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## Fearless: Josh Griffiths

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# Fearless: Josh Griffiths

## **Abstract**

Continually a strong voice for the underrepresented on campus, working with other students and faculty to take initiative in changing campus policy and culture toward the LGBTQ community, and serving as a leader in multiple groups and organizations on campus, **Josh Griffiths '14** fearlessly advocates for members of our campus community, making Gettysburg a more open and welcoming space. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

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

## **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](https://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: JOSH GRIFFITHS

April 18, 2014



Continually a strong voice for the underrepresented on campus, working with other students and faculty to take initiative in changing campus policy and culture toward the LGBTQ community, and serving as a leader in multiple groups and organizations on campus, **Josh Griffiths '14** fearlessly advocates for members of our campus community, making Gettysburg a more open and welcoming space.

On campus, Josh has been involved in the leadership of many different groups over his past four years here, including ALLies, his fraternity Sigma Chi, the Sunderman Conservatory, and Omicron Delta Kappa, the leadership fraternity on campus. "I was a drum major for the conservatory's marching band this year and I was

also the president of ODK,” says Josh. “But I think the groups I’ve been the most consistently involved with have been ALLies and Sigma Chi.”

When Josh arrived at Gettysburg his first year, the ALLies group on campus was very small, just starting out. “The club was almost nonexistent,” says Josh. “There were only 7 or 8 people in the group and it really wasn’t a presence on campus. So, I became president and then started encouraging the group to take initiative to change the club and its influence on campus.” Josh and the other members of ALLies started getting more involved in the campus community by going straight to the top—they made a list of changes and accommodations they wanted to see on campus regarding gender and sexuality inequalities, and brought them straight to President Janet Morgan Riggs, Dean Ramsey, and the Provost.

“We didn’t know whether or not they’d be accepting of the suggestions and changes we had in mind,” says Josh, “but they were very accepting of them and start working with us. We sat down with President Riggs a few times and worked on what we could do to change the campus policies on gender and sexuality, add gender-neutral bathrooms, and gender-neutral housing. That was also the first year that the rainbow flag flew from the cupola of Penn Hall.”

Josh is also very involved in his fraternity, Sigma Chi, where he has served as both the ritual chairman and the new member educator. “I like to think of Sigma Chia as one of the more open-minded groups on campus that takes a stand on social issues and is really accepting of people with different sexual orientations, race, religions, etc. My fraternity has been really important for me because it has provided a place to go, outside of what most people probably assume Greek life is normally like.”

After his sophomore year, Josh investigated differences in language use between urban and rural communities of gay men in Pennsylvania on a Mellon Grant, and in the fall, Josh will be going to the University of Texas at Austin to pursue a PhD. in French linguistics, moving from studying the social aspects of language and lexicons to studying the more theoretical end of how people in different communities communicate.

But just because Josh is graduating and leaving campus doesn’t mean that he doesn’t still have goals for Gettysburg. “I’d like to see ALLies continue to grow. If we continue to get such passionate people involved in the group, we can continue this upward trajectory we started and good things will come. It’s important to realize that even small changes or one small group of people can really spark change for the future.”

“Actually, Minniejean Brown Trickey said a wonderful thing at the speech she gave on Wednesday. She talked about the importance of looking at your actions in the context of how they will affect people seven generations after you. In terms of Gettysburg generations, that’s about 28 years. So I think a really important question to ask in trying to change things on campus is, ‘How will this help and benefit students 28 years from now?’ And that’s not to say that you can change everybody’s mind or that eventually everything will be perfect. But we can still make positive changes now that will positively impact students in the future.”

Josh has undoubtedly been an important and influential leader on campus during his past four years here, creating pathways for long-lasting policy change on campus, opening the campus up to having a more accepting atmosphere, and inspiring those around him to be allies and advocates with the LGBTQ members of campus.

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/04/18/fearless-josh-griffiths/>