MAY 15, 2020

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PARTICIPATING STUDENTS IN OUR FIRST ANNUAL LAVENDER YEARBOOK!

LAVENDER GRADUATION IS AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION HELD AT INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO HONOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, INTERSEX, AND ASEXUAL STUDENTS, AS WELL AS THOSE COMMITTED TO THE PRACTICE OF “ALLYSHIP”. AT TEXAS TECH, WE CELEBRATE OUR STUDENTS WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE CHALLENGES MANY HAVE FACED ON THEIR PATH TO GRADUATION.

WE HAD 48 LAVENDER GRADUATION UNDERGRADUATE (31) AND GRADUATE (17) STUDENT PARTICIPANTS THIS YEAR. WE RECOGNIZE THERE ARE MANY OTHER LGBTQIA AND ALLIED STUDENTS WHO ARE GRADUATING AND CANNOT BE RECOGNIZED PUBLICLY IN LAVENDER GRADUATION OR HERE IN OUR LAVENDER YEARBOOK. TO OUR UNSUNG GRADUATES, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE RECOGNIZE YOU, WE CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND WE WISH YOU HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN YOUR JOURNEY!

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE, I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW INCREDIBLY PROUD WE ARE OF YOU. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WE HOPE TO FORGE AS YOU BECOME A PROUD RED RAIDER ALUMNUS. IT IS OUR WISH THAT YOU REFLECT ON YOUR TIME AT TEXAS TECH AS SO INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO YOUR LIFE – JUST AS YOU HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT TO OURS.

ENJOY!

JODY C. RANDALL DIRECTOR
WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

I’VE HAD A FEW MENTORS HERE AT TECH, MAINLY SYDNEY COX, REBECCA LARSON, AND MELISSA LOHR. EACH HAS SUPPORTED ME BEING LGBTQIA+ AND HAS MADE ME FEEL AT HOME. WHEN WE DISCUSSED STARTING THE [LGBTQIA+ ORGANIZATION AT TTU AT WACO] I WAS GLAD THAT I WAS SOMEONE SYDNEY TURNED TO.

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

GETTING THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY ESTABLISHED AT THE WACO LOCATION WAS DEFINITELY NEW TO ME. IT ALLOWED ME TO HAVE TO EXTEND AND TALK TO INDIVIDUALS AT MAIN CAMPUS AND I ALSO GOT TO GET TO KNOW MANY MORE INDIVIDUALS THAT I LIKELY NEVER WOULD HAVE MET.
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): POLITICAL SCIENCE
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): ENGLISH; INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

TO BE FRANK, ITS ALL OF THE 2020 OFFICERS FROM THE OFFICE OF LGBTQIA+ EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT. I WON’T SAY MUCH MORE BECAUSE ALL THE NICE THINGS I WOULD SAY WOULD MAKE THEM FEEL EMBARRASSED.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHO YOU ARE. AND ENJOY EVERY LAST MINUTE.
DAVE BAYCHOO

PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): MICROBIOLOGY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): CHEMISTRY

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

DANA MARIE TELESFORD WAS MY STEM MENTOR AND HELPED ME LEARN THE WAYS OF COLLEGE AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT BEING A FIRST GENERATION STUDENT. THEY PROVIDED ME INFORMATION ON MINUTE THINGS LIKE STUDY HABITS, TIME MANAGEMENT, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS EFFECTIVELY, WHICH HELPED ME TREMENDOUSLY IN COLLEGE.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

BE YOURSELF NO MATTER THE REPERCUSSIONS. HIDING IN YOUR ROOM AND EXPLORING WHO YOU ARE IS THE FIRST STEP, BUT DO WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY BECAUSE WE’RE HERE FOR OUR OWN SATISFACTION, NOT OTHERS’ –AND IT’S MORE THAN OKAY TO BE SELFISH IN RELATION TO YOUR HAPPINESS.
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): PSYCHOLOGY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S):
PUBLIC RELATIONS; HISTORY

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

BEING PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY AT TEXAS TECH HAS BEEN SURPRISING. BEFORE COMING TO TECH, I ASSUMED THE ENVIRONMENT WAS INVERSE TO WHAT IT IS NOW. WE HAVE MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO OUR COMMUNITY, AND MORE JUST WAITING FOR THE RIGHT PERSON TO START THEM.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IT’S OK TO TAKE AND ASK FOR HELP. YOU DON’T HAVE TO GO THROUGH COLLEGE ALONE. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, IT TOOK ME UNTIL MY JUNIOR YEAR TO FREELY ASK FOR HELP FROM THOSE AROUND ME. YOU CAN’T BECOME THE BEST PERSON YOU’RE MEANT TO BE IF YOU REFUSE TO GROW, AND SOMETIMES THAT REQUIRES HELP.
JORDAN BUTLER

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): ENGLISH LITERATURE
& HONORS ARTS AND LETTERS
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): HISTORY

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

“TAKE WHAT IS YOURS.”
Pronouns: He/him/his
Degree(s): Master of Education
Major(s): Higher Education Administration

What advice do you have for current or future Texas Tech students?

The best advice I can give current and future Texas Tech students is to get involved with organizations that you find interest in. I can guarantee you will find friends who have the same interests and passions as you do. It will amaze you find out that you’re not alone in this journey we call life. Getting involved, whether it’s LGBTQIA related or not -- these new friends will become your family away from home.

So many people out there will love you and support you because you are amazing and beautiful!
The Boots, Bows, & Rainbow Ties Gala
Keynote by Robyn Ochs and a Special Performance by Regie Cabico
October 14, 2019 | 6:30 p.m.
Student Union Building Ballroom
Texas Tech University
PHOENIX CRANE

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): MASTER OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS AND ANALYSIS

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

DR. AMELIA TALLEY IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN A CLOSE MENTOR THROUGHOUT MY STUDIES. SHE HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY SUPPORTIVE OF MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE OFFICE OF LGBTQIA+ AND HAS ENCOURAGED ME TO BROADEN MY RESEARCH.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

THIS IS THE SAME ADVICE I HAD FOR STUDENTS AT MY UNDERGRAD SCHOOL: GET INVOLVED! THERE ARE SO MANY AMAZING GROUPS OF PEOPLE HERE AT TECH, WHETHER THEY BE A STUDENT ORGANIZATION OR A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION, AND NOT ONLY WILL YOU GIVE BACK TO THE SURROUNDING AREA, YOU WILL ALSO GROWTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL. BY GETTING INVOLVED YOU WILL BECOME A BETTER TEAM MEMBER, LEADER, AND ALLY. MOREOVER, YOU WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE’S LIFE THROUGH YOUR WORK. YOU’LL HAVE AMAZING EXPERIENCES THAT YOU WILL CHERISH EVEN AFTER YOU GRADUATE, SO GET OUT THERE!
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): MASTER OF FINE ARTS
MAJOR(S): JEWELRY DESIGN AND METALSMITHING
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): SCULPTURE

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

ROBLY GLOVER. AS AN ALLY, ROB HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE OF ME AND MY ARTWORK AS IT EXPLORES FEMININE SEXUALITY AND THE WAYS IN WHICH IT IS CAPITALIZED IN OUR SOCIETY. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ANCHOR FOR MYSELF AND OTHER STUDENTS NO MATTER WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR LIVES.

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

AS A BISEXUAL WOMAN, I HAVE ALWAYS STRUGGLED WITH FEELING OUT-OF-PLACE, BUT THE COMMUNITY AT TECH ONLY MAKES ME FEEL MORE AT HOME. BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM AT TECH, I HAVE NEVER FELT LIKE I NEEDED TO “CHOOSE A SIDE” OR EXPLAIN MY CHOICES, AND THIS HAS HELPED ME GROW AS A PERSON AND AS A MEMBER OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY.
EMILY ESTRADA

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
MAJOR(S): COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

MY FIRST MENTOR WAS DR. MIKE PARENT (FORMER FACULTY). HE HELPED ME GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW MY MASTERS, DISSERTATION, AND OTHER RESEARCH PURSUITS CAN BE CONNECTED TO THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY. MY SECOND MENTOR WOULD BE DR. JOE CURRIN. WE ONLY HAD A YEAR TOGETHER BEFORE I HAD TO LEAVE FOR MY INTERNSHIP, BUT HE HELPED ME (WITHOUT KNOWING IT I THINK)

BE MORE AUTHENTIC AND OPEN WITH MY SEXUAL IDENTITY IN PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS. JUST BE HIM BEING A ROLE MODEL OF BEING OUT AND PROUD.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

FIND A COMMUNITY THAT ACCEPTS YOU FOR THE YOU THAT YOU ARE AND ARE GROWING TO BE. THIS CAN BE ON CAMPUS THROUGH AN ORGANIZATION OR EVEN ONLINE WITH APPS LIKE TREVOR SPACE.
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS

DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): BIOLOGY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): CHEMISTRY

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

MY ADVICE TO ANY UPCOMING OR CURRENT STUDENT AT TECH IS TO NOT BE AFRAID TO REACH OUT BUT DO IT WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR YOU. COMING FROM WEST TEXAS (MIDLAND), I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD FIND A COMMUNITY SO UPLIFTING AND WELCOMING WHILE STILL IN THIS AREA. IN FACT, I WAS SO AFRAID, I DIDN’T REACH OUT UNTIL THE END OF MY UNDERGRADUATE CAREER! EMBRACING THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY HAS ALLOWED ME TO FIND CONFIDENCE AND PASSION INSIDE ME THAT I NEVER KNEW EXISTED. IT HELPED ME TO COME OUT OF THE CLOSET TO MY FAMILY AND LIFELONG FRIENDS. IN TURN, I WAS ALSO ABLE TO FORM SOME OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDSHIPS, DISCOVER THE NEXT STEP IN MY EDUCATIONAL CAREER, AND FINALLY EXPRESS FEELINGS I’VE HAD FOR A LONG TIME. ENJOY YOUR TIME AT TECH, AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR YOU, TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH AND SEE WHAT THIS COMMUNITY HAS TO OFFER! WRECK-EM!
ALISA GRADY

PRONOUNS: NAME ONLY
DEGREE(S): DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
MAJOR(S): CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): STEM EDUCATION

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

DR. WALTER SMITH HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE IN ALL OF MY ENDEAVORS DURING MY TIME AT TEXAS TECH. IN MANY WAYS, AT TIMES I WOULD EVEN CONSIDER HIM A FATHER-LIKE FIGURE. HE HAS BEEN THERE FOR ME SCHOLASTICALLY, PROFESSIONALLY, AND PERSONALLY AND IT IS TRULY AN HONOR TO CALL HIM MY MENTOR AND FRIEND.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

TAKE THINGS ONE DAY AT A TIME. PROGRESS FORWARD REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG THE PROCESS MIGHT TAKE AND HOWEVER SMALL THE PROGRESS MIGHT BE.
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): PSYCHOLOGY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY STUDIES

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

THROUGH PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, I HAVE CHANGED MY THINKING, AND IT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE. I’VE DEVELOPED A NEW PATTERN OF THOUGHTS, AND IT OPENED UP A NEW CONNECTION TO THE WORLD. THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HAS ALLOWED ME TO TAKE PART IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY THAT ASSURES ALL STUDENTS FEEL WELcomed, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, WHAT RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND RELIGION. I’VE BEEN ABLE TO SERVE AS A VOICE, A TEACHER, AND A ROLE MODEL TO SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE YOUTH. I’VE LEARNED THAT LIFE CHANGES, SO LEARN NEW WAYS OF LIVING. CONFRONT CHALLENGES, SUPPORT EQUALITY, AND BECOME WHO YOU ARE. LOVE IS LOVE, AND WE ALL LOVE DIFFERENTLY. IT IS BEAUTIFUL.
G W Y D I O N

PRONOUNS: THEY/THEM/THEIRS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): MATH
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): ACTUARIAL SCIENCE

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

IT’S OKAY TO CHANGE AS A PERSON. IT’S OKAY IF THE PERSON YOU WERE WASN’T GREAT. WHAT MATTERS IS WHO YOU ARE NOW AND WHO YOU PLAN TO BE IN THE FUTURE.
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS

DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS

MAJOR(S): POLITICAL SCIENCE

MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): SOCIOLOGY

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SHOWED THAT THEY BELIEVE IN ME AND WERE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO ENSURE I WAS SUCCESSFUL. I AM DESIGNATING JADE SILVA TOVAR AS MY LAVENDER MENTOR BECAUSE SHE HAS ALWAYS GONE OUT OF HER WAY TO BE A SUPPORTIVE ROLE MODEL AND HAS BECOME A PART OF MY CHOSEN FAMILY. JADE HAS TAUGHT ME SO MUCH ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SELFLESS IN SITUATIONS WHERE THAT MIGHT NOT BE THE EASIEST THING TO BE. SHE HAS TAKEN TIME OUT OF HER BUSY DAYS TO TALK WITH ME ABOUT MY LIFE AND HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF GETTING ME THROUGH COLLEGE AS A FIRST GENERATION STUDENT. IN MY PROCESS OF APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL, JADE WAS THERE FOR ME. COLLEGE SENIORS CAN GO THROUGH SOME STRESSFUL TIMES IN MAKING LIFE CHOICES, AND I AM PROUD TO HAVE HAD JADE INVOLVED IN THIS EXPERIENCE!
PRONOUNS: THEY/THEM/THEIRS

DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): ENGLISH
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): SPANISH; ETHNIC STUDIES

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS HAS HELPED ME FEEL LESS ALONE, AND ALSO HELPED ME SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY, BY PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE TO BE MYSELF.
RULA AL-HMOUD HAS BEEN MY BIGGEST SUPPORTER AND MENTOR THROUGHOUT MY TIME AT TEXAS TECH. NOT ONLY ENCOURAGING ME IN ARABIC CLASSES AND PUSHING ME TO STUDY ABROAD, SHE CONSTANTLY IS sending me EVENTS TO HELP WITH AND NOMINATING ME FOR AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS. SHE MAKES SURE EVERY STUDENT IN CLASS IS SUPPORTED AND LEARNING AND ALWAYS GOES THE EXTRA MILE FOR STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE. NO MATTER WHAT ISSUE I HAVE BROUGHT HER ACADEMIC, EMOTIONAL, AND PROFESSIONAL SHE TAKES TIME TO SUPPORT ME THROUGH EVERY STEP. TRICIA EARL HAS ALSO BEEN A HUGE MENTOR FOR ME DURING MY TIME. SHE HAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED ME TO TAKE THE EXTRA STEP TO START MY OWN RESEARCH, PRESENT AT CONFERENCES, AND GROW ORGANIZATIONS. I ALWAYS LEAVE HER OFFICE FEELING READY TO TAKE ON THE WORLD, WITH A LONG LIST OF WAYS TO CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND ME.
EMERSON KURDI

PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): ENGLISH
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): POLITICAL SCIENCE

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

I CAME TO TEXAS TECH ASSUMING THE WORST ABOUT LUBBOCK’S TOLERANCE OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY. I EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN THE CLOSET TO PRESERVE MY SAFETY AND SANITY. BUT MUCH TO MY SURPRISE, WHEN I ARRIVED, I FELT SAFE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE. I WAS GREETED WITH ACCEPTANCE, ALLYSHIP, AND MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW MY PRIDE HERE THAT I NEVER HAD IN MY HOMETOWN OR PREVIOUS SCHOOL EXPERIENCES. EVERY STEP OF THE WAY I HAVE BEEN EMBRACED WITH OPEN ARMS AND CELEBRATED BY THE FRIENDS AND PROFESSORS THAT I HAVE MET DURING MY TIME AS AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT. I EVEN MET MY WIFE HERE! IN ADDITION, THE RICH HISTORY OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY HERE AT TTU INSPIRED MY RESEARCH FOCUS. MY SENIOR YEAR, I BEGAN CONDUCTING HISTORICAL RESEARCH ABOUT TTU’S LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF PROFESSOR [ALLISON] WHITNEY IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT. NEXT SEMESTER, AS I BEGIN MY MASTER’S DEGREE HERE AT TTU, I PLAN TO CONTINUE MY RESEARCH AND GIVE A VOICE TO THOSE WHO WERE SILENCED ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
YZABEL LYZET

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): MASTER OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): FRENCH

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR
(LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE)
FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW
HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU
THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

DR. ANDREA JONSSON HAS BEEN PROBABLY THE BIGGEST ADVOCATE FOR ME HERE AT TEXAS TECH. I'VE SHARED WITH HER MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MET WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING. SHE HAS ALWAYS FOUND A WAY TO MAKE NOT ONLY HER CLASSES BUT OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS INCLUSIVE OF HER STUDENTS AND IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPT.

DR. JONSSON HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE TO MOTIVATE ME DURING HARDSHIPS AND HAS ALWAYS MADE HER CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT ONE THAT APPRECIATES AND ENCOURAGES OPEN DISCUSSION WITHOUT FEAR OF JUDGMENT. I REALLY CANNOT THANK HER ENOUGH FOR BEING ONE OF THE MOST SUPPORTIVE AND AMAZING PEOPLE I HAVE EVER MET AS SHE TRULY INSPIRES ME TO NOT ONLY BE A BETTER PERSON BUT A PROUD PERSON. I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE PROUD OF THE PERSON I'VE BECOME AND AM EXCITED TO SEE THE PERSON I WILL BE AND I HAVE HER TO THANK FOR THAT.
MISS GLAMOUR AND FAME 2019

LADY LILIANA BELLE-VERSAILLES
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS

DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

MAJOR(S): ECONOMICS

MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): MATHEMATICS; ACTUARIAL SCIENCE

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

THIS IS A TRICKY QUESTION. I WAS IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP DURING MY TIME HERE AT TEXAS TECH, AND AFTER THAT EXPERIENCE, I VOWED TO BE MY OWN MENTOR WHO DIDN’T NEED ANYONE ELSE'S APPROVAL TO TELL ME WHO I SHOULD AND SHOULDN’T BE. EVERY DAY I HAVE TO LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR AND ACTIVELY TO CHOOSE TO LOVE THE IMAGE OF THE PERSON IN FRONT OF ME. TO QUOTE RUPAUL HIMSELF, “IF YOU CAN’T LOVE YOURSELF, HOW THE HELL ARE YOU GOING TO LOVE ANYBODY ELSE?”

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

I WOULD TELL CURRENT AND FUTURE TECH STUDENTS TO LEARN TO BE THEIR OWN ADVOCATES. THIS CURRENT GENERATION OF STUDENTS, AND EVEN MYSELF TO AN EXTENT, HAVE GROWN UP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA THEIR WHOLE LIVES, AND IT’S REALLY EASY TO DEFINE YOUR OWN SELF WORTH BY WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK. PRIDE IS NOT JUST A WORD. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE PRIDE IN YOURSELF AND DEFINE WHAT PRIDE MEANS TO YOU.
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): CHEMISTRY
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): HISTORY

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

MY FIRST YEAR AT TEXAS TECH, THE GSA (GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE BACK IN THE DAY) WAS MY SAVING GRACE. IT CREATED A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN RURAL WEST TEXAS. GSA HOSTED SOCIAL AND EDUCATION EVENTS THAT MADE ME A BETTER PERSON. THROUGH THE SOCIAL EVENTS, I WAS ABLE TO FOSTER AWESOME FRIENDSHIPS. THE EDUCATIONAL AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS HOSTED BROADENED MY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY WHILE FOSTERING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY WITH LUBBOCK AS A WHOLE. MY FAVORITE MEMORY WAS HELPING GSA HOST THE FIRST DRAG SHOW ON CAMPUS IN CONJUNCTION WITH RHA. THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY HAS GROWN SO MUCH AND I AM PROUD TO BE A RED RAIDERS BECAUSE OF IT.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

GET INVOLVED! TEXAS TECH HAS SO MANY ORGANIZATIONS, CLUBS, AND EVENTS TO BE INVOLVED IN. GETTING INVOLVED FOSTERS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND REALLY HELPS STUDENTS GET MORE ACCLIMATED TO CAMPUS.
JUSTIN NORTH-OLAGUE

PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): HUMAN SCIENCES
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S):
ADDICTIVE DISORDERS AND
RECOVERY STUDIES; HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY
STUDIES; PSYCHOLOGY

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR
(LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE)
FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW
HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU
THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

ANNA TREVINO HAS BEEN MY
MENTOR. SHE EMBODIES WHAT
IT MEANS TO BE AN ALLY TO THE
LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY. SHE
HAS TIRELESSLY ADVOCATED
FOR THE COMMUNITY AS WELL
AS ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL. SHE
CONSTANTLY PUSHES ME TO BE
A BETTER PERSON.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE
FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH
STUDENTS?

STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF. I
KNOW THAT IS CLICHE, BUT IT
HAS BEEN WHAT’S HELPED ME
THE MOST IN LIFE.
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): PUBLIC RELATIONS
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): MASS COMMUNICATION

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

MY EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH WAS DEFINITELY IMPACTED BY BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY. WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE, I DEALT WITH KEEPING A HUGE PART OF ME A SECRET. IT TOOK A TOLL ON MY MENTAL HEALTH AND LEFT ME CONFUSED AND LOST FOR A WHILE. ONCE I FINALLY CAME TO TERMS WITH ACCEPTING MYSELF, I STARTED TO THRIVE. THE FRIENDS I’VE MADE THROUGHOUT MY TIME AT TECH ARE SOME OF THE GREATEST FRIENDSHIPS I’VE EVER HAD. THOSE FRIENDS ACCEPTED ME FROM DAY ONE AND HAVE SUPPORTED ME ALONG THE WAY. THANKFULLY, I CHOSE TO INVEST MY EDUCATION IN A UNIVERSITY THAT PROVIDES RESOURCES FOR AND UPLIFTS THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY. I’VE LEARNED THAT MY SEXUALITY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHO I AM. IT’S HELPED ME UNDERSTAND MY WORTH AND ALLOWED ME TO CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD, UNDERSTANDING THAT FROM HERE IT’S POSSIBLE.
PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): RESTAURANT,
HOTEL AND INSTITUTIONAL
MANAGEMENT

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF
THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR
HOW HAS PRACTICING
ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+
COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR
EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

COMING INTO TECH I FELT
UNCONNECTED AND LIKE AN
OUTSIDER. DISCOVERING THIS
COMMUNITY ALLOWED ME TO
FEEL AS IF I HAD A “PLACE”. I
ALSO REALLY APPRECIATED THAT
I HAD EXPERIENCED PEOPLE TO
GO TO AS I NAVIGATED. THE
CONTINUAL REACHING OUT
AND ENCOURAGEMENT WAS
INVALUABLE.
PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE(S): DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE
MAJOR(S): LAW

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

PROFESSOR ALEX PEARL NOT ONLY IS AN ADEPT SCHOLAR AND ADVOCATE BUT HE ALSO CARES DEEPLY ABOUT DIVERSITY WORK FOR ALL COMMUNITIES. WE HAD MANY TALKS ABOUT THE STRUGGLES OF LGBTQ, NATIVE AMERICAN, AND OTHER MINORITIZED GROUPS. THIS, IN TURN, LEAD TO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER AND OUR BACKGROUND.

I CANNOT THANK HIM ENOUGH FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO MY LIFE AND ALL STUDENTS AT TECH LAW!
Ariel Rodea

PRONOUNS: HE/HIM/HIS
DEGREE: BACHELOR OF ARTS
MAJOR(S): MEDIA STRATEGIES
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): PUBLIC RELATIONS

WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

Dr. Kent Wilkinson is a professor that I consider to be a mentor of mine because of how he has pushed each of his students to grow in their understanding of the world around them and how he has advocated for a more welcoming and accepting environment for all here at Texas Tech.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

I would say that college is probably one of the scariest times of your life, but never feel like you have to hide or change anything about yourself just to fit in.
TRISTIN ROLIN

PRONOUNS: SHE/HER/HERS
DEGREE(S): BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
MAJOR(S): MEAT SCIENCE
MINOR(S) AND CERTIFICATE(S): TEACHING CERTIFICATE

HOW HAS BEING A PART OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, OR HOW HAS PRACTICING ALLYSHIP WITH THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, IMPACTED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS TECH?

WITHIN MY DEGREE I WAS TREATED AS AN OUTCAST—NOT ONLY DID I HAVE BLUE HAIR BUT PEOPLE KNEW I WAS BISEXUAL AND JUST OPEN WITH EVERYONE I MET. THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT WERE SOMEWHAT NICE WERE THE GRADUATE STUDENTS. ONCE I SWITCHED TO TEACHING, THIS IS WHERE PEOPLE FOUND ME MORE ACCEPTING. IT WAS TOUGH FOR THE FIRST 3 YEARS, BUT I CAME TO ACCEPT IT AND PUSH FORWARD.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

ALWAYS BE YOURSELF. YOU WANT BLUE HAIR, GET BLUE HAIR. YOU WANT TO SHAVE YOUR HEAD AND GET A NECK TATTOO, DO IT. BE THE WITCH OR WARLOCK YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE.
WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

THOUGH HE IS YOUNGER THAN ME BY CLOSE TO A DECADE, J. RIGGS IS AN INSPIRATION WITH HIS DEDICATION TO THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY AND ITS FURTHERANCE TOWARDS EQUALITY.
WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR (LGBTQIA+ OR OTHERWISE) FOR YOU HERE AT TECH? HOW HAVE THEY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME HERE?

DR. REBECCAHITE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION AT THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION HAS BEEN NOT ONLY A MENTOR, BUT ALSO A FRIEND DURING MY TIME HERE AT TECH. NOT ONLY DID SHE HELP MAKE MY MOVE TO LUBBOCK SEAMLESS AS POSSIBLE, SHE ALSO POINTED ME TO BOTH TECH’S AND THE LUBBOCK COMMUNITY’S WIDE ARRAY OF LGBTQIA+ RESOURCES. SHE IS A GREAT ALLY.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT OR FUTURE TECH STUDENTS?

KEEP YOUR HEAD HIGH AND CONTINUALLY PURSUE HAPPINESS AND FULFILLMENT WHICH YOU, AND ONLY YOU, CAN DICTATE!
LGBTQIA+ STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

TECHGSA OFFICERS, 2019–20
KAITLYN SHIVERS, PRESIDENT
VIET NGUYEN, PRESIDENT (FALL 2019)
KAYLA MCBURNEY, VICE–PRESIDENT
MELISSA HANNA, SECRETARY
ANITA CABRIALEZ, TREASURER
ARIEL RODEA, PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRIDESTEM OFFICERS, 2019–20
BLESSEN BROCKE, PRESIDENT
JEFFREY TESSITORE, VICE–PRESIDENT

OUTLAW OFFICERS, 2019–20
J. RIGGS, PRESIDENT
NOAH HEARN, VICE–PRESIDENT
SHEENA TEAGUE, TREASURER
DARRIS HAWKS, SOCIAL CHAIR
HALEY HICKEY, 1L REPRESENTATIVE

TTUHSC GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE OFFICERS, 2019–20
MEGAN MIKKELSON, PRESIDENT
JAVI OCHOA, VICE–PRESIDENT
PARKER MCCABE, VICE–PRESIDENT
UNSUNG LGBTQIA+ GRADUATES

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE LGBTQIA AND ALLIED GRADUATING STUDENTS WHO CANNOT BE RECOGNIZED SO PUBLICLY. THIS SPACE REPRESENTS THOSE WHO, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, ARE UNABLE TO BE A PART OF OUR PUBLIC CELEBRATION.

TO ALL OF OUR UNSUNG GRADUATES, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE RECOGNIZE YOU AND WE CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS! WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR IMPACT ON OUR CAMPUS, AND WE WISH YOU HEALTH AND HAPPINESS AS YOU MOVE FORWARD ON YOUR JOURNEY.
ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE BRAVER THAN YOU BELIEVE. STRONGER THAN YOU SEEM. SMARTER THAN YOU THINK AND LOVED MORE THAN YOU KNOW.