Wow what an incredible Spring 2013 semester we've had at FIU! We've had a semester of many firsts, including the hosting of an extremely successful Florida Collegiate Pride Coalition Ignite Conference on campus with over 20 schools represented and 200 registrants from across the state of Florida. We had the debut of our first FIU sponsored float at the Miami Gay Pride Parade where 281 FIU family members attended. The parade was complete with FIU students, administrators, faculty and alumni. Yes friends our very own FIU President, Dr. Mark Rosenberg was on the FIU float, front and center with some of our distinguished alumni in support of the LGBTQA Community. Thank you Mr. President! Additionally we hosted our first Pride Month at FIU in April with over 14 incredible events and activities. We held our Annual Lavender Graduation and Student Recognition Dinner, and partnered with multiple organizations to help out our community friends in South Florida and spread the word of all the great things happening in the LGBTQA community at FIU. Other Signature events this year included: Day of Silence, Panther Pride Film Festival, Transgender Awareness workshop, and participation at the Annual Diversity Day for the Miami Dade County Public School, Broward Count Public Schools and Safe Schools South Florida.

Of course this could not have been done by one person alone. As we all know it takes a village... Thank you to all the wonderful students, staff, faculty, alumni and community friends that made this semester at FIU SIMPLY AMAZING! There are a few people who were indispensable to our efforts this semester and I would like to give them a great big shout out. Charkivia Lovett, our MMC LGBTQA Graduate Assistant, Janeille Simpson, BBC LGBTQA Graduate Assistant, Aidyn Scott MPAS’s LGBTQA Higher Education Practicum students, Marco Gomez, Andrew Becerra and Geoffrey Vancol from MMC Stonewall Pride Alliance; William Stirrup, Gary Santos and Craig Cunningham from the beautiful Biscayne Campus and last but certainly not least the wonderful MPAS professional staff and student staff. Thank you all.

Well, we have already begun planning for next year and can’t wait to bring you another highly educational and fun filled year. Some of the things we are planning for this up-coming year include: an incredible Mentoring Program, a new GSA at the BBC campus, an Alumni Outreach program and much more! Please keep an eye out for our upcoming events and if you would like to get involved just stop by our office in MPAS 216, send us an email at lgbt@fiu.edu, visit our website http://mpas.fiu.edu/LGBTQA.html or our MPAS page at lgbt.fiu.edu for updates.

Have a fantastic summer!
LGBTQA Initiatives offers services that S.A.V.E. our students!

The LGBTQA Initiatives mission is to meet the needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Ally student population, by developing and implementing educational, social, and awareness programs and services.

These initiatives are aimed at reducing homophobia and heterosexism on campus through education, advocacy, and awareness. Services include: academic development, student involvement, social awareness, and leadership development.

We provide programs and services that address the various needs of the LGBTQA community at FIU. We encourage you to stop by the office and utilize the many services that MPAS offers. Our staff is dedicated to serving you through the free tutoring program, workshops, a mentoring program, LGBTQA awareness, educational workshops, advising and a variety of other cultural programs.

There are four areas of concentration that guide our Office programs and initiatives. Both the personal and academic well-being of the FIU LGBTQA students are at the heart of all that we do.

A Year in review

Charkivia Lovett, GA
LGBTQA Initiatives (MMC)

For the past year, I have had the opportunity to engage in campus wide initiatives, educating our campus and community on diversity and the inclusiveness of all its constituents. Although this experience has been challenging it has always been rewarding. During this year I have seen how we have transitioned into an intentional LGBTQA program to S.A.V.E our students. Prior to hiring the Associate Director, the LGBTQA community was remiss in having a dedicated full-time staff member to take forth the task of helping our sexual minority students on campus and in the community. With the development of our vision we were able to develop SMART goals to further the mission by increasing educational programs and services to all involved in the process through advocacy, awareness and support.

To contemplate upon the many accomplishments the LGBTQA Initiatives has embark upon this past year has been a understatement and a privilege. I have had the opportunity to personally develop into a goal-oriented individual that works smarter by maximizing my time and efforts.

While we have had far too many accomplishments to mention them all here, I will highlight a few of my favorites in addition to mentioning a few goals that I am looking forward to working on in the upcoming year. We have established and implemented a physical resource library for the LGBTQA community, complete with a selection of magazines, books, CD’s & DVDs available for educational, personal and academic use of our FIU community. In our resource library you will also find a variety of free educational materials, and brochures. The website for the online catalog can be found at http://www.librarything.com/catalog/fulgbtqa

The LGBTQA Library is located inside the MPAS Conference room and is open during regular office hours. For more information about how students can access this resource on campus stop by or call the MPAS office, GC 216.

Another program we have been revisiting and will implement soon is the Peer Educator Advocating Cultural Enrichment (PEACE) program which is a series of peer-led student workshops for student groups, organizations, and first year experience courses. Participants will come away from the workshops having gained a better sense of one’s own identity in the social context in which they live, and a greater understanding and appreciation of the diversity around them. We look forward to creating an atmosphere in which students are engaging in civil dialogue and discourse. If there are any students that are interested in helping with this initiative feel free to email us.

With the continual support of our LGBTQA Associate Director I have been given the opportunity to explore a world of possibilities. I look forward to the next year of working with our LGBTQA initiative to S.A.V.E our students!
FCPC 2013, It’s a Wrap! This year FIU students and staff hosted an amazing three day conference for the 221 Florida college and university students that represented 21 schools. The 10th year anniversary conference was a memorable one with great programs, speakers and performance by Raja from Ru Paul's Drag Race! Thank you to the host committee members and the conference co-chairs for all your hard work. Congratulations to the University of North Florida, FCPC’s next year’s conference site. Below are some highlights from the conference. Please visit the website for more pictures lgbt.fiu.edu A very special thank you to our conference photographer Kimberly Berkley. See you all next year at UNF!
The 2013 Spring Semester Highlights & Events

Wow what a Spring Semester we have had! The FIU LGBTQA community made its mark with the first ever FIU Pride Month in April. Thank you to all who helped in making these events a huge success! Additional pictures can be seen via our website at: http://mpas.fiu.edu/LGBTQA.html or via lgbt.fiu.edu

Release Week Pride Month BBQ @ BBC

Lavender Graduation and Student Recognition Dinner

Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

This year LGBTQA INITITITATIVES served as a proud community sponsor for two films shown at the 16th Annual Miami Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

Congratulations to our graduates and student leaders that were recognized! Bayardo Barrios, Bachelors of Arts and Certificate in Middle Eastern Studies; Apolinar Ramirez, Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology; David Quispe Escudero Bachelors of Science; Geoffrey Vancol, Stonewall Pride Alliance; Andrew Becerra, Stonewall Pride Alliance; Charkivia Lovett, LGBTQA Initiatives; Aidyn Scott, LGBTQA Initiatives; and Janeille Simpson, LGBTQA Initiatives.
Highlighting the “T” in our Community:

FIU MPAS has been working hard this last semester to bring more light to the “T” of the LGBTQA (and all of the other letters the community has adopted). In this case we mean the “T” for Transgender. For those who may not be as familiar with the transgender subsection of the LGBTQA community here is a little clarification. Transgender is an umbrella term to cover anyone that does not follow the traditional male/female based on birth sex dichotomy; this includes everything from cross dressers to transsexuals. This also means that there are people somewhere in the middle of all of this gender talk that claim both genders sometimes, all the time, or even never.

The biggest program that has been implemented here at FIU in an effort to show support and educate on transgender issues is the pronoun campaign. The pronoun campaign started on April 5th at the kick off to the Florida Collegiate Pride Coalition Conference. The campaign uses a small card with a brief paragraph of why pronouns are important and the harm that using the wrong one can bring, as well as some variations on pronouns used. There is also a sticker that simply says “Please Respect My Pronouns” with a line to let individuals identify what they prefer. Pronouns are one of the single largest sources of stress for members of the “T” community, using the wrong pronoun could “out” them, it could take away their feelings of confidence and empowerment, and it takes away their identity. With the pronoun campaign we are working towards creating understanding and allowing people to safely self-identify without putting them in any awkward positions. The sample of the postcard is listed below.

FIU also took another big step during the conference; there was a pair of gender neutral restrooms. While only temporary, it was still a step in the right direction. The conversations had in order to get the restrooms for the weekend helped show that there is a greater need for gender neutral restrooms on campus in general. It is important to remember that small steps are what get us farther and that GC wasn’t built (or remodeled) in a day. Our office has worked closely with the Graham Center and Wolfe University to begin identifying locations for future gender neutral bathrooms.

Keep your eyes peeled for more transgender news in the future as FIU continues to make those small steps.

Your friendly neighborhood transman
Aidyn Scott
Graduate Assistant
MPAS—LGBTQA Initiatives

Understanding Pronouns

For many gender-queer, transgender, and other gender-variant people, pronouns can be a source of frustration, anxiety, hurt and unease. Being referred to by the wrong pronoun, particularly by family and friends, can make one feel as though people do not respect their genders. There are additional options when it comes to gender-neutral pronouns. People have been searching for an English, gender-neutral, third-person singular pronoun for years (admittedly, mostly to avoid the awkward “he or she,” not in order to include non-binary gendered people), although none of them have really been adopted into mainstream usage. Within transgender and gender-queer communities, there are two particular sets of gender-neutral pronouns: ze/hir and they/them/their, used similarly to she/her & he/him/his.

Chat Live with Us!

Ever had an LGBTQA question or concern that you wanted to talk to someone about? Did you know that you can Chat live with our staff via the MPAS LGBTQA website: http://mpas.fiu.edu/LGBTQA.html

Click on the LGBTQA chat button and we will be happy to assist you. Chat is available Monday through Friday 8am – 5pm

Save the Dates!

2013-2014 Important dates
September 4th LGBTQA Welcome Reception at BBC Location TBA
September 5th LGBTQA Welcome Reception @ MMC 243 GC 4pm - 6pm
November 20th LGBTQA Thanksgiving Day Dinner @ BBC Location TBA
November 26th LGBTQA Thanksgiving Day Dinner @ MMC
April is Pride Month
April13th Miami Gay Pride Parade
Keep an out for our full calendar coming soon!
Miami-Dade’s Public Schools 15th & Broward County’s 7th Annual Public High Schools Diversity Days

FIU attended the Annual Diversity Day sponsored by Safe Schools South Florida. Over 300 students were in attendance from GSA from both Miami and Broward’s various high schools.

Day of Silence at MMC & BBC Campus

Speaking Card

Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement protesting the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and transgender people and their allies. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by harassment, prejudice, and discrimination. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today.

What are you going to do to end the silence?

Point Foundation Cornerstone Event

Ten FIU staff, faculty, students and alumni assisted with the Point Foundations Miami Scholarship event held at the Miami Botanical Gardens on May 7, 2013. Over 150 people were in attendance including Miami Beach’s Mayor, State Representative David Richardson and several other city officials.
This fall semester MPAS LGBTQA Initiatives proudly presents the, "LGBTQA 3D Series". The series is a diverse set of presentations offered throughout the year in order to provide awareness and education on LGBTQA topics and concerns to the FIU community. These lunch time sessions are held to bring together students, faculty and staff to dine, discuss and deliberate together as an FIU family. Below is a complete list of our Fall and Spring D3 Series programs. Please join us to "Dine, Discuss & Deliberate". Sessions are open to all. Please be sure to RSVP for the workshops you will be attending at: lgbt@fiu.edu

**FALL 2013**

September 19th  Gay & Lesbian Brothers and Sisters in Greek Life
12-2pm  GC 314

Ever wonder what it would be like to be Gay or Lesbian in a Greek organization? Wonder how you can help your Gay Brothers or Sisters fit in? Then join us to learn about this topic and how you can make a difference.

October 3rd  DOMA is dead… so what’s next?
12-2pm  GC 314

While history was made with the recent Supreme Court ruling on DOMA, for many same-sex couples, marriage is still not an option. Come learn about Florida’s same sex marriage ban and what you can do to make a difference.

October 17th  LGBTQ in the Workforce…what do I do?
12-2pm  GC 314

So you wanna know how to make it in the workforce as a GLBTQA individual? Then come listen to this interesting panel that will offer their tips, and words of wisdom to help you succeed.

November 7th  Lesbian, Gays and Queers oh my! My friend is Gay what do I do?
12-2pm  GC 314

So you best friend just came out to you, what do you do? Who do you talk to? Come hear great tips, learn about the resources available when discussing this sometimes difficult topic.

**SPRING 2014**

February 13th  Healthy Relationships
12-2pm  GC 314

Having and maintaining a healthy relationship can sometimes be difficult for same sex partners. Join us as we explore this topic and provide some valuable insights into what makes a relationship a healthy one.

February 27th  Telling it Straight
12-2pm  GC 314

So you wanna be a good ally for your LGBTQ family member or friends but aren’t sure how? What do you say or not say? Join us as we provide you with a model and resources to help you be a good ally.

March 20th  LGBTQA Faith and Family
12-2pm  GC 314

Is it possible to be spiritual and LGBTQ? How can I help family and friends understand that this is okay? Come hear from some of the gay affirming and welcoming churches and organizations in south Miami.

April 3rd  The Politics of Pride Today
12-2pm  GC 314

April is pride month a time to celebrate and educate. However not all pride celebrations are full of joy and happiness. Come find out the history of pride celebrations and how this phenomenon is experienced in different parts of the world.

*Sessions are designed with our MPAS students in mind and will count as credit for their SSS and/or VEO workshops.*
This fall semester MPAS LGBTQA Initiatives proudly presents the, “LGBTQA 3D Series”. The series is a diverse set of presentations offered throughout the year in order to provide awareness and education on LGBTQA topics and concerns to the FIU community. These lunch time sessions are held to bring together students, faculty and staff to dine, discuss and deliberate together as an FIU family. Below is a complete list of our Fall and Spring D3 Series programs. Please join us to “Dine, Discuss & Deliberate”. Sessions are open to all. Please be sure to RSVP for the workshops you will be attending at: lgbt@fiu.edu

**FALL 2013**

**September 19th**
Gay & Lesbian Brothers and Sisters in Greek Life  12-2pm  GC 314
Ever wonder what it would be like to be Gay or Lesbian in a Greek organization? Wonder how you can help your Gay Brothers or Sisters fit in? Then join us to learn about this topic and how you can make a difference.

**October 3rd**
DOMA is dead... so what's next?  12-2pm  GC 314
While history was made with the recent Supreme Court ruling on DOMA, for many same-sex couples, marriage is still not an option. Come learn about Florida's same sex marriage ban and what you can do to make a difference.

**October 17th**
LGBTQ in the Workforce...what do I do?  12-2pm  GC 314
So you wanna know how to make it in the workforce as a GLBTQA individual? Then come listen to this interesting panel that will offer their tips, and words of wisdom to help you succeed.

**November 7th**
Lesbian, Gays and Queers oh my! My friend is Gay what do I do?  12-2pm  GC 314
So you best friend just came out to you, what do you do? Who do you talk to? Come hear great tips, learn about the resources available when discussing this sometimes difficult topic.

**SPRING 2014**

**February 13th**
Healthy Relationships  12-2pm  GC 314
Having and maintaining a healthy relationship can sometimes be difficult for same sex partners. Join us as we explore this topic and provide some valuable insights into what makes a relationship a healthy one.

**February 27th**
Telling it Straight  12-2pm  GC 314
So you wanna be a good ally for your LGBTQ family member or friends but aren't sure how? What do you say or not say? Join us as we provide you with a model and resources to help you be a good ally.

**March 20th**
LGBTQA Faith and Family  12-2pm  GC 314
Is it possible to be spiritual and LGBTQ? How can I help family and friends understand that this is okay? Come hear from some of the gay affirming and welcoming churches and organizations in south Miami.

**April 3rd**
The Politics of Pride Today  12-2pm  GC 314
April is pride month a time to celebrate and educate. However not all pride celebrations are full of joy and happiness. Come find out the history of pride celebrations and how this phenomenon is experienced in different parts of the world.

*Sessions are designed with our MPAS students in mind and will count as credit for their SSS and/or VEO workshops.*
Safe Zone gets a face lift! The New LGBTQA Training & Development Committee

The Safe Zone Committee has been busy at FIU this past semester. The group has debuted its new Safe Zone sticker and been hard at work on restructuring the Committee to best meet the changing needs of the LGBTQA FIU population. In this article you will find an update of the new structure.

Safe Zone was originally established to train staff and faculty in order to establish safe spaces on campus for LGBTQ individuals. Throughout the years however the group morphed into serving a myriad of various LGBTQA needs on campus, making it difficult to sustain its original mission. As a result a new LGBTQA Training and Development Committee has now been established.

The goal of the LGBTQA Training and Development committee is three fold:
1) to provide education, 2) create awareness and 3) increase visibility on campus regarding the LGBTQA community. With this end in mind the committee will be comprised of three functional subcommittees: 1) Safe Zone; 2) the LGBTQA Speakers Bureau and; 3) Workshops and the LGBQA Campus Groups & Events.

We would like to invite you to be part of our new structure or if you are interested in being trained on Safe Zone please contact us at: lgbt@fiu.edu

Congratulations to our Spring 2013 Ally Spotlight Award Recipient
Dr. Janie Valdez!

Dr. Janie Valdes, Ed.D.
Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Education

We are so excited to announce this semester’s Ally Spotlight Award. Drum roll please….. Congratulations to Dr. Janie Valdes! Dr. Valdes is an advocate for students. She is tireless in her efforts to ensure all students receive the best services and support to help them reach their full potential. Whether LGBT, veterans, or non-traditional students, she is instrumental in fostering a welcoming and supportive network where students can achieve their goals. It’s not just the rainbow pin in her office that lets you know you are in a safe place and can be yourself. It’s something in her personality that lets you know you can confide in her. She has counseled many LGBTQ students who have had a difficult time. She is a constant supporter of the Miami Gay Men’s Chorus and encourages faculty and staff to support it. It sends a very positive message when the director or an assistant dean is vocal about their support of GLBTQA issues and organizations. It sets an example for other FIU leaders, employees, and students. Dr. Valdes was also a very enthusiastic supporter and presenter in the 10th Annual Florida Collegiate Pride parade Coalition Conference in April 2013, which is an annual 3-day conference that brings together college students of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and ally communities from all over the state of Florida.