

DAILY FORTY-NINER

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OUT *OBER*

ON THE COVER

OUTober is a month-long recognition of the LGBTQ+ community celebrated at CSULB. Keilan Stafford, a third-year dance major, tells his coming out story in the “Out of the Closet” video series at daily49er.com.

Photo by RYAN GUITARE
Daily Forty-Niner

Editor’s Note: Happy OUTober!

Media, including the Daily Forty-Niner, have a responsibility to highlight marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ+ community who have been historically misrepresented and misunderstood.

With our OUTober issue, we highlight the LGBTQ+ community on campus to feature our queer community and their impact at CSULB.

Check out Daily49er.com for multimedia content. Watch your fellow faculty and classmates share their coming out stories from the “Out of the Closet” series.

A lot of the stories told are personal, and many of those speaking out laid their vulnerabilities on the table. Looking through the pages, you might stumble upon one of your classmates, professors or friends. Read their stories and learn about what it means for them to be a part of this diverse community. Understand that they are more than surface level stereotypes. Acknowledge that while we are on an accepting campus, there are serious problems that we must be aware of.

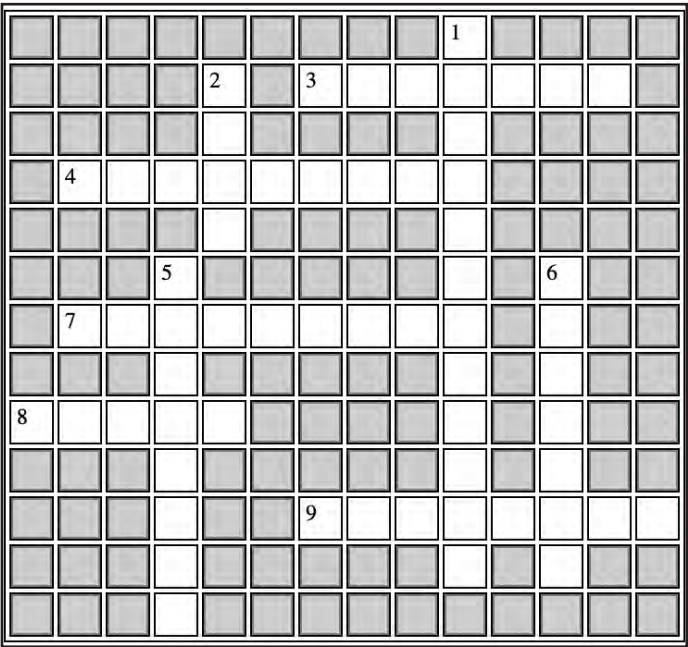
Hannah Getahun,
Special Project Editor

SHARK BITES

By Alejandro Vazquez

Shark Bites is a CSULB inspired crossword puzzle that contains clues from the recent news stories published by the Daily Forty-Niner. Tag us @daily49er with a picture of your completed crossword for a chance to win a prize!

Across



- 3. CSULB celebrates _____ this month.
- 4. The first name of Kathryn’s husband.
- 7. You can watch the “Out of the Closet” series at _____ .com.
- 8. _____ studies started in 2013.
- 9. Professor Kathryn Perkins was born in this state.

Down

- 1. Artist Jonathon Torres focuses his art on _____ themes.
- 2. How many variations of the rainbow can you find in this paper?
- 5. This group is subject to erasure in the LGBTQ+ community.
- 6. The pride flag colors make out the colors of the _____.

DAILY FORTY-NINER

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Introduction to Queer Studies: 'A place to think about the way you think'

The course teaches students to consider "how queer manifests itself outside the body."

By Paris Barraza
Staff Writer

Inside the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum, a small group of students surveyed a black-and-white silhouette of a plastic bag with a tag on the end, sealing the contents inside. Beside the piece hung a second copy of the work, split into a bright orange half and blue half.

The students are from the Introduction to Queer Studies class taught by Abraham Weil, who was drawn to women's, gender and sexuality studies for its "rigorous study of life." Weil has taught at Long Beach State for two years and previously taught the class once before.

Students analyzed how the work by Susan Boelle featured in the B.A.T. State III exhibition, an all female showcase, could relate to the themes taught in class, like "how can objects be queer in the everyday sense."

Though the group was initially reserved, Weil provided insight for the assignment.

"None of the pictures will have a human body," Weil said. "Think about how queer manifests outside of [the] body."

For Weil, this meant that thinking about queer sexuality requires individuals to be mindful of other variables including space, environment or politics.

Julian Acua, a third-year women's, gender and sexuality studies major, remarked how the image reminded

him of an amniotic sac and how parents have a preexisting idea of what their child should be.

First-year pre-social work major Maeve James Dudgeon observed something different.

"Maybe [it's about] how valuable a person is," Dudgeon said. "If you're in one circle you're good. In the other circle, you're bad."

Introduction to Queer Studies was developed in 2013, according to Jennifer Reed, the department chair of women's, gender and sexuality studies. CSULB's course catalog defined the course as a "focus on the relationship between gender and sexualities."

Dudgeon defined queer studies in their own words.

"It's just learning about and analyzing that which is deemed non normative," Dudgeon said. "That which goes against what society pushes kind of thing. Whatever goes against the [cisgender], patriarchal, able, etc. community and the society."

Weil explained how students are often surprised by the scope of the class, which examines many questions about queer studies, including the history of queer theory and how it became institutionalized. Other topics address the idea of sexual orientation and how people utilize objects that align with it.

"Coming into this class, I thought 'Oh it's just gonna be about LGBTQ people, stuff like that. I'm prepared to learn about that,'" Dudgeon said. "But we've talked about so much more than that. It's really eye opening."

The extent of the concepts discussed in class were apparent in the students' dialogue at the Kleefeld Contemporary. Students noted how the two colors used in the second piece of "Tag Bag" added an aspect of binary thought and as a result, would reveal what is deviant. Another student shared how the bag represented disposability, with the contents inside the bag reduced to a label via the tag.

Aside from the material taught in class, the larger contextual importance of the class is clear to both Weil and his students.

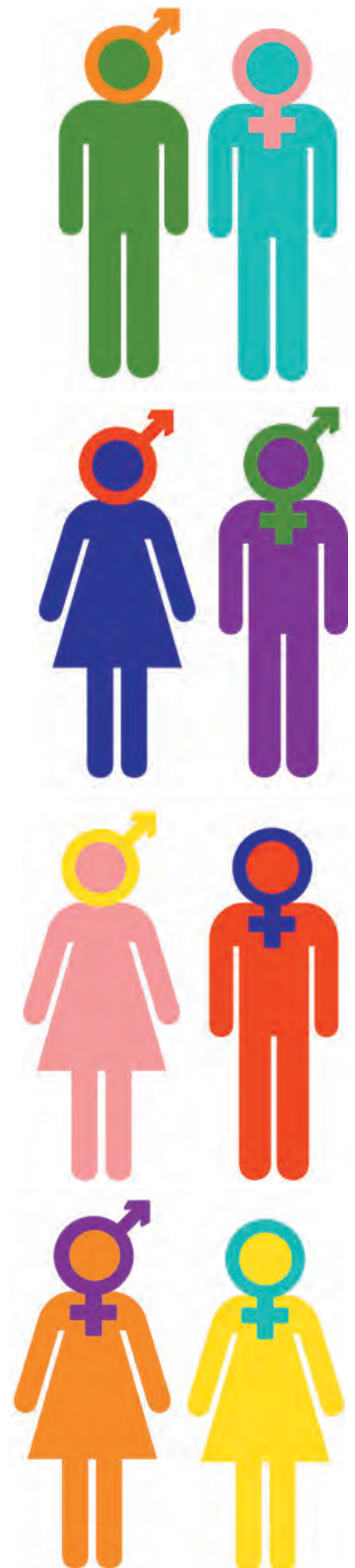
Akari Omyia, a third-year Japanese exchange student, shared that after she finishes this program, she will write a thesis on queer studies.

"I don't have this class in my country," Omyia said. "In my country, there's some LGBTQ friends, but they don't have any idea of what to do. So I can help them."

For Dudgeon, the class helped educate them in areas they had not realized they still needed to be educated in and introduced them to important authors within the field.

These are the lessons that Weil intended for students to take away from the class.

"Attention to issues of gender, race and sexuality is essential both on and off campus," Weil said. "More than anything, I hope students leave this class prepared to encounter and interrogate their assumptions about sexuality and the work of queer studies. It's a place to think about the way you think."





Bi Erasure: A look at the silent “B” in LGBTQ+ community

Some bisexual people in the LGBTQ+ community feel excluded because they don't fit the mold.

By Mercedes Cannon &
Rachel Hanna
Staff Writers

Bisexual people are often seen as too straight for the LGBTQ+ community and too gay to be straight. This “pick a side” attitude leaves bisexual people in a confusing limbo of erasure and alienation.

As a bisexual woman, Annika Brandes, like other individuals in the community, has experienced the effects of bisexual erasure.

Since the fourth-year journalism major is dating a man, her sexuality is frequently questioned.

“Sometimes I feel like my [bisexuality] is invalidated because I am in a relationship with a man and not a woman,” Brandes said. “It feels like people are saying ‘Oh, she’s not really bisexual since she isn’t with a woman.’”

Because bisexual individuals may still have heterosexual relationships, as well as same-sex relationships, they can be viewed as not fully committed as a queer individual.

“A lot of it goes back to heteronormativity,” said Shaeleya Miller, an assistant professor of sociology at Long Beach State. “Heteronormativity, really [has] to do with...assumptions that heterosexuality is the norm and...that there are two and only two genders, and that there is ‘opposite’ gender attraction.”

According to Miller, the first issue is the generalized idea that people in heterosexual relationships are privileged.

“That kind of operates as this spector around bisexuality that bisexual people are dipping into a privilege pool,” Miller said.

This means some may perceive bisexual individuals who are in heterosexual, monogamous relationships as having the

same advantages in society as straight individuals.

Miller said another issue is the duality of bisexuality.

“Which is this idea that ‘I’m’ attracted to...‘both genders’ which then implies that there are two and only two genders and that bisexual people are then attracted to two genders and that this excludes all other genders,” Miller said.

Brandes acknowledged that while bisexual erasure cannot invalidate her sexuality, it is still an issue.

“My happiness isn’t based on what gender my partner is,” Brandes said. “It is based on how my partner treats me. I do feel there are passive comments against my male partner which makes me uncomfortable.”

Franklin Hansen, a technical theatre major, learned he was bisexual while working as a set designer for a play about bisexuality and LGBTQ+ issues.

Hansen hasn’t experienced any backlash for his sexuality from the LGBTQ+ community, but is aware that it’s a problem.

“There’s this idea you have to be fully gay or fully straight,” Hansen said.

Bisexual individuals are becoming more accepted, but there’s still a long way to go, according to Hansen.

“I feel like in pop-culture...‘Friends’ and ‘Seinfeld’ [had] characters that, after dating a man, decided to date a woman on the show, and they never mentioned [they were] bisexual,” Hansen said.

For Hansen, in order to end the erasure of bisexual individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, the idea that people can identify as bisexual must be accepted.

“People are acknowledging that bisexual people exist instead of referring to them as turning gay,” Hansen said. “It’s hope for the future.”



WELLNESS WEEK

OCTOBER 21 - 25, 2019

Monday, October 21

POP - UP TENT

COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
12:30 - 2:30 PM | University Library

USU 3RD FLOOR OPEN HOUSE

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
11:00 - 2:00 PM | USU Southwest Terrace
*Showcasing USU Beach balance, Beach Pantry
and new gender-neutral bathroom*

MINDFUL MEDITATION

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
4:00 - 5:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

MINDFUL MEDITATION

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
5:00 - 6:00 PM | Student Recreation
& Wellness Center

FREE MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

2ND MENTAL HEALTH TOWN HALL

FOR STUDENTS/STAFF/FACULTY
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

3:30 - 5:00 PM | The Pointe
Please RSVP: http://bit.ly/DSA_SMTH

HEALTH HUT MONDAY: HYGIENE 101

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM | Maxson Plaza

FLU SHOT CLINIC

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
1:00 - 5:00 PM | Bookstore Space F

Tuesday, October 22

FREE MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

MINDFUL MEDITATION

powered by LifeFit
12:30 - 12:45 PM | Speakers Platform

ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE TRAINING

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
3:00 - 4:30 PM | Barrett Athletic Center,
2nd Floor Conference Room

OPEN HOUSE

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
5:00 - 7:00 PM | Student Recreation
& Wellness Center

PLANT A PLANT

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
5:00 - 6:00 PM | USU 306

Wednesday, October 23

FARMERS MARKET

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM | Friendship Walk

MOVE FOR A MILE

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Maxson Plaza Fountain

FREE MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

STOP THE BLEED FIRST AID TRAINING

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
2:30 - 3:30 PM | Educational Opportunity Center

HIV MOBILE CLINIC

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Beach Circle

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY: EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
12:30 - 1:30 PM | USU 305

Thursday, October 24

CHAIR MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
4:00 - 6:00 PM | Student Recreation
& Wellness Center

WOMEN'S SOCCER VS. UC RIVERSIDE

ATHLETICS
7:00 P.M. | Long Beach

FREE MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

PIZZA WITH THE POLICE

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM | Upper Campus Quad
PINK PATCH PROMOTION
(City of Hope/Breast Cancer Fundraiser)

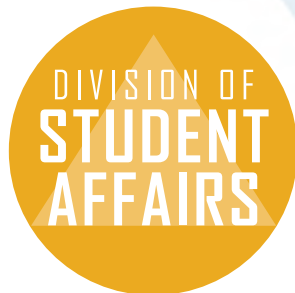
ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE TRAINING

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
3:00 - 4:30 PM | Barrett Athletic Center,
2nd Floor Conference Room

Friday, October 25

FREE MESSAGES

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | USU Beach Balance

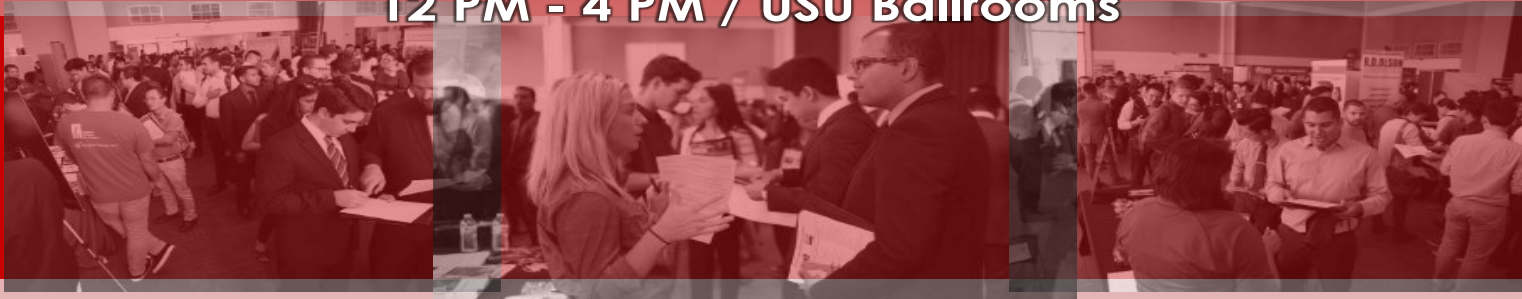


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If you would like to request accommodations, please contact the
Bob Murphy Access Center at least 72 hours before the event. 562.985.5401

FALL JOB & INTERNSHIP FAIR

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Wed, Oct 23 - DAY 1 / Thu, Oct 24 - DAY 2
12 PM - 4 PM / USU Ballrooms



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RSVP via



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2. Select **Events** Menu
3. Select **Job Fair & RSVP**

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Members of Long Beach State's LGBTQ+ community share their coming out stories in the Daily Forty-Niner video series, "Out of the Closet."

BY PAULA KILEY AND AUBREY BALSTER



**"[Coming out] never felt like an option," Paulina Rodriguez
Fourth-year public relations major, She/Her, Queer**

Growing up, Paulina Rodriguez told herself that she would not come out until her mom passed away. Raised in a Catholic family, Rodriguez felt like coming out was not an option until about two years ago.

"It kind of hit me that I was going to lose so much of my life," Rodriguez said. "I was already going through other things, so the sexuality kind of played into it. And I knew I wouldn't be able to move forward until I was honest."

On the day Rodriguez realized this, she came out to her mom.

Learn more about Paulina's coming out story and how her sexuality intersects with her Mexican upbringing in the Daily Forty-Niner's "Out of the Closet" video series available at Daily49er.com.

**"It felt empowering to say it [out loud]," Megan Henry
Second-year English literature major, She/Her, Bisexual**

Megan Henry was 15 years old when she first said out loud that she was bisexual.

"I said it to myself in the mirror," Henry said. "It felt empowering to say it. It's finally out there in the open."

Having gone to a Catholic school, Henry had always thought that romantic relationships could only be between a man and a woman.

"Do I want to date her, or do I want to be like her?" she would often ask herself.

Henry has been out for four years now and has experienced biphobia within the LGBTQ+ community.

"Being bisexual, people in the LGBT community have told me, 'If you are with a man while being bisexual, you're straight now,'" Henry said. "Hearing that made me feel depressed about my sexuality. I didn't know how to express it. But now, I've known for a while that I am bisexual, and I'm going to keep it that way."

Learn more about Megan's coming out story and her experience with biphobia within the LGBTQ+ community in the Daily Forty-Niner's "Out of the Closet" video series available at Daily49er.com.



**"It wasn't a crazy big deal," Keilan Stafford
Third-year dance major, He/Him, Gay**

Keilan Stafford was in his freshman year of high school when he received a question on Ask.fm, a social media site that encourages users to send questions anonymously.

"Are you gay?" the user asked.

Stafford quickly responded yes, and the news soon spread to his family. One Friday night before a football game, Stafford came home to his mother, who confronted him about the social media exchange.

According to Stafford, the conversation was brief and casual. After coming out to his mom, he went to the football game just like any other Friday night.

"It wasn't a crazy big deal," Stafford said. "My family's super accepting."

Though Stafford is grateful for having been raised in a nurturing and accepting environment, he recognizes that it could have been much worse and that many people don't receive the same support he did.

"I sympathize with people who have had harder times," Stafford said. "I try to be there for people the way that my parents have been there for me."

Learn more about Keilan's coming out experience and his advice for people who may be considering coming out in the Daily Forty-Niner's "Out of the Closet" video series at Daily49er.com.



'Transitioning while visible'

Kathryn J. Perkins, assistant professor in the political science department, shares her story of transitioning while teaching at CSULB.

By Madalyn Amato
Staff Writer

Before last spring, Professor Kathryn J. Perkins felt that she was living her life in someone else's body.

Born Jared Perkins in Illinois, Kathryn was raised in an Evangelical Christian community. She later moved to Texas. Both states have little to no legal protections for LGBTQ+ people, let alone social acceptance for those who identify out of the "norm."

"I first came out as a gay man in eighth grade, and that was pretty terrible as you might imagine," Kathryn said. "Texas and many other states were voting on banning same-sex marriage and the national conversation was just a very negative and hostile one."

Kathryn doesn't regret her decision. She felt a sense of urgency to come out in hopes of achieving a sense of authenticity and self-acceptance.

"I would say that I definitely had a lot of bullying, a lot of discrimination throughout middle school, into high school," she said.

While attending Northern Texas University, Kathryn came face-to-face with one of the worst cases of discrimination she had ever encountered. Currently in Texas, as in many other states, LGBTQ+ community members have no legal protections against retaliation for their gender expression or sexual orientation.

"I was put on probation and targeted for being openly gay and prevented from running for student government," Kathryn said.

This experience is what she credits for her inspiration and passion for civil rights. Perkins then went on to become a researcher and received her B.S., M.A. and Ph.D. in political science.

It was in a constitutional law class where she found an outlet to express her passion for something more.

"I saw myself in the political and constitutional struggles of many other marginalized groups," Kathryn said. "I could turn some of the frustrations about the things that I've encountered into something that could advocate for social change...so that other people's journeys don't have to be as difficult."

However, there was something she felt was missing from her life: authenticity.

Given the name of Jared at birth, Kathryn said that the life she lived as a gay man was more of a "LinkedIn profile" version of herself. Trimmed, proper and socially accepted, her "performative life" is something she looks back on as being exhausting, draining and frustrating.

"I was always worrying about what people think, what people would think if I wore this instead of that, what people would think if I did or didn't take on certain responsibilities," she said. "I spent a lot of time perfecting this mask, so that way I wouldn't have to show people my true self."

When she first came out as gay, Kathryn said her mother really struggled coming to terms with it.

"I think she really always loved me and wanted to accept me, but I think she couldn't understand...why I couldn't just not do 'that,'" Kathryn said.

It would take five years for her mother, after many attempts of turning to prayer and therapeutic techniques to change Kathryn's sexual orientation, to come to terms with her choice to be a gay man.

"I think she felt like she was not only in a place to accept me, but that she also felt bad about not having been able to do that sooner," she said.

It wasn't until she came to Long Beach State that she began to explore the identity she'd been hiding all along.

"If it had not been for this job, I don't know that I would have been able to transition at this point in my life and feel like it was safe enough to really open that box," she said. "It was really only after I came here that I began to process a lot of these suppressed feelings about my gender identity that I hadn't wanted to process."

Having been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, Kathryn initially felt pressure to perform as a gay male and was afraid to explore any further due to concerns of persecution.

She credits the "Life at the Beach" attitude on campus for inspiring her to take a look deeper into who she really was.

"I couldn't keep gendering myself the way that I was and blame someone else," she said.

It was then she began experimenting with her gender identity. Kathryn began her transition at the beginning of 2019 legally; however, her social and medical change only began at the end of the spring 2019 semester.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

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-Kathryn

Assistant Professor

n Perkins
of Political Science



MADALYN AMATO | Daily Forty-Niner
Kathryn Perkins, assistant professor of political science, began her transition at the beginning of the spring 2019 semester.



*Kathryn, pre-transition,
at her doctoral
graduation May 2016.*

*Courtesy of
Kathryn Perkins.*

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Kathryn defines the transition process by three main categories: social, legal and medical.

For many, the only stage ever reached is the social transition, which she said involves presenting as your idealized gender. In her case, this included figuring out what colors she liked, how she wanted to do her makeup and what hairstyle she wanted.

In many states, legal transition is not allowed until a trans individual undergoes a full gender affirmation process, which can cost up to \$100,000 according to the Human Rights Campaign. Those living in marginalized communities often cannot afford these “extraneous costs” and are left with only completing a part of their journey.

Kathryn has begun the legal process and received immense support from her department. She said, however, the administration of CSULB has been less than accommodating.

“I’ve been somewhat frustrated with the process at the university,” she said. “For some archaic reason the university requires you to pull from your official social security name, way beyond things that I think are appropriate.”

On class schedules and the department website, and in official references, however, she is referred to as Kathryn J. Perkins.

Her biggest worry when coming out were not the thoughts of co-workers or students, but the reaction of her mother.

“I perceived that she was more comfortable with me being gay because I still got married, I still got a Ph.D.,” Kathryn said. “I did all of these things that I think she thought were really admirable and that she would really want for her child.”

Having already come out to her siblings over the phone, she wanted to take a different approach to coming out to her mother. Perkins decided to write a letter, to provide her with something tangible that she could refer back to and a framework to open the discussion between mother and daughter.

“When we finally talked, she assured me overwhelmingly that she loved me and that she supported me and she accepted me as her daughter,” Kathryn said.

Her biggest supporter all along has been her husband of three years, Johnathan Perkins. He identifies as a queer man, meaning he doesn’t prescribe to any one label, but still resides outside of the “heterosexual norm,” and has stood by Kathryn’s side during late nights writing her thesis and her decision to transition.

“I think that when I came out and we started having these conversations we just viewed this as another thing in our relationship that we are going to work through and process together,” she said.

When it came to choosing a name, Kathryn discussed different options, but said she kept coming back to Kathryn. Meaning “pure” in Hebrew, she saw this as a representation of her rebirth into her more authentic self.

She also wears the ancient ouroboros symbol, which represents new life, on a necklace.

As her transitional journey continues, Kathryn looks forward to her new life.

“It’s almost like 29 years of a life semi-lived, not un-lived, but not just lived to the fullest because I wasn’t showing up 100% to most of my life,” she said. “And so now I feel like I am showing up.”

Currently, she’s working on a book detailing *R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, a trans civil rights case currently being heard before the Supreme Court. The case on the surface, Kathryn said, is about trans rights, but she feels it has much deeper implications.

“I think it’s about: Are transgender people valid? Do they really exist?” Kathryn said. “I think that one of the conversations we need to have is the right to self-determine your identity, including your gender and sexual identities.”

She said that she doesn’t think the journey of transitioning ever ends, but it will continue to be a part of her identity.

“I will always be someone that used to be on the other side and has made that journey,” Kathryn said.

She hopes that by sharing her story she can inspire and empower others facing the same challenges.

“Everything that I have created in my life now is something that I had to transform and transition into...to realize that every day I can choose to go a different path...and I think that has been really powerful for me,” she said. “[I think of] this as a journey where I’m constantly evolving and becoming a more authentic version of myself.”

“It’s almost like 29 years of a life semi-lived, not un-lived, but not just lived to the fullest because I wasn’t showing up 100% to most of my life.”

-Kathryn Perkins



AUSTIN BRUMBLAY | Daily Forty-Niner

Jonathon Torres poses in a cubicle, which serves as his graduate studio, on the basement level of the Student Success Center. His walls are covered in explicit illustrations.

Just the tip of the art world

Jonathon Torres creates explicit artworks to explore his sexuality and the ideas of femininity and masculinity that accompany it.

By Daily Forty-Niner Staff

In Jonathon Torres' illustration graduate studio, a satin cloth covered in monarch butterflies drapes his wall.

The graceful image stands in stark contrast to the imagery on opposing walls, which are plastered with pornographic drawings of men.

Torres is an artist and a gay man. His illustrations, while explicit and jarring for some, are his way of exploring gay sexual identity.

Growing up, Torres did not have a role model to base his sexuality on.

"My parents used to own a video store, and they had a porno section there...I guess that's where I got curious about pornography, specifically gay pornography," Torres said.

He eventually got more curious. He began experimenting by sketching penises.

"I was ashamed of it because I didn't want my mom or my dad to find out,"

Torres said. "I think I knew I liked men deep inside, but I didn't quite understand how the world worked in a way and I was scared."

Torres' fear stemmed from seeing how coming out in high school had negatively affected other friends of his.

"[In college] I started going on dates," Torres said. "That helped contribute to the art I make now. I finally got to a point where I was able to come out to my mom and let her know 'Hey, I like men.'"

When he creates art now, the personal aspects of his identity are apparent in the themes of his work.

"At first he was going through the phase of showing us very cute ginkgo leaves and then he showed us this and everyone, me included, were like 'There it is: that is [him]," said Ben Lin, a graduate animation student and one of Torres' colleagues. "It was, in a way, coming out and really truly expressing what he cared about."

In his art, Torres depicts pornography and the "distorted perception of sex" it creates by making certain human features like chests, heads and penises

appear larger than life. This all ties into the hypermasculine nature of gay pornography.

Torres sometimes juxtaposes the well-toned, aggressive men with imagery of jewels, glitter or clear, pink, plastic cover sheets. His work compares traditional feminine themes to traditional masculine themes.

On his green shirt, Torres pointed to a small butterfly, mariposa in Spanish, pinned to the pocket. Upon closer look, the abdomen and head of the butterfly appear as a penis.

"Back when I was younger, I was called mariposo," Torres said. "When you call someone mariposo, it is the equivalent of calling someone a fairy. In society's view, [fairies are] very feminine, very colorful, very bright. I've always been interested in butterflies because they are transformative."

In trying to bridge the gap between masculinity and femininity, the intersectionalities of Torres' culture come into play. Torres is half-Mexican and half-Filipino. Many of his family members were adamantly against the idea that a

man could display feminine traits and were fixated on the idea of machismo.

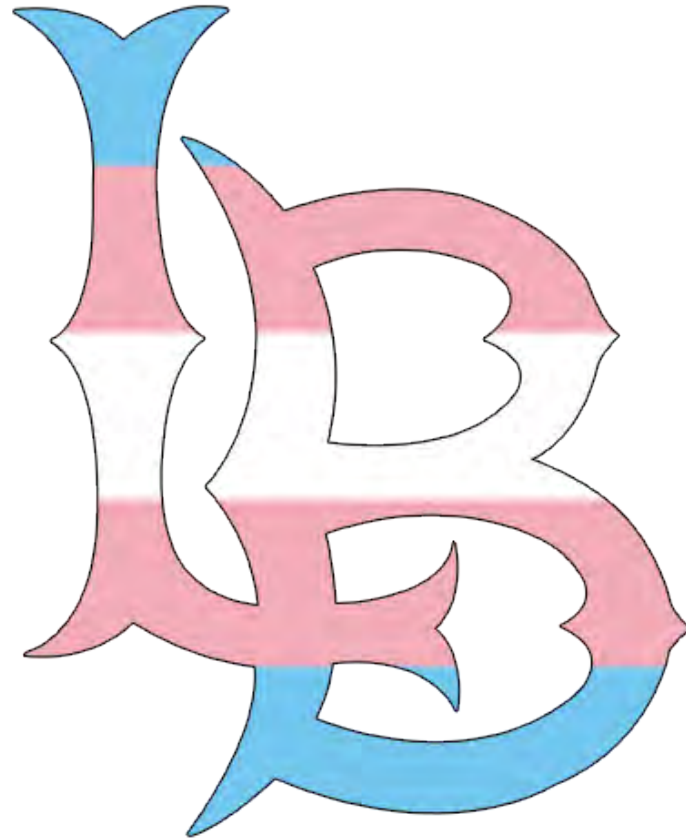
While the pins, which he sells as "Peens," are a more palatable version of his artwork, Torres understands that he can't please everyone with his more explicit art. Those who view his art may "be overwhelmed" by its nature, and not bother to consider its meaning.

"I didn't react positively to a lot of the drawings that he was doing for his first semester in grad school," said Huan Nguyen, Torres' boyfriend. "They were... explicit in their nature, [and it] wasn't something that I was used to seeing; I thought they weren't pleasant to look at."

However, Nguyen has accepted his boyfriend's work as something that has value for others.

And Torres has accepted that at the end of the day, despite criticisms or opposing views, his art is for him.

"I always wanted to please everyone," Torres said, "but what I got out of this work is that I can't please everyone... It taught me to love what I do and love myself."



Safe spaces are essential

Transgender youth rely on these communal spaces in order to fully develop themselves.

By Alejandro Vazquez
Design Editor

[@avzqz32](#)

Transgender women of color have been placed at the lowest level of the social hierarchy, and in most communities, are constantly shamed and demeaned.

Transgender people of color have the lowest life expectancy in the United States at 35 years old. This is due in large part to hate crimes targeting the community and the alarming rate at which transgender youth contemplate and commit suicide.

Their absence leaves the community insecure and worried about its safety. These deaths cause a ripple of fear and affect the mental health of the community.

According to the Humans Rights Campaign, 19 transgender individuals have been murdered so far this year, with a majority of them being Black women. These violent attacks are caused by the transphobic tendencies and sexist fragilities of our society. As a result, transgender women are afraid to come out.

"A lot of the [transgender] violence is towards women and so I don't find, in the youth group, that there are a lot of trans women or nonbinary individuals who are

speaking up and coming out," said Malory Robinson, engagement specialist for transgender health at The LGBTQ Center in Long Beach.

The experiences that transgender people go through are what affect their mental stability and confidence.

"I believe it has an impact on all people, including those who don't identify as [transgender]," said Abraham Weil, assistant professor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies at Long Beach State. "I am inclined to say that finding sources of connection and support are crucial to anyone's well-being."

A study released by the American Medical Student Association shows that 62% of the transgender community reported having depression and 41% of them have attempted suicide. While in comparison the rate for the population at large is much lower.

Luckily, there are services in Long Beach that can help the transgender community, but this is not the case for many other places in the U.S.

Transgender students at CSULB and have resources, both on and off campus, where they can create a supportive space and receive counseling. With danger targeting the community and the need for a safe atmosphere, safe zones like Rainbow Café and CSULB Queers and Allies Club, on campus, are resources that can help trans-

gender students feel comfortable.

"Rainbow Café and Q&A [are] great [ways] for LGBTQ+ students and [allies] to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community here on campus," said Amber Va, a first-year WGSS major. "As a trans woman, coming to these support spaces on campus allow me to interact with other LGBTQ+ students and gaining more knowledge about the LGBTQ+ community."

Sara Stanizai, a licensed marriage and family therapist in Long Beach, emphasized the importance of seeing people with similar identities in these support groups.

"It helps everything, not just [their] mental health," she said.

According to Stanizai, these zones allow for transgender students to create a safe environment among each other. As well with off campus resources, the transgender community has access to services that can help combat internal battles or insecurity.

Places like The LGBTQ Center in Long Beach, provide support for the transgender community in addition to "providing access to resources such as legal and medical services as well as by advocating for justice and education," according to its website.

When asked about the services provided at The LGBTQ Center, Robinson noted that

testing, mental health counseling, and legal services were the three most used.

"I definitely feel like mental health [services] is one that a lot of [transgender] individuals come in for," Robinson said.

At the center, transgender people come in for service, and for a supportive environment and a social space.

"People come here definitely to try and get counseling and just kind of support and [to have] more questions answered and how to approach things like that," Robinson said. "To have this place, this space where individuals can be themselves...is absolutely amazing."

These spaces are important because they create an environment where one sees other people with similar backgrounds, identities and journeys.

In places where these resources are not available, there need to be efforts made to open more safe space for transgender people.

"For any [transgender] student who may or may not have come out, just remember that you're not alone," Va said. "There's [a] light at the end of the tunnel' is what I always tell myself. You got this. Never give up."

Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860

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SPILL THE TEA



Spill the Tea is a weekly section for students to share their opinions and make their voices heard. Long Beach State students answer questions that can range from the silly to the political. We at the Daily Forty-Niner value the diverse opinions of the CSULB student body and look forward to you sharing them with us. This week, students weight in on reservations people may have of their communities.

Photos and Reporting by Perry Continente



Name: Gabriela Muca
Major: Third-year political science
Pronouns and Sexuality: She/Her Bisexual

What is a misconception about the LGBTQ+ community?

"There's a lot of stereotypes with a lot of sexualities. People think that someone is gay or bi or trans based on characteristics of a person. A lot of people can be a lot of different things. The notion of a 'gaydar' I find is a huge misconception."

What is something surprising about you?

"I love conventions, I cosplay. I'm broke right now, but when I get some money I love to cosplay... everybody at conventions [are] from all different walks of life, but they are all nerds. There is a sense of community."



Name: Olivia Wildman
Major: Fourth-year animation
Pronouns and Sexuality: She/Her, Lesbian

What is a misconception about the LGBTQ+ community?

"Everyone equates being out and being open with suffering every single second. You do definitely face a lot of backlash. I feel like a lot of transgender nonconforming people hear 'you have to feel disphoric and super out of place.'"

What is something surprising about you?

"I think most people see that I'm very visably queer. [The] city that I grew up in [was] a super rural area, [and] we went hiking, camping, chopping wood, we were very backwoods, very hillbilly."



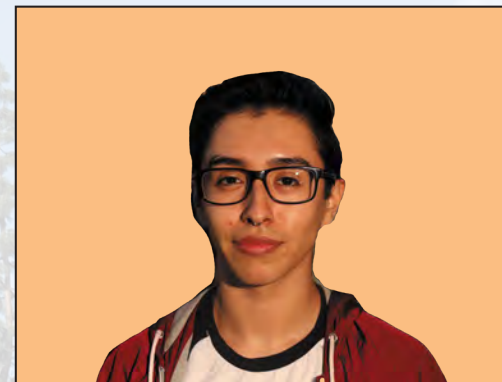
Name: Federico Yñiguez
Major: Third-year graphic design
Pronouns and Sexuality: He/Him, Gay

What is a misconception about the LGBTQ+ community?

"Straight men believe that gay men are attracted to them, but they're not. People think that the gay community is hyper-sexualized about sex and all about drugs. Those are all misconceptions, it's a wide spectrum of people... there is a perception that its alternative to the norm."

What is something surprising about you?

"I think something surprising about me is that I like going to the gym because I'm skinny, you know? I'm a twink."



Name: Edgar Trancozo
Major: Fourth-year graphic design/marketing
Pronouns and Sexuality: He/Him, Gay

What is a misconception about the LGBTQ+ community?

"Pronouns, people don't understand the meaning to it. The sense of the individual feeling like they don't belong in a certain category."

What is something surprising about you?

"I'm just very witty, I try to make associations with other topics and get giggles from some people."

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