Brian Sims Comes to Campus

By Julia Bernhard

On October 27, 2009, Brian K. Sims, Esq. was brought to Bucknell’s campus to present the program titled “Athletes & Allies: A Conversation About LGBT Athletes & Teammates.” Bringing Brian to Bucknell’s Campus was a collaborative effort by the Department of Athletics and the Office of LGBT Awareness and was co-sponsored by the University Lectureship Committee, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Dean of Students, and FLAG&BT. Brian attended Bloomsburg University where he was a Scholar Athlete and captain of the football team that he lead to the 2000 National Championship for Division II football. Brian currently holds the title as the only openly gay college football captain in NCAA history and the most notable college player to ever come out. From there, he went onto Michigan State University School of Law and worked as an Extern and Law Clerk for Legal Aid of South Michigan. He also served as the Senior Law clerk at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. for the Office of Enforcement & Compliance Assurance. Now located in Philadelphia, Brian is the Staff Counsel for Policy & Planning at the Philadelphia Bar Association. He also is the President of GALLOP (Gay & Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia) and a member of the Board of Directors of Equality Advocates of Pennsylvania. In April 2009, Outsports interviewed Brian about what it was like to come out to his sports team. His reply, “My team came out to me” after the quarterback was told of Brian’s sexuality. However, his team remained supportive—being gay did not change Brian for who he was. It was because of this, Brian realized that he could create a major impact on the lives of other gay athletes across the country, including those at Bucknell. He began his day by meeting with the Head and Assistant Coaching Staff and Athletic Administrative Staff to discuss issues that may arise by having a gay student on their team. During the luncheon, Brian spoke to about how he began acting as an advocate for gay athletes and how important an issue this is. Many athletes face a stereotype that can prevent them from being who they truly are. Brian overcame that stigma and remains a symbol of hope for all gay athletes. A small dinner was held that evening with FLAG&BT members and other interested campus members. This casual atmosphere provided an opportunity to discuss issues that are not often talked about. Brian then met with the football team and other student athletes on campus. Brian connected to those students and created a relationship that will hopefully impact Bucknell University students to create a more inclusive team environment. A true inspiration for all, we hope Brian continues to help those students who face a unique situation and often have no where to turn.
Out in the Silence: A Documentary, an Inspiration

“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.” - Audre Lorde

On Sunday, October 4, 2009, the Campus Theatre and Office of LGBT Awareness hosted the documentary film “Out in the Silence,” filmed and produced by Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer, lovers who put their wedding announcement in Joe’s hometown newspaper. Oil City, Pennsylvania, however, was not too receptive to this and was followed by waves of hateful letters to the editor. It also brought to light the letter of one 16 year-old boy, CJ Bills, who was being abused in school because of his perceived sexual orientation. Joe gave CJ a camera of his own and followed his story of fighting along side his dedicated mother against the school who turned a blind eye to the acts violence against him. It also follows the story of a lesbian couple in Oil City who restored an old theater, the Latonia. Diane Gramley, a leader in the American Family Association and a local radio talk show host, directly stated that supporting this theater meant supporting a horrible life style—being gay. Over the course of two years, both CJ and the couple overcame those prejudices against them and showed their community who they truly were—good people. After the show, Joe and Dean held a talkback in which many people spoke, asked questions, and showed their support. Once again, this is just a demonstration of how important hate crime bills are to this country, and although we have taken a small step towards equality, there are many more miles to go.

National Coming Out Day — October 8, 2009

Every year, the LGBT Office and FLAG&BT come together for a group photo on the steps in front of Rooke Chemistry. Unfortunately, attendance this year was limited due to important University meetings that conflicted with our Noon photo. However, for those that did attend, a beautiful “gay? fine by me.” cake was shared giving an uplifting boost of moral for the rest of the school day. This year, the National Coming Out Day Support lists met our high hopes for participation—1,815 students are now on the list (over half of the school) and 482 faculty and staff (approximately half the faculty). This is a great step for our school by demonstrating how supportive we are of LGBT issues on campus. Despite limited attendees for the photo, the LGBT community can be assured that there are many supporters out there.

Rocky Horror Picture Show at Campus Theatre Once Again a Smashing Success!

Over 300 people came to the Campus Theatre on Friday, October 30 2009 to sing and dance along with the all star cast of Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon, and Barry Bostwick. The costumes this year out-shined last year’s including a costume of Dr. Frank-N-Furter’s lips. The Office of LGBT Awareness sold bags of props outside of the Campus Theatre, giving the movie its interactive feeling that everyone enjoys. Who wouldn’t want to throw rice or confetti in a movie theatre? After an hour and a half, the theatre was transformed and seemed as if a wild party had been held there. But this party was not only to enjoy a fantastic movie, but demonstrate an appreciation and support for those individuals who too are from Transsexual, Transylvania.
Gay? fine by me.
October 23, 2009

By Amanda Roy
Senior Writer

Students at The University are often said to be politically apathetic and unaware of important national issues. The annual creation of a list of supporters for National Coming Out Day in October, along with the distribution of free “gay? fine by me” t-shirts at the Office of LGBT Awareness, is a step in the right direction for removing this bad reputation.

The list is undoubtedly a powerful tool for making people of all sexual orientations feel more welcome on campus. It also shows that there are people aware of and in support of the issues potentially faced by people in the process of coming out.

Being able to see that a friend, roommate, professor or advisor is on the list and is accepting can make all the difference in this difficult step. When combined with the t-shirt, this creates a tolerant environment towards sexual diversity in which students can speak out about their orientation.

Almost every day on campus, you can find someone wearing one of the colorful t-shirts. You may not know the person by name or by face, but the fact that you can turn somewhere on this campus and see that there really are people standing up for this cause is amazing. They’re effectively a daily reminder that there are always people on this campus that support LGBT efforts for equality and tolerance.

Simply putting a face with a cause and being able to support something as contested as gay rights is important. This is especially true in Pennsylvania, a state where it is still legal to fire someone without cause based on his or her sexual orientation. College campuses are supposed to be places where we challenge set ideas, suggest changes and see those changes happen for the better.

Will t-shirts and lists necessarily change the way Pennsylvania and those around us view gay rights? No. Can they change this University and our bad reputation for apathy? Certainly. Is it important and valuable that we let those who need us know we support them and show the world we’re willing to put our face to a cause? Absolutely.

Want to respond to this article? E-mail bucknellian@bucknell.edu
Current Safe Spaces:

“A safe space is a place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person’s self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others.”

Excerpt from The ALLIANCE at Bucknell: Creating Safe Space Powerpoint

Fraternities:
- Chi Phi (chapter and house)
- Delta Upsilon (chapter and house)
- Lambda Chi Alpha (chapter)
- Sigma Alpha Epsilon (chapter and house)
- Sigma Phi Epsilon (chapter and house)
- Tau Kappa Epsilon (chapter and house)

Sororities:
- Alpha Chi Omega (chapter and suite)
- Alpha Delta Pi (chapter)
- Chi Omega (chapter and suite)
- Delta Gamma (chapter and suite)
- Kappa Alpha Theta (chapter and suite)
- Kappa Kappa Gamma (chapter and suite)
- Pi Beta Phi (chapter and suite)

Sports Teams:
- Field Hockey
- Men’s Cross Country Team
- Men’s Lacrosse Team
- Men’s Track Team
- Women’s Cross Country Team
- Women’s Lacrosse Team
- Women’s Rowing Team
- Women’s Track Team

Others:
- Languages and Cultures Residential College
- Residential College Staff 2009-2010
- Social Justice Residential College

Call x7-1609 and schedule a Safe Space program for your hall, group, fraternity, sorority, athletic team or administrative/departamental office.

Do you have any LGBT topics that you would like to see covered in future issues?

Send in your ideas at lab036@bucknell.edu

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The Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Awareness is committed to making Bucknell a safe place for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. This is accomplished by supporting student groups and efforts to educating and increase awareness about LGBT issues and current public policy concerns. The office is guided by an Advisory Board comprised of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who are interested in and committed to the mission of the Office.

Given that Bucknell is dedicated to prepare its students to be morally responsible citizens, and given that societal attitudes are changing, the University attempts to promote attitudes and behaviors among its students which will create a climate of mutual respect and empower us all to appreciate diversity.