

GENDER MATTERS



AGREAA: Introducing A New Perspective on Gender

Researchers in the current field of Gender Studies and its counterparts (Women's Studies, Masculinity Studies, LGBT Studies, Sexuality Studies, etc) have long embarked on their work in relative or total isolation. Many of us who engage in true multi-disciplinary gender work tend to push at the socially acceptable boundaries of our fields, and as a result, are often forced to recreate the wheel in the name of sound academic research. Those of us who come to the field from a place of passion and a desire to work for change try to occupy the spaces of both the academic and the activist, often finding that their credibility in both arenas is at stake, and that they are marginalized for their efforts. And for all who teach in non-traditional settings without the safety of the collegial classroom, the validity of gender-diverse-inclusive curriculum is often challenged and critiqued – assumed to be part of an “agenda” or non-essential education.

It is for these reasons and many more that AGREAA has been founded. We believe that in order to move forward there needs to be a dedicated community to break down the walls that inhibit dialogue. Our hope is that AGREAA will become a thriving professional development organization that fosters the ongoing opportunity for continued dialogue about gender.

One thing that sets AGREAA apart from other organizations is our true cross-disciplinary focus. We are dedicated to breaking down the walls that currently exist between the various factions of gender studies. Rather than focusing on academic backgrounds, AGREAA chooses instead to focus on gender as a whole. Additionally, we are looking to the future. For example,

by having a central professional development component AGREAA offers opportunities, such as mentoring, which are geared towards personal and professional growth for long-term career success.

We also believe that there are many different ways to work towards change, and accordingly our membership goes beyond researchers and academics. We actively engage activists, and educators as agents of change and provide specialized communities for each area.

Finally, AGREAA has worked to take the best of all available professional development organizations. The business of AGREAA is run by a volunteer Board of Directors, which operates by consensus and strives to put ideological standards into practice. The work of AGREAA is done by the members, so that all that AGREAA does meets the direct desires and needs of the membership.

AGREAA seeks to be as accessible as possible. Our membership dues for one year are as follows:

- Career Professional – \$50
- Established Professional – \$40
- Emerging Professional – \$30
- Student – \$20
- Low Income – \$10
- Scholarship – Volunteer Hours

For more information about the specifics of our services, membership, leadership opportunities, or to join AGREAA please visit www.AGREAA.org or e-mail us at admin@agreaa.org. We look forward to working with you, and we hope you will share your thoughts with us!

– *The AGREAA Board of Directors*

IN THIS ISSUE:

WHAT'S IN A WORD

AGREAA's struggle to find inclusive language

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The history of AGREAA, and its roots in Trans-Academics.org

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet lore dickey, the new Chair of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students Committee on LGBT Concerns

UNITED ENDA: The Battle to Educate and End Legal Gender Discrimination

HOW I FOUND GENDER IN MY BRA: A guest article by Bevin Branlandingham

AGREAA

16192 Coastal Highway
Lewes, DE 19958

Phone: 888.792.1902

Web: www.AGREAA.org

Email: admin@agreaa.org

First Person Perspectives: How I Found Gender In My Bra

I didn't know it at the time, but buying my first Lane Bryant plunge bra was the first step I took towards solving my gender problem.

Growing up fat in suburban California, I was taught by the media, my friends and well-meaning family members that the best thing I could do was hide my fatness. Baggy clothes, black, "slimming" vertical stripes, I tried it all. But there's really nothing I could do to hide the fact that at a size 24, I was one of the fattest people in my high school. I did my best to go unnoticed, had long hair, wore a bit of make-up but just enough to fit in with the other girls, but it never occurred to me that I should feel good or confident in the way I presented myself.

Once I got to college and started the process of coming out, I began to pay closer attention to my gender presentation. I knew it didn't feel comfortable for me to dress in male clothes, but at the same time I saw them as the perfect hybrid of inherently lesbian and fat disguising. While I assumed I was dressing to attract other dykes by trying to look more like them, I created a negative feedback loop. I wasn't dressing in a way that expressed who I was or how I felt comfortable. And the more I swam in loose-fitting Old Navy button-down shirts and green corduroy overalls, the more awkward I felt. (The full version of this article is available to AGREAA members. Join at AGREAA.org)

Bevin Branlandingham is a guest writer for Gender Matters and is a flamboyant femmecee, queer high femme, writer, drag king, burlesque and comedy performer. She is the producer and host of FemmeCast: The Queer Fat Femme Podcast Guide to Life. www.femme-cast.com

ISNA Reorganizes

Following more than 15 years of historic and groundbreaking movements for change aimed at increasing awareness for and about individuals with intersex conditions (also known as Disorders of Sex Development or DSD in some circles), the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) is reorganizing into a new nonprofit called Accord Alliance.

ISNA was responsible for facilitating radical improvements in the way the medical community handled infants born with intersex conditions. Some of these improvements included a shift to a more team-oriented, patient-centered care system, a more cautious approach to infant genital surgery, and the softening of the equivocal language leading to the perception of intersex conditions as life-threatening emergencies rather than a naturally occurring human variance. Throughout the years, and culminating in 2007, the strong resistance of medical institutions towards implementing a reliable and universal standard of care increasingly frustrated ISNA. (The full version of this article is available to AGREAA members. Join at AGREAA.org).

Article by Seth Pardo, AGREAA Board of Directors.

A Different Kind of Dude

In August dudes from across the country rallied together in DC to honor a different kind of dude. Several organizers in the District came together to organize a festival committed to discussing the limitations of various masculinities and social expectations of how to behave, feel and connect with others in a heteronormative culture. Conference workshops addressed several topics such as barriers to emotional intimacy and self-awareness along with creating space to be wrong and share vulnerabilities.

One conference organizer said that limitations imposed by masculinities come "with a pain that is oftentimes taken out against those closest to us – women, children and other guys that don't pay enough attention to their limits." Many attendees sought out the DC Dude Fest to safely discuss the expectations certain masculinities imposed upon them that continually influence how they live, act and express emotion. (The full version of this article is available to AGREAA members. Join at AGREAA.org)

Article by Rhodes Perry, AGREAA Board of Directors

United ENDA's Campaign to Educate and End Hate

Recently, the United ENDA Coalition launched a nationwide education campaign building off of its ongoing lobbying work urging congressional representatives to pass a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). United ENDA is a coalition of state, local and national LGBT organizations and allies committed to ensuring the passage of comprehensive federal legislation that protects individuals from employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Coalition was formed at the end of 2007 in response to Representative Barney Frank's decision to split ENDA into two bills, one focusing on sexual orientation protections and the other on gender identity protections, and only move forward with the sexual orientation bill. He, along with the Human Rights Campaign, believed that there were not enough votes to pass the unified bill and felt it was better to secure rights for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people now and continue to educate and push for protections for trans and gender diverse people later.

An overwhelmingly majority of LGBT organizations and allies condemned this decision. (The full version of this article is available to AGREAA members. Join at AGREAA.org).

Article by Eli Vitulli, AGREAA Board of Directors

Like what you've read so far? Want to read more? Gender Matters is the official newsletter of The Association for Gender Research, Education, Academia & Action, and is available in its full format to all AGREAA members.

Go to www.AGREAA.org to join!