

Boston to host LGBT friendly college fair

by Peter Cassels
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High school students who want to apply to LGBT friendly colleges will have the chance to check them out this week in Boston.

More than 40 colleges are expected to participate in the GLBT Youth and Allies College Fair in the Great Hall of the Massachusetts State House from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sept. 30.

Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale, Tufts, Brandeis, Emerson and the Universities of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Texas will be among those institutions that will participate.



More than 40 colleges and universities are expected to participate in an LGBT friendly college fair on Beacon Hill tomorrow.

Besides meeting with college and university representatives, attendees can take advantage of expert advice about LGBT friendly colleges, scholarship resources and tips for successful campus visits.

The fair is the first one sponsored by the Boston-based Friends of GLBT Youth in partnership with Campus Pride, an organization that acts as a national clearing house and resource for LGBT college students.

In the past two years, Campus Pride held similar events in San Diego and Philadelphia and added one in Minneapolis last year. Fairs also will be held at the New York City GLBT Center in Manhattan on Nov. 6 and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles on Feb. 10.

"Our goal is to offer our national fair program in every region of the country in the next two years," Shane Windmeyer, the organization's executive director and author of an LGBT student college guide, told EDGE. "Finding the right local organizations like Friends of GLBT Youth is part of ingredients o success."

PFLAG and the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Youth have endorsed the event.

"I think it's wonderful," BAGLY executive director Grace Stowell said in an interview. "We certainly encourage all of our members to take advantage of any opportunity in the community in education or health or anything else in their lives. It's so important to young people who are pursuing interviews at potential colleges in terms of their inclusiveness for LGBT students."

Cory Larson, a junior at Nashoba Regional High School in Bolton, Mass., will attend the Beacon Hill event. Planning to pursue a career in criminology or psychology, he said won't confine his college search to LGBT friendly campuses, but he pointed out he feels it's a good choice for many.

"I am a firm believer that we as LGBT teens should not segregate ourselves and keep ourselves in the safe zone," he wrote in an email exchange with EDGE. "The safe zone is nice but we also need to go where we may not be wanted and make a difference, even if it's scary. It's what we need to do to advance our social standing."

Lex Thomas, Larson's mother and a Friends of GLBT Youth spokesperson, added she expects many students will attend the event (less than 100 participated in each of the previous ones,) but others are reluctant.

Thomas related the story of one lesbian high school senior who contacted her. The student would be in school during the fair, but sought information about the colleges and scholarships. The student said her father does not know she is a lesbian and "feels certain he would kick her out of the house if he knew," Larson told EDGE. "

I'm the first of my family to be going off to college and I'm really nervous," the student wrote in email to Larson. "It's stressful enough going to college, but if I knew I was going somewhere that was friendly and safe for me, I know I'd feel a lot better."

In Massachusetts, seniors are entitled three absences to attend college fairs. Visit www.glbtcollgefair.com for more information. Visit www.campuspride.org for more about the events in New York and Los Angeles.

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