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Fearless Friday: Chelsea Broe

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Fearless Friday: Chelsea Broe

Abstract

Consistently speaking up for social justice issues around campus, finding innovative ways to promote peer understanding, and making our campus a more welcoming, accepting, and open place, **Chelsea Broe '14** is a fearless leader who advocates for others.

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, sexuality, gender

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Gender and Sexuality | Sociology

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](#) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: CHELSEA BROE

May 9, 2014

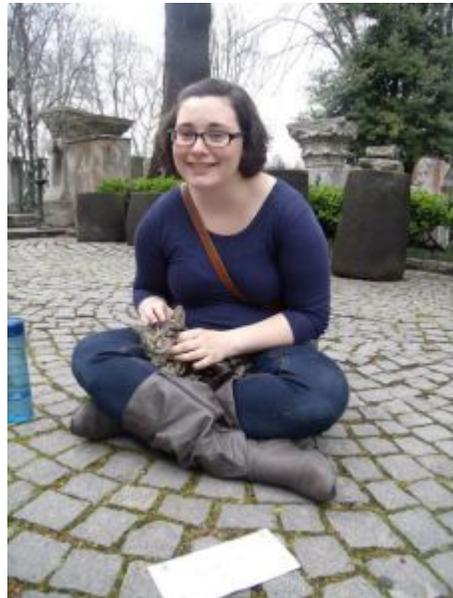
Consistently speaking up for social justice issues around campus, finding innovative ways to promote peer understanding, and making our campus a more welcoming, accepting, and open place, **Chelsea Broe '14** is a fearless leader who advocates for others.

When she's not writing stellar articles for Surge about social justice issues, Chelsea stays involved by being a Diversity Peer Educator (DPE), working in Res Life, and working in the Writing Center. "I really like working as a DPE," says Chelsea, "because it's my job to come up with creative ways to get people interested in issues of diversity so that they can talk about and understand diversity in different ways."

This past year, DPE held an MP3 experiment for students to meet each other and learn about diversity, had a movie night, and made an identity photo booth. "For the photo booth, we set up a table outside the CUB with little whiteboards so people could write different things about their identities, and then we took their pictures with their whiteboards and put them up on Facebook. It was a great way for people to share different parts of their identities, see other people's identities, and start thinking more critically about their own."

The DPE group is only two years old, but has already had a great impact on campus. "I think diversity issues are important because on campus it seems like people don't tend to think about it very much," says Chelsea. "In a lot of ways, we have a very homogeneous campus, so people don't really know how to talk about difference, or if they *should* acknowledge difference, or if they even *can* acknowledge difference. But if difference is not acknowledged, it makes it more uncomfortable for people who do feel different. You're just overlooking part of their identity if you treat them as if there's no difference."

Another way in which Chelsea is involved on campus that keeps her focus on helping students learn more about and shape their identities is through her work with Residence Life. "I work as a Community Advisor (CA) with sophomores, trying to help them acclimate to their sophomore years where it's less about knowing where different things are—it's really about planning and thinking ahead. I push my residents to take advantage of different things



on campus like study abroad and the Center for Career Development, Greek Life, and leadership opportunities like the Garthwait Leadership Center (GLC).”

Chelsea herself was involved in the GLC leadership institute during her sophomore year and found the experience to be a transformative, pivotal moment for her. “It was an amazing experience. I still talk about it all the time,” says Chelsea. “I feel like it’s had a huge impact on my time here at Gettysburg because it got me interested in and thinking about issues of race for the first time. I had always focused on issues of gender and sexuality, but I had never really considered race. It was an eye-opening experience to go to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas and hear about the experiences of the students there, and it has definitely changed how I view things.”

During her sophomore year, too, Chelsea and her friends started talking about making a theme house for their junior year that would be based off of doing random acts of kindness around campus. And so during her junior year, when she wasn’t studying abroad in Denmark, she lived in the Random Acts of Kindness house where she and her friends put random notes of encouragement in people’s mailboxes, handed out study grams during finals week, and setting up an appreciation station. “The appreciation station was my favorite,” says Broe. “We had a CUB table the week before Thanksgiving and had people come in and write notes of appreciation to anyone on campus. We got over 100 notes written, which was really exciting.”

Whether it’s being involved with diversity-oriented groups on campus like DPE or eRace, or developing new things like the RAK house, Chelsea always finds a way to work social justice issues into everything she does. She is sure to stay involved in different social justice initiatives and activities after Gettysburg, too, since Chelsea will soon be moving out to southwest Ohio where she has been stationed as a Teach for America elementary school teacher. “I’m really excited to be doing Teach for America. And after that, I hope to get my Master’s and then teach a bit more, and then hopefully go into education reform. I mean, the whole education system needs reform. It’s all bad. And I want to get experience now so that I can see where I can make the biggest impact for our education system.”

Chelsea is an influential leader on campus because she is always looking for ways to include people, make them happy, and feel like they belong. Whether that means creating a white board photo booth, putting random notes into people’s mailboxes, or having dialogues about race and gender issues, Chelsea never hesitates to advocate for justice and change.

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/05/09/fearless-friday-chelsea-broe/>