

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE
LGBTQ ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview of
Jeffrey E. Finegan Jr. '17
Conducted by
Mary Armstrong
May 31, 2017

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Lafayette College

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Finegan

MARY ARMSTRONG: So that one should be running, and that one should be running. OK, so, this is Mary Armstrong, and I am sitting here with Jeffrey Finegan, class of 2017. I am professor of Women's and Gender Studies and English, and chair of the Women's and Gender Studies program at Lafayette College, and it is May 31st, 2017. So first things first thank you, Jeff, very much for this interview.

JEFF FINEGAN: You're quite welcome.

MA: It's generous of you to spend the time. So at the beginning of the interview, we do the same questions in which, all for protocol, I'm going to ask you to state your name and confirm that your participation is voluntary, and that you have given your informed consent.

JF: Jeffrey Eric Finegan Jr. My participation is voluntary, and my consent is given in the highest degree possible.

MA: (laughs) That's good. That's great. [00:01:00] As I think the forms mentioned, but if they don't, you get a chance to review your transcript. It'll come to you; you get to look at it --

JF: Oh, great. OK.

MA: Make any clarification. If there's anything that -- if we couldn't catch a word or whatever, you're the person who

would probably know, but you can also review it to make sure that it's what you said. Can I take your picture?

JF: Yeah, sure.

MA: OK, so I'll do that after we're done. And that'll go with your interview. So a couple of ground rules. The ground rules are basically that they are your rules. So you can decline to answer any question you don't want to answer.

You can elaborate on any questions or contribute additional thoughts if you want. If you're like me, you get home and you realize you should have said several other things.

(laughs) So if and when that happens and you think, "I'd really love to write down this story," or whatever, write it down and send it. It's not like there's a sort of date stamp to this that means you've done your interview and you can't add anything else. It's exactly the opposite. If you thought of something else you wanted to write follow up, [00:02:00] or you had some sort of other comments you wanted to make, we'd be happy to take those at any time.

JF: Great, OK.

MA: So that should take away the stress of feeling like, "Oh, I've got to get this all right." Because if you wanted to add something, you can. The idea behind the interview is that it's your story, right? So I have some questions in front of me, but they're just to sort of get things started.

You don't have to particularly follow this, and we'll just go where you want to go, because the idea is it's sort of your -- what you have to say about your time as a member of the LGBTQ community at Lafayette College during the years you were here. So it's your story. So don't feel like you have to answer my questions, particularly. To get us going, though, personal pronouns and names you prefer me to use?

JF: He, masculine pronouns, and I do identify as male.

MA: OK. And you go by Jeff?

JF: Jeff, yeah, generally, Jeff.

MA: All right. And your class year, this I know, (laughs) is 2017.

JF: Seventeen, correct.

MA: You've been an alum for a couple of weeks.

JF: Two -- less than two weeks. Twelve days.

MA: That's awesome. That is fantastic. [00:03:00] And how do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community?

JF: I'm gay. And I like to tell the joke with friends that I am gayer than Elton John.

MA: OK. (laughs)

JF: Which, maybe that gets into a little stereotyping and whatnot, but sometimes I think you question, should you identify yourself? I think that in and of itself is a very worthwhile question. But I think the way I view it, is in

order to help someone understand me, it's easy for me to say that I'm gay. And I do identify as gay. So it's not as if I don't identify, and I say it to make it accessible.

MA: OK, absolutely.

JF: I do identify, and I've found the benefit in that identification as well, because most people have an idea, you know, of what that means.

MA: Yeah. Yeah, OK, that's great. That makes a lot of sense, because as we talk to people, one of the things is that people do feel differently about that question. And so, that was a really helpful answer. Anything to add about your identity or who you are? [00:04:00] I mean, you just kind of did, but --

JF: I love men. (laughs)

MA: OK, that makes me so happy.

JF: No, I think it's some -- and I'm sure we'll wade into it over the course of the interview, but my coming out story really is part and parcel of my time at Lafayette, and in many ways, this institution helped me to come out. And you know, I'm sure that there's probably some that give a completely different experience or an account of that process, but that's what I think's fascinating is this notion of variations on a theme. Same place, dramatically different experience for every student that's here. So you

really can't quantify it. But no I would say that -- you asked about identity; I'm very proud of my identity. I think it makes me a unique person. It gives me, certainly, a distinct and nuanced perspective on a lot of different issues. [00:05:00] I wouldn't go so far as to say that it's "fun to be a minority." I know some people sort of like to claim their minority status, and that's good for some people. Others it's not. And it's not that I don't like that, but it's different. You know? And I think in my instance, what is sometimes an advantage or a disadvantage -- I have it a little bit easier in terms of navigating various environments, because I quote, unquote "present straight." Which is ridiculous. You know, the splicing and the nuancing that goes on even in the gay community with the terminology, are you "masc," which is short for masculine or "femme." You know, all these crazy -- there's, I think when you come out, you learn a whole other vocabulary for how to navigate. But that's been an advantage to me; maybe with some family members that I'm not out to, or friends. And I've never been not true to my identity. [00:06:00] You know, if somebody asks me, "Are you gay or are you straight?" I'm always very forthcoming. But there are some times where maybe you're in a spot that

you think, "Hey, I might have to sort of play my cards a little closer to my chest," and that's an advantage.

MA: So being a cisgender person, the way you just happen to be a cisgender person, the way some people happen not to be cisgender, right?

JF: Exactly.

MA: Happen to be cisgender male, and so --

JF: That's a great way of saying that.

MA: That gives you an advantage. OK. No, that makes a lot of sense, and that's an important part of how you're perceived as a member of the LGBTQ community or not, by people to whom you may or may not be visible. I mean, that's a big part of this - how is it being -- you just offered the tantalizing remark that Lafayette was the place you came out, and it helped you come out, and sort of -- so, tell about your time here. Has it been a safe place? Has it been a good community? What have been the positives and negatives? There's any place you can start.

JF: Yeah, so, I think that's a great question. [00:07:00] And I'm going to very happily follow your questions, because they're great, but what's interesting about that question, I find, is that implicit in that question to a certain extent, is the role of identity. So you can look at Lafayette through the lens of a gay person, which certainly,

I have, and others. Or, I could look at it through the lens of a cisgender male who happens to be gay. So that's, I think -- why is that even worth mentioning? I don't know. Sometimes my mind wanders off in these philosophical musings.

MA: That's OK. (laughs) That's all right. That's totally fine.

JF: But I think that's an interesting way to sort of dissect that question, and I would say that that approach has sort of defined my time here, to a certain extent. But to start kind of at the beginning, I transferred here from Bucknell University, had kind of a fresh start here, and one of --

MA: How many years were you at Bucknell?

JF: I was at Bucknell for two and a half years.

MA: Oh, OK. OK. [00:08:00]

JF: And I would never badmouth a fellow Patriot league institution. But the one thing I will say, that I can almost guarantee you assuredly is, A, a type of interview such as this is not occurring there. And B, I know in my heart of hearts that I never would have been able to have come out there. And I can't say that authoritatively, though, because I also wasn't aware of my sexuality at that point. And so, maybe had I been aware it may have been a different story, but looking back in hindsight, I don't think it would have been possible. I was the president of

my fraternity there, so I did, quote, unquote, all the "Straight boy" things. You go off; you join a Greek organization. But what was important to me in everything I did was that I maintained my sense of individuality. I never -- I've done some dumb things, and everybody has. And you look back, and you think, "Gee, whiz, probably should have been smart and not done that." [00:09:00] But everything that I did was public service oriented. I was the president of my class, the president of my fraternity at the same time, all sorts of stuff like that. And I was a very, very visible figure on that campus. I was friends with the president of the university, and the one thing I have thought about on that point is my goodness; if I had had the knowledge and the courage to be out, who I was, what that visibility could have done to help other people. And when I came here and had kind of a clean start, that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to hit the ground running here as someone who maybe wasn't flamboyant, per se, or wasn't in someone's face about my sexuality, but was open, was honest, and was in a position to assist other people going through the struggles that I did. [00:10:00] And I met with Dean [Paul] McLaughlin May 14th, I believe, of 2014. We had a nice interview, and he came out to me. You know, he said that he had been with his husband for a number of

years, and I kind of thought OK, I can do this. I know I'm going to be here -- I wasn't out to my family -- not to my parents at that point. I was to some cousins and stuff like that, sort of periphery family if you want to use that phrase. But I thought I have to be me when I come here. I can't do it again as someone that's not -- I can't be someone I'm not. It's just -- well, for one thing, it's not who you are. So it's misleading.

MA: Yeah. It was like a fresh start for you coming here.

JF: It was.

MA: It was like do-over for starting college in this time, feeling like --

JF: It really was. And I have some fond memories of Bucknell. [00:11:00] Would I go there ever again if I could redo things? Not in a million years. But I certainly have some good memories. But -- and this could sound crazy -- that's not really me. It's a, in many ways, a drastically different version of me. And I think that process has been one of the more illuminative ones, is how you can sort of maintain your sunny disposition, your sarcasm, every characteristic of personality that someone would identify you as, except for what you might say is the biggest elephant in the room. And how interesting that you, yourself, might not know that. And you discover that about

yourself. Other people then sort of view you through that lens, and that was kind of another thing -- I know I'm sort of talking at length here.

MA: That's good. That's fine.

JF: But how do you -- and to kind of switch to the [00:12:00] coming out process a little bit, how do you show, to your parents, to your friends, to your family, that you're still the same son, you're still the same brother, you're still the same grandson, the same cousin, but in some ways, you're not? I think at the fundamental level you are, but there is a moment where your parents, your aunts, your uncle, your cousins, your siblings, you know, whoever sort of is important, friends, realize that hey, this individual's life is going to take a markedly different direction than what the expectation was, if you want to call it that. But that also gets into narrative, as well. And so, if you are someone for whom it's important that you are the architect of your own future, and that's my favorite quote on the Kirby Building. [00:13:00] That shouldn't matter, but I think that there's some sense in which to let your family grow into that understanding; it's a very sensitive topic.

MA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's complicated.

JF: It really is. It's a very complicated topic.

MA: And how long were you -- so, you had this sort of do-over, how long were you -- then, you were two years? Two and a half years?

JF: I was about two and a half, yeah.

MA: OK, all right, so two and a half years here.

JF: And I -- when I was there, being in a Greek organization, you're around a lot of very attractive other people.

MA: Yeah.

JF: And I think that I started to realize hey, something ain't right here. And I don't say that as in I have a deviant orientation, but something isn't right in the context of where I am. I think I'm a moderately attractive person, you're the president of a fraternity -- but you're not sleeping with girls. [00:14:00] I think you can -- I dug myself into my books, I sort of found distractions, and I think that I always knew that there was something distinct and different about me, but it really wasn't until I started to notice that growing attraction to the same sex that I started to think, "I might be gay." And I have to tell you it was a scary thought at first. Because truthfully when I tell you that five years ago if you said to me, "What is a gay person?" And you might laugh. I couldn't give you an answer. I wouldn't have known if it was someone who just sleeps with someone of the same sex,

if it's a phase, and I look back and laugh, and think, "How absurd." But I guess in some ways, I can't be too harsh, [00:15:00] because I didn't have -- I neither had, nor had access to by virtue of my environment, the requisite skill set to start that process of identity discovery, and sort of foundation, if you will.

MA: You were experiencing your own self, the kind of re-orientation so to speak, or reframing that you describe other people as having when you came out to them. You had to have it first, in a sense, of having your expectations overturned. Were you out when you got to Lafayette? So, how did it sort of take off? You interviewed with Dean McLaughlin, and then were you out during your years here? Or, how did it go while you were on campus here?

JF: So as of now, I'm more or less completely out. There's probably a handful of family members that either don't know, or if they know just sort of pretend that they don't know. But no, I sent my parents a long email. It was early September of 2014; it's probably about a week and a half after I had been here. [00:16:00] And a good family friend who's not gay, but who had sort of mentored me had said, "You're going to know. You're just going to have this nagging feeling that you're just going to want to get it off your chest." And I can tell you exactly where I was.

This is going to sound crazy. I was coming back -- I belong to LA Fitness on 25th Street -- and I was coming back from the gym at the base of College Hill here, and there's that car dealership and now where public safety's going. And I was turning to make the left up the hill, and right when I got to stop sign, (snaps) I said, "When I get back to my room, I'm going to barricade myself in my room. I'm going to do this email; I'm going to send it," and I was scared. I actually shut my phone off and didn't -- by the time I sent it, I was trembling. But as much as I didn't want to do it, I had to do it. I had reached that threshold where -- and I was actually dating someone at the time. My first relationship. And you have kind of rose-colored glasses or whatever the phrase is, when you have that and all that stuff, but I just said, "I can't do it anymore. I can't --" inevitably, Mom or Dad's going to say, "Hey, have you met any girls in your class?" you know this or that. And I know what the answer is. And I sort of resigned myself to the fact that it's probably going to be tricky for some time, but better to do it now; get it over with. But to answer your question a little more directly, for the longest time, I wasn't out to a close friend; I've since come out to. Went very well. Exceedingly well, in fact. And I wasn't necessarily as highly visible here as I

was at Bucknell. I participated in a number of activities. You know, Landis, I was an associate student representative for student government, all sorts of stuff like that. I wasn't involved in the social scene here at all. I actually never once went to a Greek event. [00:18:00] I'm a little older than the average student, and there's a lot of great people, but I just didn't necessarily need a distraction, so I wouldn't --

MA: That was a change for you.

JF: It was a change. And I wouldn't say that I'm highly known, but most people know, "Oh, that's Jeff, and he's gay. He's out. He's happy to talk about it, if you ask him," type thing. So that's kind of like a bell curve, in a way. Because your peak is coming out, and then the other end of that is being known as an individual, not just as the preppy gay kid who walks across the quad. And that's kind of a funny thing too, in a way.

MA: Yeah. What was it like to be a gay student at Lafayette?

JF: Much better than what I came from, (laughs) I can tell you that much. And as I've said, the identity wasn't necessarily there for me. Overall, very positive. It wasn't bad. It really was not bad in any way. [00:19:00] I definitely felt supported and encouraged, for sure. Not the least of which from people such as yourself. You know,

having a gay dean of students; having some gay faculty. The one thing -- and I know we've talked about it in our personal conversations -- is it's unfortunate that statistically, there's probably three to four hundred students here that are not straight. And for whichever reason -- I was in a tricky spot; I never begrudge someone of their decision to come out or to not come out, but what struck me here is that there's something about the culture where you might be gay, you might be accepted, but that's probably the extent of your identity expression.

MA: Mm-hmm, so, you can be out if you want to, but there's not a culture of being out.

JF: No, there's really not. [00:20:00] And I would say that the culture exists in as far as those individuals who are out, are identified as being quote, unquote, "The out gays." And that's OK. I mean, the college age population has some maturing to do, and that type of thing, and I think I'm an understanding guy, and I do get that. And I understand that for some people they might have to work through what that means, and I applaud anybody who wants to learn and figure it out and become educated on the topic. But that's the one disappointment from my time is that I never really had the opportunity to develop friendships with other gay individuals other than in passing. And I have friends at

basically every Ivy League school, and some other elite liberal arts institutions, and it's very much different at almost every other institution.

MA: How is it different? The community's more visible?

[00:21:00]

JF: The community's -- yeah, much more visible. I partially dated somebody from Lehigh last year, and he could name a number of other individuals on their campus. And certainly, there's a demographic discrepancy between our institutions, but proportionally there are many more individuals at Lehigh that are out, actually, which I'll never understand. Maybe I'd have to be a student there to figure that one out. And it's not a regret, because there's nothing I can do to change it. I think a regret indicates that you could have had some control or direction over something. But what --

MA: Was that isolating?

JF: Yeah, I think where it becomes isolating is -- and the individuals with whom I became friends were all very understanding, and never expressed a slur, and were very advanced in their understanding of identities and whatnot. And so they sort of got to the extent that they could [00:22:00] what a potential struggle might be for a gay person. You know, there's no dating opportunities. Literally none.

MA: Yeah. OK, that matters.

JF: You know, the question is, I have friends at large schools even who have said, "I won't date here." You know, maybe you date at a neighboring school or something like that, and so that's a personal preference issue. But at the same time, I have some friends -- straight, gay, everything in-between -- who met either their significant other, or had very positive, meaningful relationships while they were in college, and I think that would have been nice. I think it would have been nice; you're not going to sit here and cry over spilled milk, but you can share intimacy with someone. You have the commonality of being at the same institution, of experiencing sort of the same environment. [00:23:00] And as crazy as it sounds, had I dated someone here sure, I would have been visible about, "This is my boyfriend," or something like that. And I think that would have been good. I'm not going to say I'm a gay prophet, but --

MA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. If I hear you correctly, there was no same-sex dating scene. You could have done it if it happened to happen to you, but this has been a school that has been characterized by not having a same-sex dating sort of, particularly -- are there pockets of gay life during your year here? Were there ways to find other --

JF: Well, there's Grindr, of course. Which is a hookup app, and --

MA: But that's everywhere. (laughs)

JF: That's everywhere. Well, again, the frustrating thing -- and something that I really have mentally committed to trying to help change as now an alum -- is there's not. And God only knows what goes on in fraternity houses at 2:30 on a Saturday morning. [00:24:00] But that, I think, is a problem. And once again, the central issue is that you can't force it. It's going to develop as it will. But that leaves a large portion of the campus community without exposure to that. And the fact of it is, and somebody might say, "Well, you're pushing an agenda," or "Diversity quotas," and X, Y, and Z, and all that stuff. You know, you're in a fraternity, and you moved to work in New York or Philadelphia, or Chicago, or Orlando, or Atlanta, or LA or San Francisco -- God, San Francisco. Wherever. Your boss might be gay, and have a partner. You might go out with a colleague after work who you think is straight and they might take you to a gay bar. [00:25:00] And the reason I think that's important is it's a shame that the campus doesn't have exposure to that type of diversity. Because I think that also helps to sort of develop your sensitivities. And you go from Easton to mid-town

Manhattan, or wherever else -- some people might kind of be hit with a wall of bricks. Kind of like, "Hey, I've never seen this. What do I do?"

MA: And the culture fails --

JF: The culture fails, yeah.

MA: Yeah. I mean, obviously, gay people most, because it could be isolating, or you think, "Here's a large population, but there's only a few of us out." But there's also a loss to the college climate generally because people are not exposed to the more diverse populations that they'll eventually be exposed to.

JF: In the world. And one other thing I would say to that topic is I felt personally confident and strong enough to navigate the rigors of the lack of the culture here.

[00:26:00] But I can see very distinctly that this institution has a lot of work to do to create an environment in which someone who's having the experience I did their Freshman year when they come here --

MA: That's a great point.

JF: Can have that experience. So I was lucky with the benefit of hindsight, but --

MA: You came here ready.

JF: I came here ready in a lot of ways.

MA: And many people don't.

JF: There's going to be a lot of people, I would say, probably the overwhelming majority will not be ready.

MA: Are there the support structures in place for the -- I mean, I'm wondering. The first year comes in, and he or she or they have this, sort of coming out to themselves, and --

JF: Actually -- and this is a good part to mention that one of the things I was very involved in was Behind Closed Doors. And I love the organization. I'm very passionate about it. I think it did not only me a service, it did others a service as well, but what it also did was it gave me the competency in a vocabulary fashion, [00:27:00] even grammatically, to engage with some of these issues. Behind Closed Doors is great. I've been able to have, or did have, an impact on people here, and it's a bit of a commune. You can sort of meet and discuss, and talk, and it's fun. You know, you have some fun, tell jokes, and "Oh, he's hot," or if a girl is gay, "She's hot," you know, that type of thing. It's fun. But that, I think, is a phenomenally equipped organization to be able to help people. Here's the challenge as far as I see it. The challenge becomes once you've not necessarily sort of outgrown BCD, but when BCD gets you up to speed where you feel you're ready to sort of take the next step, there's nothing after that. Quest does

a good job. Quest, like every organization, has its detractors and its supporters. [00:28:00]

MA: So it has limits.

JF: It has limits. My personal view on Quest -- nothing against it -- but I think it can be sometimes a little exclusive. Which can lead to problems of alienation, which then leads to stigmatization, because the outside community's looking in, and sort of only being exposed to what it sees on the surface. I think that's something that the institution's going to have to work through, is how do we make better use of what we have. I certainly think that the tools and the resources are here. But I'm very passionate about the belief that the institution needs to start to get a little more serious about creating conditions. And here's the thing, too. You come out. OK, that's great. There's stages of that process. Once you've sort of announced to the world [00:29:00] that you're not who your family, or your friends, or even you may have thought you were; that's just the beginning. Say I find a partner in DC, right? We go on a trip somewhere together. Well, do you need two beds in a hotel? Well, no we're a couple. We need one bed. So that's just a little example. There's all sorts of little discriminatory things that maybe someone doesn't intend, but if you don't sort of get

to go through those stages of coming out, and the confidence building that's required to ensure you can move successfully into the future, you're probably going to have a difficult time as time moves on.

MA: Yeah, yeah. That makes a lot of sense. So it sounds like the landscape from 2014 to 2017 as an LGBTQ student at Lafayette, [00:30:00] there's BCD, which is serving this amazing function of getting people on their feet, right. So, "Who am I, and do I feel comfortable with myself?" and you have all that privacy and all that sort of safe space, and then the only other option after that is Quest, where you're on your own, and there's not -- I mean it's just sort of saying back what you're saying. There's not sort of a community with all kinds of options for gay people, and different people are out in different ways. There's sort of Quest and the individual making their way.

JF: Yeah, I think that's right. The other thing too -- I think a lot of it has to do with our geographical location. Sure, we're not far from New York or Philly, which are certainly major world hubs. Not just regional or national. But -- there's -- how do I want to say this? I really have, I like to think. And I think so often about what is lacking here in the culture.

MA: Yeah. What do you think it is?

JF: I --

MA: [00:31:00] So it's not cosmopolitan, that's part of it?

JF: I think that there's -- at the same time that's a disadvantage for the institution. But we're more advantaged than a Bucknell or a Colgate, or even a Dartmouth. Dartmouth is four hours from Boston. OK, Montreal's an hour and a half north, whatever.

MA: Very isolated.

JF: Very isolated. So there are institutions that are arguably more isolated that have a much better culture. We're somewhere in the middle. And I sometimes wonder if that's a bit of a draw where you are close to a city, but you're not at the same time. I don't know. I don't know how that would be, but it seems like maybe that factor has something to do with it.

MA: OK. Well, that makes sense. So this actually brings me to another -- it's sort of an angle on what you're talking about, is the idea of a social scene. So people describe this in different ways, [00:32:00] but in terms of what we call "Queer life on campus" during the last years, there's not really a social scene is there?

JF: No, there's not. And I can tell that I'm answering from my queer identity. And the reason I know is because there's not many of us here, at least ones who are out. I can't

answer that from the cisgender identity, because I didn't participate in the social scene holistically. No, there's really not. And once again, this could sound nuts, but some of the other gay people I've known here are objectified, to the degree that maybe they're in a fraternity, and -- "Oh, wow look. A gay person can be really good at beer pong." They don't just go dress in drag all weekend and go clothing shopping. And OK sure that's cute. It's funny [00:33:00] to watch a moronic sophomore make a comment like that.

MA: But you're tokenized.

JF: But you're tokenized.

MA: Because you're so rare.

JF: And I'm OK with that, because I realize that there's not much you can do to change it, but it is unfortunate. You know, and I think it's an overall loss for the institution. And the other thing that I would say, too -- and I have a great many number of friends in the administration, including President Byerly who I adore. I think she's doing a spectacular job for the institution, and I was actually very humbled to hear of her support for this project. So it's obviously something that she has identified as an issue, and wants to work to change.

MA: Yeah, she's been very supportive.

JF: But I don't want to condemn in too strong terms, but I think that the administrative approach [00:34:00] in many ways to the "topic" of LGBTQ identity on campus is a joke in a lot of ways.

MA: Mm-hmm. What do you think's missing?

JF: I think that what's missing -- and this is the scary thing -- they -- in particular, admissions -- projects an understanding, but not only admissions, but sometimes even Campus Life's actions indicate a very deep misunderstanding. And that divide is very alarming to me, because it seems to indicate that there are those who realize the value in projecting understanding for whatever motives they have, but then either not caring enough to follow through -- or not having the resources to follow through, both of which are problems.

MA: Feels superficial. [00:35:00]

JF: Correct. So if you don't have the resources to follow through, let's have a conversation and figure out how to do it. I mean, it's not like trying to build a rocket. We can literally sit down and do it.

MA: That's right. Schools do it all the time.

JF: Schools do it all the time. And if you're doing it because you feel you have to do it, then I would prefer that you

not speak about diversity on campus. And like I said, that's not directed at any particular individual in any way.

MA: Yeah. You're describing a gap between rhetoric and action.

JF: Correct. The gap is much more narrowed than where I came from, but that's not a good comparison. I can tell you that right away. We do not want to be comparing ourselves to Bucknell University when it comes to LGBTQ issues.

MA: Right, we want to look up at the trendsetters.

JF: Correct. [00:36:00]

MA: And close the gap between what everyone says and --

JF: Maybe I'm biased because I am gay. There's certainly value in other forms of diversity, but in many ways your sexual orientation -- and I learned this in my women's and gender studies course -- really is the foundation for your interactions of society. If you're African American, or if you're Latina or Latino, in many ways some of your interactions have already been predetermined. That's not necessarily the case if you're a gay individual. By virtue of, as we discussed earlier, sort of my identity also as a cisgender person.

MA: The visibility issues that you're talking about, right?

JF: The visibility issue. And that's why I think it's even more important that the institution get more serious about that, because you really -- part of, I think, the

obligation of this institution is to give people the tools to learn how to navigate that process. If that makes sense.

MA: Right, [00:37:00] so people come into their gay selves in many, many ways when they enter college. There's a transformational self-understanding for queer people that happens often. Sometimes they come in here queer. But whether they come out or not is still -- so, issues of that change of identity are particular for non-cisgender or queer people, or gay or lesbian people. There's a shift, and they're trying to deal with it in some way as they become adults.

JF: Correct. Yeah.

MA: As people with sexual identities. So then it seems like you're saying we're struggling, and this makes sense to me as a faculty member here. We're struggling between a sort of learned appreciation for diversity, but a failure to sort of follow up on that in terms of what that really means, and the kind of hard work and investment it would take to say, "Let's get more gay kids on campus, and we can tell you why, and we can, when we get them here, make sure they thrive."

JF: Yeah, exactly. [00:38:00] And Matt Hyde's a great guy. I love what he's doing in admissions. And if I were able to ever sit down and chat with him, my suggestion would be,

"You know what? Go recruit gay people." University of Pennsylvania does it, and in fact UPenn has sort of like an Accepted Students Day specifically for members of the LGBTQ community. And I do get that there's an argument to be made for -- we want everybody to be a Lafayette student equalized. However --

MA: We still stay "diversity," though. (laughs)

JF: Exactly. That's my corollary point. Sort of the counterpunch is -- but they've taken the first step, and marketed diversity as a goal to be achieved, and something to be celebrated. I really think if you want to fancy yourself as a leader among liberal arts institutions, you have to actually do things that make you a leader.

[00:39:00] Such a novel idea, right, that you have to do things a little differently. And like I said, it's really -- I'm not critiquing or criticizing in any way, it's sort of a suggestion. But go out -- the marquis himself was a relatively progressive guy for his age. Go out and say, "Hey, you know what? We want students who are proud of their sexual orientation, their gender, their identity, we want you. And we know we have improvements to make on campus, and we want you to come here. We want you to take ownership of that process, and become involved with that."

MA: Yeah. If we did that, and we had a more-than-tolerance approach -- we had really a proactive, welcoming -- we built up the gay community. What would have to change at the college for that larger group to be out and thrive here? [00:40:00]

JF: Well, the other thing -- and this is interesting you asked that question, because this is sort of something I've thought about as well. What I think happens here, there's this top-down approach. So we have the programming, and at least at the holistic level the resources to support activities. We don't have the students. And an example of that is, I've participated twice in Our Beloved Community, which is an admissions event. It's a phenomenally done event. Really well done event. Very professional, dignified. It sort of touches on various social justice issues, and infuses them with representations of various constituencies on campus. I've been the only gay person two years in a row that's done it. And that's OK; I'm happy to do it. But once again, it's this notion of tokenism. So people, I think, see that there's the staff here -- if you will, there's the Quest Center, X, Y, and Z, what's missing is the people. [00:41:00] And the reason I mention that in the context of your question is, what I think would need to change is -- I think if you had a

larger queer population here, you would start to see those resources put into use. I think there's a certain stagnancy and dormancy now that would change if you had a requisite population here.

MA: It's like your critical mass problem.

JF: Correct. I think it very much is. But then the question becomes "When do you know that you've hit the critical mass?" And that changes. Maybe one class who's graduating has more queer people than another, and they leave and it balances out, but it's very obvious that there is a very, very, very, very significant amount of work that needs to be done on this campus.

MA: Yeah. Tell me about academics and gay life on campus. Did they ever connect for you?

JF: They have, in some unexpected ways, [00:42:00] but nonetheless very interesting. I think I'm out to basically every professor I've ever had. I had Professor [Lucy] Swanson for introductory French, and she never explicitly came out in our class, but she made some comments that I knew she was a member of the community, and I always write all of my professors a thank you card at the end of a semester. Just, "Thanks for your time; had a good time." Even if I hated a class, you still do it because maybe it helps boost your grade a little bit too. And that works in

statistics; I think actually, so. So it's good. I'm not going to change that, even at the graduate-school level. But in my card had said to her, "And thank you for speaking about who you are." And she got the reference, and I said, "I also am a member of the community," and so that's just one example. My German professor, Professor [Margarete] Faffelberger, who I believe is in some way affiliated with the women's and gender studies department.

MA: Mm-hmm, she has been. Yes. [00:43:00]

JF: She has been very supportive. We had some good conversations, and she would say, "Hey, how do you call -- what should I refer to you as? How do you call yourself?" And it's funny, you know? It's nice to see that she was interested, and I said, "I'm gay," and somebody cares. Faculty has always been incredibly supportive. The problem really has never been with the faculty. It's with the student body. And I think that's a travesty to a certain extent, because there's also probably a number of faculty that wish they had the opportunity to have more students to teach, and to interact with at that level. And so, I view it as a loss for them as well, to some extent.

MA: Yeah. How about content? Because that's part of it, right? It's like you come to Lafayette -- anybody comes as a student to be in the classroom. So are classrooms here

[00:44:00] -- I mean, obviously, in women's and gender studies, they talk about gender and sexuality, but are they heterosexist classrooms, does it sort of mirror the social scene you've been describing, are they -- "Don't ask, don't tell"? You're describing a kind of "Don't ask, don't tell" culture, where you can kind of tell if you want, but mostly, you don't. One doesn't, here.

JF: No, I think that's an apt description. Curriculum, you know -- I was very disappointed with my Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies class. It was taught very well. We spent half of one class talking about gender issues. And maybe that's at a more advanced level, where you get into sexuality, what does it mean to be gay --

MA: You mean, like, LGBTQ --

JF: LGBTQ issues --

MA: Oh, so that wasn't part of the --

JF: We really didn't talk about that at all. And I had Professor [Tara] Gilligan, really nice woman, great class. Like I said, it was not necessarily a criticism of her, [00:45:00] but I was just more surprised, and didn't understand -- like, I genuinely couldn't understand why that wasn't a part of the class.

MA: Yeah. Too little.

JF: But I was a German and a government and law double major, and in my German courses we focused -- in many ways, and in many aspects -- on the question of identity from a language acquisition perspective, from an immigration perspective, German as a second language, all sorts of -- however many spins you want to put on it. Government and law, not so much. And I actually can't recall a single instance in any class, where there was ever a discussion about LGBTQ issues or, even subsidiary issues, related issues. [00:46:00] With the exception maybe of the seminar I had this past semester, where a character in *The Awakening*, which is a Kate Chopin book, is perhaps questionably gay. And there was maybe five minutes of class discussion on could that have been a possibility. Here's the issue, once again, is if your student population isn't exposed, how does a student look for literary devices or cues that might indicate, "Hey, the author's trying to play with gender or sexuality here." So I actually just thought about that right now, but that's kind of another example, of how you -

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MA: It is. It's consistent with what you were -- the social scene suffers from an absence of exposure to these other kinds of identities. The curriculum suffers from the same absence.

JF: And I can tell you -- I'll give you an example of that. In my seminar, [00:47:00] had we had a conversation on LGBTQ issues. I would have shot up my hand and said, "As a gay person, I can tell you this is my perspective," or this or that, and you know what? There was a football player in there, there was a lacrosse player, there was a baseball player; all tremendously friendly people, very smart people, and you know what? They probably would have liked to hear that.

MA: Yes. Yes.

JF: Because they look at me and think, "He's probably straight," right? And I'm sure they probably would have liked to hear what my perspective was on an issue they didn't get to.

MA: The moment never came.

JF: The moment never came. And once again, you can't cry over spilled milk, but it is interesting that it never did come up, because I think that's a moment for instruction.

MA: Yeah, and when you think about it -- I mean, as you say, not to pick on any one place, but it's just an example -- you can go through and get a government and law degree at Lafayette College, and imagine the LGBT community as one of the most significantly impactful -- in terms of shifting law -- [00:48:00] and shifting policy, at least in the US in the last ten years. Maybe the most significant group in

the last ten years in terms of major policy and legal shifts. You can actually go through and get a degree at this fine institution, and literally never mention the word "LGBTQ."

JF: Yeah, and that's --

MA: That's a pretty powerful thing that you're saying.

JF: It's powerful, and it's an alarm bell. And I would never tell a department what to do, but if I had a suggestion, maybe not get a chair of LGBTQ studies or something like that, but work it into -- and I'm sure Bruce Murphy in constitutional law -- I would be shocked if he didn't hit on it. I'm sure he does.

MA: These big cases, of course. But your point -- I mean, the exception might prove the rule in this case. Which, just is a common problem in our curriculum, it sounds like -- which is, you might not even -- if you were ready and everybody in the class was ready, and everyone was interested, and it wasn't a homophobic atmosphere, and the faculty member was, [00:49:00] of course, didn't mean any harm, but the curriculum isn't sort of pushing these issues into a place where that's a gap in your education. Even if you're a straight person.

JF: Well, and I can -- not to --

MA: To your earlier point.

JF: Yeah, and not to go back to my gov law experience this past semester, but I can really tell you authoritatively -- I can sit here and tell you authoritatively I bet my life on it that there would have been students that probably would have really been interested to hear -- not to talk, my perspective isn't important -- but different. I guarantee you, and even the athletes -- there's the stereotype that athletes are closed-minded and X, Y, and Z. I'm telling you they would have loved to have heard it. Just because it's different, you know? They were investing in the class. They were doing good work. They were carrying their weight, and they really would have enjoyed it. So yeah, I think the curriculum -- but that's, I think, something that needs to start probably -- certainly you can have kind of a democratic movement with maybe students requesting [00:50:00] a change of curriculum, but I think that's also something that needs to start at the administrative level, whether there's a review board, or the faculty committees. And the breakdown of how do we start to -- not all at once maybe, but how do we start to make sure that we're giving a much more emblematic --

MA: Representative, yeah. Well, to your point, the curriculum belongs to the faculty, so the faculty are the people that have to step up and decide that this is a priority. It's

like any form of diversity and taking groups into account in our curriculum. And our classroom atmospheres -- and making sure that they're safe, and that they're welcoming, but to your point, I think that's a really good point. So yeah, it's an interesting parallel I really see emerging as you speak between a sort of -- it's like a passive acceptance model. You can sit in class and be gay, you can walk across campus and be gay, but this is not a campus where there's a gay culture, or a gay classroom, [00:51:00] or a gay place where everybody who's gay is there and out, and you can be there if you want to come, fine. But it will go on without you.

JF: And the other unfortunate aspect of that is that the gay individuals to which people have exposure, once again, are tokens. It's really --

MA: It's a lot of representational burden on -- yeah.

JF: It is. And happy to carry that burden if it helps somebody else --

MA: Yeah, it's not fair, though.

JF: Really happy to do it, but it would just be nice to see -- a thriving culture.

MA: Yeah, absolutely. Well, you hear this with all kinds of diversity representation, you know, the black student who's always the only black student in the class, and they're the

black student, and everybody else gets to be just a student. Or the only woman in a STEM class, who gets to be the woman in the STEM class, and everybody else just the student in the class, you know? I mean, it's that. It's that pressure on being the person who is representing this gigantic group, and they're sort of --

JF: And I think that the [00:52:00] undercurrent to some of this might be the fact that someone might be very confident in their identity and might just say, "Hey, I'm going to keep it under wraps, just because" for whichever reason, and that's OK. I don't have an issue with that. But where I think it's important to have the discussion is in terms of what an institution can do to dot its I's and cross its T's and make sure that it's doing everything it can to create conditions that lend themselves to a supportive, and encouraging environment, should someone want to do that. I think that is the central issue.

MA: Speaking of environment -- I'm thinking about clubs and other things, which is kind of the place between just being out there on social, whatever that is, and classroom. So were you in clubs? Were there places that you felt --

JF: Accepted, or X, Y, or Z? Or just in general?

MA: Yeah, or just how it felt for you.

JF: Yeah. No, I think Lafayette has a very [00:53:00] vibrant club and activity scene, which I do like. I think it's good. I have a good friend who's on the hockey team, which is a club sport and that's great. I think it's great for people to be involved and pursue their passions, and I think it shows the vibrancy of what goes on here, as imperfect as it may be. I did -- Behind Closed Doors really was a big thing for me. I spent a lot of time with that. I was an associate representative for student government for a time. I served on the dean of students advisory board, which Dean McLaughlin instituted. That was kind of a semester -- he chose five students from the student body, and we would meet with him once or twice a month. If he had an issue, like dining facilities for example, maybe then solicit our opinions, and then we could go out and talk to friends -- that type of thing. What else did I do? I did Model UN for a hot second; I kind of bounced around, did a bunch of different things. I really spent a lot of time studying, though. I wanted to make sure that I did very well, [00:54:00] proved myself academically here. But I think, once again, in terms of the clubs -- a lot of the people that I met in those activities, and just on campus definitely are very supportive. Definitely are interested; they definitely

want to hear about you. "Hey, do you have a boyfriend? Cool, where does he go to school? What's he do?" People are really not biased. But that's also at the microlevel, right? So that's at the lower level of clubs, not sort of at the official level of sitting in the classroom, or I have my student identity turned on at the moment. And I think that that's -- it's reassuring to the degree that it shows that kids are accepting, they're open, they're interested. But I think it also then demonstrates further that the burden lies with the institution. It's not the students, it's the institution. If that makes sense.

MA: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. We do come back to that. I mean, we really -- I paint a very -- [00:55:00] the picture gets clearer and clearer as we talk, of sort of where the institution is at right now from your perspective. Greek life was not something that you carried through from Bucknell. One of the other topics that comes up a lot is athletics, but you don't mention that, so it sounds like --

JF: No, and athletics -- I have to tell you, too, I -- athletics, I think, gets stereotyped probably the most, along with the Greek organization, and for good reason.

MA: Yeah, OK.

JF: In a lot of ways. You can find exceptions to the rule, but then you find the rule, and you say, "Wow, that's a big

rule." So there is definitely that. But Mary, the one thing I will say again is some of the smartest, most open-minded people I've met on this campus also wear a uniform. And to me that's interesting. Because the stereotype is that that shouldn't be the case. [00:56:00] And once again, there are individuals who, if you sat down and had a conversation with, probably would be completely understanding, accepting, open, all the good virtues that are associated with that, but I think it's the groupthink. I think when you're with a team, and the same goes with Greek organizations, and the same goes really with any organization. So the one thing I would say about athletics, in the context of overall institutional culture, is I think you can't ignore the fact that it has a very large impact on the development of non-athletes as well, because it's such a large pole, P-O-L-E, obviously. In many ways, it defines the sphere around it too. So you might not be on the lacrosse team, but [00:57:00] if you're gay, and all your friends are on the lacrosse team, and you go to a party and you hear the word, "Hey, effing faggot," are you going to come out to your friends on the lacrosse team? Probably not. So when you have such a large percentage of the population that, for better or for worse -- for whom, I should say, for better or for worse, groupthink is a rule

of life that I think is a challenge. And I don't know. I haven't seen any signs in my three years that the institution has given serious thought to how it's going to navigate that discrepancy in culture, if you will, moving forward.

MA: What you described as something around clubs that people join -- if you came out to a member of a club, [00:58:00] you used the word microlevel, and it sounds like athletics have an interesting effect, which is if there's a sort of homophobic culture, or what you described as sort of the "effing faggot" kind of example, people may not sort of mean it. It might be the groupthink culture, is that what you mean?

JF: Yeah, very much so.

MA: On a microlevel, that one person would never want to hurt your feelings, and would never call you that, but it's a way that the lacrosse team interacts, so that's how they talk. And it just creates this homophobic culture that nobody means on some level, and then everybody's fine on the microlevel, but the culture's thriving as a homophobic culture?

JF: A hundred percent, and that actually -- I think you just described very well what sentiment I've been attempting to articulate, and that's that in some ways the institution

points to the microculture as evidence of vibrancy, if you will, [00:59:00] but ignores the systemic culture. If that makes sense.

MA: Mm-hmm, it does make perfect sense, yes.

JF: So they want 100% allegiance to D1 sports at all costs, but aren't willing to have the conversation about the impact -- won't even entertain the conversation, of the impact that that allegiance might have. Might have. Maybe doesn't.

MA: Systemically.

JF: Systemically, on the other parts of the campus, and that's a famous Einstein quote. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results." And I've said this before, and I really don't mean to bang up on sports, but I'll use it because of the team mentality, the jock mentality, sort of the groupthink mentality. If you're accepting, let's use football. If you're accepting a football player from the same school [01:00:00] every year, say he comes from the Hun School in Princeton, if they have football. Just because his SAT scores are 20 points higher than the previous year's football recruit tells me jack shit. It really -- but that's what admissions does, in a lot of ways, is they point and say, "Well, the scores are higher." OK. The sky's blue. You know what I mean? Like, that --

MA: But the cultural impact, yeah.

JF: But the cultural impact, it's got no impact on the culture at all. But it's a convenient way; it's a bit of a sleight of hand it's a convenient way to say that we're making strides. But once again, evidence of the divide between the culture and how you feed the culture.

MA: Right, right, right, right. So you've got a microclimate [01:01:00] and a macroclimate operating at the exact same time, and yeah, the sleight of hand problem.

JF: Yeah, and the micro thing, I think -- I would say that Our Beloved Community is evidence of the microclimate, to the degree that quite literally people are handpicked as tokens for these various groups. But what's the macroclimate? I mean, the macroclimate is an institution that's dominated by athletics and Greeks. That's a fact. You know what I mean? And no amount of talk on the part of anybody can change that fact.

MA: Yeah. And those are classically homophobic cultures, especially for men. And it may not mean the people are homophobes, but the cultures of those group behaviors are classically homophobic.

JF: And I can tell you, because there would be those that might listen to this and that would say, "Well, you were duly unfair to a particular demographic," or this or that. And

I literally witnessed [01:02:00] in my previous existence as a fraternity president that 90% of what Greek organizations do is based on what other Greek organizations on that same campus are doing, or what another chapter of the same organization has done on another campus. So that's a little scary that you have people that are smart people, but they're not thinking in the context of what's good for them. It's the perception. It's, "How do we get the most girls at our house, how do we do this, how do we do that, how do we come off as the cool --" and I get that when you're a 19 year old that's the biggest thing in your life is -- you think it's the most important thing. Then you get into the real world and realize it's the farthest from it. But yeah. And like I said, I'm not trying to bang up on anybody in particular, but the institution, really, [01:03:00] I think there's going to either be a day of reckoning, or people are going to have to get very conscientious about sitting down and -- what I should say is the direction the institution's taking is not commensurate with the current campus demographic structure, if you want to call it that.

MA: Yeah, it makes a ton of sense. It makes a lot of sense. So thinking about this really excellent -- and I think really usefully fine grained description of the strange layers of

welcoming-ness and non-welcoming-ness at the college, right? That there's pockets of at this level, the classroom, the faculty, at this level, these cultures feel hostile, these individuals feel good -- it's really interesting to see the sort of swiss cheese -- the swiss cheese picture that you're painting. Over your years here, were there any moments -- and this is something that I do ask everybody: [01:04:00] were there any moments that were big, public moments, around queer life on campus?

JF: I think that's a good question, you stumped me on that one.

MA: No, no, it's not always the case that someone can think of one, but sometimes there's something, someone, somebody comes out, the AIDS quilt came in the 90s, you know, that sort of thing.

JF: There was nothing major like that. You know, they have the equality rally, and that's great. They're small, but it's still good that it's there. My gut answer is going to be no, there was nothing that was like an "Oh my goodness" moment. But for me, I think, on the personal level, it was that slow coming out process that unfolded over time. That made me much more confident and sure of who I am as a person. So I really did grow tremendously as an individual here. In so many ways. [01:05:00] And the academics are stellar, they really are. And I have to tell you, too, I

graduated with a 3.6, which would and should have been higher, albeit for two required courses, but that's still my fault at the end of the day. But I worked my tail off here, and I really feel that I got great mileage out of this place. I know it's going to serve me in the future. And maybe the silver lining to all of this is that I can be a leader in the LGBTQ alumni community for working -- in tandem, of course, with other individuals. So that's another way of looking at it is if you go to a school like Columbia or Harvard, you're gay; big deal. Kind of like, join the club. And I'm sure Harvard has probably a \$14 million beautiful, brick mansion for a gay association or something like that. But that's the other thing. I think there's always a silver lining to everything. [01:06:00] And that which, at first, is maybe a bit of a setback, can be turned into an advantage. And I'm OK with that as long as the institution progresses. As long as there's marked, pronounced progress, I think I'll be OK with that.

MA: Yeah, that's great. And that is a good silver lining, because things do change, and they do get better, because here we are.

JF: I mean, five years ago, seven years ago --

MA: Impossible.

JF: Yeah.

MA: I think, impossible. Yeah.

JF: And there's probably a student, maybe, who transcribes this.

MA: Absolutely. If I have anything to say about it. (laughs)
Right, and who works on it, and we'll go forward with the queer archives project, and we'll do a digital humanities timeline and excel students who -- hopefully it'll be members of the LGBTQ community on campus. Those students will work on this project, and they'll get to meet the gay alums that talked, [01:07:00] and we'll do what you're talking about, and we both get to be part of it, but it is a moment of change for the college, I think.

JF: Yeah, and homecoming has -- there's an LGBTQ, I guess, mixture event or the Pride Network, and that's great. I think that those are the things that the institution needs to keep doing. And hey, you know what? I don't know what my schedule is yet, but if I can be up for homecoming in October, I'm going to be here, and I will hopefully sign up as an alum to participate in that.

MA: How cool is that. That's great.

JF: So there is stuff like that, that I think does make a difference. But I think it's got to be sustained. I think it has to continue, and it has to be something where the administration says, "These are our values as an

institution, this is what we're going to do, and we're just going to sort of keep plugging away."

MA: Right. The administration has to say to alumni affairs, "The Pride Network matters. Make sure this happens every year. [01:08:00] Bring the gay alumni back. Give them leadership positions." Right, the college has to reach out to you, I think, is what you're saying, to give you a place for that, too.

JF: Correct. Yeah, correct. I think on the programmatic side that definitely starts with the institutional level, and I can tell you I would never want to put the ball -- or the cart -- too far ahead of the horse, but I'd like to be on the board of trustees at some point. As a gay board member. Or, I don't know; there's probably like an alumni association where you kind of work your way up through the ranks. I mean, I think it's important to be visible, and for people to know that this is who you are, you're proud of it, and yeah, Lafayette had a positive impact on me, albeit from a different perspective.

MA: Yeah. That's great. Well, I think that we're very lucky that you're willing to bring that back.

JF: Well, I like to do it, and the biggest thing for me though is I feel obligated to do it. Not that I feel like somebody has a gun to my head that says, "Hey, you have to

do X, Y, and Z," [01:09:00] but I know what this institution gave me. And if I'm in a position to create conditions that can help another person, I think that's part of your contractual obligation.

MA: That's a great thing. I would certainly agree with that. Any other comments, or things you'd like to say or share?

JF: No, this is great. This is a lot of fun.

MA: It is, indeed.

JF: It's my hope that this is something that can continue. I don't think that the college doesn't take it seriously, but I think it needs to take it more seriously. But how great is it, like you said, that Special Collections is doing it?

MA: It's wonderful, yeah.

JF: Maybe it wouldn't happen at another institution, or for whichever reason. So it's good; you can see the fits and starts a little bit, I think. But it's just something, you know, I think that needs to continue. And sustained process, and progress, and effort.

MA: Yeah, pushing along.

JF: You're always going to get somewhere, [01:10:00] it's like you have a bat, just take it and swing it in a direction. It doesn't matter where; you're going to hit something. So and who knows, but the one thing I will say, not to keep going back to admissions, because I love Matt and I love

his team, and admissions really does bring a lot of great people here, but maybe admissions or whomever else can start advertising this. "Hey, if you come here as a student, and you want to do research, you can transcribe interviews of alumni who belonged to the LGBTQ population." So there's so many unique opportunities that can come about if the institution is ready to seize that opportunity, and to project it.

MA: Absolutely. This can be a conduit.

JF: Correct.

MA: Yes. Yeah.

JF: But you have to do it.

MA: Yes, you do, and you have to partner all across -- it can't be one faculty member, or the library and the faculty; it's got to be the whole college really trying to make things happen.

JF: You know what? I've thought ahead, too. [01:11:00] I think it's the Bradley Sullivan LGBTQ Center in Allentown, maybe Lafayette can start -- or, Landis? Maybe Landis can partner with them.

MA: That's a great idea. That's a fine idea.

JF: And send -- if there's an LGBTQ student who comes from a good background -- who wants to go mentor an inner-city LGBTQ individual who doesn't have the privilege and

opportunity, and background that a Lafayette student has.

I mean, how great would something like that be?

MA: There's probably a lot of outreach opportunities in the LGBTQ community in these organizations that the college has never thought of.

JF: Yeah, and that's the thing -- you have to start.

MA: You have to proactively go do this.

JF: You have to go for it. Somebody has to say, "You know what? We're going to do this." And maybe there's legal issues, consent, X, Y, and Z, all that stuff, but you won't know until you find out.

MA: Well, they're going to do something. (laughs) Yeah.

JF: Yeah. And that's just one example of an idea, [01:12:00] but those are the things - cur non. You laugh; it sounds crazy, but why not? If you're marketing yourself as a top-notch liberal arts school, go out and do it.

MA: Yeah. That's the luxury of giving it a shot.

JF: Yeah. Go make it happen. And if you're a student here and you want to do it, we're going to give you the resources to go out and make it happen.

MA: Well, you're going to make it happen. I can't wait to see all the cool things you'll do.

JF: We shall see what happens. But it really would not be possible without here. When I sat at graduation, and I

didn't tear up or anything -- it's kind of mechanic. You go through it. It's a ceremony; it's a procedure. But you do have some memories that flow back: your first week of classes, your first exam that you take, all that stuff. And the various junctures throughout your time. [01:13:00] And this is a very spectacular place.

MA: It's quite a place, yeah.

JF: But it can become more so.

MA: Yeah, I think so. Well, we'll work on that. Well, your interview was part of that. Jeff Finegan, on May 31st, 2017. Our very, very new alum that we won't be hearing the last of. Thank you.

JF: You're quite welcome.

END OF AUDIO FILE