A Welcome Message from Evan Litwin ’05

It’s both a privilege and a pleasure to bring to our community of LGBTQ alums* and advocates, the first edition of our bi-annual student-written newsletter, Pride Alum News (PAN); a publication of the LGBTQA Center at the University of Vermont.

In our inaugural issue, we offer you stories celebrating work we have been engaged in with our campus partners, the impact of dedicated and visible student activism, and highlights from students, staff, faculty, and alums who are both serving and lifting up our community.

The mission behind the newsletter is to bring our diverse and diasporic community together through information and affinity. The topics are meant to celebrate achievements, highlight critical LGBTQ-focused work occurring on campus, explore areas of conflict, difference, or activism, and to broadly communicate with you, our community, about what the LGBTQA Center and the on-campus community we serve feels is important to share with you. Additionally, we hope that this will continue to stimulate dialogue and engagement between alums, UVM students and affiliates, and the LGBTQA Center.

As this is an experiment that will undoubtedly develop over time, we enthusiastically invite you, our readers, to to tell us what you think. Also please share important news, achievements, or stories with us. We will continue to reach out to our student, staff, and faculty community members and partners for stories about their achievements,
opportunities for community and alum engagement, as well as the challenges they face conducting LGBTQA-service.

Through both engagement and financial support from our alum community, the LGBTQA Center is able to maintain its programming, training, and campus impact. The LGBTQA Center and our student staff look forward to bringing you more news and updates in the future. I hope that you will take a moment to e-mail me with your questions, thoughts, and feelings if you feel inspired to do so at evan.litwin@uvm.edu.

Warmly,

Evan Litwin
LGBTQA Center at UVM
Operations & Alumni Initiatives
Class of 2005

* I am often asked why we use the word alum in our communications. We have actively chosen to de-gender the term alumni to both honor those who identify as gender non-conforming or non-binary and to reject a masculinist construct that uses the male plural when describing a group of people of all genders. Additionally, you will notice that all communications from us that are delivered with the help of our partners at the UVM Foundation, leave off honorific prefixes such as Mr. or Mrs. as we choose not to assume how you identify. I welcome any questions or feedback you’d like to share.

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UVM student group Justice for Queer and Trans Students advocates for all-gender bathroom accessibility in Bailey Howe Library.

**Student Activism Spurs Action Around Restroom Access**

Student activism is a proud tradition at the University of Vermont. From the formation of the Gay Student Union in 1974 to the creation of the Translating Identity Conference in
2002, and the addition of "gender identity and expression" to the non-discrimination policy, UVM students have played an invaluable role in LGBTQ education and advocacy on campus. The historical line continues with Justice for Queer and Trans Students (QTS), a newly-organized student group directed at "expanding access, safety, and justice for queer and trans students on campus." Justice for QTS formed out of an HB2 (North Carolina's bathroom law) solidarity rally held in response to what they felt was a national climate characterized by backlash against young queer and transgender people. The founder of Justice for QTS, Lindsey McCarron, directed the bulk of their efforts towards an issue affecting queer and trans students - locally and nationally - restroom access.

Since 2003, all-gender restroom access at UVM has substantially expanded. However, LGBTQA people have expressed the concern that inadequate restroom access in main campus areas, including the Bailey Howe Library, continues to restrict queer and transgender students' intellectual and social engagement. Representatives from Justice for QTS met with campus leaders to discuss library restroom access over a series of months, but felt they had seen little progress. Justice for QTS then launched a grassroots campaign to secure adequate all-gender restroom access in the Bailey Howe Library, and UVM's athletic complex by the end of the Spring semester of 2016. Justice for QTS organized a variety of educational presentations and protests, that eventually led to a week-long occupation of the Office of the Dean of Library & Information Services. A series of discussions between Justice for QTS and members of the UVM administration, including President Sullivan, led to President Sullivan charging a task force to meet through the summer to student the issues Justice for QTS raised and to follow the work underway at Bailey-Howe library.

The taskforce, co-led by Director of the UVM LGBTQA Center Dot Brauer, joined actors from across the University to discuss future directions for inclusive restroom access. In August, GIRT presented a detailed set of recommendations for expanding all-gender restroom access on campus to President Sullivan. By the start of the semester several accessible all-gender restrooms had been created in Bailey-Howe Library and the athletic complex. With the momentum of their recent victories behind them, Justice for QTS members plan to continue advocating for queer and transgender students to make UVM an even safer and more inclusive space for LGBTQA people to study, live, work, and thrive. In the words of Dot Brauer, “What is possible has moved. We have done a lot, but we can do more.”
Continuing the Legacy: Mike Brittenback Becomes One of Few Non-Alums Appointed to FLC

Bill Meezan graduated from the University of Vermont in 1967 with a B.A. in psychology, and began a career dedicated to the promotion of child welfare through social work. Among his many professional accomplishments, Bill served as the Dean of the College of Social Work at Ohio State University, one of the largest social work colleges in the nation, and received an honorary doctorate degree from UVM in 2013. LGBTQA Center student staff member, Natalia Korpanty, is constructing a Wiki page further detailing Bill Meezan’s professional life and relationship with UVM. That page can be viewed here. In the early 2000’s, Bill reconnected with UVM through contact with Dot Brauer, who, at the time, was the single employee of what was then known as LGBTQA Services. From that moment on, Bill Meezan and his husband, Michael Brittenback, were invaluable friends and advocates of the LGBTQA Center.

In 2015, Bill and Mike, loving partners, distinguished professionals, and champions of LGBTQ rights, established the Meezan-Brittenback endowment fund for the LGBTQA Center at UVM. The endowment aims to support and expand student programming and provide emergency assistance for LGBTQ students in financial need. The full impact of Bill Meezan and Michael Brittenback's generosity is yet to be realized, but it is clear that this pair has guaranteed the survival of the LGBTQA Center and its mission. Dot Brauer detailed their appreciation for Bill and Mike’s support, stating, “I have been blessed to have Bill and Mike in my corner.”

In 2013, Bill was appointed to the UVM Alumni Foundation Leadership Council, where he consistently advocated on behalf of a diverse student body and brought the University of Vermont closer to fulfilling the principles detailed in Our Common Ground. When Bill Meezan passed away in May 2016, the community experienced an indescribable loss. In September, the UVM Foundation, in partnership with the LGBTQA Center, planted a memorial tree in honor of Bill Meezan’s life. The accompanying plaque reads:
The tree is located in front of the new Alumni Silver Pavilion, creating an open and visible place for reflection for all who felt Bill’s influence. Additionally, the student body will continue to have an advocate on the Alumni Foundation Leadership Council. Bill had been awarded a seat on the Foundation Board just before his death. Another alum, Michael Upton MD ’94 was slated to take his place on the Leadership Council. After Bill died, the Foundation Board met and decided to ask Dr. Upton to take Bill’s seat on the Board. Mike Brittenback, was asked to become one of the few individuals without a degree from UVM to sit on the Foundation’s Leadership Council. In response to the announcement, Dot Brauer stated, “we are fortunate that Mike is willing and able to carry on Bill’s legacy of LGBTQ activism at the Foundation.” In this role, Mike hopes to support organizations like the LGBTQA Center and improve alumni relations across age groups. In his own words, “I have received a warm welcome at the University of Vermont, and I want to work to keep that atmosphere.”

Readers interested in watching Bill Meezan’s speech at UVM’s LGBTQA Awards & Rainbow Graduation Ceremony in 2012 should visit http://go.uvm.edu/rainbowgrad.
UVM Athletics made headlines this summer when the women’s basketball team canceled its game at the University of North Carolina in protest of the HB2 law passed earlier this year, which requires transgender people to use the restroom that corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.

The decision to cancel the game embodies UVM Athletics’ dedication to developing a culture of inclusivity within their department and on campus. HB2 directly violates values and policies of UVM and its Athletic Department. “Equity, inclusivity, and human rights are at the foundation of our values,” says Cathy Rahill, Associate Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Development and LGBTQA Center campus partner. In a public statement to the media, Jeff Schulman, Director of Athletics, stated that, "We strive very hard to create an inclusive climate for our students and staff in which they all can feel safe, respected, and valued. It would be hard to fulfill these obligations while competing in a state with this law, which is contrary to our values as an athletic department and university.” He went on to stress that this decision was made in collaboration with coaches and team members, further demonstrating the strong culture of inclusive excellence that UVM Athletics has committed to nurturing over the years.

These values prompted the department’s efforts to promote understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities. All student-athletes are taught how to be inclusive leaders on the field, in the locker room, and on campus. Student athlete organizations at UVM, like Generation Out Athletic Team, develop affinity spaces for LGBTQ+ athletes and their allies.

UVM Athletics has also partnered with national LGBTQ+ athletics organizations, like You Can Play and Sports Safe, to promote LGBTQ+ inclusivity. As student staff members at the LGBTQA Center, UVM alums Gretchen Powers ‘13 and Kaleigh Wood ‘13 created UVM’s You Can Play video, which can be viewed here. It received significant local and national praise, earning them an on-camera interview with WCAX news on the "The :30" program.

When the partnership with Sports Safe begins in the Spring of 2017, the athletics community will receive training about “how to create a culture of inclusivity and ... an open dialogue around differences and sameness,” says Rahill. This program will build upon the inclusive foundations that the partnership with You Can Play created in UVM Athletics.

“The most important thing that we can do to support a team... is to ensure that everyone feels respected, loved, [and] included,” says Rahill. This sentiment provoked the HB2 decision, and motivates UVM Athletics to cultivate an inclusive, accepting athletic community.
Growing Inclusivity in UVM Police Services

Each year, the University of Vermont presents the Diversity Award, which celebrates the promotion of diversity on campus. This year the recipient was Officer Melanie Waldbrise ‘13, who joined UVM Police Services after graduating with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from UVM.

Officer Waldbrise, an out transgender woman, won the award for her work training UVM Police on the needs and treatment of the transgender community. She educates fellow officers on how to create a respectful, inclusive environment that is sensitive to the identities of all who are involved with Police Services. Part of these training sessions include discussions with officers regarding how to approach interactions with LGBTQ people.

Officer Waldbrise also leads training sessions and discussion panels within the community, specifically at the Pride Center of Vermont’s Trans Town Hall series and UVM’s Translating Identity Conference, about the necessity of improving relations and expanding communication between law enforcement and the transgender community. Her work also focuses on improving outcomes for LGBTQ victims of crime, who may choose not to report crime out of fear for personal safety or a variety of other factors.

Officer Waldbrise’s activism is representative of the inclusive spirit of UVM Police Services. Chief Lianne Tuomey, who joined UVM Police Services in 2000 and was sworn in as Chief in 2009, has spent the better part of her tenure at UVM fostering an LGBTQ-sensitive environment in Police Services. She teaches bias-free policing at the Vermont Police Academy, and promotes a culture of positivity and acceptance among her officers.

Sergeant Mary Seller joined UVM Police in 2008, and was the first liaison to the LGBTQA Center at UVM. While working at the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI), Sergeant Seller reached out to Becky Swem of the LGBTQA Center to design training for
CUSI staff that equipped them to better serve transgender and gender non-conforming victims of sex crimes.

The LGBTQA Center has had a close relationship with UVM Police Services for years, says Director of the LGBTQA Center Dot Brauer. Officers often attend LGBTQA events, and LGBTQA staff attend events at the UVM Police Station. Staff members from the LGBTQA Center, as well as the Women's Center and the Mosaic Center for Students of Color (formerly known as the ALANA Student Center), are also asked to join in hiring processes for new officers. Additionally, all new officers are required to visit and engage with all of the diversity offices on campus as part of their introductory training.

The department enthusiastically partnered with the LGBTQA Center in 2014 to form the Biased Speech Education Outreach initiative in response to a series of incidents on campus when, each academic year, Evangelical preachers visited the Davis Center green during the days leading up to Vermont Pride. The LGBTQA Center brought together campus partners, educators, and allies from dozens of campus offices and organizations, including UVM Fraternity and Sorority Life, UVM Hillel, the Center for Student Conduct, and the Dean of Students Office to offer support and create a response plan for incidents like these in the future. UVM Police Services used the opportunity to engage students in learning about Constitutional rights and UVM’s policies surrounding biased speech, as well as to develop positive relationships between LGBTQ students and police, particularly in those, often-heated, moments.

This relationship would not exist without the passion of officers like Chief Tuomey, Sergeant Seller, Officer Sue Roberts, Deputy Chief Tim Bilodeau, and Officer Waldbrise. The inclusivity that they cultivate within their community of first responders has stimulated positive communication between the two organizations, and is a window into the future of inclusive, LGBTQ-sensitive policing.
LGBTQ+ Health Education in the Larner College of Medicine

LGBTQ+ health education is a new frontier for the global medical field, and the UVM Larner College of Medicine’s own Dr. Michael Upton ‘94 is at the forefront of this movement.

Since joining the team there, Dr. Upton has been continuously engaged in promoting LGBTQ+ health. He is an advisor to the College of Medicine's Gender and Sexuality Alliance, sits on the Wellness Committee, works in the Dean’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. He also treats UVM students as a staff Psychiatrist at UVM’s Counseling and Psychiatry Services.

Medical environments must be accepting and inclusive, and Dr. Upton is accomplishing this by preparing medical practitioners to better serve LGBTQ+ patients. He has used his own identity as a gay man to speak with classes about the importance of LGBTQ+ health education. Additionally he has partnered with Becky Swem and other LGBTQA Center staff to expand training and education in this area.

In 2014, Dr. Upton was awarded the Service to Medicine and Community award from the Alumni Association for his work on LGBTQ+ health education. In addition to his work in medicine, Dr. Upton co-founded the UVM Alumni Association LGBTQA Affinity group in 2015, and is a strong supporter of the LGBTQA Center on campus.

After finding that students are eager to learn more about LGBTQ-related health issues, Dr. Upton submitted a proposal to the Frymoyer Project, a program which invests in projects that promote exceptional medical education, to “capture this energy and ... ensure that
students and teachers demonstrate cultural competence in treating LGBT patients.” His proposal was chosen, and is in the early stages of a two-year project to facilitate LGBTQ+ health education.

Dr. Upton has taken on this work because he believes that it is important for “UVM to be helping to create a physician workforce that’s going to provide excellent care to everyone, including LGBTQ people.” His work is shaping the future of medicine at UVM and beyond, and is sculpting a medical system that is more conscious of the needs of LGBTQ+ people.

Charlotte Gliserman, second from left, at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute Congressional Internship Program.

**LGBTQA Center Student Staff Completes Prestigious LGBTQ Congressional Internship**

This past summer, UVM student and LGBTQA Center student staff member Charlotte Gliserman was accepted into the prestigious Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute Congressional Internship Program. The program pairs eight college students from across the country with an LGBT or LGBT-friendly member of congress or senator for an eight-week internship with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of LGBT individuals in politics and government.

Charlotte worked in the Office of Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) where she researched LGBT policy initiatives, attended press conferences and congressional committee meetings, and participated in weekly leadership development trainings through the Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute. Charlotte is looking forward to attending the International LGBT Leaders Conference this coming December, and meeting new champions of LGBT rights from across the world.
(Im)possible Baby, an exhibit that presents a scientific approach to the conception of a child by two biological females.

**LGBTQA Center Student Visits Japan: Inspired by Genetics Exhibit**

Andrew Lambert ‘19, a student staff member at the LGBTQA Center majoring in Japanese and Molecular Genetics, attended an intensive Japanese language course in Tokyo, Japan this past summer. While there, he visited the Mori Contemporary Art Museum.

One exhibit in particular caught his attention, titled (Im)possible Baby by Ai Hasegawa, which featured a scientific approach to the conception of a genetically related child between two biologically female parents. The artist included photographs that showed the couple with two potential daughters whose appearances' were developed using simulation technology based off the couple’s genetic information. These photos included scenes such as eating breakfast together or celebrating birthdays, each with a description of the family’s traits under each picture. At the end of the exhibit, there was a discussion area where thought-provoking questions pertaining to the potential family were posted on the wall.

Andrew thoroughly enjoyed the exhibit as it helped him consider what research projects he wants to be a part of in the future. Andrew said, "The exhibit is provocative and stimulates discussion within the scientific community. It gives hope to a future where same-sex couples could have genetically related children together"
and also helps to break down the social prejudices surrounding same-sex couples in Japan."

Recently, Andrew had the opportunity to sit down with UVM alum and the first president of the Gay Student Union (GSU), Dr. John Krowka ’74, while he was visiting the LGBTQA Center during a trip to campus to speak to STEM students. Dr. Krowka is a highly-accomplished microbiologist in Washington, D.C. and was last May’s Rainbow Graduation keynote speaker. Visits from alums have provided unique opportunities for LGBTQA students to engage in impactful conversations with people in fields they are interested in pursuing professionally. If you are planning to return to the Burlington area and might be interested in stopping by or meeting students, please contact us as soon as your availability is known. We would be thrilled to host you here at Allen House and to invite interested students to join.

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**History Corner**

Dakota Steele ’17, an LGBTQA Center student staff member, has been assisting the Center with the huge project of uncovering UVM’s history of queer activism, expression, and community by combing the archives of the Bailey Howe library. We’ve invited Dakota to select an article that felt particularly relevant, interesting, or moving for them to highlight in this issue’s “History Corner.” We continuously add to our online Queer Archive and encourage you to look around at [http://go.uvm.edu/queerarchive](http://go.uvm.edu/queerarchive).

This letter, written in February of 1990 to the Vermont Cynic by UVM student Winston D. Brathwaite II, expresses Winston’s frustration with the discriminatory climate on campus. He describes scenarios during which he, as a gay man, felt angry and upset about the treatment of his community. “Being gay,” he writes, “is standing around your friends as they insult homosexuals...while you remain silent and struggling, afraid to correct their blatant ignorance.” He demands that heterosexual people challenge their own biases and question prejudiced beliefs that they see in their personal lives and within American society. Winston’s letter is a powerful, defiant protest against discrimination, and he ends it on a bold, courageous note: “[Being gay] is the courage to write a letter of this kind to my school without signing it
Dakota feels that UVM has come a long way since 1990, and now functions as a safe haven for many LGBTQ+ people. In light of recent national events, Winston’s bravery and determination is even more meaningful and serves as a reminder to embrace and use one’s voice. When faced with challenges, you must have the courage to stand up for yourself and your peers to realize change.

Evan Litwin ’05, LGBTQA staff member, writes that one of the most compelling and rewarding parts of his work in engaging both alums and students has been bridging past with present. He shares that it has been incredibly rewarding to see students frame their experience today through the lens of past activism, while also tangibly demonstrating to queer students that they do have a history and a community to draw upon and reference. He hopes that alums are equally as interested in engaging in the history of queer people at UVM, and that they reach out to share stories, documents, and photos, to continue documenting the narrative. Volunteers throughout the years have also contributed to a growing wiki which can be viewed at http://go.uvm.edu/queeractivism.

Call for LGBTQA Alums to Volunteer to Welcome Allen House Guests on December 8th
Sanford Friedman ’73 and his husband Jerry Hipps, both of Palm Springs, CA. will be joined by fellow LGBTQ+ Alum Affinity Group co-founder Michael Upton MED ’94 at this year’s annual LGBTQ+ Home for the Holidays, a non-denominational community celebration, here at Allen House. They will be greeting guests and helping us create a welcoming and home-like environment for the UVM community before winter break, which can be a challenging time for many LGBTQ+ people.

Their enthusiasm is contagious! We hope you will consider volunteering alongside them as we welcome nearly 200 people for food, music, crafts, games, and conversation from 3:00-7:00pm on Thursday, December 8th. If you are local or would like to return to campus and be involved in this event, please contact either Evan Litwin.

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Meet the people behind PAN!
Evan Litwin '05 is the Operations & Alumni Initiatives Assistant at the LGBTQA Center.

Rachel Foster '20 is in the College of Arts and Sciences, majoring in English and Global Studies with a minor in Spanish. She joined the LGBTQA Center in the Fall of 2016 and works on the Social Media and Marketing team. Rachel is also a staff member on the Vermont Cynic, UVM’s student newspaper.

Charlotte Parker Gliserman '18 is studying Political Science and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies. She has been with the LGBTQA Center since 2014, and currently works as an Alumni Engagement Assistant. In addition to her studies, Charlotte is a varsity member of the Lawrence Debate Union.

Do you have any story ideas for a future issue of Pride Alum News?
Send us an e-mail at evan.litwin@uvm.edu with a short description of your idea and we’ll consider it!