

## Oakland University to celebrate diversity, LGBTQIA awareness during 'Pride Week'

Every April, Oakland University hosts Pride Week to celebrate OU's diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity with events that raise awareness, promote education and foster a sense of community.

"With the work of many students, staff and faculty over the years, Oakland University has positioned itself as one of the most LGBTQIA-inclusive universities in the state of Michigan," said Grace Wojcik, coordinator of the OU's **Gender & Sexuality Center**.

"It's important for us to continue to celebrate all aspects of our diversity and to continue to raise awareness on campus."

This year's Pride Week festivities kick off at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 2 with the Fifth Annual Lavender Graduation Celebration, which recognizes the achievements of LGBTQIA and ally undergraduate seniors and graduate students.



*Pride Week, which celebrates OU's diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity with events that raise awareness, promote education and foster a sense of community, kicks off at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 2 with the Fifth Annual Lavender Graduation Celebration.*

"It's an opportunity for us to say thank you to them for their contributions to the LGBTQIA community and the campus community in general," Wojcik said.

All winter, summer and fall 2017 graduates, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are encouraged to participate in the celebration which will take place from 1-4 p.m. in Room 110 at O'Dowd Hall.

"Though the Pride Week calendar is managed by the Gender & Sexuality Center, we work with the student organizations like the Gay-Straight Alliance to plan the week of events," Wojcik said. "This year, we are also incorporating a new event, Slam for Solidarity, which is an evening poetry, spoken word, and story-telling."

The "Slam for Solidarity" will take place from 7-10 p.m. April 3 in Lake Superior Room A at the Oakland Center.

Also during Pride Week, "SAFE on Campus" training will take place from noon to 1 p.m. on April 4 in Lake Superior Room A at the Oakland Center. The training will include information on LGBTQIA terminology, the role of an ally, group activities, how to make referrals, and on campus resources.

"Students, Administrators and Faculty for Equality (SAFE) on Campus empowers students, staff and faculty to provide support to LGBTQ colleagues at Oakland University," Wojcik said.

In addition, the GSC will also host a "Family Meal" from noon to 1 p.m. April 7 in Lake Superior Room B at the Oakland Center. The event features Jay Kaplan, LGBT Legal Project Staff Attorney at ACLU Michigan.

"The Family Meal is an opportunity to take a break from our busy schedules and break bread with those in our community," Wojcik said. "It is a great chance to meet new people, connect with old friends, and build friendships."

Other Pride Week events include:

- The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference
- The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Drag Show
- The Pride Prom (hosted by the Gay-Straight Alliance)

A full listing of events, including registration information, can be found at [www.oakland.edu/gsc](http://www.oakland.edu/gsc).