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10 November 2014

Evolution: My Journey becoming an LGBTQ Politician

Honors Program

Final Proposal

After reviewing all of my artifacts along with commentary by you, Dr. Pereira, I have decided upon one coherent theme amongst the several central questions I posed. The theme that I feel I will be able to write a twenty-five page paper on is the fusing of the two “What Ifs” that I have chosen: “Coming Out: My LGBTQ Experience”, and “Politics: Where I Have Started and How I Have Evolved” into one theme; Evolution: Becoming an LGBTQ Politician. I chose this title for multiple reasons. First, I have come to realize that during a person’s lifetime their political views are subject to change as they evolve and go through different experiences that may cause them to become more liberal or conservative on a plethora of issues. I have always been a Democrat as I was raised as such by my parents. Once I came to the revelation that I was gay and I discovered what the political parties felt about people like me I further aligned myself to be a Democrat. Now that I am not as naïve as I once was I now realize that each political party, including my own, has its positives and negatives. One has to look at the big picture as well as pay attention to the smaller minute details in order to assess what is important to you and how you base your decisions on that information. Secondly, the word evolution fits perfectly with how someone like me—who was born gay—changes through their lifetime on how they decide to come out of the closet and be open about who they are and who they love. As I have grown older after learning what “gay” meant and how it would affect my life I have come to
learn to not only accept who I am but to be completely open and honest with friends and family for hiding my true self is not only lying to them but lying to myself as well. Why sacrifice my happiness for someone else’s ignorance and bigotry?

The artifacts that I have chosen offer not only academic evidence for my ever evolving political views, but they also signify major milestones in my coming out experience. The one artifact that stands apart from my political and LGBTQ artifacts but is essential to understanding how my thinking has changed over the years is my battle with depression and anxiety throughout my college career. I feel the best way to symbolize this experience may be a simple picture of the pills that I now take on a regular basis to maintain my bipolar disorder. Without this experience I would not have become the person that I am today; in fact, I could have been dead by now if my suicide attempt had been successful. By not including this artifact I would be remiss and there would be no reasonable way for me to explain how I have gotten where I am and how my college career has been affected by this battle. The second artifact that is also set apart from the LGBTQ political theme is the constitution for my street hockey club here at UNC Charlotte. The reasoning behind including this artifact is that my desire to be a leader and do something that sets me apart from the crowd is part of what makes a politician a politician. Many people think that politicians just go into the field to become powerful and make money but I want to make a difference in my community no matter how small that difference may be. Though being the president of the street hockey club may not seem like a huge responsibility, it taught me that I need help from others in order to lead and how to socialize and get a person involved with something that is bigger than themselves. The third artifact that I feel is appropriate to include would be when I had a major breakthrough in my coming out experience during my sophomore year of college. This was the year that I decided to start coming out to my friends and some
acquaintances which really then allowed me to know who were my real friends and who weren’t. As I came out to each person it felt like the weight was being lifted off my shoulders and a tidal wave was building to where I even started coming out to some people that I probably should not have told. Either way this was a milestone in my coming out experience. The fourth artifact is an academic one as it deals with the War, Peace, and Justice course that I took with Dr. Gay at UNCC. Going into this course I felt that I had already cemented my views on multiple issues but Dr. William Gay opened my eyes to the world and I came out with a different worldview than when I went in. I was even inspired to try for an internship in Washington after taking the course. The fifth artifact that fits with my theme would be another academic one when I wrote a paper in Dr. John Cox’s Political Repression course about the Gay Rights Movement. This was a combination between my political views and LGBTQ experience as I was able to research the struggles that LGBTQ people have gone through in order to gain basic human rights that everyone should be able to enjoy instead of being treated as second class citizens. The sixth artifact is also academic and is one of my Honors artifacts as I took as class with Dr. John Perry on the topic of Politics and Elections. This class allowed me to explore more with my field in a small classroom environment which was much more rewarding as I was able to have more one on one time with the instructor compared to regular class sizes. I learned how and why people vote certain ways which will be useful for my overarching theme of becoming a politician. My seventh artifact is actually going to be an academic infusion that includes up to four or five separate academic pieces that can be fused together to explain how humor affects politics. Over the years at UNCC I have taken several classes with my advisor Dr. Kropf and I have done research into how humor affects politics. If I am going to run for office someday I may want to integrate humor into my campaign in order to try a different approach at winning an election.
Being able to understand a person’s sense of humor can often open doors to people that may usually stay disengaged from the political process altogether. The eighth artifact that I feel would be perfect to include is my first visit to a PRIDE event here in Charlotte this year. I had never gotten to go to PRIDE when it was here in Charlotte the past few years; attending a PRIDE event is another step in my coming out process as I am not only comfortable with who I am among my community but I am willing to go out and celebrate that difference. When I first knew that I was gay I would never have dreamed of going to a PRIDE event. The ninth and final artifact that I feel will be of the most substance to my reflection paper is the internship that I have with ForwardNC working with Kay Hagan’s re-election campaign. I will be able to include a plethora of details as I will have recently completed this internship and it ties directly into my desire to aspire to be an LGBTQ politician. Now that we have the artifacts laid out and explained it is time to delve into the methodology of the portfolio.

When I look at all the artifacts that I have included I think that there will be a mixture between going with a chronologically inspired paper and one that also involves placing artifacts where there will be a continuation and natural flow to the reflection paper. If I were to stick to either a strictly chronological portrayal of the artifacts then the theme may appear to become choppy which will make it harder for the reader to understand. If I stick to only placing things that are alike (like political with political and LGBTQ with LGBTQ) then this will defeat the entire purpose of fusing these two together for the main theme. The best option in my opinion is to do a hybrid of the two and to have the underlying artifact of my battle with depression and anxiety to be a tie that binds the two together.

The following will be an outline of steps for completing the online portfolio, reflection paper, and meetings with my thesis advisor going in reverse order: March 28th Defense of
Portfolio due, March 13th Final Draft Due and final review with thesis advisor, February 27th
Completion of E-Portfolio due, February 20th 2nd Draft Due and meeting with thesis advisor,
February 6th 1st Draft Due, January 23rd uploading of artifacts and Web Design due, January
19th first meeting with thesis advisor.

For my thesis advisor I have chosen Professor Brenda Tindal as my thesis advisor as I
have had her for several classes, she is in the Honors teaching program, and she has seen me deal
with my depression and anxiety and seen me change with my evolution as a LGBTQ politician. I
have chosen Dr. Martha Kropf as my reader as she is from the Political Science Department and
I have taken her for many classes and she has been my advisor for the past few years after I
declared political science as my major.
Bibliography

Photography:

Documents:

Other:
3. Internship with ForwardNC, Charlotte, North Carolina, June-November 2014. Internship