"I think that everyone at the conference, sponsors and attendees alike, came away with a greater understanding that inclusion of LGBT people, both in school and the community, enriches all of our society."

Terry Bird, MTSU Alumnus 1968

WHAT'S NEXT?

Planning is already underway for the Second Annual LGBT+ College Conference.

Some highlights:

- The conference opening day will allow researchers (faculty, staff, and students) from Tennessee to share the results of their research projects related to LGBT+ issues

- Results of the Tennessee LGBT+ Campus Climate Survey will be used to develop a strategy session to utilize strengths identified by some institutions to assist with challenges identified by other institutions

- A special session for student affairs professionals will allow better planning and strategizing by administrators working to support and retain their LGBT+ students

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE SECOND ANNUAL LGBT+ COLLEGE CONFERENCE APRIL 9-11, 2015!
Day 3 began with breakout sessions for students to learn about and confront their own biases that they may have concerning members of the LGBTQ+ community. Over six sessions, conference-goers addressed bullying, “trans” issues, LGBTQ+ and communities of color, and attitudes towards bisexual and gay people. These free-ranging discussions were the highlight of the conference for many attendees. At the beginning of the experience, I wasn’t sure who was going to show up or if exactly the conference was for me, but I actually learned quite a bit there. During the second day we attended a lecture on different word used to ‘name’ people who are not heterosexual and how those words can be hurtful and disrespectful to those individuals. I could also appreciate and relate the lecture to my life because I have a very good friend who is gay. I learned a lot about the issues that are present in the LGBTQ community and some ways that we are approaching the issues.”

Day 3 concluded with Pastor Bryan Currie’s discussion of homophobia and religion, another high point for many attendees, and an empowering experience for attendees from religious institutions who learned ways to discuss LGBTQ+ issues with their campus administrators.

Each evening, conference-goers were treated to entertaining and informative programming with various conference themes. The first evening, the film Miracles on Heaven’s Door—the project of MTSU Professor, Dr. Bob Pondillo—was presented, along with a discussion moderated by Dr. Pondillo. The second evening, actress Jennifer Lanier presented her emotional and thought-provoking performance None of the Above about her personal journey as an African American, Lesbian, and Native American woman. Lanier’s performance was made possible with the support of the MTSU Women’s and Gender Studies Program and the June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students.

This event had a profound impact on several audience members, including Marcus C., who wrote: “After I saw Jennifer Lanier’s dynamic performance of None of the Above, I felt an immediate rush of joy overcome me. Her show combined comedy, dance, and music, and she captured my heart. This is a movement that I would recommend to anyone as a must-see performance.”

“One lesson that I took from her show was that it is alright to be who you want to be and not be afraid to stand up for what you believe. I learned ways to discuss LGBT+ issues with my friends, family, and thought-provoking performance None of the Above about my personal journey as an African American, Lesbian, and Native American woman. Lanier’s performance was made possible with the support of the MTSU Women’s and Gender Studies Program and the June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students.”

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

Day 2: The focus of Day 2 was students, and the first panel of the day featured Bea Purdue, Development Officer for MTSU’s College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, moderating a discussion of Friendraising and Fundraising. Panelists were Travis Parman, the first deputy Athletics Director at MTSU and now the football coach for Tennessee State University, and the all-time leading scorer for the NCAA’s Sun Belt conference by welcoming Christian Brothers University, which will be starting a SafeZone program (again, using materials shared from Middle Tennessee State University). In addition, attendees made numerous contacts to assist other in programming, fundraising, and maintaining membership in their organizations (an especially vexing problem for community colleges given their rapid turnover).

The day’s sessions concluded with a panel discussion led by Bryan Parman, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at MTSU, on “How to get others to do your work.” Panelists were Ron Balcarzas of Deloitte, Greg Carson of Nissans North America, and Diane Easter of Deloitte. Panelists shared stories and added a personal touch to a day filled with organizing and strategizing.

“Do Friday, I attended a lecture on the strategies and approaches to use when applying for a grant, it was a fantastic session. I learned that you can not only apply for grants but also other ways to apply for funds, and the message of the lecture was to support your ideas and connect with others in order to accomplish and reach your goals.”

Christina H. - Student Attendee

The most touching part of the show for me was the segment about the coyote and the leaf. She mentioned how the coyote walked into the water holding a leaf in its mouth, and you could see across the water. The coyote was carrying the leaf that he had found and eventually traveled the leaf off of the coyote and he could leave the leaf in the water and return to the shore. The point behind her story is if you have something that is bothering you, you should move on to it. Instead you should cast your leaves away and try to move on and make the best of every hour you have.

“I overall I found Ms. Lanier’s show inspiring and amazing. To say that her performance was ‘great’ is a huge understatement. In order to give this performance justice it is not sufficient to simply show up and watch the performance, you must also think about how you are able to take her lessons and apply them to your everyday life and how you can make the most of the life that you are given.”

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

Entertaining and Impactful Programming

The focus of Day 2 was students, and the first panel of the day featured Bea Purdue, Development Officer for MTSU’s College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, moderating a discussion of Friendraising and Fundraising. Panelists were Travis Parman, the first deputy Athletics Director at MTSU and now the football coach for Tennessee State University, and the all-time leading scorer for the NCAA’s Sun Belt conference by welcoming Christian Brothers University, which will be starting a SafeZone program (again, using materials shared from Middle Tennessee State University). In addition, attendees made numerous contacts to assist other in programming, fundraising, and maintaining membership in their organizations (an especially vexing problem for community colleges given their rapid turnover).

The day’s sessions concluded with a panel discussion led by Bryan Parman, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at MTSU, on “How to get others to do your work.” Panelists were Ron Balcarzas of Deloitte, Greg Carson of Nissans North America, and Diane Easter of Deloitte. Panelists shared stories and added a personal touch to a day filled with organizing and strategizing.

“Do Friday, I attended a lecture on the strategies and approaches to use when applying for a grant, it was a fantastic session. I learned that you can not only apply for grants but also other ways to apply for funds, and the message of the lecture was to support your ideas and connect with others in order to accomplish and reach your goals.”

Christina H. - Student Attendee

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

Entertaining and Impactful Programming

The focus of Day 2 was students, and the first panel of the day featured Bea Purdue, Development Officer for MTSU’s College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, moderating a discussion of Friendraising and Fundraising. Panelists were Travis Parman, the first deputy Athletics Director at MTSU and now the football coach for Tennessee State University, and the all-time leading scorer for the NCAA’s Sun Belt conference by welcoming Christian Brothers University, which will be starting a SafeZone program (again, using materials shared from Middle Tennessee State University). In addition, attendees made numerous contacts to assist other in programming, fundraising, and maintaining membership in their organizations (an especially vexing problem for community colleges given their rapid turnover).

The day’s sessions concluded with a panel discussion led by Bryan Parman, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at MTSU, on “How to get others to do your work.” Panelists were Ron Balcarzas of Deloitte, Greg Carson of Nissans North America, and Diane Easter of Deloitte. Panelists shared stories and added a personal touch to a day filled with organizing and strategizing.

“Do Friday, I attended a lecture on the strategies and approaches to use when applying for a grant, it was a fantastic session. I learned that you can not only apply for grants but also other ways to apply for funds, and the message of the lecture was to support your ideas and connect with others in order to accomplish and reach your goals.”

Christina H. - Student Attendee

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

Entertaining and Impactful Programming

The focus of Day 2 was students, and the first panel of the day featured Bea Purdue, Development Officer for MTSU’s College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, moderating a discussion of Friendraising and Fundraising. Panelists were Travis Parman, the first deputy Athletics Director at MTSU and now the football coach for Tennessee State University, and the all-time leading scorer for the NCAA’s Sun Belt conference by welcoming Christian Brothers University, which will be starting a SafeZone program (again, using materials shared from Middle Tennessee State University). In addition, attendees made numerous contacts to assist other in programming, fundraising, and maintaining membership in their organizations (an especially vexing problem for community colleges given their rapid turnover).

The day’s sessions concluded with a panel discussion led by Bryan Parman, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at MTSU, on “How to get others to do your work.” Panelists were Ron Balcarzas of Deloitte, Greg Carson of Nissans North America, and Diane Easter of Deloitte. Panelists shared stories and added a personal touch to a day filled with organizing and strategizing.

“Do Friday, I attended a lecture on the strategies and approaches to use when applying for a grant, it was a fantastic session. I learned that you can not only apply for grants but also other ways to apply for funds, and the message of the lecture was to support your ideas and connect with others in order to accomplish and reach your goals.”

Christina H. - Student Attendee

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.

Entertaining and Impactful Programming

The focus of Day 2 was students, and the first panel of the day featured Bea Purdue, Development Officer for MTSU’s College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, moderating a discussion of Friendraising and Fundraising. Panelists were Travis Parman, the first deputy Athletics Director at MTSU and now the football coach for Tennessee State University, and the all-time leading scorer for the NCAA’s Sun Belt conference by welcoming Christian Brothers University, which will be starting a SafeZone program (again, using materials shared from Middle Tennessee State University). In addition, attendees made numerous contacts to assist other in programming, fundraising, and maintaining membership in their organizations (an especially vexing problem for community colleges given their rapid turnover).

The day’s sessions concluded with a panel discussion led by Bryan Parman, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at MTSU, on “How to get others to do your work.” Panelists were Ron Balcarzas of Deloitte, Greg Carson of Nissans North America, and Diane Easter of Deloitte. Panelists shared stories and added a personal touch to a day filled with organizing and strategizing.

“Do Friday, I attended a lecture on the strategies and approaches to use when applying for a grant, it was a fantastic session. I learned that you can not only apply for grants but also other ways to apply for funds, and the message of the lecture was to support your ideas and connect with others in order to accomplish and reach your goals.”

Christina H. - Student Attendee

The final evening, conference-goers were treated to a TED Talk-style lecture by Elizabeth Birch, former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, discussing the entire history of the LGBTQ+ community framed against the backdrop of human history. After Birch’s lecture, the conference awards dinner celebrated a successful and invigorating three-day experience, and recognized the significant contributions of the honorees.