

Teaching LGBTQ+
History & Erasure
Through Archaeology

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Nashville Big Picture High School

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March 13, 2018

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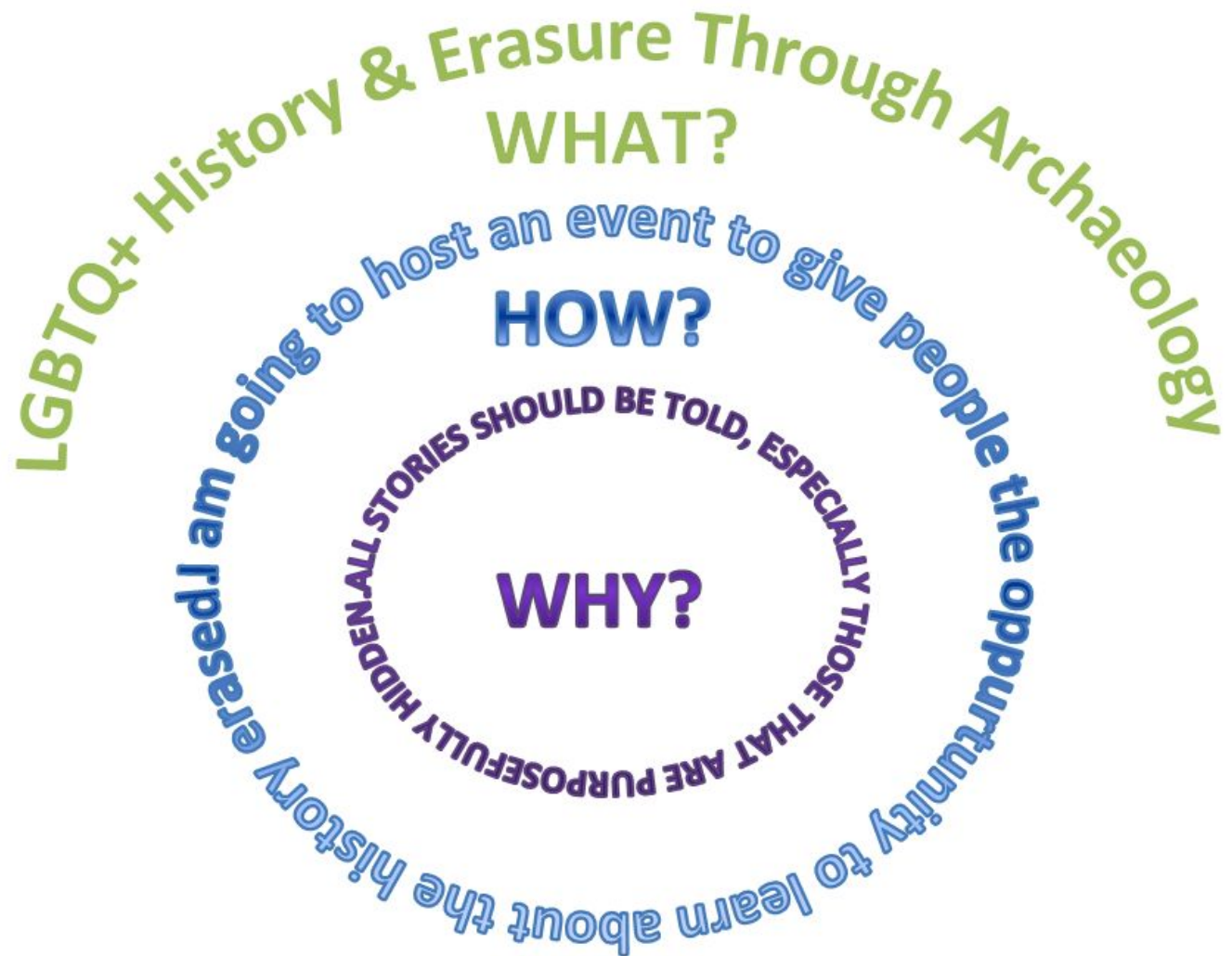
Executive Summary

a. Overview

I have always wanted to know what is in between the lines of the history I have learned. What storyteller inspired someone to sit down and write The Epic of Gilgamesh? Who laid the first brick of the pyramid structures found in a handful of countries? Every event in a history book has countless people tied to it that we will never know about. As much as I wish I could tell the life story of everyone from the worker that strung Johnny Cash's guitar to that of the individual in a few thousands year old grave that no one has found, I can not. Instead I am going to focus on major gap in acknowledged history, the LGBTQ+ community.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) history is kept under very heavy wraps. I have met people inside the community who do not know what the Stonewall Riots were. Some of those who have heard of it think that white men started the revolution. I have met people outside the community who think that these identities were "invented" in the early 2000s. Some of this is intentional, some of it is not, and all of it needs to be fixed. I am going to organize an event to teach people inside and outside the community to learn about the long existence of LGBTQ+ people in as many walks of life as I can fit into it. The people the speakers will talk about do not even get a paragraph in your average history book. This project already contains my passions for history and justice. I am going to add a theater element by having the high school students participate in a skit competition.

b. Golden Circle



Capstone Description

Despite its importance and impact, LGBTQ+ history is not widely taught. The only state where it is part of the curriculum is California. Even then, the curriculum goes into effect in the 2018-2019 school year. My goal in this project is that everyone who attends my event learns even the smallest detail about LGBTQ+ history. I hope that some individuals can learn that people with these identities are and always have been in everyday life. Using historical and archaeological examples is a great way to accomplish this. My event will host four speakers who specialize in different areas of this branch of history. Though I do not know who the speakers will exactly be, I have a variety of resources with an equally wide range of knowledge. For example, I am planning to contact Dr. Helford from Middle Tennessee State University's Women's Center. Her expertise is in queer, film and popular culture, and Jewish American and Holocaust studies. I want to have the most diverse group of speakers I can have for only hosting four. After the event, I will be donating any leftover funds to a queer archaeology or anthropology group.

Both LGBTQ+ students and non-LGBTQ+ students can gain a lot from this event. Everyone has the potential to realize how much of this history exists compared to how much they actually know. Even those who have an understanding of the extent of the erasure can learn more queer life in a different culture or time period. One of my goals is that everyone will be able to apply their knowledge to their form of advocacy. I hope that people outside of the community can learn something that they can use to help others un-learn their misconceptions, and those inside the community can maybe find some validation.

Capstone Analysis

A. Preliminary Research

- What is erasure of the LGBTQ+ community?
 - Oxford Dictionary defines erasure as “the removal of writing, recorded material, or data” and “the removal of all traces of something; obliteration.”¹ LGBTQ+ people, as does anyone else who goes against societal norms and expectations, have been persecuted for a long time. Unfortunately, it is not clearly stated how and how long ago the criminalization took shape. The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has pieced together a LGBTQ+ history timeline that includes an entry for a group known as the “Night Officials.” The members were said to arrest men on the charge of sodomy in Florence during the 1430s.² However, there is little else to find on the subject. I found one source with the potential of an expansive understanding, a book titled *Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trail*. There was one sentence stating “authorities in Florence in 1400s used strict supervision to curtail sodomy.” It includes equally vague actions in other European Countries and early United States.³ This is an example of erasure. Queer history has existed for centuries, but it has been intentionally repressed.

¹ “Erasure.” *Oxford Living Dictionaries*, Oxford Dictionary.

² “LGBTQ History Timeline.” *GLSEN*.

³ Keen, Lisa, and Suzanne B. Goldberg. *Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trail*. Chapter 4. University of Michigan, 1998.

- This history is not widely taught outside of post-secondary education. California is the only state that has LGBTQ+ history in its curriculum, and will be required for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year. If someone would like to learn more about it, they would have to research it themselves. According to GLSEN's 2015 National School Safety Survey, less than half of students had access to LGBTQ+ resources and information in their school's library. The same amount could not access this information through their school's internet connection.⁴
- How has oppression and erasure affected people around the world and in different eras?
 - Admittedly, what I know most about queer history is the Stonewall Riots. I can (and have) talk about the affects the mafia had on criminalizing LGBTQ+ people for quite a while. As important as that movement is in the United States, it is only event in one country. What did queer persecution look like before police raids? Where were LGBTQ+ identities against the law and where was it an unspoken rule not to be open? What are some of these laws? Are there places where they are or have been worse? Who or what groups influenced oppression? Are there more instances where the root of the discrimination comes from outside of a fear of "otherness"? For example, the mafia owned the gay bars in New York. This caused many people to associate LGBTQ+ people with the unfortunate managers of their bars.
 - When the colonists first landed in the Americas, "all Native American societies acknowledged three to five gender roles: Female, male, Two Spirit female, Two Spirit male and transgendered." These identities were always celebrated. They

⁴ "2015 National School Climate Survey." *GLSEN*.

often held highly revered positions and qualities in their tribes. For example, passing on tradition, being religious leaders, “having a high functioning intellect (possibly from a life of self-questioning), keen artistic skills and an exceptional capacity for compassion. Rather than being social dead-enders as within Euro-American culture today...” In some Siouan tribes it was believed that The Creator gave children their skills, regardless of gender association, before they were born. “Just as with all other aspects of the European regard for Indians, gender variance was not tolerated.” There is record of Christopher Columbus literally throwing those with a gender variance to the dogs.⁵ George Catlin, a well-known artist for his work painting Native Americans during the 1830s,⁶ said that these traditions “*must be extinguished before it can be more fully recorded.*” The Bureau of Indian Affairs forced a Two-Spirit named Osh-Tisch to cut their hair and follow European gender roles. The damage has gone so far as to that in the 1900s it was widely accepted that the⁷ Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, Tuscarora (Six Nations)⁸ did not have these traditions “despite documentation and oral histories.” Many Native Americans do not identify as LGBTQ+ because they desire to “remove themselves from a culture that emphasizes sexuality over spirituality and a way to reconnect with their own tribal communities. Adopting the Two Spirit term was the answer.”⁹

⁵ Brayboy, Duane. “Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders.” *Indian Country Media Network*, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Embassy of Tribal Nations, 7 Sept. 2017.

⁶ “Biography of George Catlin.” *George Catlin - The Complete Works - Biography*.

⁷ Brayboy, Duane. “Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders.” *Indian Country Media Network*, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Embassy of Tribal Nations, 7 Sept. 2017.

⁸ “League of Nations.” *Haudenosaunee Confederacy*, Haudenosaunee Development Institute.

⁹ Brayboy, Duane. “Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders.” *Indian Country Media Network*, National Congress

- What are some social movements that have raised awareness and change for LGBTQ+ issues?
 - The Stonewall Riots are the most commonly known event in United States' queer history. It inspired dozens of organizations and marches. It is the reason Pride Month is in June. However, there were similar riots before and after. There were organizations before Stonewall. What impact did they have? What other countries have had similar experiences? How did their movements affect the modern progress that LGBTQ+ people have?
 - Gene Compton's Cafeteria was a restaurant that remained open twenty-four hours located in San Francisco, California. It was nearly equidistant between a bus terminal, "the hair salon, the corner bar and the bathhouse" which made it a popular place for transwomen to gather. This was not what the staff and management of Compton's Cafeteria wanted their restaurant to be, which led to a large amount of police raids. Like the Stonewall Riots, the women there got tired of the harassment and violence, therefore they fought back. They damaged the restaurant, structures on the streets, police cars, and police officers themselves. This riot happened in 1963, three years before the Stonewall Riots. After Stonewall, there was a large increase in open LGBTQ+ rights organizations, protests, and parades. Compton barely got news coverage, but that does not mean it is not important.¹⁰ In the miniseries *When We Rise*, which is based on true stories, Cleve Jones moved to San Francisco in search of the gay liberation

of American Indians (NCAI) Embassy of Tribal Nations, 7 Sept. 2017.

¹⁰ Paskula, Nicole. "Ladies In The Streets: Before Stonewall, Transgender Uprising Changed Lives." National Public Radio, 5 May 2015.

rumored to thrive there. After his move, Jones joins Harvey Milk's, one of the first openly gay elected officials, campaign. Every small step in the LGBTQ+ movement led to change.¹¹

- What can be done to keep making improvements in society?
 - Fortunately, leaps and bounds have been made in understanding and protecting those in the community. In 2016, California's LGBTQ+ legislative group submitted twenty six bills to be reviewed.¹² One of the state's newest laws created a more efficient way for birth certificates to pronounce one's sex as non-binary. Physical transition and doctor's notices are no longer required to obtain it. Oregon and Washington D.C. have similar systems for driver's licenses.¹³ Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, India, Nepal, and New Zealand have these in place as well.¹⁴ There is a book featured on the National Park Service's website titled *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. It has chapters dedicated to the importance and preservation of this history. Naturally, there is a focus on the value of historic monuments. It also talks about so many different LGBTQ+ experiences. It includes a lot of useful information on how to support this history on an institutional level.¹⁵

¹¹ Black, Dustin Lance. *When We Rise*. ABC, 2017.

¹² "List of LGBTQ Related Legislation for 2015-16 Session." *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Caucus*, California Legislature, 5 Oct. 2016.

¹³ Caron, Christina. "Californians Will Soon Have Nonbinary as a Gender Option on Birth Certificates." *The New York Times*, 19 Oct. 2017.

¹⁴ Grinberg, Emanuella. "You Can Now Get a Gender Neutral Driver's License in D.C." *CNN*, 28 June 2017.

¹⁵ "LGBTQ Heritage Theme Study." *National Parks Service*, U.S. Department of the Interior.

- While government level growth is important, there also needs to be an increase in person to person support. Especially regarding families and schools. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) “Growing Up LGBT in America” reports that only sixty four percent of LGBTQ+ youth have told their family about their identity. Twenty six percent said “their biggest problems are not feeling accepted by their family, trouble at school/bullying, and a fear to be out/open.” The number of students who say where they live is not accepting is just under half.¹⁶ These identities are not negative, and they need to be seen as such. If the work starts at the bottom with families, at the very least national realization will follow.

i. Works Cited

“Biography of George Catlin.” *George Catlin - The Complete Works - Biography*.

Black, Dustin Lance. *When We Rise*. ABC, 2017.

Brayboy, Duane. “Two Spirits, One Heart, Five Genders.” *Indian Country Media Network*, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Embassy of Tribal Nations, 7 Sept. 2017.

Caron, Christina. “Californians Will Soon Have Nonbinary as a Gender Option on Birth Certificates.” *The New York Times*, 19 Oct. 2017.

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Grinberg, Emanuella. “You Can Now Get a Gender Neutral Driver's License in D.C.” *CNN*, 28 June 2017.

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¹⁶ “Growing Up LGBT in America.” *HRC*.

of Michigan, 1998.

“League of Nations.” *Haudenosaunee Confederacy*, Haudenosaunee Development Institute.

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“LGBTQ History Timeline.” *GLSEN*.

“List of LGBTQ Related Legislation for 2015-16 Session.” *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Caucus*, California Legislature, 5 Oct. 2016.

Paskula, Nicole. “Ladies In The Streets: Before Stonewall, Transgender Uprising Changed Lives.” *National Public Radio*, 5 May 2015.

“2015 National School Climate Survey.” *GLSEN*.

B. Strengths and Weaknesses

My biggest concern is getting high school students to attend my event. Even as someone who enjoys going to events to learn more about something I am interested in, I usually do not go to them. Especially not on the weekend. Most of the people my age would not even give it a moment’s thought. I am doing my best to try and reach people my age. I am going to provide lunch, a fun activity through the skit, and a prize. I am going to try and get the word out through Instagram. I am doing everything I know to get my peers interested.

I do get anxiety asking people to do things for me, so that is a concern regarding contacting speakers and sponsors. As with anything that causes me anxiety, I will look at it as an opportunity to practice and reduce anxiety in the future.

Products

a) Filling In the Blanks:

Combating LGBTQ+ Erasure Through Archaeology

My main product will be an event that teaches high school students about LGBTQ+ history and erasure. First, I will have an introduction defining erasure and the importance of this branch of history. I would like to organize four speakers to attend this event. Each of them will present on LGBTQ+ identities in different cultures and time periods in different rooms. High school students that attend will get to learn about some or all of these topics. A large part of queer erasure is that idea that gay white men are the head of queer liberation, but this is far from the case. Therefore, these presentations will include indigenous cultures, countries outside the United States, and other examples of the long standing existence of LGBTQ+ people. I would like to reaffirm this and the speakers by providing artifacts for each topic. Even if I can not find archaeological evidence to specific to LGBTQ+ lives, the artifacts will make the event more engaging for a high school audience. For example, if one of the speakers is presenting on South American queer identities I would like to have ceramics in the room. Since this event will take a considerable amount of time, I would like to provide the students with lunch. During the second half of this event, students will get the chance to create skits around one of the topics they learned about. They will be assisted by either theatre grad students or professionals. These skits will be judged in order to receive some sort of prize.

This will take a lot of work and organization. I need to create a registry system, find speakers, collect donations, decorate the space, organize a lunch, and so much more. Finding the right speakers and the budget are what concerns me the most. However, I have a lot of potential resources for meeting both of these needs. It will probably not be as difficult as I fear it will.

This event will have so many benefits. This will be a learning experience for those in and outside the community. Everyone who attends will have the opportunity to learn more about marginalized pieces and people of history, that these identities have always existed, and about queer erasure.

LGBTQ+ students may find validation in this information.

i) Venues

Name of Venue	Contact	Phone	Address	Points of Interest
Garland Hall	Dr. Tung	615-322-2553	212 Garland	Great space with lots of room
K.C. Potter Center	Jasmine James	(615) 322-3330	312 West Side Row	LGBTQ+ Center
Inman Fourth Floor Conference Center	Kelli Davis	615-460-8500	1515 Wedgewood Ave	A large space with breakout meeting rooms

b) Outline for Queer Archaeology

I would like to create an outline of this event for Gabriela Oré Menéndez to spread on the website she helps run called Queer Archaeology. There are a fantastic list of resources on the page about creating safe field work environments, the importance of this aspect of history, and articles about LGBTQ+ experiences. An example of youth outreach would be a great addition to their work.

c) Website & Social Media

I would like to create a website and a social media page to help promote Filling In the Blanks.

See marketing (pg. 20) for more information.

d) Survey

Before the event I am going to send everyone who signed up a survey. It will be asking questions about what they know about LGBTQ+ history, where they learned this information, how important they think this history is, areas they would like to know more about, and what their ideas regarding what can be done to improve the outreach of it. I will also ask anyone who did not fill out the survey to do so during or after the event as well.

Operational Plan

a. Step-by-step Plan

1. Create a spreadsheet for calls to sponsors
2. Create a spreadsheet for calls to speakers
3. Make a tentative schedule for event
4. Create name for event
5. Write a script for finding speakers and sponsors
6. Start contacting
7. Collect donations needed to cover costs and add donors to website
8. Find 3-4 speakers
9. Learn how they want to advertise their workshop and add to website and/or social media
10. Finalize schedule and add to website and/or social media
11. Find theatre grad students to participate
12. Find judges and volunteers/facilitators for event
13. Find out about hosting event at Garland Hall
14. Update directions page on website and/or social media for venue
15. Publish website and buy domain
16. Find out about Vanderbilt or other vendor supplying lunch
17. Based on speakers create list of appropriate archaeological items and decorations
18. Create a registry and place link on website and/or social media

19. Create rubric for judges and establish prize
20. Find a graphic designer for posters
21. Print and display posters
22. Create a spreadsheet for calls to high schools LGBTQ+ clubs
23. Send posters and information to teachers in charge of these clubs
24. Send posters to Casey Porter, Oasis, and similar centers
25. Gather everything needed for ambiance
26. Send reminder emails as the event comes closer
27. Send any need information to speakers, judges, grad students, and volunteers
28. Write introduction to event speech
29. Print name tags
30. Make schedules for students
31. Create signs to help students find different rooms
32. Host event
33. Donate any remaining donations to a LGBTQ+ history/anthropology/archaeology group

b. Adult Contacts

My mentor, **Dr. Tiffani Tung** (t.tung@vanderbilt.edu) and an anthropology graduate student, **Gabe Oré** (gabriela.ore@vanderbilt.edu), have been helping me find these resources and so much more. Dr. Tung has offered to help me be able to use Garland Hall for my venue. They are my main adult contacts for this senior capstone.

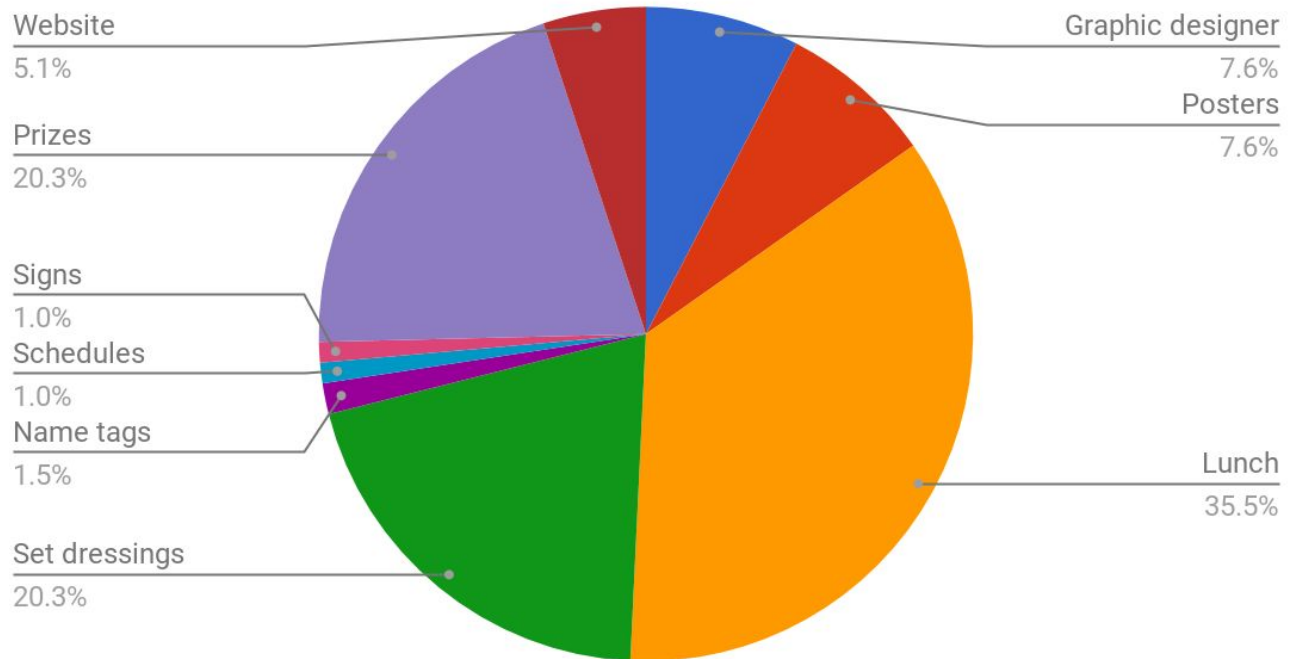
Name	Organization	Reason	Contact Info
Dr. Katie Crawford	Vandy Gender Studies	Speakers	katherine.b.crawford@vanderbilt.edu
Dr. Karen Hammer	Vandy Gender Studies	Speakers	karen.a.hammer@vanderbilt.edu
Dr. Mary Zaborskis	Vandy Gender Studies	Speakers	mary.zaborskis@vanderbilt.edu
Brianna Nesbitt	Margaret Cunniggim Women's Center	Speakers	brianna.nesbitt@vanderbilt.edu
Dr. Andi Stepnick	Belmont Dept. of Sociology	Speakers	andi.stepnick@belmont.edu
Dr. Lean'tin Bracks	Fisk Arts & Languages (oversees Gender Studies)	Speakers	lbracks@fisk.edu
Dr. Jennifer Adebajo	Fisk History & Political Science	Speakers	jadebanj@fisk.edu
Dr. Roberta Chevrette	MTSU Women's Studies	Speakers	roberta.chevrette@mtsu.edu
Dr. LaToya E. Eaves	MTSU Women's Studies	Speakers	latoya.eaves@mtsu.edu
Dr. Kathleen Therrien	MTSU Women's Studies	Speakers	kathleen.therrien@mtsu.edu
Dr. Elyce Rae Helford	MTSU Women's Studies	Speakers	elyce.helford@mtsu.edu
Jasmine James	K.C. Potter Center	Speakers	jasmine.b.james@vanderbilt.edu
Liv Parks	K.C. Potter Center	Speakers	liv.parks@vanderbilt.edu
N/A	Black Pride Nashville	Speakers	615-974-2832
Page Regan	Oasis Center	Speakers	pregan@oasiscenter.org
Dr. Ellen Armour	Divinity School	Speakers	ellen.t.armour@vanderbilt.edu
Dr. Rory Dicker	Margaret Cunniggim Women's Center	Sponsors	615.343.5729
Dr. Katie Crawford	Belmont Dept. of Sociology	Sponsors	(615) 343-7808
Contact Dr. Lean'tin Bracks	Fisk Gender Studies	Sponsors	TBA
Dr. Shelby Longard	Belmont Dept. of Sociology	Sponsors	615-460-6995

Dr. Jennifer Adebajo	Fisk History & Political Science	Sponsors	615-329-8689
Dr. Vicky MacLean	MTSU Women's Studies	Sponsors	615-898-5910
Christopher Purcell	K.C. Potter Center	Sponsors	(615) 322-3330
Rev. Dr. Emilie M. Townes	Divinity School	Sponsors	(615) 322.2776
Pam Sheffer	Oasis Center	Sponsors	(615) 983-6862
Gabe Ore	VAGSA	Sponsors	gabriela.ore@vanderbilt.edu
Brandon Brown	Nashville In Harmony	Sponsors	through majorminors@nashvilleinharmony.org
Ryan Ellis	Pride Festival Nashville	Sponsors	615.844.4159
N/A	Black Pride Nashville	Sponsors	615-974-2832
Leah Lowe	Vanderbilt Dept. of Theatre	Theatre	leah.lowe@vanderbilt.edu
Cori Lammael	Theatre Bug	Theatre	cori @thetheaterbug.org
Bakari King	Theatre Bug	Theatre	bking@usn.org

- I will also need to look into finding judges for the skit competition.

Financial Plan

Total: \$985



Item	Amount
Schedules	\$10
Signs	\$10
Name tags	\$15
Posters	\$75
Graphic designer	\$100
Set dressings	\$200
Prizes	\$200
Lunch	\$350
Website	\$50

Marketing

A good place to start advertising would be high school LGBTQ+ clubs. In the fall, I can call schools and ask for the contact information for the teacher overseeing the group. I will send each of them a poster and a detailed description of the event. They can present that information to their schools as a whole. I would also like to send a copy to the Oasis Center's Just Us and Trans Youth Meet to Empower groups. The Casey Porter Center and Planned Parenthood are places that would welcome the event. The library is always a good spot for posters. Putting posters in places high school students visit frequently would also be a good idea.

My secondary form of advertising would be to create a website social media page. They will detail the speakers, sponsors, sign up, and all of the other necessary information about the event. For example, picture directions to the venue I am currently considered which is easy to miss if you do not know where it is. The website will have more information than the Instagram page, but the social media aspect is important to reach my peers more effectively.

I would like people outside the community to attend, so I will add something to the poster and website to try and encourage this. I think stating that "everyone is welcome," but I would like to do something more. Maybe even encourage every LGBTQ+ person that attends to bring a plus one that is not in the community. As much as LGBTQ+ students will benefit from this group, I do not want to solely preach to the choir.