

NAFSA Rainbow SIG SIGnals Newsletter

Rainbow SIGnals is published once a semester by the Rainbow Special Interest Group (SIG) of NAFSA: Association of International Educators. The Rainbow SIG is comprised of diverse NAFSAns whose goals are to combat homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia within NAFSA, to counsel international students and study abroad students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, and to support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered professional in international education.



Questions? Concerns?

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Media Matters: NOH84 It Gets Better Campaign

Submitted by: Brett M. Reichert (Clayton State University)

Decoded, "Don't hate, for it gets better," is the core message of two wildly successful *new media* campaigns, fused for the purposes of this article. Both continue to spread the message of equality and hope.

NOH8 is a creative, beautiful response to an ugly state referendum in California, known as Proposition 8, to amend the state's constitution to ban gay marriage. The measure passed Nov. 8, 2008. NOH8 was one among many responses in a ground-swell of support against the high-jacking of the state constitution to codify prejudice. Celebrity photographer Adam Bouska and partner Jeff Parshely began the project in which subjects appear with duct-taped mouths and NOH8 face tattoos. Essentially a positive image campaign, it effectively harnesses the power of clean, clear headshots, which focus the viewer on the faces of humanity across class and race. Add ...across sexualities. NOH8 is not simply a travelling, gay photo shoot. The subjects include: politicians, soldiers, newlyweds, Police officers, celebrities and folks from all walks of life. Today, NOH8 is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has taken root around the world and shot more than 8000 images. In time, the photos will figure in a large-scale media campaign targeted at shooting down Proposition 8.

On the net: www.noh8campaign.com

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Rainbow SIG Conference Schedule

Submitted By: Jennie Woolf (University of California, Los Angeles)

Monday, May 30th

- 3:30 PM – 5 PM Advisory Board Meeting, Fairmount Pacific Rim Hotel

Tuesday, May 31st

- 9:30 AM – 11 AM MIG Open House, Location TBD

Wednesday, June 1st

- 1:45 PM – 3 PM Rainbow SIG Annual Business Meeting, Pan Pacific Hotel Pacific Rim 2
- 3:45 PM – 5 PM Discussing Sex and Sexuality in Study Abroad (Session), VCC West Room 205-207
- 8 PM – 10 PM Rainbow SIG Annual Reception, J Lounge (Jupiter) / 1216 Bute Street / Vancouver

Friday, June 3rd

- 9 AM – 10:15 AM Crossing Borders and Coming Out: Understanding and Supporting LGBTQ International Students (Session), VCC West Room 110

Another Year... Another AWESOME Rainbow SIG Reception...

Don't miss out mingling with the Rainbow SIG Family...



**Wed, June 1st at 8 PM at
J Lounge (Jupiter)**
Located in Vancouver's West End
1216 Bute Street, off Davie
604.609.6665

Rainbow SIG Advisory Board:

Co-Chairs

- BJ Titus (University of Minnesota)
- Terry Crouch (Middlebury College)

Listserv Manager

- Daniel Soto (Indiana University)

Membership Coordinator

- Susan Carty (Indiana University)

Newsletter Co-Editors

- Jennie Woolf (University of California, LA)
- Brett M. Reichert (Clayton State University)

Don't Hate 4 It Gets Better

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It Gets Better addresses the tragic rise in youth suicide due to the bullying and harassment gay students face at school. The project began in 2010 with a YouTube video posted by Dan Savage, a syndicated columnist, and his partner Terry. They simply wanted to reach out to youth, not only in America but also worldwide, with the simple, personal message: "it does indeed get better." In just 2 months, the video had turned into a worldwide movement, and has already inspired more than 10,000 "user-created videos viewed over 35 million times." Do these names sound familiar? Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Adam Lambert, Colin Farrell, The Gap, Google, Pixar? These individuals, countless others, and the employees of these companies, to name a few, have mounted short video messages of hope and encouragement for gay or questioning youth in crisis. I'd like to append a name here you've likely never heard: Clayton State University, the medium-sized, University System of Georgia campus where I work. Just today, May 5, 2011, the "It Gets Better" campaign appeared in a university e-blast to all employees and our 6800 students ahead of next week's "National Day of Silence". The video was created by the "Gay-Straight Alliance" here on campus. I'm really proud of them. Ok, where was I? At the IGB website, supporters of all stripes and nationalities can also take the IGB Project pledge. IGB, which is also a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, provides a unique, visual, personal resource for parents, families, organizations, friends, and of course anyone pushed to the brink of self-harm by fear of being who they are.

On the net: www.itgetsbetter.org

Clayton State Gay-Straight Alliance, IGB Video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sho0u49iuYI>

Recording Secretary

- Ismael Crotte (Universidad de Guadalajara – Mexico)

Treasurer

- Rick Russo (University of California, Berkley)

Web Content Manager

- Paul Geis (Elon College)

Developments on Same-Sex Marriage

Submitted By: Jennie Woolf
(University of California, Los Angeles)

Want a brief update on what's been happening in the world regarding Same-Sex Marriages since the last NAFSA Conference? Here's a quick update:

June 2010:

- Same-Sex Marriage Law becomes effective in Portugal, making it the 6th European country to allow same-sex marriage.
- Same-Sex Marriage Law takes effect in Iceland.
- Icelandic Prime Minister, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, became the world's first head of government to enter a gay marriage!

July 2010:

- The Relationship Register Bill 2010 takes effect in New South Wales, Australia which recognizes registered relationships much like domestic partnerships or civil unions.
- Argentina allows Same-Sex Marriage.

August 2010:

- U.S. District Court of Northern California declares Prop 8 unconstitutional.
- Mexico mandates that all Mexican states are required to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions.
- A district judge in New Mexico rules that a lesbian couple issued a marriage license in Feb 2004 must seek a divorce under state law.
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit supports a stay on the earlier ruling by U.S. District Court on Prop 8 until appeals have been finalized.
- Mexico allows same-sex couples entering into marriage the right to adopt children.



Image: <http://mwood919.blogspot.com/>



It's a slow process but improvements are continuing to be made in regards to same-sex marriages around the globe. Each passing year seems to be filled with more and more significant milestones for the LGBT community.

Image: <http://caribflyer.com>

January 2011:

- Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 takes effect in Ireland. Additionally, foreign same-sex relationships are recognized as civil partnerships in Ireland.
- Civil Union Law is passed in Illinois and will take effect June 1, 2011.

February 2011:

- Obama administration drops defense of DOMA.
- Hawaii legalizes civil unions which will take effect January 1, 2012.
- Maryland State Senate passes legislation to allow same-sex marriage. A vote in the House is postponed until 2012.

March 2011:

- Liechtenstein legalizes registered partnerships which will take effect September 1, 2011.
- Colorado State Senate passes a bill legalizing Civil Unions. Bill goes to House.

April 2011:

- Isle of Man introduces civil partnerships.

May 2011:

- Delaware passes Civil Union bill providing same-sex couples with all rights of marriage.
- Brazil legalizes Civil Unions for same-sex.

Source: Wikipedia (always reliable!)

Future of Uganda's "Anti-Homosexual Bill" Unclear

Submitted By: Brett M. Reichert (Clayton State University)

Snapshot: Republic of Uganda

Capital City: Kampala

Population: 34,600,000 (of which 500,000 gays are estimated to be a part)

Colonial Status: British protectorate until 1962

Current Gay Prohibition: "Criminal Behavior with prison sentence up to 14 years"

Location: central eastern Africa between Kenya and Congo / slightly smaller than Oregon

Language: English (Official), many local languages, Arabic and Swahili

Government: Republic, based on English Common Law

Avg. Life Expectancy: 53.4, unless you are gay or HIV+



It hasn't been a good century to be gay in Uganda. Tourists beware also!

Current anti-homosexual laws in Uganda are based on remnants of arcane British Colonial laws, which pervade present times and promulgate the idea that being gay is "unnatural and bestial". Add-in a 2009 workshop hosted in the capital city by a trio of extreme-right, evangelical Christian bigots, and you have a socially volatile population at the mercy of hate and ignorance.

Enter David Bahati, Member of Parliament. In October, 2009, he introduced a private bill to further defend the "cherished heterosexual culture of Uganda" by adding the death penalty for anyone found guilty of being gay or having HIV. This measure would apparently make it okay to add state-sanctioned murder to the cherished culture. The bill goes on to require all Ugandans to report gay offenders "within 24 hours" or face imprisonment themselves up to 3 years. Even more horrifying is that Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, openly supported the bill, which was said to have a "99% chance of passing" when it was introduced.

Jump forward to October, 2010.

David Kato sued a Ugandan tabloid for violating his fundamental right to personal privacy. Calling the practice "investigative journalism", the Rolling Stone weekly - no relation to the U.S. music rag of the same name - had published a list of names, photos and even addresses of individuals known to be gay. Alongside the list was the caption, "hang them!" David was simply trying to bring the newspaper to justice for violations of his personal privacy, a plight that drew more unwanted attention to himself. Soon after, David was found beaten to death. The managing editor of the tabloid later said he had "no regrets about publishing the story". David Kato's death, along with many tragic stories like this, was met with international outrage, boycotts and condemnation. The plight of gay Ugandans against this barbaric legislation began to draw international attention.

As of March 2011, the bill was set for discussion in the "Legal & Parliamentary Affairs Committee", which would have paved the way for a full parliamentary vote. Not Good! Such a step would have effectively rammed the bill through with little recourse. Luckily, in a moment of unusual clarity, Ugandan President Museveni indicated March 28th, that he wanted the measure shelved - likely a calculated response to international pressure, including the U.S. State Department that reminded him the law would constitute a major human rights violation. An online video of this announcement can be seen on YouTube by entering, "State Backtracks on Anti-Gay Bill". Bahati, the bill's sponsor, isn't going away so fast though. He assures his supporters the bill will be heard.

In the mean time, being gay, suspected of being gay, or having HIV in Uganda doesn't conjure a state of "cherished culture" at all. Instead, a very real state of fear and terror is ever-present.

STAY CONNECTED LISTSERV

Are you subscribed to the Rainbow SIG email listserv?
If not, simply complete the online form found at this URL:
<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/sig.htm>

To send an email to the listserv:
rainbow@listserv.indiana.edu

facebook

We are on Facebook. Search "NAFSA Rainbow SIG"

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