

Queer Joy Now!

Capturing diverse campus histories through institutional and student group partnerships

CRKN 2024

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Agenda

Context

What is “Queer Joy”?

About the Project

Partnerships

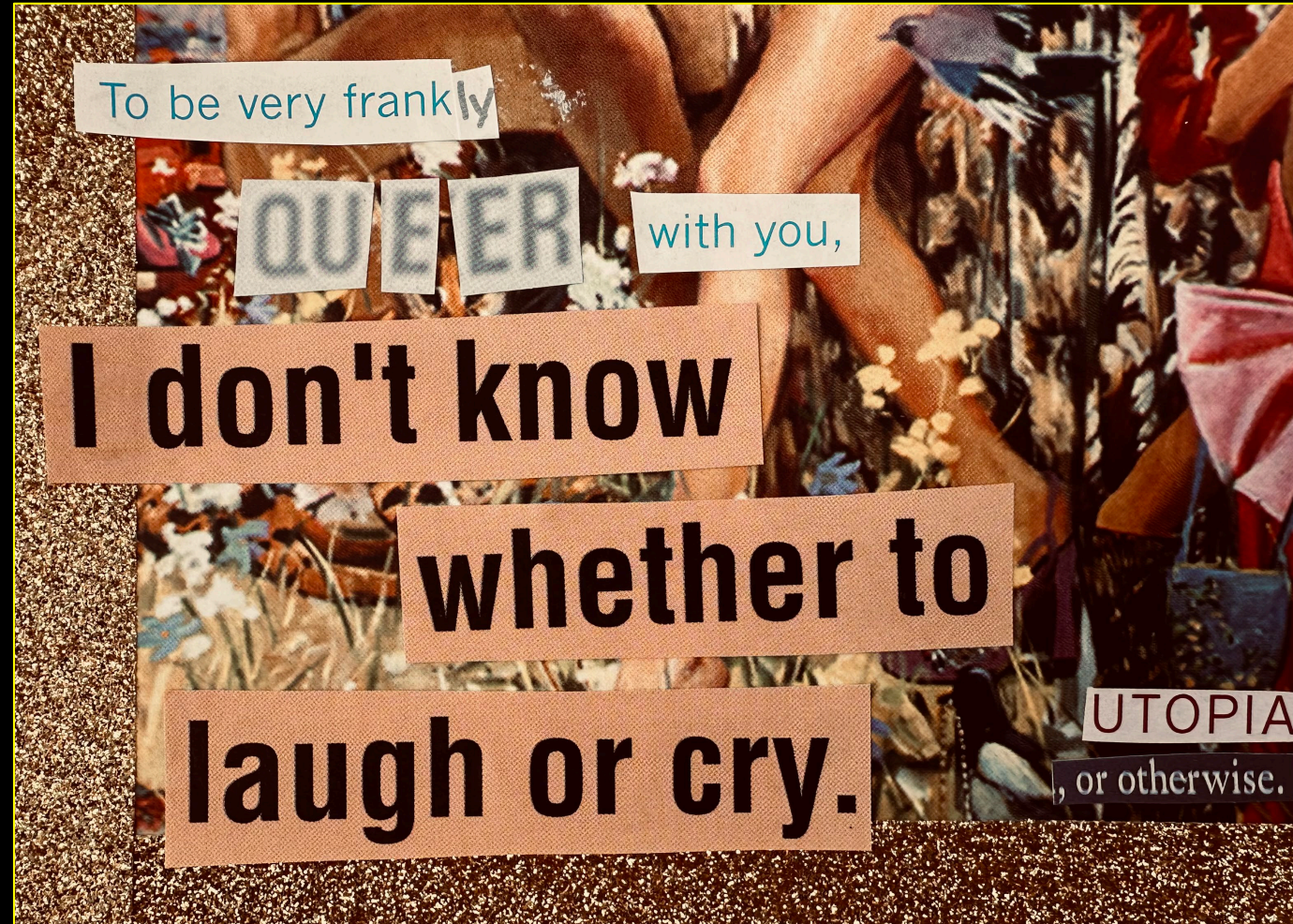
Archiving Process

Importance

Context



NB Premier Blaine Higgs (2023):
“How do you separate curriculum from what one might think, and many might think, is controversial or is something that should be outside the school? [] Should kids in kindergarten be exposed to drag queen reading time? Because no, I don’t think they should at that age... are we trying to teach tolerance and acceptance, or are we trying to teach promotion?”



(Keehn, 2024)

Queer Joy



“Queer joy is the pursuit of queer pleasure and queer abundance in a big and broken (hetero)normative world. Amid pronounced assaults on queer and trans communities across the globe (Castillo, 2023), queer joy meets violent conditions with a reparative gesture –building spaces where joy can be embraced and embodied through friendships, crushes, love, intimacy, queer and trans childhoods, and families of choice across the lifespan” (See Burkholder & Keehn, Submitted).



(Keehn, 2024)

The Queer Joy Now! project



queerjoynownb.ca



About the Project



What does it mean to take up joyful queer space?



WHAT IS QUEER JOY?

QUEER JOY IS AN ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE OTHERWISE. IT RESISTS TROPES OF PAIN AND BRAVERY AND PUSHES BACK AGAINST TRANSPHOBIC AND QUEERPHOBIC VIOLENCE (WRIGHT, 2023). THIS JOY GIVES US PERMISSION TO RELISH IN, RATHER THAN SUPPRESS, OUR QUEER SENSIBILITIES. IT HINGES ON MOMENTS OF DESIRE, LAUGHTER, CHOSEN FAMILY, YEARNING, INTIMACY, CREATIVITY, AND HAVING CRUSHES AND PARTNERSHIPS.

COPELAND (2023) TELLS US THAT QUEER JOY ALSO "WORKS AS A COMPLIMENTARY EXPRESSION AND STATE OF BEING ALONGSIDE OTHER AFFECTIVE POLITICAL TOOLS, SUCH AS RAGE AND GRIEF" (P. 120). QUEER JOY HAS A MUDDY ENTANGLEMENT WITH QUEER HEARTACHE—HEARTACHE DERIVED FROM AN ESTRANGED FAMILY, PAINFULLY IMPOSSIBLE SAPPHIC LOVE, A MESSY FAILURE AT CIS HETERNORMATIVITY—WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT MAKES IT A QUEER SENSATION. QUEER JOY IS ALSO A RESISTIVE STRATEGY. IT RESPONDS TO THE HISTORICAL AND CURRENT POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL VIOLENCE AIMED AT QUEER AND TRANS COMMUNITIES AND MOBILIZES SOMETHING DIFFERENT: GENEROSITY, SELF-LOVE, MUTUAL AID, AND RECIPROCITY. IT IS RADICAL, LIVED, FELT, AND EMBODIED (BURKHOLDER & KEEHN, 2024).

LUONG (2023) SHARES THAT "QUEER JOY TO ME RIGHT NOW IS QUIET, AND OFTEN SOLITARY. IT LOOKS LIKE THE METICULOUS PRACTICE OF REST IN ORDER TO ACCESS PLEASURE, CARE, ABUNDANCE, AND LIBERATION. IT LOOKS LIKE THE EXHILARATION OF RADICAL EMBODIMENT. IT LOOKS LIKE INTENTIONALLY BUILDING AN INNER SCAFFOLDING OF SYMMETRY AND BALANCE TO SUPPORT THE TENSION AND DARKNESS. IT LOOKS LIKE TENDING TO POTENTIAL, SO I MAY EVENTUALLY TRANSMUTE IT INTO ACTION. IT LOOKS LIKE SAFEGUARDING THE SOFT BOUNDARIES AROUND MY HEART WHEN THE WORLD FEELS BURDENSOME. IT LOOKS LIKE A REFUSAL TO GIVE MY BODY TO A CAPITALIST ENGINE THAT STILL OWES MY ANCESTORS A DEBT" (N.P.).



QUEER JOY NOW! A DUSTING OFF OF HISTORIES EXHIBIT

MOBILIZING QUEER AND TRANS WORLDBUILDING HISTORIES, JOY, AND FUTURITIES



THE QUEER JOY NOW! EXHIBITION COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT THE HELP AND EXPERTISE FROM MANY PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING FOLKS: MEREDITH BATT (QHINB), ANTOINETTE LISTER, ALEX BOND (SPECTRUM/SAFE SPACES), PRIDE/SWELL+, RICE FULLER, SABINE LABEL, CONOR FALVEY'S GRADUATE THESIS, THE UNB LIBRARY ARCHIVES, NEW BRUNSWICK'S PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES, JEANNIE BAIL (UNB LIBRARIES), JAY CAPMAN, NADINE VIOLETTE, AND MEGAN HILL. THANK YOU FOR SHARING IN THIS JOY!

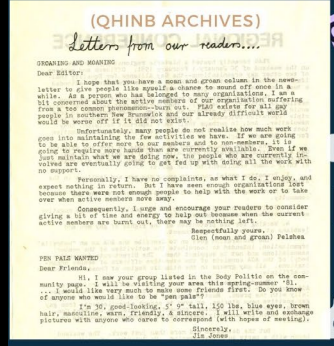
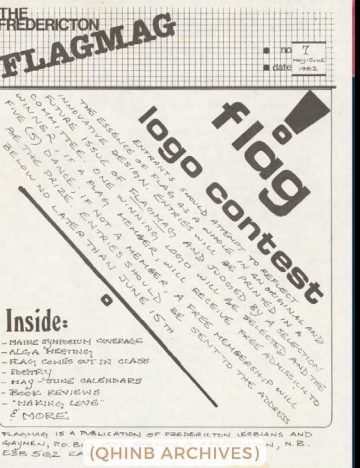
A HISTORY OF QUEER ORGANIZING ON CAMPUS: PART 1

BEFORE UNB OR STU RECOGNIZED QUEER AND TRANS ORGANIZATIONS AT ANY OFFICIAL LEVEL, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAMPUS ORGANIZING AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING WAS BLURRED. QUEER AND TRANS FOLKS IN BOTH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS WERE BUILDING INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR THEMSELVES WITHIN THE MARGINS (BOTH ON CAMPUS AND IN THE BROADER FREDERICTON COMMUNITY).

FORMED IN 1974, GAY FRIENDS OF FREDERICTON (GFF) WAS THE COMMUNITY'S EARLIEST KNOWN QUEER ORGANIZATION—AND ITS MEMBERSHIP WAS DIRECTED EXCLUSIVELY TOWARDS GAY MEN AS A WAY TO PROVIDE SPACE FOR THEM TO SOCIALIZE AND MEET. WHILE MOST OF THEIR WORK HAPPENED OFF CAMPUS, ITS MEMBERS WOULD OCCASIONALLY GIVE PRESENTATIONS TO CLASSES AT UNB (FLAVEY, 2010).

DURING THE EARLY AND MID 1980S, THE QUEER SCENE IN FREDERICTON WAS PROPELLED FORWARD BY THE ORGANIZING OF FLAG (FREDERICTON LESBIAN AND GAYS)—A LOCAL QUEER ORGANIZATION FORMED IN 1979. FLAG WAS KNOWN FOR ORGANIZING PRIVATE HOUSE PARTIES, DANCES, AND PUBLISHING COPIES OF FLAGMAG (A LOCAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO QUEER NEWS AND ISSUES). LATER, THEY WOULD GET INVOLVED IN POLITICAL WORK AND ACTIVISM.

THE FOUNDING OF FLAG WAS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT FOR UNB AND STU'S QUEER COMMUNITIES, SINCE FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS WOULD GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER AT ITS REGULARLY-HELD DANCES AND EVENTS— SOME OF WHICH WERE HELD DIRECTLY ON THE UNB CAMPUS. WHILE THESE EVENTS WERE NOT HELD IN DESIGNATED QUEER SPACES AT THE TIME, THEY WERE QUEERED SPACES NONETHELESS (LISTER, 2023). DURING THIS TIME, UNB WAS ALSO OFTEN USED AS A SPACE FOR OTHER QUEER ORGANIZATIONS FROM ACROSS NEW BRUNSWICK, NOVA SCOTIA, AND MAINE TO HOST CONFERENCES AND HOLD MEETINGS (FLAVEY, 2010). AROUND THE SAME TIME, THE FIRST GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSPAPER IN THE COMMUNITY—CALLED BODY POLITIC—STARTED BEING PUBLISHED (IT EXISTED BETWEEN 1971-87), AND THE UNB LIBRARY SUBSCRIBED TO IT.

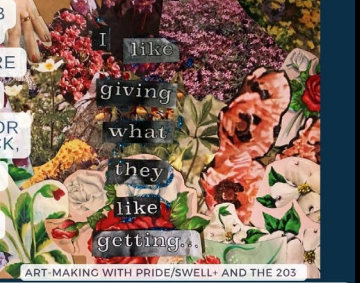


QUEER SPACE

DURING THE 1970S AND 1980S, FREDERICTON WAS, OF COURSE, ALSO HOME TO THRIVING UNDERGROUND QUEER ACTIVITIES. 'CRUISING ON THE GREEN' AND REGULAR MEETUPS WITH FRIENDS, DATES, AND PARTNERS AT THE RIVER ROOM IN THE BEAVERBROOK HOTEL (NOW KNOWN AS THE CROWNE PLAZA) WERE TWO POPULAR QUEER SPACES, WHICH UNB AND STU FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS WERE MOST CERTAINLY PART OF (LISTER, 2023). AS UNB'S PROFESSOR EMERITUS ANTOINETTE LISTER RECALLS, "EVERYTHING WAS HUSH, HUSH AND IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO MEET OTHER GAY PEOPLE. THERE WAS A BIG RISK IN COMING OUT TO ANYONE, AS YOU COULDN'T BE CERTAIN IF THEY WERE GAY OR NOT. I THINK THAT IF THERE WERE ANY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED TO SMALL GROUPS OF FRIENDS."

A 2SLGBTQIA+ GROUP WOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED AND RECOGNIZED AT UNB UNTIL SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDING OF FLAG. IN 1987, UNB COUNSELING SERVICES ORGANIZED A SERIES OF TALKS FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ STUDENTS ON CAMPUS, FOLLOWING THIS, A SMALL GROUP OF BETWEEN 10-15 STUDENTS WOULD CONTINUE TO MEET INFORMALLY ON A WEEKLY BASIS, WITH HAL HINDS AS THEIR FACULTY ADVISOR. HAL HINDS WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS OF FLAG AND WAS A PROMINENT GAY RIGHTS ACTIVIST DURING THAT TIME.

SHORTLY AFTER IN 1989, GALA-UNB (THE GAY AND LESBIAN ALLIANCE OF UNB) WAS FOUNDED BY JAMES GILL: UNB'S FIRST RECOGNIZED 2SLGBTQIA+ GROUP. STUDENT AND FACULTY QUEER ACTIVITY DURING THE 1990S BEGAN TO ESTABLISH EXPLICIT AND CONCRETE QUEER SPACES ACROSS THE TWO CAMPUSES. FOR INSTANCE, ADRIAN PARK, A FACULTY MEMBER AT UNB, TOOK OVER WRITING FOR THE UNIVERSITY NEWSPAPER'S GAY ISSUE COLUMN IN THE EARLY 1990S AND ALSO LAUNCHED A QUEER-THEMED RADIO SHOW CALLED FRUIT COCKTAIL ON THE CAMPUS'S RADIO STATION (FLAVEY, 2010).



QUEER AND TRANS LIFE ON CAMPUS: NOW!

MULTIGENERATIONAL QUEER SPACES

TELL US A STORY ABOUT QUEER AND TRANS LIFE ON CAMPUS. IS THE EXHIBIT MISSING AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF QUEER HISTORY ON CAMPUS? WHAT STORIES STILL NEED TO BE TOLD? THE STORY YOU SHARE COULD BE ABOUT YOU, ANOTHER PERSON, YOUR CHOSEN FAMILY (INCLUDING PETS), A LOVER, A FRIEND, AN EVENT, SOMETHING FUNNY, SOMETHING JOYFUL, OR SOMETHING UNCOMFORTABLE. EVERY STORY IS WELCOME.

FILL OUT YOUR ANONYMOUS STORY ON THIS POSTER USING A MARKER! YOUR STORY WILL BECOME PART OF THE QUEER JOY NOW! EXHIBIT.



MOBILIZING QUEER AND TRANS JOY!

UNB LIBRARIES OVER THE YEARS, UNB LIBRARIES HAS PARTNERED WITH THE QUEER COMMUNITY ON A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES. LIBRARIES ARE OFTEN SITES OF ALLYSHIP FOR QUEER AND TRANS COMMUNITIES: RESISTING BOOK BANS, HOSTING QUEER AND TRANS EVENTS, AND ENSURING THE VISIBILITY OF 2SLGBTQIA+ AUTHORS AND TEXTS (FOR INSTANCE, THE HARRIET IRVING LIBRARY (UNB CAMPUS) HOSTED AN ART EXHIBITION IN 2013 WHICH WAS HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH PRIDE FREDERICTON, AND FEATURED ART MADE BY QUEER AND TRANS ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY "QUEER RESEARCH DAY," WHICH UNB LIBRARIES CO-HOSTED WITH THE FACULTY OF ARTS IN 2017. SHOWCASED LOCAL GENDER AND SEXUALITY RESEARCH BY FACULTY AND STUDENTS. UNB LIBRARIES REGULARLY SHOWCASES THE WORKS OF QUEER AND TRANS AUTHORS, ARTISTS, SCHOLARS, AND STUDENTS.



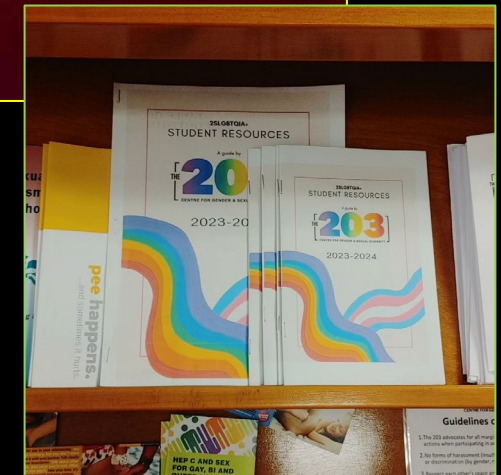
WE ALL KNOW level as constant
to start from by the underpass where he/she/they live
WE ALL KNOW HOW TO START FRIES TOO
YOU WERE NOT BORN TO BURN
WE ALL KNOW HOW TO START FRIES TOO
WE MAY GO OUT AS NIGHT
WE ALL KNOW HOW TO START FRIES TOO

About the 203

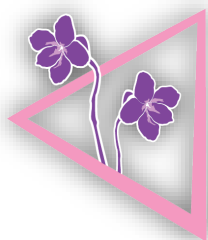
“The 203 Centre aims to maintain a sense of 2SLGBTQIA+ community through student-led organizing, gathering, activism, programming, and resource-sharing activities.”



- Opened February 2018
- Student-led
- Offers space and resources for 2SLGBTQIA+ students
- Serves UNB, STU, NBCCD, NBCC



Partnerships



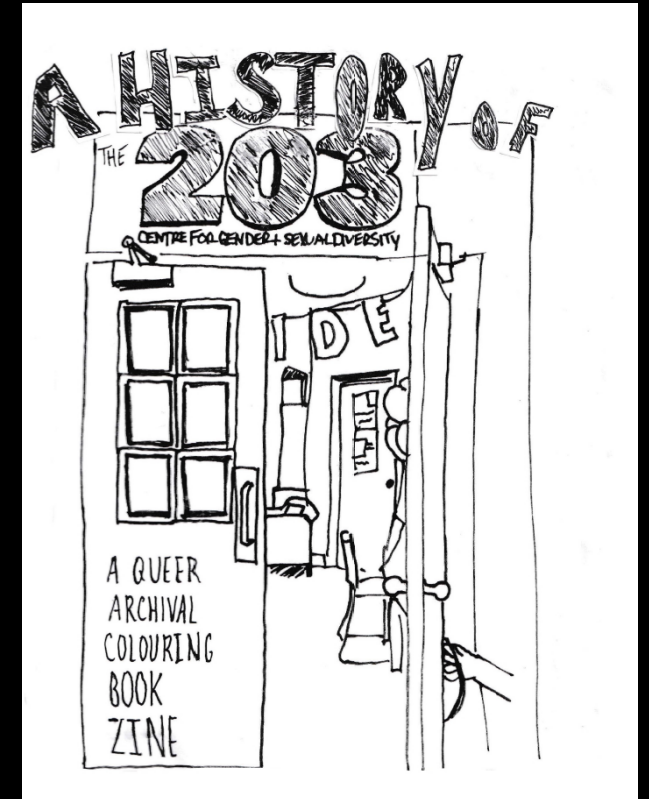
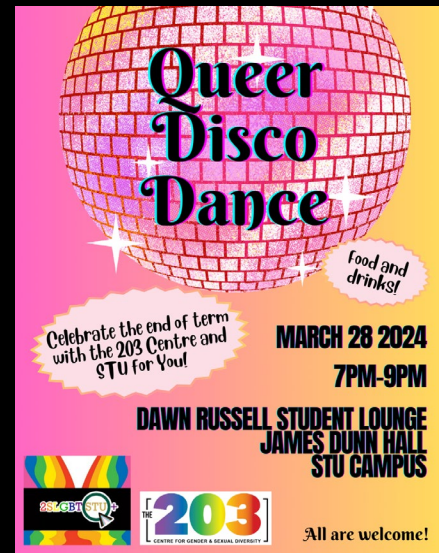
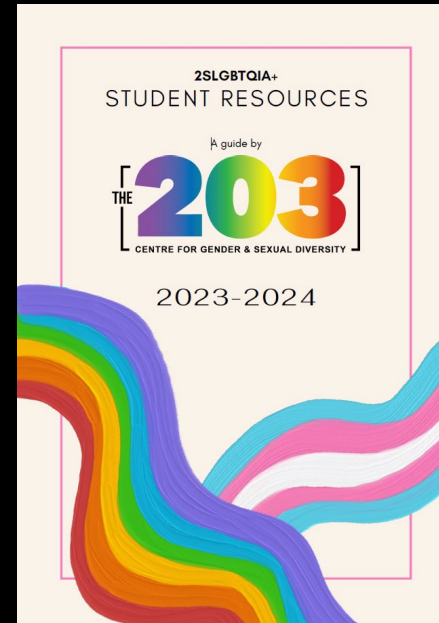
Queer Heritage Initiative
of New Brunswick

Initiative du patrimoine
Queer du Nouveau-Brunswick



The Archives

- Zines (personal fave)
- Resource Booklets
- Pride Photos
- Board Documents
- Meeting Minutes
- Event Posters
- Reports
- Projects



Importance to Student Groups

- Builds a culture of respect and trust
- Supports relationship building
- Anchors archives in the present
- Supports ongoing work of student groups
- Evidence of existence!



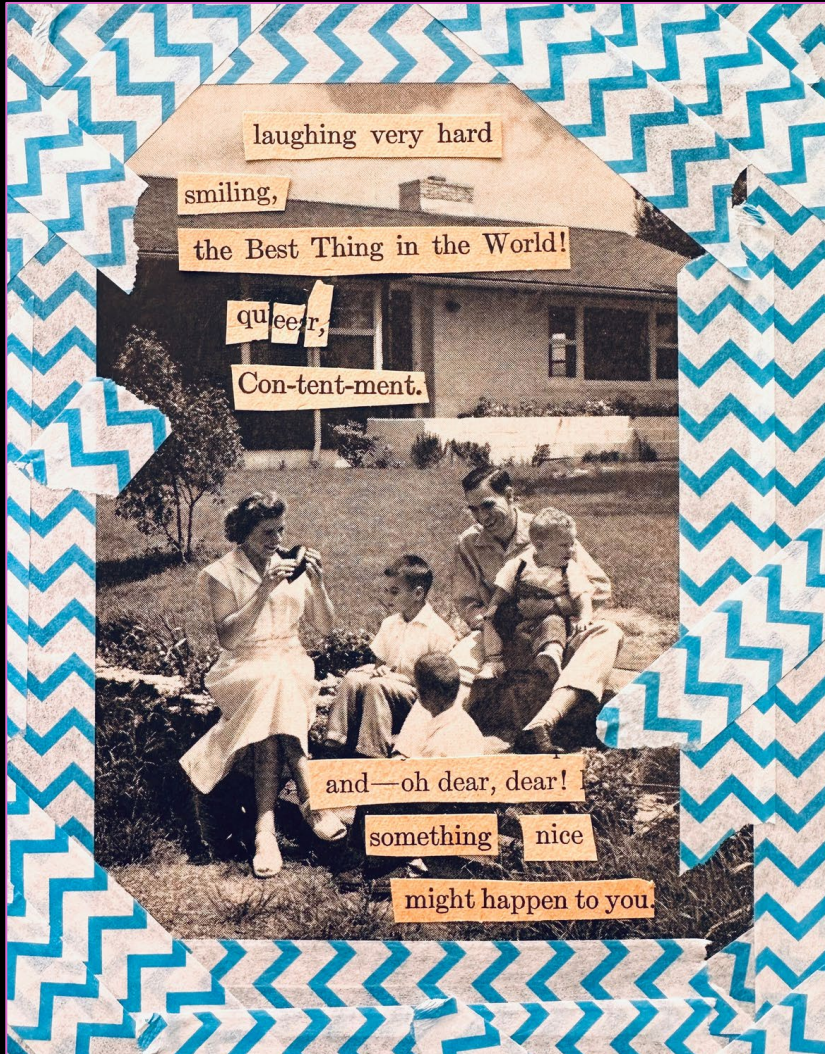
University Archives

Preservation of :

- Institutional history/culture
- Campus life
- Cultural diversity



Documenting Student-Led Groups



- Student groups represent diverse interests, histories, and perspectives on campus
- Promotes inclusivity and representation
- Evidence of social movements and advocacy
- Validates presence and contributions

Documenting Minority and Marginalized Student Groups

- Documents the historical context of 2SLGBTQIA+ activism, advocacy, and community-building
- Shows impact of community on campus, in the province, and nationwide
- Highlights importance of institutional support



Ethical Considerations

Collaborate with community stakeholders to understand and respect protocols when documenting sensitive materials.

Sensitive Materials:

- Personal narratives
- Confidential information

Considerations:

- Legal
- Cultural
- Ethical

Thank you!

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