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Executive Committee

For Immediate Release



Recognizing the LGBTQ+ Community at Valpo

Dear Valpo Students,

As Pride Month ends, we in the LGBTQ+ community have a lot to reflect on and celebrate. This is the 51st year after the historic Stonewall Inn Riots that put the LGBTQ+ rights movement on the national and international stage. It has been nine years since the repeal of the controversial Don't Ask Don't Tell Act that disbarred openly gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals from serving in the United States military. It has also been five years since the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of allowing same-sex couples to get married in all fifty states.

Within our own Valpo community, Alliance has been amazing in putting together events that raise awareness for LGBTQ+ issues and celebrate the community. Events such as GAYpril and numerous panel discussions let students across the campus learn about the struggles that LGBTQ+ community members face. While this year's drag show had to be cancelled, we in Student Senate are sure that Alliance will be ready to put on their annual drag show in the next academic year.

While there is much to celebrate, Pride Month is also about recognizing the daily struggles and challenges that LGBTQ+ community members face. As an openly gay man, I have countless stories where I faced discrimination and prejudice from people I just met, childhood friends, and even trusted adults. Many people within the LGBTQ+ community have similar stories where we have been scared and frustrated with the way our society treats us. We are continually analyzing our environment to see if we can truly be ourselves; coming out does not happen once but rather each time we meet someone new.

The Valpo community is not immune to LGBTQ+ discrimination and prejudice, but we are continually trying to address them. While the new COVID-19 guidelines for the fall restrict residential hall visitation, this does not mean your Student Senate has stopped the conversation on new, inclusive visitation policies. Once the Incident Command Team determines that the

COVID-19 guidelines can be lifted, Student Senate will make it a priority for the university to remove the discriminatory visitation policy in the Spring 2021 semester. By removing the gendered language of the visitation policy, any visitors who may be a part of the LGBTQ+ community will not have to 'out' themselves nor have their gender assumed.

Through the Student Senate's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, we are dedicated to making sure campus is a safe place for every member to feel welcome. This committee works closely with the Office of Multicultural Programs to make sure all students on campus are being heard. This committee should and will be used to bring forward legislation to improve inclusivity on campus. I will make it a personal goal to work with the next committee chair to make sure LGBTQ+ issues are a priority. Pride Month should not be the only time that we show our love and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community, but rather throughout the entire year. We in Student Senate want all members of the university to feel love and accepted by one another. Happy Pride to all my friends, allies, and fellow LGBTQ+ community members!

Sincerely,

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