

# Faculty joins Straight Talk

By Julia Anselmo  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Four faculty members shared their outlook on "coming out" and the LGBTQA community at Penn State at the first ever faculty-run "Straight Talk" session Monday afternoon — part of the first day of activities for Coming Out Week.

Nearly 20 students, staff and community members gathered in Room 321 of the HUB-Robeson Center to hear the stories and advice of faculty members who are involved with the LGBTQA community at Penn State.

The faculty members shared their experiences both in the workplace and personally about being gay, transgender or an ally in the Penn State community.

Brian Patchcoski, assistant director for the LGBTQA Student Resource Center, said he was happy with the session's turnout and the response the center got from outside community and staff members.

"This was the first time we had

this," Patchcoski said. "I wasn't expecting this many people. It was really nice — it was a really intimate setting."

Patchcoski said students usually run and hold "straight talks," but this year they wanted to try something new to get faculty more involved and engaged with the students.

Beth Bradley, assistant director for the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs and one of the four panelists at the event, said it's important to hear the perspective of faculty members about these issues.

"The LGBTQ center has had more requests recently to have people coming from our perspective to talk about these issues," she said. "It helps raise awareness of these issues."

Audience members were free to ask any of the four panelists questions about specific personal experiences they have had at Penn State with the LGBTQA community.

The faculty members each

emphasized that while there are almost always difficulties for gay and transgender students and staff, there are outreach and support groups available to both groups on Penn State's campus.

While she often attends talks sponsored by the LGBTQA Student Resource Center, Destiny Aman (graduate-geography) said she was particularly interested in Monday's event because it was run by faculty.

"The faculty and staff are the folks who really create the spaces that the students occupy and use on campus," she said. "The really have a lot of power to determine the climate of those spaces."

Aman said LGBTQA students need to know the faculty supports them.

"Undergrad students rely on faculty, staff, and grad students to make safe places for students," she said. "We shouldn't be telling our queer students that they need to bear this burden on their own."

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Kelsey Morris/Collegian

UPUA President Christian Ragland talks with Mayor Elizabeth Goreham during her office hours last spring. She will continue to hold office hours this semester on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

## Mayor to resume HUB office hours

By Colleen Boyle  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For students concerned with local issues, there is now an outlet for discussion — State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham will hold office hours in the HUB-Robeson Center to speak with Penn State students.

Goreham's office hours began last spring in a makeshift pilot program, hosted by the Off-Campus Student Union. Students were invited to speak with the mayor about issues that concerned them. Goreham considers this the "bridging of the gap" between the borough and the university — one of her main priorities — and said she was pleased to use the Off-Campus Student Union's space to do so.

"They offered it, and I snapped them up on it," Goreham said.

Off-Campus Student Union President Bobby Ryan said the group received a strong reception from students who came to discuss issues like downtown recycling and last year's proposed Nuisance Gathering Ordinance. He said he looks forward to continuing the dialogue between students and the borough. "We had a lot of good conversations on topics we weren't expecting," Ryan (senior-psychology) said.

People waiting in line to speak with the mayor often joined in on the discussions, he said. Because of the success of the spring office hours, the mayor will hold them again this semester.

Despite the controversial nature of some of the issues

brought up by students, Ryan said the conversations were very friendly and respectful.

"The only issue was people waiting in line because of longer discussions," he said.

This year, Ryan said the Off-Campus Student Union will keep an eye on the clock so every student who attends gets a chance to speak with the mayor.

Goreham said she hopes to continue to improve town-and-gown relations through her office hours. While some students draw attention for their bad decisions, Goreham said she is pleased with the actions of most students.

University Park Undergraduate Association President Christian Ragland said he hopes a variety of students — not just student leaders — take advantage of the mayor's office hours.

"I think her taking the extra step through her office hours is great because it shows that she is dedicated to working on behalf of the students," Ragland (senior-political science) said. "I think there are many issues she can expand on."

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### If you go

**Where:** 221 HUB  
**When:** Wednesdays 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., Thursdays 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.  
**Details:** The mayor will not have office hours this week.

## Student leaders continue discussion

By Kathleen Loughran  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Student leaders are moving forward with creating the Pennsylvania Student Association — an organization that hopes to increase student voices in Harrisburg.

Last Wednesday, members of the University Park Undergraduate Association held a conference call with other universities about the formation of the PSA. During the call, UPUA Governmental Affairs Director Travis Salters said he told the other representatives why UPUA wants to form an association.

"The main purpose [of the association] overall is to create a broader, more unified voice of the students of Pennsylvania to tackle issues like tuition," Salters (junior-broadcast journalism and African and African American Studies) said. "It will be a resource for the future if anything would come about."

As per the suggestion of University of Pittsburgh student body president Charles Shull, Pennsylvania universities involved in the formation of the association will convene at Penn State on Nov. 6.

"It will get everybody in one place to discuss because over

"We need to sit down and talk about it and get everyone on the same page."

Travis Salters  
UPUA governmental affairs director

conference calls is not the best way to do this," Salters said. "We need to sit down and talk about it and get everyone on the same page."

On Nov. 14, the schools plan to meet in Harrisburg for the Board of Governors meeting. Salters said this will ensure there is no confusion between legislators in Harrisburg and students regarding the PSA's purpose.

Shull said creating an association is not only feasible but also beneficial.

"Any resource where students can come together and bring their resources to one front gives students a better opportunity to approach the officials that represent us," he said.

Shull also said he has first-hand experience at forming a student coalition with multiple universities because he helped to form the Pittsburgh Student Government Council, which represents many universities in the city.

But Shull said forming the PSA will definitely take a lot of work.

"There was a lot of motivation coming from Penn State, but I definitely see a long road ahead of us," he said. "We really need to focus a lot on large schools — University of Pittsburgh, Penn State, Temple — get them to sign on first and then go seek other organizations."

Salters said the only criticism he has heard about the formation of the PSA revolves around a misunderstanding on the purpose and structure of the Board of Governors.

"The Board of Governors only has three students on the board, which is different than us because we're going to be created by the students for the students," he said. "There will be no adults represented."

UPUA President Christian Ragland said the conference call went well. "I think we're in the right direction to start advocating in regards to tuition," said Ragland (senior-political science).

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