

Are We There Yet?

Queer U 2012

Questioning Progress, Rethinking Ideals

As part of Outweek (Feb 13-17), Pride UBC, with the support of Critical Studies in Sexualities and The Network: Queer Grad Students, is organizing Queer U, a **graduate student academic conference on Wednesday, February 15, 2012**. Queer U brings together students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds to present their work on sexuality(ies) and gender(s) issues to a broad public audience. The goal of this panel is showcase the work being done at The University of British Columbia and other West Coast universities in the area of sexuality(ies) and gender(s).

Same-sex marriage in Canada. The repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in the United States. The possibility of listing one gender’s as X on an Australian passport. In the wake of positive legal and social reform, some people are beginning to assume that gender(s) and sexuality(ies) have become a non-issue in Western countries. One of the consequences of this visible progress in science, law, education, and the socio-cultural sphere is a sense of accomplishment—and complacency—for an entire generation of young Westerners. Meanwhile, other parts of the world are facing the West’s increasing scrutiny and criticism for being supposedly ‘backwards’ and breeding deadly prejudices against LGBTQ people. As emerging scholars, we challenge these assumptions by questioning this dichotomy and dedicating ourselves to research that illustrates the ongoing relevance of gender(s) and sexuality(ies) studies, even (especially) in Western countries where people are most likely to think these issues have become irrelevant and/or that equality has been achieved.

This year, Queer U wants to generate a discussion on the implications of these narratives of “progress” for our work on gender(s) and sexuality(ies). While we want to acknowledge the advances and successes achieved in the realm of research as well as that of everyday human rights, we also want to interrogate our definitions of success, the quality of progress that we have made, and the assumptions that continue to drive our research. Some questions that we hope to raise with this conference include: How do we define progress, and who benefits from this definition? What ideals are we are working towards? Who and what does this vision prioritize? More importantly, who and what does this vision *not* prioritize? What have we lost, missed, overlooked, or abandoned in the name of progress, and who have we marginalized? Finally, how do we address these gaps and limitations, both in our research and the activism that stems from our work?

This call for papers is open to graduate contributors from any department or area of research related to gender(s) and sexuality(ies). We also encourage undergraduate submissions. All topics are welcome, however we are especially interested in submissions dealing with the following topics:

- Laws and policies on gender(s) and sexuality(ies), such as “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)
- Social and historical accounts of gender(s) and sexuality(ies)
- Notions of ‘choice’ and biological determinism in discussions of sexuality(ies) and/or gender(s)
- Representations of gender(s) and sexuality(ies) in politics, popular culture, and education
- Advances, changes, progress, or regress regarding gender(s) and sexuality(ies) in any field of research
- Innovative and leading edge methods or avenues of research regarding gender(s) and sexuality(ies)



If interested, send in a short (200 word MAX.) abstract to helenefd@gmail.com and jennifer.lundin.ritchie@gmail.com, **no later than November 15, 2011.**

The Queer U academic panel is open to the general public. It will take place on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 and will be immediately followed by a Wine & Cheese reception.