

MSU Stories of the Pride

Queer Students of MSU

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PREFACE

I was inspired when we went on a fieldtrip for the Queer Straight Alliance (QSA) to the library archives. We got to look at QSA's history, one of the oldest clubs on campus [[**TODO:** Clarify is it the oldest or just one of the oldest?]]. I wanted to help document this history as it happens. The purpose of this document is to capture stories of queer individuals at Montana State University (MSU). It is meant to serve as a time capsule of sorts for LGBTQ+ students. The stories are not required to meet any standards; there are no assigned topics nor length limit. Participants can write about what is meaningful to them and their personal experiences. If things change and people have more to say, they can add multiple stories over their time at MSU. I hope this document can become a collaboration between many groups on campus and lives on long past me.

The information for each story (only what the writer is comfortable sharing) is a combination of:

- Name
- Pronouns
- Year in school
- Major
- How the writer identifies
- Story
- Title of story

Some potential topic ideas could be:

- What are your experiences as a member of the MSU LGBTQ+ community?
- When did you discover your identity and how did you feel about it?
- What is your coming out story?
- What advice do you have to younger or less experienced LGBTQ+ individuals?
- What's a funny/sad/happy/random story that involves your LGBTQ+ identity?

- What are some LGBTQ+ issues in the world today and how do they affect you?
- (Current Event!) If you were forced to go back home due to coronavirus, how did that situation play out?

The current event topic was suggested by Anne. I really like it and think it would offer an interesting take on the current times we live in from a queer point of view. It would make unique stories for future generations to look at. My heart goes out to those who had to return home and be once again closeted or be unaccepted.

LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES

[[**TODO:** Have members of the MSU LGBTQ+ community (QSA, oSTEM, etc.) write about the identities making it more primary source material!]]

ASEXUAL

The dictionary defines asexuality as not having sexual feelings toward others, not experiencing sexual desire or attraction [1]. [[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define asexual.]]

BISEXUAL

According to the dictionary, bisexuality is defined as of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex and of the opposite sex [2]. [[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define bisexual.]]

GAY

The term gay has a little more complex meaning. For example, the dictionary defines it as of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex, usually referring to males [3]. It also says of, relating to, or intended for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc [3]. Therefore gay doesn't just refer to one group. [[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define gay.]]

GENDER FLUID

Gender fluid is defined as of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is not fixed [4]. [[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define gender fluid.]]

LESBIAN

The dictionary defines lesbian as of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to other women or between women [5]. It also shares an interesting fact about the origin of the term. Sappho of Lesbos (c. 610-c. 580 b.c. lead a female religion and educational community where she would write poetry for and about other women [5].
[[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define lesbian.]]

NONBINARY

Nonbinary is defined by the dictionary as relating to or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female [6].
[[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define nonbinary.]]

PANSEXUAL

Pansexual is defined as of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction that is not limited to people of a particular gender identity or sexual orientation [7].
[[**TODO:** Work with MSU's LGBTQ+ community to further define pansexual.]]

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2019-2020

ANONYMOUS: PICK AND CHOOSE

I had a conservative upbringing wherein the idea of being binary was inherent and somewhat drilled into us, children. Those were the underpinnings of a culture I had to take a hiatus from, when I came to America at 17 and my entire foundation of navigating identities was dismantled by my engagement at MSU. I starting questioning but that only made me increasingly frustrated, as I had a conflict brewing inside me. At this time, a close friend of mine and a member of the MSU LGBTQ+ community told me something, that changed my entire perspective on having an intersectional identity. He said, "You need to pick and choose a person to love, not a gender" and that defined the rest of my experience at MSU.

-Cell Biology & Neuroscience, Junior

BRITNEY: FINALLY, A REALIZATION

I never realized my sexual identity and now that I have, I'm much happier. The signs were all there, I even joked about being a lesbian or told it to guys when I didn't want to go on dates. Turns out it was true! Basically, long story short, my best friend in Bozeman moved and I was lonely. I was 22 and for the first time started to consider that maybe I wanted a relationship. Shortly after a guy asked me out. Now I've never been attracted to a guy in my life, but I said yes. I assumed that's how it was for all people. The funny thing is I had been attracted to girls in the past, I just never realized what that was either. This guy and I had been dating for a while when I began to realize I was in love with a friend from high school. Shortly before things ended with him, I reached out to her. I told myself we were just friends. She ended up being my first kiss. Another long story short, she ended up breaking my heart. However, I realized something valuable. Turns out, I was not straight; I am a lesbian! I started looking into dating girls and getting involved in the MSU LGBTQ+ community. There I found a wonderful group of friends

and encouraging community. All in all, I am so thankful I was able to meet these people and explore my identity with them. It's been an interesting, amazing ride!

-She/Her/Hers

-Computer Science, Masters

SHAMARRA HARDEMAN:

After discovering my Not So Straight™ identity in my second year I started frequenting the Queer Straight Alliance every week. The president at the time, Jamie, introduced the game Warewolf to the group. I thought it was a great bonding experience for the local queers, and it was easy to build a lot of strong connections and friendships through this game for me. So the following year once they had left I decided I wanted to start running these games more often in qsa just after the meeting. It's a lot of crazy stories of betrayal, trust, and friendship and I think it's absolutely amazing! At this point that was two years ago now and we have a tradition of doing it at the end of almost every meeting and then we go to IHOP and talk to the amazing waitress and hang out there for an hour or two. I guess it's not just one story, but I've seen this continuing event bring people out of their bubbles and create strong friendships that have lasted and I really enjoy it!

-She/Her/Hers

-Political Science

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[[**TODO:** Include acknowledgments of those that helped and want credit]]

LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES

Asexual: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write asexual section]]

Bisexual: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write bisexual section]]

Gay: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write gay section]]

Gender Fluid: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write gender fluid section]]

Lesbian: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write lesbian section]]

Nonbinary: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write nonbinary section]]

Pansexual: [[**TODO:** Names of people who helped write pansexual section]]

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