



TJ Jourian

TJ Jourian is a Michigan State University alumnus; he graduated MSU in 2002 with a Bachelor's Degree in General Management and again in 2006 with a Master's Degree in Student Affairs and Administration. He is going to Loyola University to get his PhD in Higher Education .

As an undergrad at MSU, TJ was heavily involved with several LBGT caucuses and the Alliance. He remembers being extremely busy:

“It was definitely a very busy time, but I loved it. I think getting involved in the community was one of the reasons I stayed at Michigan State.”

One of TJ’s largest challenges and biggest priority as a member of the Alliance was to recruit new members.

“We tried to recruit really new folk, people who were really invested in—especially the trans work; gender identity and expression were not yet in the anti-discrimination policy at the time so that was a huge campaign. And one of the things we did was, instead of just expecting people to come to us to talk about trans stuff, we kind of just decided to take it out to the rest of campus... I think seeing straight and cisgender students of color... and all kinds of other folks start getting really interested in LBGT issues helped other queer and LBGT students of color be like ‘Ok, I feel like I can feel a little bit safer here if there are straight and cisgender allies that look like me.’ So that was something that was important to us—us going out and finding allies who kind of mirrored our community.”

When asked if during his time at MSU he knew any professor or faculty/staff that were openly LBGT, he said “Outside of the LBGT resource center I didn’t know many faculty/staff members who were out.” He added that he might have had more academic success if there had been more professors or faculty/staff members who were openly LBGT or openly allied

“Especially on the faculty/staff side, being in the business school, I didn’t know anybody who was out and when I was going through all kinds of different struggles in terms of figuring out what was going on I struggled academically and didn’t really know who to go to because I wasn’t really sure if my professors would be necessarily open to those sorts of conversations.”

When asked if he had any advice for LBGT students at MSU, he said, “If people have the chance to get involved with the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Trans Ally College Conference, I would so for sure take it on, it’s a great chance to meet a lot of people from all over the country and do stuff you never thought you’d have a chance to do. But also, when doing stuff like that, and I guess this could translate to students anywhere, is to kind of look around and see whose voices and perspectives are in the room, basically, and how can the ones that are missing be present and what are your responsibilities in making that happen.”