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Fearless Friday: Casey O'Higgins

Casey O'Higgins
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: Casey O'Higgins

Abstract

This week is Spirit week. Because of this, today's Fearless Friday honors a student who has worked tirelessly to promote education around LGBTQ issues.

Casey O'Higgins is a senior from Detroit, Michigan, who is majoring in Women & Gender Studies and minoring in English. He is the President of Outerspace, an LGBTQ organization on campus that provides a safe, social space for students in the LGBTQ community and allies to socialize. Casey also works at the Office of LGBTQ Advocacy and Education as one of their program coordinators. In this role, he is responsible for organizing campus events that are geared towards raising awareness about the problems faced by the LGBTQ community. Spirit Week and Bisexual Awareness Day are among the events that Casey has helped to plan.

[*excerpt*]

Keywords

Fearless Friday, Gettysburg College, Detroit, Education, Gender, leadership, LGBTQ, Sexuality, Teach for America, WGS, Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Center for Public Service

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://cupola.gettysburg.edu) 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: CASEY O'HIGGINS

October 21, 2016



This week is Spirit week. Because of this, today's Fearless Friday honors a student who has worked tirelessly to promote education around LGBTQ issues.

Casey O'Higgins is a senior from Detroit, Michigan, who is majoring in Women & Gender Studies and minoring in English. He is the President of Outerspace, an LGBTQ organization on campus that provides a safe, social space for students in the LGBTQ community and allies to socialize. Casey also works at the Office of LGBTQ Advocacy and Education as one of their program coordinators. In this role, he is responsible for organizing campus events that are geared towards raising awareness about the problems faced by the LGBTQ community. Spirit Week and Bisexual Awareness Day are among the events that Casey has helped to plan.

He became involved in these organizations during his junior year here at Gettysburg. It seemed like a natural progression for Casey; as a freshman, he focused on navigating the campus community and coming to terms with his own identity. By junior year, however, he felt that he was ready to take the next step. Casey began pursuing leadership roles on campus that would allow him to help others embrace their identities. Much of his motivation to assume these roles came from his desire for comfortable, safe spaces on campus where LGBTQ students could come together. Early in his college career, Casey noticed that there was a lack of queer visibility on campus and that many LGBTQ students didn't always feel "queer enough" to engage with the resources that were available at the time. To remedy this, he created Outerspace.

Casey also tries to encourage awareness by being "out enough so other people don't have to be." He knows that by being openly queer, he can help add to the diversity of voices taking part in campus conversations. This didn't always come easily for Casey. There are many moments in his past when he didn't defend his identity; he looks back on these times regretfully, wishing he would have proudly asserted his identity instead of feeling afraid to do so.

Above all, Casey believes that education is one of the best ways we can create a community, nationally and campus-wide, that is committed to developing safe spaces in which people can explore their identities. It's

important to him that we critically analyze the disparities in our educational systems and that we commit to teaching inclusive, diverse curricula. Casey is currently applying to Teach for America so that he can work toward these goals.

Thank you, Casey, for all that you have done for our campus community!

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