

## Queer Inclusion in the Lafayette Community: A Letter from Quest

To the Lafayette Community:

The members of Quest, Lafayette's LGBTQ activism club, offer this letter in hopes that we will come together as a College to ensure that future Lafayette queer communities thrive. We bring these goals to light in the midst of a complex social climate in order to provide hope and direction for this year's Equality Rally. Quest's Equality Rally is held biennially and focuses on relevant LGBTQ issues that mass support could help change.

In reaching out to you, we'd like to recognize the fellow students who developed the *List of Diversity and Transformation Concerns of Marginalized Students* as the influential change makers they are and to acknowledge that they have inspired us. We thank them for demonstrating that students can indeed make changes on their campuses at a systematic level. We'd also like to thank Lafayette's faculty and administration for responding promptly to student concerns and for taking the steps that have recently been made towards queer-inclusivity. We are pleased that Lafayette is in the process of integrating gender neutral housing options and gender-neutral restrooms in every renovation and construction project moving forward.

Keeping this in mind, we would like the 2017 Equality Rally to focus on two pressing issues:

- More proactive attentiveness to the well-being of trans-students
- Strengthening of academic offerings in Queer Studies at the College.

Regarding the issue of trans-students' well-being, we want to highlight the inclusion of trans-related medical care (including transition consultation and related courses of action) to be included in the college-offered health insurance plan. When transitions occur at younger ages, the importance of having a supportive and accepting community is paramount. Providing an easier avenue for students who need this kind of care is critical for the mental health of a transgender student. The toll of not living one's authentic self is a burden that no student at Lafayette should have to endure. In the same vein, it is important to enable transgender students to change their name on Banner and seek ways to facilitate communication between trans students and their professors in order to ensure correct use of desired pronouns and names.

In addition, a twentieth-century education must include new methods for understanding the complex spectrum of sexualities and genders while providing opportunities to unlearn socially enforced binaries. Support through an academic lens provides objective information, positively impacts the climate for LGBTQ students, and fortifies the College's affirmation of the multiplicity of human experience. Bolstering the Women's and Gender Studies Program with more faculty will enable a wider, more frequently offered array of courses, particularly in sexuality studies, and would be a monumental step towards advancing both academic excellence and the comfort and wider acceptance of queer students.

We at Quest implore the Lafayette Community to be thoughtful, vigilant, and compassionate in taking active steps towards increasing broader acceptance and visibility of LGBTQ students on campus. We invite you to come listen to the narratives of Lafayette students and faculty on

Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm on the Quad and to embrace this powerful opportunity to create meaningful change in—and with—your community.

Sincerely,

Quest President, Sarah Mudrick, Vice President of Education and Activism, F. Esra Demirhan, Vice President of Social Programming, Julianna Dorozynsky, Program Chair, Megan Mauriello, Secretary, Jamie Taber, and Treasurer, Jennifer Wellnitz