

NEW WAYS MINISTRY CAMPUS MINISTRY CONVERSATION
Conversation on Catholic Campus Ministry & LGBTQ Issues
October 14, 2020
Report Back Notes

What is the easiest: Attending an event like this with New Ways to learn about good and meaningful practices.

Meeting with groups which are accredited to support LGBTQ students
Easy to accompany these students

Who would be allies on campus?

One said every group/department is very supportive on campus in this secular school environment. However, partnerships do not exist in general with religious groups and how they support the spiritual/religious needs/desires of the LGBTQ students
Off campus agencies support students in the LGBTQ community
Classrooms/teachers

What is most difficult?

Some students don't feel comfortable/welcome

Finding ways to share their difficulties and break the ice with the LGBTQ students
(awkward silence)

Not showing deference to one part of the Catholic community over another part of the community.

Sharing Catholic identity and teaching of the Church

Group #15:

- Survey
 - Layers & categories are helpful (Catholic Institution, University/School Institution, Staff)
 - Who's supporting CMs and backing up affirmation?
 - Students and staff have fear around advocating for LGBTQ+ community
 - Building Queer Theology into curriculum when there's no diocesan pressure
 - Student culture is important
 - Independent university - happy to poke Bishop in the eye (first coming out day happened this year)
 - Diocesan to university side - opportunity to have Bishop meet with LGBTQ+ family members
- One action you can resolve to do
 - Start small group sharing - SSR (Spirituality, Sexuality, and Reality)

- Need to write a statement because need to name the unknown
 - Writing on Queer Theology and migration, chair invited to be part of faculty
 - **Need - Naming what needs to be named, taking the plunge, beginning small group sharing**
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- need for cohesive leadership — executive leadership/CM. Also tension with Catholic Studies Department that is much less user-friendly to LGBTQ+ students

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Group 9:

One action ~

- With LGBTQ students looking for places to worship that aren't Catholic, have decided to develop relationships with places in the community - one open and affirming place nearby with lots of shared affinities and exploring what's possible together
- For designated week "Community Means Everybody," do something larger and more intentional than crafting the prayer; looking to create a resource book that shares welcoming churches, online articles and resources. Also planning to show video of alums sharing about their experience and holding a discussion
- Connect with LGBTQ student org to brainstorm continued programming even if our Queer student center is closed to gatherings along with other student spaces due to COVID considerations
- Need agreed on by all -- building relationships! Realize there may not be a one size fits all for the work in each of our places

Group 11 (I think)

- There are currently affinity groups for faculty and staff, but not an lgbtq one, but a task force, doing something on the faculty staff side that would allow for role models for lgbtq students to connect with pride group as well
- Campus ministry was previously a watch dog over lgbtq group, how can we have a relationship without being an overseer, how can we have our out faculty and staff serve as personal role models and build relationships with these students
- Helping campus know that we are here for the ENTIRE campus, serving the needs of every student no matter who they are (catholic in tradition and now there is a catholic chapel... how do we send the message to everyone), what is it that we can do during a covid semester??
- new lgbtq+ student organization is currently taking shape, talking about issues, needs, joys of the lgbtq+ community in prayer groups and reflection groups, just starting the conversation, having our out staff and professors be resources and support for our students

- One need going forward: Connecting our out faculty and staff to our LGBTQ+ students on campus as accompaniers and role models if willing

Group 12:

- More conversations among CM team about the topic of supporting LGBTQ students. How might COVID be a time to discern more around how we do this?
- Look at how the team that took the same survey for this webinar answered the questions to instigate conversation.
- One institution began an LGBTQ group in Campus Ministry (one already existed as a student org) called "Spectrum" to allow the space for students to talk about faith from their unique identity.
- Perceptions of LGBTQ students of CM/faith/church is an ongoing challenge (even from their lives long before arriving on our campuses).

Group???:

- Be ready to do ongoing education
- Be well read (Commonweal, America)
- Staff discussions, and in partnership with other allies on campus: how can we say more? Be more explicit about support as Catholic Institutions

Group 10:

Joan – "Campus Pride" - Fordham given 2.5 stars as a gay-friendly school. Joan started an email to Office of Diversity of Inclusion about this but stopped. Proposing that she could finish that email and follow up on the Index that rates schools on their Campus Pride / Gay Friendliness

Jon – Connecting with the multi-faith groups to engage a broader community. There seems to be a big hesitancy to trust CM. Rumor-mills and misconceptions abound at the moment even though the team is being creative in outreach.

Drew - Partnering with offices on campus that have more trust with LGBTQ students to see if any of their existing programming would like to explore intersectionality between sexuality and spirituality.

Sean – Campus church music director. Bring up the issue that CM has not done anything in the past 3 years that LGBTQ are explicitly welcome

Group 10 summary: LGBTQ+ community inherently (and understandably) do not tend to trust Campus Ministry departments. Explicit welcome to LGBTQ groups is the bare minimum. Breaking into a place of trust will require partnering with offices on campus that the Queer community actually trusts, and offer spaces to explore the intersectionality between sexuality and spirituality.

Group 16: We talked about what is a good start-faith sharing groups (having an LGBTQ+ only one for safe sharing) and also one on one meetings with students

Area to work on: connecting beyond campus ministry to pride groups/orgs on campus, working collaboratively

Group 6:

Talked about the variety of support we all experience for LGBT ministry on campus; requesting more support from the pulpit, diocese, and institution.

Other points/offerings:

- Let students take the lead on creating programming
- Common Ground Retreat with the LGBTQ community and the Catholic community
- Spectrum groups/Prism retreat/Queer spirituality groups

From Small Group 20:

Context and Things that have Worked Well:

- One person staff, very conservative bishop, LGBTQ group and allies – a few faculty and staff, one part-time student, partnering with Library for Coming Out Day, Sociology professors, looking to reach out more to students who want to be involved. Today they had a table out and it received some attention to campus. CM started a petition for National Coming Out Day, students impressed that CM did that, as it is a very conservative diocese.
- Different characteristics among three campuses, LGBT groups are formal clubs with student involvement, not formally associated with CM, although CM supports the student groups; CM have never been invited to Coming Out Events, Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil, Pride Month is June, so no students; but we do celebrate LGBTQ Mass and Retreats and these have been successful and have worked well. Advocacy has been lacking- we haven't been invited or challenged to do it.
- Things we do well: LGBTQ Group in Campus Ministry, Campus Ministry bathrooms adapted for single-use, Partnering with Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Changing language and gender identity questions on forms to be more inclusive, Advocacy is lacking. Hoping that LGBTQ ministries will be more spread around the staff, which is 15 full-time campus ministers, 8 graduate interns
- Smaller CM office, LGBTQ group on campus is "Spectrum," CM has been connected, looking to get more involved. We know there are students who are uncomfortable coming to CM.

Needs/Action Steps:

- General sense of needing more advocacy from CM
- Looking for more ways to get involved (just starting LGBTQ ministries)

- Challenge of one-person staff and great ideas of modeling ways to partner with different departments (Campus Ministry, Library, Sociology, students, Faculty...)
- Having consistent support from everyone in the CM department rather than a few campus ministers as responsible for LGBT ministry

Group 18 - to have more opportunities for the LGBTQ community - shared constant conversations with the LGBTQ community

Group 5

Importance of LGBTQ+ identifying students as student leaders in Campus Ministry. Importance of these student leaders to share their stories.

Not debating dogma/doctrine but focus on accompaniment of all students in campus ministry. This gets students in the door to a place they may trust. This can lead to more advocacy for change of dogma/doctrine. Not going to change right now.

Different approaches to institutional support based on location (Philippines - more conservative); clerics (more traditional); staff capacity and support; archdiocese - in some areas it is difficult to have this ministry

Small staffs make outreach to all sometimes difficult - capacity issues as well.

Saint Louis University would be happy to share their LGBTQ+ retreat schedule. (Sue Chawszczewski and Patrick Cousins)

Group ?

Realities on our campuses

- new programming is difficult right now
- not attracting the attention of the local bishop allows for more freedom in affirming ministry with LGBTQ students
- school looking into hiring a queer theologian

Hardest next step- offering same sex ceremonies in the chapel

Easiest next step- compiling resources for education and fellowship

We would love to tap into future opportunities for formation and learning for ministers and for learning, prayer and fellowship spaces for LGBTQ students- if New Ways has resources we would be grateful to hear them!

We would love to continue to support conversations in the church around the needs of LGBTQ Catholics (and LGBTQ people who might be drawn to the Church if they felt welcome)

would love resources on retreats and Lavender masses...also struggles with being LGBTQ and religious/catholic.

Looking to expand resources on LGBTQIA+

Group 32? (I think, I don't remember the number)

- More time to speak with other Campus Ministers (like this), to learn more ideas to bring on our campus
- how other campus ministers have overcome push back or challenges by other Catholics.
- We also wanted to know how to deal with Alumni, board members.
- How to bridge the gap between conservative and students who are more open.

Group 13

- Put a symbol on doors to show that we're safe to talk to
- Conversation around pride flag in chapel - conflict with senior management or donors?
- You're whole until we talk about sacraments and other Church related items
- Do we only highlight one group? What about other groups? (when it comes to symbols in churches)
- Survey would be great to take as a ministry team to see where we are as a team and to move forward
- Here to prepare myself and feel educated on experiences in new role
- We have a lot of questions
- It seems like this is a lay issue and not much leadership is coming from our church
- There is a real desire to want to learn from each other, share experiences, and have a safe space to delve into these conversations