. “My intent of these programs is to offer realistic, open and fun conversations that many students may not have had prior to, or even within, their college experience.”

Starting off the week will be an event co-sponsored by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. It is an invitation to students of all religious and spiritual backgrounds to talk about “positive intimacy, relationships, sexuality and health.”

On Tuesday, the student organization Queer People of Color (QPOC) will be co-sponsoring an event exclusively for students who identify as women.

“QPOC was asked to participate in sex week, because usually sex week is very heteronormative, only talking about men and women, especially focusing on men and women, and we wanted to do something to break the norm,” said Alex Diaz '21, co-president of QPOC.

At the event, participants will be building vision boards to help visualize healthy love, sexuality and relationships in a relaxing, all-woman environment.



Photo courtesy of Joint Base Langley-Eustis

The college will be hosting a series of sex-positive events as a part of Sex Education and Exploration Week.

“Sex week can be a lot of lecturing... so we wanted to do something to decompress,” Diaz said. “[We wanted] to have women describe what a healthy relationship means to them, [and] help each other put together what we think healthy relationships are.”

“We are going to discuss what healthy communication in a relationship is, what

do we expect, what should we do in a healthy relationship, just a very healthy conversation among women,” she added.

QPOC will also be hosting a screening of the film *Tangerine*, which follows the story of two transgender women living in Los Angeles. It was the winner of the 2016

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GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Film.

“A lot of people don’t go out of their way to find media...about trans women,” said Diaz. “We don’t really talk about transgender rights here because we don’t have a lot of people who come forward as trans, or people who speak up for trans women.”

On Wednesday, the college will be home to a wide variety of adult toys courtesy of Exotic Dreams, an adult store located in Allentown. Staff members from Exotic Dreams will be doing an adult toy presentation, open to students of all genders.

Thompson said that he built the programming schedule off of both student input and the incorporation of the educational components of the week. He noted that not all students learn in the same way, and he tried to design the events of the week to cater to the multi-faceted, intersectional identities of Lafayette students.

“Some people do well in larger groups or at events with larger attendance while others desire a more intimate setting,” he wrote in an email. “[H]ow we express ourselves in certain spaces with certain communities we are a part of constantly

changes.”

Overall, Thompson emphasized the openness underlying the week, and the disparate experiences of students regarding sex, sexuality and gender.

“These events are meant for all students,” Thompson wrote. “There shouldn’t be an assumption that just because you are [sexually active] or are very [educated] about sexuality and gender expression, then that means that you know everything about these topics. There is always more to learn.”