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Eastern Illinois University

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Gender, sexuality struggles better in other nations

By Kaitlyn Lonkar

Staff Reporter

Students struggle with more than grades, social life and finding a job after graduation.

“Gender and sexuality are distinct things and they have a distinct struggle,” said Angela Aguayo, a communication studies professor.

Aguayo spoke at Thursday’s Faculty Development meeting on gender and sexuality.

The different struggles include the under-representation of men or women in certain majors like psychology, mathematics and science.

“About 75 percent of psychology majors are women,” said Bill Addison, a psychology professor.

For sexuality, the struggle includes ignorant language and the uncomfortable feeling that conversations about sexuality can sometimes bring about.

People might experience a conflict when these issues are brought up, but the conflict can be productive, Aguayo said.

“We can all disagree, but love one another,” Aguayo said. “We can talk about it and find common ground.”

While trying to find some common ground, there is hope for the future that eventually domestic partnerships will become acceptable. One suggestion at the meeting was to look to other countries like Spain.

The people in these countries are predominantly Catholic and accept same-sex marriage.

One way to help the idea of different sexual orientations is through a new idea thought up with the help of members of the Recognized Student Organization Pride and Terri Fredrick, an English professor.



JOHN BAILEY | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Robert Fischer, professor and associate chair of biological sciences, moderates one of four groups in attendance at Thursday afternoon's faculty development meeting on gender and sexuality in the Charleston-Mattoon Room on the third floor of the student union.

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"Faculty have to provide support for groups and get involved," Fredrick said. "I want to see more resurgents like women's studies with their 'Bitch' reading groups. We can continue with women's studies and start with Pride."

From there, ideas were being thrown back and forth about a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender office for students that need help with their sexuality. Part of the LGBT student services would include being able to lead difficult discussions about gender and sexuality and engage in conflict and argument.

"Not everyone will always agree," said Nikki Schultz, secretary of Pride and junior psychology and sociology major.

Having a place for students to go would be an amazing thing, she said.

The LGBT student services will try to offer things like an academic program, Safe Zone project, connections to the counseling center and a place for students to go that they know is open.

TERRI FREDRICK |

ENGLISH PROFESSOR

"Faculty have to provide support for groups and get involved. I want to see more resurgents like women's studies with their 'Bitch' reading groups."

A few members of Pride plan to help with the project as well.

Jill Schultz, a freshman special education major, and Matt McNally, a freshman marketing major, will help Fredrick with plans of starting a program to reach out to students questioning themselves.

With the help of Pride, faculty development and the hopes of an LGBT student service the issues of gender and sexuality could possibly be addressed more and maybe later accepted.