Revolutionary. That's one of the words Briana McGeough, Ph.D., uses to describe the existence and goals of the newly created Center for LGBTQ+ Research & Advocacy, located within the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

“For so long, LGBTQ folks have been really invisible in the systems that exist. That’s been really slow to change. But primarily the visibility of that change and inclusion has been in coastal, urban areas,” explains McGeough, assistant professor in the KU School of Social Welfare. “To be able to take the perspective as researchers and community members and practitioners in the middle of the country, to better understand what LGBTQ folks’ experiences are, what their advocacy needs are, and to be able to serve those and center those is pretty revolutionary.”

Meg Paceley, Ph.D., associate professor in the KU School of Social Welfare, agrees, then adds, “It’s not just that it’s a center promoting advocacy and research, but it’s where we are – not on a coast, not in a major metropolitan community. That feels really powerful to me.”
The Center for LGBTQ+ Research & Advocacy will once again host the LGBTQ Research Symposium in 2022. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the symposium, which provides researchers an opportunity to present their work, discuss challenges and opportunities, and network with others conducting LGBTQ+ research across disciplines.

This year’s theme is Pleasure is Power. “We chose the theme of Pleasure is Power to look at the strengths and resources of the LGBTQ community. So often, we talk about the oppression and victimization, but there are also some incredible strengths and resources the community has,” says Briana McGeough, Ph.D.

Meg Paceley, Ph.D., adds, “With communities that have been marginalized, they are often talked about from a deficit framework. There is this subversive resistance to talk about pleasure and power, instead of trauma. Those things go together. We can’t not talk about harms that come to the community, but talking about pleasure and joy is also really powerful and exciting.”

Keynote speakers for the event will be D-L Stewart, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Higher Education Department in the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver, and Blu Buchanan, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at University of North Carolina-Asheville. Two invited methods workshops will be provided by Jason C. Garvey, Ph.D., the Friedman-Hipps Green and Gold Professor of Education and program coordinator for the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration program at the University of Vermont, and Chris Barcelos, Ph.D., assistant professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

The virtual event will also feature presentations, panel discussions, methods workshops, awards, and networking events. It is open for students, community members, nonprofit organizations, faculty, staff and university affiliates, and will offer continuing education units.

For questions or information about future events, please visit the Center for LGBTQ+ Research and Advocacy webpage (socwel.ku.edu/clra) or email LGBTQResearch@ku.edu.
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