

ISSUE | OCTOBER 2021

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Bridges to Diversity and Equity Resources & Events

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We are celebrating Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month, which is from September 15th - October 15th! To celebrate Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month, a Q&A section titled My Culture, My Story, explores the life and culture of Rafael Carmona, a student from SUNY Old Westbury. We are also celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month which is during the entire month of October! Information pertaining to LGBTQ+ labels is provided to educate our community. Additionally, a poem titled To the Little Girls With Hess Trucks, which was written by faculty member Kya Simmons, is shared in celebration of LGBTQ+ History month. Movie suggestions for both Hispanic and Latinx History and LGBTQ+ History are given to those interested. Lastly a recap of previous campus events are given as well as upcoming events that will be held at the college.

# My Culture, My Story-Hispanic Heritage Minth

*By Rafael Carmona '21*

**Where is your family from?**

My family is from the Dominican Republic. My mother is from Bani and my father is from Villa Duarte in Santo Domingo. I am actually a first generation American myself.

**When People from other countries usually think about your culture, what is usually thought of?**

I feel like people tend to think about the resorts that are here and view it as a tourist vacation spot. I also feel that people also embrace the positivity of Dominican culture which is the food, the history, the music and aspects of that nature. I would prefer that people look at the Dominican Republic as much more than another old vacation spot. I would prefer them to look at it a place where they can find a great experience through immersing themselves into the culture.

**What noticeable differences exist between American culture and your own culture?**

Within my experience, I noticed that Dominican people tend to be very family oriented, whereas in American culture its there but not as prominent. Dominicans speak Spanish and we have our own variation of it which includes our slang into it whereas most Americans don't really have that unless its African-Americans using AAVE (African American Vernacular English). Dominican people also do not like to eat out or order food as often, its more common to eat at home, eating out is a very rare thing. American people tend to eat out or order food a lot, because its something that's alright to do. I know as a Dominican-American, I do both often. I eat out a lot and then when I'm not at school on the weekends, I tend to eat more at home. Another difference would be gender roles. In Dominican culture, gender roles are traditional but in American culture, gender roles are usually traditional but also changing because people want to not conform to what society suggests that they do. I would say that Dominican parents are very over protective and don't allow their child to do much unless it is something supervised or timed.

American parents allow their children to express themselves and are not as over protective.

**Have these differences impacted your education or personal experiences at any point in time?**

It has never affected me in regards to my education. However, there are times where there is a culture clash between my parents. The reason for this might be because culturally I am an American but my parents are culturally still Dominican and didn't assimilate at all. Being involved at school has definitely led to arguments because they are over protective and want the best for me but I also feel that I need that time to grow and discover who I am as a person.

**Have you been able to connect with someone who shares your culture at SUNY Old Westbury?**

Yeah, I have, my frat brother Efrin Martinez shares my culture and we were able to have numerous conversations that would be related to our cultural identity and experience. I appreciate having that and I do not think I would have been a member of my beloved fraternity, MALIK if it was not for his part as a mentor.

**Do you feel like an environment of inclusivity is found here on campus?**

I feel that there is and there is not. I believe that it is there because Old Westbury is a very diverse institution which has numerous students of different ethnicities, races, genders, religious backgrounds, etc. and I feel that being around different people allows you to be immerse in new cultures and have an appreciation for it. I say that it is not because there is sometimes a lack of cultural events that doesn't show the diversity that this institution has. I feel that cultural programming is an inclusive way to make students get involved as well as welcomed on their campus.

# LGBTQ+ Definitions

## Labels

No one knows for sure what makes a person straight, gay, lesbian, or even bisexual or transgender. There are many theories (biology, environment, personal experiences, etc.) but we know that there isn't just one cause. Whatever the reason may be, it's important to know that all orientations and identities are normal. They're just a part of who we are! Labels can be a huge source of self-understanding for some LGBTQ people. Because we live in a society where everyone is assumed and expected to be straight and cisgender, finding the words to define yourself can be an act of liberation. Labels can help connect people to one another, allowing them to feel less alone and to create community together. Labels also allow researchers to study marginalized groups, giving us important information to better understand and support these groups.

While labels feel meaningful for some LGBTQ people, labels can feel restrictive for others. It's OK to explore different labels or to avoid labels altogether! You are never required to label your identity in a particular way or to disclose your identity, especially if doing so would compromise your safety.

## Sexual Orientation

The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/ or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and therefore "curable." People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

## Sex

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

## Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

## Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

# To the Little Girls With Hess Trucks

To the little girls with Hess Trucks  
The ones who thought that power rangers were cool  
And Pokémon were too  
The ones who never really grew out of wearing  
baggy jeans and t-shirts  
This is for you

Don't let society tell you what to do  
How can we listen to a medium that plasters the bad  
news on the big screen  
And the good news is a small strip across it?  
They don't value you.

Finding value in yourself is like discovering Blood  
Diamonds in Sierra Leone,  
Don't let those who don't think like you benefit from  
your uniqueness  
To them you will merely be a product to market  
To capitalize on, to make a profit

To the girls who would rather wear uptowns  
Then shop downtown for a pair of pumps.  
The ones who rather build a house than be confined  
and defined by one  
This is for you  
This isn't Leave it Beaver  
You aren't Mrs. Cleaver  
I know you been itchin' to get out of the kitchen.

Don't let society tell you that GI Joes are for your  
brothers  
Because Uncle Sam still wants you  
Don't let them tell you that your combat boots are  
unfitting  
When you lace them just like the boys it as simple as  
adding two plus two  
Don't let them tell you that being an engineer is  
unfitting  
Because reason and logic are becoming  
Girl you look beautiful

To the girls who know the stats of their  
favorite players  
The ones who now that MJ was the GOAT  
Erving was the Doctor  
Iverson was the Answer  
Kobe was the Black Mamba  
And Lebron's a king  
Your love for the game is rivaled by no other  
Its your sport too  
Own your jimmy  
Not a gimmick, you girl are the real deal

To the little girls who are wired differently  
Those who seem to think more critically  
Don't be afraid  
To think differently just means to succeed  
differently  
All you have to do is be prepared mentally

To the little girls with Hess Trucks  
The ones who thought that power rangers  
were cool  
And Pokémon were too  
The ones who never really grew out of  
wearing baggy jeans and t-shirts  
This is for you

-K.S



# Recommended Movies

## *Hispanic/Latinx*

I'm No Longer Here (Ya No Estoy Aquí)

Real Women Have Curves

Book of Life

Y Tu Mamá También

La Llorona

Retablo

Even the Rain (También la Lluvia)

Pelo Malo

City of God

El Norte

## *LGBTQ+*

Before Stonewall

Moonlight

Hedwig and the Angry Inch

The Watermelon Woman

My Beautiful Laundrette

Love, Simon

Weekend

Carol

Tongues Untied

Happy Together

Hispanic/Latinx Movie List Retrieved from:

<https://news.usc.edu/191994/top-movies-to-watch-hispanic-heritage-month/>

LGBTQ+ Movie List Retrieved from: <https://mashable.com/article/lgbtq-movies>

# Recap of Campus Events

9/9/2021

- Multicultural Welcome Fair

9/21/2021

- Podcast Say What?: Latinx Therapy a podcast listening session

9/23/2021

- Hispanic/Latinx Culture Cafe

9/24th-28/2021

- The Other Slavery: Histories of Indian Bondage from New Spain to the Southwestern United States

9/26/2021

- In the Heights Movie Showing

9/28/2021

- Latin Music & Chill Kahoot Game

9/30/2021

- Hispanic Heritage Keynote Speaker Greisy Genao (She/They)

10/11/2021

- National Coming Out Day Virtual

10/12/2021

- Netflix Teleparty: Latin History for Morons

10/13/2021

- FSI Invisibility: A Discussion about the LGBTQ community in Fraternities & Sororities.



# Remaining October Events

Pictionary LGBTQ Edition

- 10/19/2021

Pronouns Day

- 10/20/2021

Spirit Day

- 10/21/2021

vNo Name Calling Day

- 10/26/2021

LGBTQ Social

- 10/27/2021

LGBTQ History Month Keynote Speaker

- 10/28/2021



# GET INVOLVED!

## SUBMIT TO THE NEWSLETTER

November is Native American History Month & December host many cultural and religious holidays. You can submit poems, short stories, experiences etc. to the Building Bridges Newsletter by emailing Kya Simmons at [simmonsk@olwestbury.edu](mailto:simmonsk@olwestbury.edu)

## STAY CONNECTED

Email: [CSLI@oldwestbury.edu](mailto:CSLI@oldwestbury.edu)

Instagram: [SUNYOWCSLI](https://www.instagram.com/SUNYOWCSLI)

Facebook.com/[sunyowcsli](https://www.facebook.com/sunyowcsli)

Download the Panther Connect App

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