



Taking the Next Step Toward Social Justice as an LGBTQ Studies Library Liaison



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Abstract

Chapman University's annual Next Step Social Justice Retreat is a weekend-long forum for students, staff, and faculty to learn about and discuss issues on diversity, power, and privilege. Through affinity group discussions and team-building exercises led by facilitators, participants also learn how to become better change agents and leaders on campus and beyond. Serving as a facilitator of the retreat these past two years has provided this LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) Studies library liaison the opportunity to connect on a deeper level with students and colleagues while sharing applicable information literacy skills and resources to support their information needs. The information needs of participants vary as they move forward with their personal, academic, and/or professional social justice development. This poster session will highlight ways in which this library liaison has served students and colleagues at the retreat and for resulting projects. Examples include teaching a student how to locate reliable statistics for the number of self-identified LGBTQ students of color on campus, obtaining peer assessment data on existing Queer Studies programs for the University's LGBT Faculty/Staff Committee, and demonstrating how to access the library's and Open Access LGBTQ online resources to students and staff during a meeting of our campus' Safe Space Committee.

The Next Step Social Justice Retreat



The small group I co-facilitated at Next Step 2013

The Next Step Social Justice Retreat provides an educational forum for participants to explore a host of issues surrounding diversity, identity, and social justice issues. The weekend-long retreat involves a variety of activities to support discussion, reflection, learning, and action planning. The retreat also provides students, faculty, and staff opportunities for networking and coalition building as participants develop personal action plans for contributing to a more just campus environment.

My role as a facilitator at the Next Step Social Justice Retreat involved co-facilitating small group discussions on topics surrounding white privilege, racism, socioeconomic stratification, gender bias, and sexuality. I also co-facilitated a workshop "Grassroots Organizing & Taking Action" with a Chapman Women's Studies professor. As part of the planning for the retreat, I served on the Next Step Steering Committee, which evaluates and develops Next Step curricular materials, including resource guides I developed that highlight resources for subjects including ableism, ageism, classism, racism, religious oppression, sexism, and xenophobia.

My involvement with the Next Step Retreat has attuned me to the information needs of Chapman's social justice community on a deeper level. Moreover, Next Step has inspired in me a greater understanding and ability to help others find, use, and share information in order to raise awareness and promote social justice.



The training I received as a Next Step facilitator taught me to be a more effective organizer and information activist on campus and in my community. Above are examples of programs and events I have helped to organize and facilitate using strategies introduced through the Next Step program.



Creating zines and practicing DIY publishing taught me about the power of creating and sharing information with others on a grassroots level. During Next Step, I had the opportunity to conduct zine workshops and share this passion and skillset with students. These workshops influenced other zine projects I am involved with on campus and in my community.



Participating in Chapman's Next Step Social Justice Retreat has empowered me to stretch my bounds as a librarian and information activist through a variety of campus and community initiatives.



Attending Next Step Retreats has taught me a great deal about social justice issues impacting Chapman's community, especially those who identify as LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual/ally). This compelled me to expand my role as the LGBTQ Studies library liaison and become more involved in Chapman's Safe Space Program as a committee member and trainer. The Safe Space Program provides educational intervention to support Chapman's LGBTQIA community members. My involvement with Safe Space has resulted in the following:

- Providing Safe Space trainings for Chapman faculty and staff
- Creating information and resource displays in the library during Pride Month to raise awareness of LGBTQIA issues, including this year's QPOC (Queer People of Color) display
- Co-organizing a film screening of the documentary *Trans* to raise awareness of transgender issues and fundraise for the Next Step Retreat
- Serving on the Gender Neutral Restrooms subcommittee to advocate for more gender neutral restrooms on campus
- Compiling peer assessment data on LGBTQ Studies programs offered at other universities to inform the continuing development of Chapman's LGBTQ Studies minor.
- Presenting on library and open access LGBTQ Studies resources



The library resource guides I created for Next Step participant training packets inspired me to create additional guides for other campus initiatives and events as a way to reach out and provide information support. While attending these campus events, I have been approached by students and faculty for research advice. Some of these transactions have lent themselves to on-going research consultation and meaningful working relationships.