



**LGBTQ+ PRESIDENTIAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Quarterly Newsletter

May 2021 Issue

Spring Semester Update

by Oliver Grundmann (he/him)

The spring semester saw progress on several important LPAC initiatives. First, in a collaboration between LGBTQ+ Affairs, the Office of Business Affairs, and several other offices at UF, the existing gender-inclusive restrooms all across campus are being identified and added to the online campus map. In addition, a policy document is being written to address the need for more gender-inclusive facilities on campus. If you wish to be part of this initiative or survey restrooms in your area of campus, please reach out to [Tiffany Richards](#).

Second, UF now has a campus-wide LGBTQ+ inclusivity and awareness training course, [GET201 LGBTQ+ Inclusive Gators](#). This 3-hour course provides participants a basic understanding of the LGBTQ+ diversity, systems of power and privilege, and how we

can create more inclusive and equitable work environments. The course would not have been possible without the tremendous dedication and persistence of Tiffany Richards and Cecilia Luna! Please take the opportunity to thank them and maybe sign up for the course.

Third, LPAC continues to work towards establishing a monument on campus that signifies the many contributions of past and present LGBTQ+ members of the UF community. The unique historical and ongoing struggles of the LGBTQ+ community deserve to be visualized as a continuing reminder to all at UF that we are and always have been an integral part of the Gator nation. Discussions with the administration on possible locations and funding sources are ongoing.

With spring 2021 ending, many of us look forward to a more relaxed summer term, even as we look back on the many ways COVID impacted each of us over the past year. While doing our best to remain safe and physically distant from one another, we also came together, made our voices heard, and stood up against harm to our sisters and brothers in the Black, Brown, and Asian and Pacific Islander communities. As we prepare to return to campus, we must not settle for a "new normal" that looks like the past or present. Instead, let's carry this energy and unity forward as we continue to fight for greater equity and inclusion for those that still lack it, both here at UF and in the world abroad.

In the News

As many of you have heard, the Florida House of Representatives and Senate have [approved a bill](#) (SB 1028) that would prevent transgender women from joining and competing on women's school and collegiate sports teams. It specifically targets transgender girls/women and would impact their ability to play on a UF collegiate sports team during or after transitioning. The LPAC committee is gravely concerned that this bill, if signed into law, will harm transgender youth by causing trauma, discrimination, and potential violence. We call on UF leadership to denounce this bill and stand united with all members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable. LPAC is committed to an inclusive UF and stands united with the UF transgender community – please [reach out to us](#) if you have concerns regarding this or other LGBTQ+ related policies and legislation.

Welcoming the Lavender LLC

by Alex Hernandez (they/them)

The University of Florida is welcoming the inaugural cohort of students to live in the Lavender Living Learning Community (LLC) for Fall 2021!

This is the university's first explicitly-LGBTQ+ living option for on-campus students to connect to important resources and build a stronger community. Housed in the Springs Complex, this LLC will be paired with a UF Quest course on social justice and host several programs throughout the year.



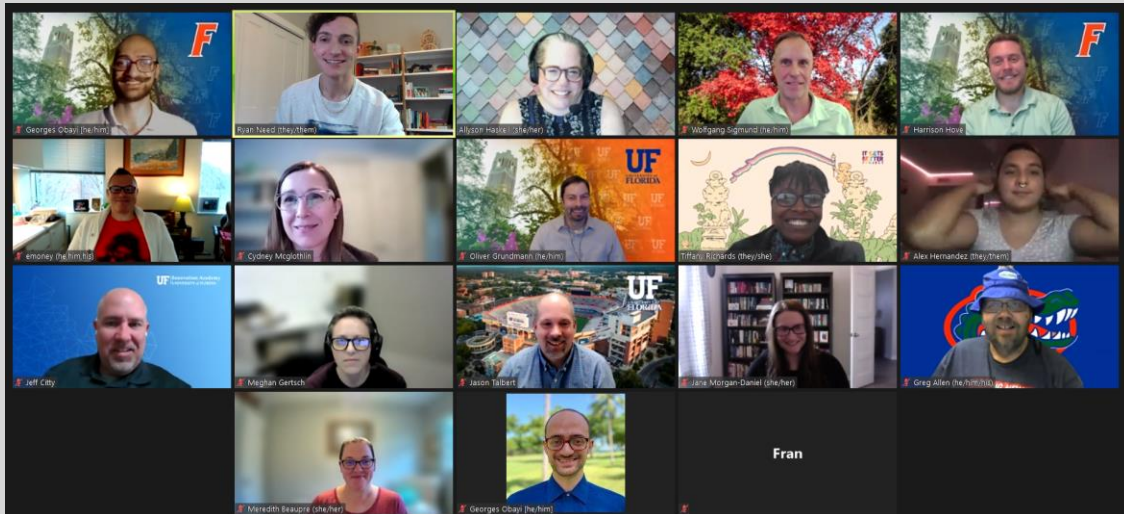
The creation of the LLC has been largely student led, beginning in summer 2020 with the co-sponsorship of a Student Government bill by student senators Ryan Wilder (he/him), Monica Lea (she/her), and Dayanna Peek (she/her) along with Pride Student Union President Alex Hernandez (they/them). Following this initiative, these students submitted a formal LLC proposal to UF Housing and Residence Life in the fall of 2020. After the proposal was approved, the group secured various campus stakeholders for this academic LLC, including the Student Health Care Center and the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women Studies Research.

In addition, our team of students has met biweekly to build the foundation of this community and integrate student input. Roommate matching at Lavender is based on noted preference or random assignment, with no use of sex or gender markers. We have additionally hosted virtual roommate matching events to allow potential residents to safely network and find roommates. Recently, our Lavender stakeholder team was selected for the Outstanding Inclusive Excellence Award by Multicultural & Diversity Affairs in recognition of our work this past year!

As we continue to work on the Lavender LLC, we are excited to build a programming calendar to target our learning and experiential outcomes and continue to uplift the LGBTQ+ community at UF.

You can find out more information on the Lavender LLC [Website](#).

Meet (some of) the LPAC Team



From left to right, top to bottom: Georges Obayi, Ryan Need, Allyson Haskell, Wolfgang Sigmund, Harrison Hove, Eric Money, Cydney McGlothlin, Oliver Grundmann, Tiffany Richards, Alex Hernandez, Jeff City, Meghan Gertsch, Jason Talbert, Jane Morgan-Daniel, Greg Allen, Meredith Beaupre, Georges (again), and Fran Smith.

The LPAC committee and each of its members ([member list](#)) are available to you if you have questions, concerns, or would like to get involved. We are members of the UF community, care about your concerns, and serve on your behalf.

Member Spotlight: Georges Obayi

by Cayley Buckner (she/they)

Who has been an MCDA LGBTQ+ Affairs Ambassador, coordinator for Pride Awareness Month (PAM), Treasurer of oSTEM, President of the Pride Student Union (PSU), a heavily involved LPAC member, and now is in the UF 2021 Hall of Fame while working with the UF Alumni Association to bring back the LGBTQ+ Alumni Affiliate group?



The man who does it all, Georges Obayi.

Georges came to UF in Fall 2016, where he joined a struggling PSU and became an LGBTQ+ Affairs Ambassador. Over the next four years, he helped make PSU the flourishing organization it is today, in the process creating an inclusive space for thousands of queer students at UF.

During his senior year, while president of the PSU, he learned about LPAC and saw how it could be an internal engine to get things moving to make UF a more inclusive campus and community. He helped then chair Kelli Agrawal revitalize LPAC and brought new voices, student voices like mine, to contribute to the active committee we are now.

When asked what he is most proud of, Georges doesn't list any of his many accomplishments. Instead, he is proud of persevering, despite the toxicity he experienced, and acknowledges that many of those who worked with him eventually burnt out. He started from ground zero and by the time he reached his senior year, of those who started with him, there was only one other person still active in LGBTQ+ positions of leadership. He is proud of the growth of PSU, and how it now is an enjoyable and sustainable organization.

The three issues he believes most LGBTQ+ people face* are: (1) positive visibility (e.g., seeing LGBTQ+ people in positions of power and succeeding at similar goals you wish to achieve), (2) having holistic resources which address who and how they are helping, and (3) normalizing gender variants through pronouns.

As he transitions to the next part of his life, a job in DC as an analyst with Deloitte Consulting, Georges hopes that LPAC will receive more recognition from the university and that the committee will pursue its goals with determination and push the boundaries on what we want and can achieve. Just as his time at UF was a journey for Georges in recognizing the power he holds, he wants us each to realize the power and influence that we wield to make a positive impact, within the university, community, and beyond, to create more inclusive and welcoming spaces.

Lastly, Georges would like everyone to know that he remains committed to the LGBTQ+ community at UF and is available for anyone to reach out to him at: [georgesobayi \[at\] outlook.com](mailto:georgesobayi[at]outlook.com) and his instagram is [@georgesobayi](https://www.instagram.com/georgesobayi).

From all of us at LPAC, thank you Georges - for your tireless work on behalf of the UF LGBTQ+ community!

**Georges acknowledges that he cannot speak for everyone as he is a cis queer man who is white passing, which has shaped his experience.*

Upcoming Events & Trainings

Summer 2021

***A Peculiar Satisfaction: Queer Subjects and Settler Colonialism in Library Cataloging* by Dr. Melissa Adler Friday, June 4th from 11-12:30 PM (virtual event)**

Primarily historical, this presentation will focus on Thomas Jefferson's role in establishing the Library of Congress, as well as his personal collection and classification, purchased by the Library of Congress after the War of 1812. Dr. Adler will show how the ordering and naming of queer, gendered, and racialized subjects is rooted in and limited by structuring techniques inherited in part from Jefferson. The aim is to open up honest conversations about what it means to dismantle heteropatriarchy, how to go about it, and what it means for practice. After the presentation there will be a question and answer session, followed by an opportunity for breakout room discussions.

If you need to request accessibility accommodations for the event, please contact Twanna Hodge at twanna.hodge@ufl.edu. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

This event is brought to you by UF Libraries. For questions about the event, please contact Chelsea Dinsmore at chedins@uflib.ufl.edu.

LGBTQ+ Affairs: June Pride Events

A full list of events and times is being finalized.

For up-to-date information, please visit <https://multicultural.ufl.edu/events/>

GET201: LGBTQ+ Inclusive Gators Training

This class focuses on relevant issues to the LGBTQ+ community. We identify common language and learn how different people's experiences play out in the workplace. Through

conversations and activities, we explore systems of power and privilege and learn how we can create more inclusive and equitable work environments. [Next training is July 26th.](#)

UF LGBTQ+ Presidential Advisory Committee (LPAC)

Edited and formatted by [Ryan Need \(they/them\)](#)

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