# University of Michigan School of Social Work Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative 2016-17 Year in Review







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### **History and Introduction**

In September 2002, President Mary Sue Coleman met with representatives of the Queer Visibility Caucus and created a task force to research the campus climate for TBLG Faculty, staff and students. The TBLG Report with recommendations was released by the Office of the Provost.

In 2007, the SSW TBLG Task Force update recommended the creation of a SSW TBLG Matters committee whose goals are:

- To provide students faculty and staff with tools and basic knowledge related to the TBLG communities and other minority groups based on categories of sexual and gender identity.
- To educate about gender identity, gender expression, and the realities of life for transgender folx 1.
- To focus on those who are often invisible inside the TBLGQ+ movement: transgender, gender variant youth, TBLGQ+ workers, and TBLGQ+ people of color.

Since then, the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative with faculty and student leadership, continues to offer programming and advocacy to meet these primary goals. Programming has included Out in Field workshops, Transgender Day of Remembrance events and speakers, small group discussion groups for TBLGQ+ student affinity groups, Teach Ins about TBLGQ+ local, state, and federal legislation, ally trainings and mini conferences for students and faculty.

Programming this year has included collaborations with Spectrum Center for Trans Awareness Week events and speakers, a TBLGQ Social Workers in the field panel, workshops to educate folks on transgender topics including ways to navigate the legal process, and programming during LGBTQ Health and Wellness week. More information on the initiative's 2016-17 programming follows.



A gender neutral form of "folk(s)". When translated into certain languages, "folk(s)" may become gendered and may not include those who fall outside the gender binary.

#### **TBLGQ Social Workers in the Field Panel**

September 20, 2016

On September 20th, the Dean's TBLG Matters initiative collaborated with OUTreach, the Office of Field Instruction's Out in Field, and Spectrum Center to host the TBLG Social Workers in the Field Panel. Speakers included Anthany Beasley, Rachel Naasko, Tynishia Walker, Debra McGee, Ashley Kuroiwa who spoke on their experiences as out individuals in their social work professions. Roughly 15 people attended the panel, and most said that they were interested because they were TBLGQ identified and wanted to know how to navigate their sense of self while being in a professional space. Attendees said they appreciated the transparency of the panelists' answers, and showed a new perspective about being out in field placements and after graduate school. From Anthany and Ashley, individuals realized that they had the option to disclose their identity to clients and dress in gender nonconforming ways, and still maintain a professional identity as a social worker. Everyone was provided free dinner, and it was exciting to see students and other attendees engaging with panelists that they connected to after the panel. This event was a great example of the work that the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative is taking to engage with MSW students as they prepare for their next steps.



#### **Queer Latinidad Confronts Police Violence**

September 26, 2016

This event, which was a part of Latinx Heritage Month, was done in support of the University of Michigan Spectrum Center along with College of Literature of Science and Arts(LSA), and Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs (MESA). The Christopher Soto, a self identified Queer Punk Latinx and Prison Abolitionist to the School of Work. Named as one of the "10 Up and Coming Latinx Poets You Need to Know" by Remezcla and one of "7 Trans & Gender Non-Conforming Artist Doing the Work" by the Offing, Christopher is a Poet and an activist inspired by circumstances in his life. The coordination to this event was done by one of our close partners, Mark Chung Kwa Fan, who works at the Spectrum Center.

The event was light as a result of various events emerging in response to the racial tensions at the university, but the attendees provided some great insight, his personal philosophy, and unique perspectives to the group discussion. Christopher encouraged dialogue and curated the space so the audience could engage in "call in" and challenging one another but keeping in mind that many individuals come at a different place in their learning. Christopher spoke about the prison industrial complex and how it relates to the LGBTQ community and the activism work that needs to occur as well as validating small incremental changes as progress. There was a discussion surrounding restorative justice and how to truly to restorative justice work. Following the dialogue, Christopher had the audience read a few pieces of his selected poems in both English and in Spanish. He explored the backstory of each of the poems read and what he was feeling while he wrote them.

This event was a successful attempt to bring to the SSW a unspoken reality relating to the complexities of LGBTQ folx within the Latinx community. Working with Mark was a pleasure and the DI will continue to collaborate with the Spectrum Center on future events.

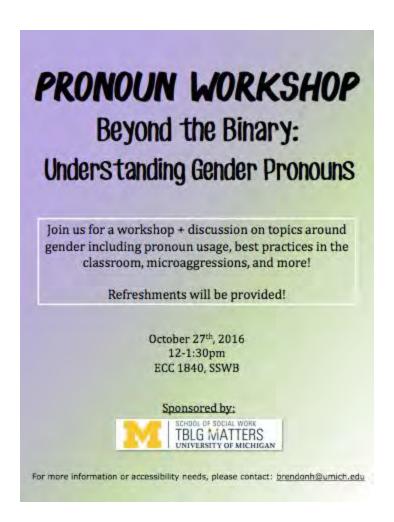


### **Beyond the Binary: Understanding Gender Pronouns**

October 27, 2016

The Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative hosted a workshop at SSW on October 27, 2016 highlighting the meaning and importance of pronoun usage in and out of the classroom. The workshop was co-facilitated by Brendon Holloway and Stephanie Skinner, two student liaisons, who discussed microaggressions, implicit bias, pronoun usage, and the importance of pronouns being added to Wolverine Access, an internal system that allows pronouns to appear on class rosters.

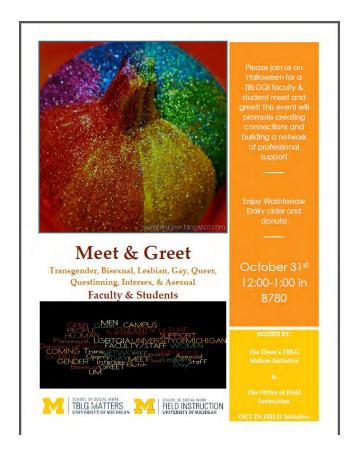
More than 20 students, staff, and faculty at SSW attended the workshop. Lunch was provided. The workshop received all positive feedback with several recommendations for future workshops around gender, pronouns, and what SSW staff and faculty can do to make SSW more inclusive of trans-identified students and staff.



### TBLGQ Faculty, Staff, and Students: Meet and Greet

October 31, 2016

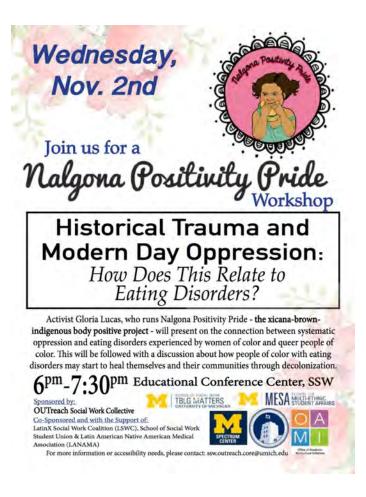
The Office of Field Instruction field faculty, Rachel Naasko and Leigh Robertson, hosted the first Meet and Greet TBLG faculty and students mentoring event on October 31, 2016. We had 8 faculty and 15 students attend. The students and faculty had time to meet and get to know each other. In addition, we asked students to share, in writing, what they would like to ask faculty in regards to their TBLGQIA identities, and how that integrates with their social work identity. It was a robust discussion and micro, mezzo and macro related concerns and issues were addressed. There was a strong support for another networking event. Rachel and I have been reviewing student feedback and plan to host another event with the agenda to include further networking and mostly importantly, determining the mission of the group. This is tentatively planned for fall, 2017.



# **Nalgona Positivity Pride**

November 2, 2016

The Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative and OUTreach co-hosted a workshop by Gloria Lucas, the founder of the Xicanx-Brown-Indigenous body positivity project Nalgona Positivity Pride. Lucas presented a workshop entitled "Historical Trauma and Modern Oppression: How Does this Relate to Eating Disorders?" to a crowd of over 50 students, staff, and faculty members. The workshop explored the role of trauma and systematic oppression in the development of eating disorders in women and queer people of color, and the ways that decolonization on both an individual and community level can lead to healing. The Dean's Initiative organized this event to bring focus to how sizeism, racism, and sexism intersect with anti-LGBTQ oppression, and to continue our efforts to support and inspire intersectional activism and dialogue. Free dinner was provided to all attendees. Bringing Lucas from Los Angeles was a huge endeavor and could not have been possible without the support of OAMI, MESA, the Spectrum Center, the LatinX Social Work Coalition, the School of Social Work Student Union, Central Student Government, and the Latin American Native American Medical Association.



#### Trans Awareness Week: Tiq Milan

November 14 - 21, 2016

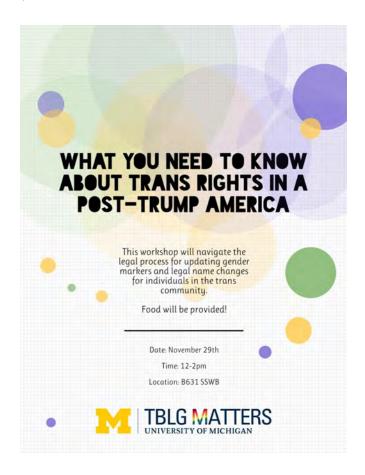
The Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative worked closely with The Spectrum Center, Student Life Housing, U-M Library, TransForm, and the Coalition for Queer and Trans People of Color to bring Tiq Milan to the University of Michigan. Tiq Milan is a crucial advocate, educator, and a strong community organizer for trans rights. The event took place at the Michigan Union in the evening. Light snacks and refreshments were provided to the guests who not only came from within the university community, but also from different parts of the state of Michigan. Tiq gave a powerful yet humble speech that resonated with the audience. Within his presentation, Tiq gave the audience an influential account of his life, clarified the difference between Trans Assimilation and Trans Liberation, and explored what the trans community demands as a necessity to flourish. The work he has done and the work he continues to do closely aligns with the NASW Code of Ethics, which is the reason the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative took on this opportunity to collaborate with the Spectrum Center to bring Mr. Milan to the University of Michigan. The TBLG team will continue to cultivate this relationship with the Spectrum Center by continuing to work together on future events.



# What You Need to Know About Trans Rights in a Post-Trump America

November 29, 2016

Following the 2016 Presidential Election, the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative felt the need to provide a workshop for trans and nonbinary folks on procedures and resources for changing names and gender markers in the State of Michigan. Two Dean's Initiative student liaisons, Brendon Holloway and Stephanie Skinner, facilitated the event. Free lunch was provided to a group of 18 individuals. Topics covered in the workshop included: 1) name changes for birth certificates, driver's licenses and other documentation, 2) changing and/or updating gender markers on driver's licenses, birth certificates, and passports, 3) updating name and pronouns through Wolverine Access and obtaining a new M-Card, and 4) connecting individuals with resources on and off campus for support during this process. In a follow up to the workshop, a brief discussion followed with individuals sharing their experiences with trans healthcare in the Ann Arbor area. This event was an important display of the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative's efforts to show solidarity and affirm trans folks in the face of current events.



#### **Know Your Rights: Name Change Clinic**

February 11, 2017

The Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative sponsored a Name Change Clinic hosted by the Michigan OUTlaws and SSW's OUTreach. The clinic was dedicated to helping trans-identified folx navigate the legal name change process in the state of Michigan. The clinic had attorney's volunteer to offer legal advice and assistance. To contribute to the event, DI's student liaison, Stephanie Skinner, created intake forms for the event. The event had approximately 100 people in attendance and food was served.



#### What Now?

February 18 - 19, 2017

One of the Dean Initiative's 2016-2017 goals was to collaborate with more organizations than previous years. On February 18th and 19th, the Dean's Initiative collaborated with the Jewish Communal Leadership Program for a weekend provocative study and discussion around the climate and challenges that arise in society. DI helped with the promotion of the event through sharing the flier on various social media pages.



#### **LGBTQ Health and Wellness Week Fair**

March 15, 2016

On March 15, the LGBTQ Health and Wellness Fair was hosted at SSW from 12-2pm. Various organizations attended the fair, including This was one of the most well-attended events for 2015-16 with a full classroom of attendees. In addition to organizing and facilitating the conversation, the Dean's Initiative also provided a catered lunch to attendees.



# LGBTQ Health and Wellness Week: How to Have Better Sex with Yourself

March 15, 2016

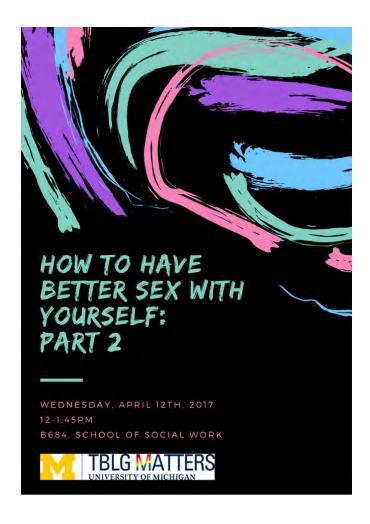
On March 15th, the Dean's Initiative hosted an event for LGBTQ Health and Wellness week titled "How to Have Better Sex with Yourself" facilitated by MSW students, Julia Henrikson and Darin Smith. The event was hosted in the ECC at SSW and was co-sponsored by the Spectrum Center. The facilitators discussed ways queer and/or trans participants can engage in better sex with themselves and also resources including LGBTQ inclusive porn websites and podcasts.



# Gettin' Down With Yourself: How to Have Better Sex With Yourself Part II

April 11, 2016

Julia Henrikson and Darin Smith are at it again! Because of such a high turn-out at the first event during LGBTQ Health and Wellness week, the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative decided to host another event specific for SSW students, faculty, and staff. Similar to the first event, Darin and Julia shared with the audience various healthy ways one can have sex with themself, as well as a brief meditation session allowing participants to touch their own bodies and to appreciate their physical existence. This workshop was held in B684 at SSW with approximately 10 people in attendance. Lunch was provided.

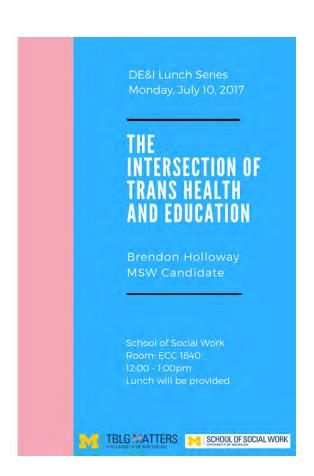


#### **DE&I Lunch Series:**

#### The Intersection of Trans Health and Education

July 10, 2017

Due to the marginalization of transgender people, having basic health needs met is a barrier for those who identify as trans. Research proves that a major barrier lies within higher education because educators are not discussing trans topics, specifically around hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgeries, as well as ways to communicate with and address trans people. Because overall well-being and physical health needs are not being met, civic health/civic well-being and a trans person's quality of life are directly connected. As a final event for 2016-2017 academic year, DI student liaison, Brendon Holloway, will facilitate this workshop on the intersection of trans health and higher education. Brendon originally presented this material at the 2017 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting in Baltimore, MD on June 9, 2017. This event is part of the DE&I Lunch Series at SSW. As of June 22, more than 50 people have RSVP'd to attend the event. Lunch will be provided.



#### **Out in Field**

2016 - 2017

Leigh Robertson is the faculty support for the Office of Field Instruction's Out in Field Initiative, which has worked together with the Dean's Initiative to provide programing over the years. This year the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative work-study students provided feedback in relation to the Out in Field brochure that is used to reach out to SSW students regarding managing disclosure in field placement. There was a consensus from the work-study students that organizing a focus group with SSW students about Out in Field could be beneficial in updating the pamphlet to further reach incoming TBLGQIA+ students. The Dean's Initiative, together with OFI, coordinated an Out in Field group with current SSW students on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 to receive current feedback on the program and to build for the future. The primary take away from the focus group was the need for more visibility from the Initiative and the from TBLGQIA+ faculty. Another focus group is planned in the summer or early fall with CASC minor and Intergroup Relations undergraduate students to assist in collecting feedback from prospective students. Updates to the pamphlet with the implemented feedback will be made within the next academic year.

### **Program Evaluation: Programming Feedback**

2016 - 2017

This winter, the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative completed a process to assess the interests, concerns, and feedback of School of Social Work students in regards to the Initiative's programing. After every DI event, the liaisons sent out post-event evaluations to gather feedback for future programming. Overall, the feedback from the event evaluations was positive and encouraging. Most students reported hearing about Dean's Initiative events through email, with social media and word of mouth serving as secondary modes of communication. Many students asked for more Dean's Initiative events at various times and days of the week in order to reach as many students, staff, and faculty as possible. When asked about topical interests in relation to TBLGQIA+ identities and experiences, students had a wide variety of suggestions for future programming. Students expressed interest in learning more about trans health and policy impacting TBLGQIA+ folks.

#### Reflection of the Events in the 2016-17 Academic Year

#### Summary

The Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative's two overarching goals for the 2016-17 school year have been to expand collaboration with other student organizations and to create events that recognize identity intersections, and the complexities that intersecting identities have on lived experiences.

To meet the goal for increased collaboration within the School of Social Work, the Initiative worked together with OUTreach, the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, and Spectrum Center. Additionally, the Initiative was thrilled to co-sponsor Trans Awareness Week which included bringing well-known trans activist, Tiq Milan, to campus as well as a storytelling event for trans and non-binary femmes.

The Initiative also expanded collaboration with organizations across campus by teaming up with Michigan OUTlaws and MESA for events throughout the school year.

The Initiative strived to include discussion on identity intersectionalities in every program, and believe that this focus was particularly clear in the multiple collaborative programs organized for Latinx Heritage Month in the fall and the orchestration of the events around trans identities.

This summer, the Initiative will shift focus to gaining a better understanding and improving documentation of the Initiative's history, interviewing former Initiative members and assembling a digital historical archive to improve institutional memory.



#### Goals for the 2017-18 Academic Year

The DI team is enthusiastic about the likelihood of becoming a part of SSW's DE&I Office. The work and programming DI does is rooted in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We will be meeting with the DE&I team to discuss that collaboration this summer.

A part of this transition to the DE&I would also be timely in considering a DI name change. We would propose adding a Q for Queer at the end of TBLG. This will promote inclusivity considering the word queer has been reclaimed by many students, staff, faculty, and community members.

Another ongoing goal that the DI has advocated for in the past is for additional SSW All Gender restrooms to better accommodate trans-identified students, staff, and faculty.

#### **Retrospect and Conclusion**

As the planning process for the Fall 2017 semester begins, the Initiative is considering programming that includes but is not limited to film screenings, guest speakers, training sessions, and panel and roundtable discussions with faculty, students, and local professionals. The Initiative will put special focus on creating events relevant to the intersections between TBLGQ+ identities and the following topics, identified as primary interests by those who attended events during the 2016-2017 academic year: civil rights, ally development, trans health inclusion, the intersection of queerness and blackness, and how queer and trans folx can have better, healthier sex with themselves.

As with previous years, the Dean's TBLG Matters Initiative will continue to and engage with the many constituencies from the University of Michigan and collaborate in creating relevant and engaging programing that align with the Initiative's mission and goals in this endlessly evolving society.

Additionally, the Initiative will continue to assist MSW students in examining how their TBLGQ+ identities intersect with their other identities and affect their lived experiences, and how they can use this gained knowledge in their professional careers.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The Dean's TBLG Matter's Initiative was able to increase our program exponentially and address all of the previous year's goals due to the various exceptional members and partnerships. We offered over 15 programs that lead to increased collaboration with student organizations within and outside the School of Social Work, and generated new ideas and programing for next year. Leigh has continued to take a strong leadership role as the Faculty Advisor with the Dean's Initiative and not only provide support for the various programing ideas that the Initiative Student Liaisons generated, but also made sure to nurture the Student Liaisons' professional development and growth. The Initiative Student Liaisons consisted of four students, Lilly Estenson, Brendon Holloway, Michelle Jendry, Stephanie Skinner, as well as Raúl Vargas in his Social Work Resident's role.

Lilly Estenson was the group's "pilot" as focused on the programing and events, and also kept a clear and accurate record of all the TBLG Matters meetings. She was also the primary organizer for the Nalgona Positivity Pride which had a remarkable turn-out at SSW. Michelle Jendry, with her energy and passion, stayed focused on our vision of last year's DI programing ideas came into realization. Raúl Vargas continued to support the Initiative in his staff position as the Social Work Resident for Associate Dean, Jorge Delva, Associate Dean until January 2017. He was very active in planning most of the events in the Fall 2016 term and helped the two new liaisons, Brendon Holloway and Stephanie Skinner, navigate the initiative. Brendon and Stephanie shined in their leadership and facilitation skills providing and generating essential programing that accurately provide programing and awareness to the evolving and complex needs of the TBLGQ+ community.

Finally, we would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to Dean Lynn Videka for her enthusiastic support this year. Without the Dean Videka's support, this initiative would not have been possible.



