

CENTER FOR

LGBTQ+

Research &
Advocacy

GAINS MOMENTUM IN ITS FIRST YEAR

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 Pacey, 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."

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KU
SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WELFARE

The University of Kansas

Even though it is just months old, the center is already doing important work:

Conducted Kansas LGBTQ Youth Needs Assessment.

In the spring of 2021, the center launched its first joint research project, a needs assessment of LGBTQ+ youths in Kansas. The center worked in partnership with Wichita LGBT Health and the Kansas chapter of GLSEN. The team will present preliminary findings in spring of 2022.

Hosted LGBTQ Research Symposium.

The center's first official act was to host the 2021 LGBTQ Research Symposium in June, a virtual event that featured a keynote speaker, presentations and a chance for attendees to network and build community. The center is already making plans for the symposium's 10th anniversary in 2022 (see accompanying article for more information).

Hosted a practicum student.

The center will give social welfare students real-world work experience by serving as a practicum site. During their practicum experience, students will support the center by doing research projects and more.

CLRA Affiliates.

The center is unique in its interdisciplinary approach, commitment to community engagement, and focus on networking and collaboration among a wide range of partners. Already, it has been joined by a growing number of affiliates, including students, community organizations and scholars engaged in LGBTQ+ research across disciplines,

Open meetings.

One of the key goals of the center is to help scholars focused on LGBTQ+ research find one another and share ideas. The center will host its first virtual meeting in January, where people can come together in a virtual environment to network, collaborate and build community.

Newsletter.

The center launched a quarterly newsletter that is packed with information, including center updates and events, research highlights and opportunities, and recent publications from the faculty, students and affiliates.



The center has ambitious plans to continue its growth and reach, furthering research and advocacy on issues that impact the LGBTQ+ community as a whole. But at its core, it will remain focused on contributing toward research, scholarly and community engagement in Kansas and the Midwest.

“The sort of challenges and supportive structures folks have in the middle of the country just look different,” McGeough notes. “So being able to better understand that is one of the important things we are trying to do.”

LGBTQ+ RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

CELEBRATES ITS 10TH YEAR

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 Pacey, 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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