

NEWSLETTER

"To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance." - Oscar Wilde

From the PA DEI Committee

Welcome to our third and final newsletter of 2022. As part of our commitment to ensuring that all families at UNIS are included in the DEI journey, the Newsletter is an important tool and means of communication. It provides information and resources to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for us all.

This edition is dedicated to AAPI, Jewish Heritage, and Pride Months.

As the PA DEI Committee continues to work to advance diversity, equity and inclusion at UNIS, we would very much appreciate your insights and experiences. Please do not hesitate to send your ideas, suggestions and feedback to the co-chairs:

Cynthia Muffuh - cynthia.muffuh@pa.unis.org

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MAY



MAY

AAPI
MONTH

MAY 5

Cinco
de Mayo

MAY 8

Mother's
Day

MAY 17

INTERNATIONAL
DAY
AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA
TRANSPHOBIA
AND BIPHOBIA

JUNE



JUNE 19

Juneteenth

JUNE 26



“Never Put Food on the Ground”
or ode to a complicated woman - by Lamson Lam



My grandmother always told me “Never put food on the ground.”

It didn't matter if it was fruit in a plastic bag, xôi mận in a bowl, donuts in a bag,
or even an unopened 2 liter bottle of soda.

It didn't matter if it was placed on a cleanly swept, spotless hardwood floor in our “no shoes”
house.

She would not abide anything
that could be loosely described as food,
put anywhere near the ground.

She was a tough woman.

She was tough when she needed to be,
And she was tough when (I then thought) she didn't need to be.

Her toughness was beaten, molded, and self-cultivated throughout the century, to survive
an abusive step-mother, countless wars, 3 occupations,
and the personal heartbreak of her only true love leaving
and the childhood death of her first daughter
and the guilt of this death.
and the virulent triumvirate of colonialism, racism, and sexism.

She was tough with enemies,
and she could be even tougher with friends and family.

I think I know now (in ways I didn't know then)

that her battles with us

over things like food on the ground, shorts with too many pockets, and the need to change
tables at a restaurant

were a way for battles won vs. ones loved and present
to replace battles lost to ones hated (and loved and hated) and long gone.

5,000 miles and 10 years after her death,
I now smile to myself and appreciate
the stubborn toughness
I see in her 3 year old great-grandson,
and I appreciate
the force of the woman
3 generations before him
who handed down this trait
(this sometimes gift)
before she left us.

And this morning,
as I stand packed into a subway
on my morning commute
clenching
my bag of fruit, my coffee cup, and the pole
I smile.
And I know.
Why I stubbornly refuse
to put my bag of fruit
on the subway floor.



VISIBILITY & VALIDITY

The Case for Asian American and Ethnic Studies

By Sonny Ago, UNIS PA DEI Committee, UNIS Parent, UNIS Alum

“If you know history, you know yourself,” is the motto for the Restoring Our Original True Selves (ROOTS) Program at San Quentin State Prison in Northern California. ROOTS was launched by the Asian Prisoners Support Committee in 2013. This initiative brings Asian American Studies scholars to San Quentin to teach incarcerated participants about “immigration and refugee history, intergenerational trauma, leadership development, and re-entry planning.”

Asian American Studies is impactful within and beyond the walls of academia. Institutionally, Asian American Studies ensures that Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIA) contributions are included, **visible** and valued in the examination of American and World History. Along with all Ethnic Studies’ disciplines, Asian American Studies represents equity in the curriculum.

Individually, Asian American Studies validates those who identify as APIA. As with the ROOTS Program, Asian American Studies gives voice and meaning to what people experience. It empowers individuals and groups to recognize, cope with, and combat *trauma* resulting from systemic racism and daily microaggressions.








“If diversity, equity and inclusion are to be truly realized at UNIS, everyone must have the opportunity to know themselves.”

As UNIS begins its celebratory recognition of Asian American Pacific Islander Month, it is important to understand the significance of Asian American Studies - and, more broadly, Ethnic Studies.

INVITATION TO JOIN THE PA DEI COMMITTEE - 2022/2023

Thank you to all of you who have been reading the *PA DEI Newsletters* and reaching out with feedback and comments. If you have a DEI story, event or content you would like featured, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. *If you are interested in joining our Committee next school year, let us know - we'll be more than happy to have you!*

Here are some resources for anyone interested in learning or teaching about the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American experience.

 <p>New York Public Library</p>	<p><u>Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Reading List</u> Explore books for adults, kids, and teens that spotlight a range of experiences within Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.</p>
 <p>SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOKS A TEACHING FOR CHANGE PROJECT</p>	<p><u>The best selection of multicultural and social justice books for children, YA, and educators</u> Teaching for Change carefully selects the best multicultural and social justice books for children, young adults, and educators. Learn about our criteria for selecting titles.</p>
 <p>the Strategist</p>	<p><u>The Best Books About Asian American Identity, According to Experts</u> A list of 15 books to help anyone looking to deepen their own understanding, recommended by experts.</p>
	<p><u>Colours of US - All About Multicultural Children's Books</u> Click the logo to find a list of 30 Asian & Asian American Children's Books for Ages 0 to 18</p>
 <p>NYU LIBRARIES</p>	<p><u>A/P/A Studies = Asian / Pacific / American Studies</u> On this page you will find bibliographies as Wei Chi Poon had them listed in A Guide for Establishing Asian American Core Collections.</p>

DEI SURVEY FINDINGS

DEI Family Survey - Thursday, May 5th

At the May 5th PA Meeting, the DEI Committee presented the findings from the DEI Parent's Survey which so many of you were kind enough to fill out.

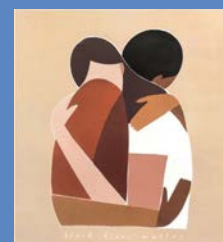
The survey was not only an opportunity for parents to share their DEI-related concerns, but also to inform the areas where we as your PA DEI Committee should be focusing our energies in the coming academic year 2022/2023.

Please check out the [recording of the webinar here](#).

NEWS CORNER

UNIS Universe article: The EIB Two Years on

The Universe has a great article by Ma-Sadio Faye, about the student-led, student focused UNIS EIB (Equity and Inclusion Board). If you haven't read it yet, this is [the link to the article](#).



AAPI Heritage Month

Advancing Leaders Through Collaboration

Asian-Americans Pacific Islanders Heritage Month is celebrated annually in May in the United States to highlight the history, heritage and contributions of Asian Pacific American communities.

Asian-Americans and Pacific Islander Americans (AAPI) play a large role in the history of the United States. We commemorate the influences and achievements of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islander Americans, who have helped to shape the culture and history of the United States.

Contributing to stronger societies as individuals and as a group, their ancestry tracks back to continental Asia (the Middle East, East Asia and Southeast Asia) and the Pacific Islands (Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia) in the United States. The contributions of the AAPI community are vast, from art to infrastructure to politics, and much more.

A diverse mix of cultures and identities make up the American population and understanding the differences between cultures and ethnicities builds an awareness of the complexities that exist within the AAPI population.

The community joins together with allies and supporters to honor AAPI cultures. It is important to acknowledge the differences between cultures and ethnicities and in light of the recent increase of violence and discrimination against the AAPI community, we proudly celebrate diversity.

“Diversity makes us Stronger!”

Individuals who do not identify as AAPI can increase their advocacy for AAPI community members during AAPI Heritage Month. Educating yourself on AAPI histories and cultures is an important way to show support and appreciation as an ally.

Fun Family Things to Do

- The Brooklyn Museum presents First Saturday: Asian American Futures with an entire line-up of fun events on May 7th, registration is required.
- Virtual Events at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, CA
- Now streaming on PBS: Asian Americans
- Adult Book Discussion: Celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month



How to Celebrate AAPI Heritage Month

- **Support** AAPI restaurants, shops, and entrepreneurs. Buy from local businesses and online retailers within the AAPI community during AAPI Heritage Month throughout the year. Enjoy the foods of AAPI culture at local restaurants and spread the word about AAPI businesses that others can support.
- **Educate** yourself on AAPI cultures and histories. Self-education of AAPI heritage can build your awareness and expand your ability to honor AAPI people and communities. Books, documentaries, and museums can provide a wealth of information about AAPI histories to increase your knowledge.
- **Join** local cultural celebrations throughout AAPI Heritage Month. Attend festivals, events, and learn activities in your area that uplift AAPI cultures. Invite friends and family to celebrate and provide support with you. Learn about the culture, traditions, and histories from people within the AAPI community.
- **Advocate** against anti-Asian hate. Recent surges in anti-Asian hate crimes impact AAPI communities nationwide. Discrimination, bias, and hatred cause harm to individuals directly affected and the population at large. Speaking out against anti-Asian hate and supporting initiatives that uplift Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders can help build a positive foundation for AAPI celebrations.

This year we highlight how we can Advance Leaders Through Collaboration

We honor and illuminate past and present leaders that have made significant and impactful contributions to our society. With the hope that the future will help foster and advance new everyday leaders through collaboration.



Serving as the ‘First Lady of Physics’

Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu is often called the “First Lady of Physics” for her many noteworthy impacts on Physics. Dr. Wu immigrated to the United States in 1936 and enrolled at the University of California Berkeley. In 1940, Dr. Wu graduated with her Ph.D. in physics. Dr. Wu was the first to confirm Enrico Fermi’s 1933 theory of beta decay (concerning how radioactive atoms become less radioactive), earning her spot in the history books. She went on to design and conduct a groundbreaking experiment on parity, the scientific principle that identical nuclear particles act alike. In 1957 her supervisors received a Nobel Prize in Physics for this work. Dr. Wu was not acknowledged with the Nobel Prize; however, she left her mark and earned her own postage stamp.

The Universal Serial Bus - ‘USB’

Although Indian American computer architect Ajay Bhatt had a hand in developing a range of computer-related technologies, the one he’s best known for is the Universal Serial Bus—better known as the USB. After emerging on the tech scene in the late 1990s, the USB became one of the most popular ways of transferring data from one device to another. The invention elevated Bhatt to celebrity-status in the computer world. “I was totally surprised by how it has impacted everybody,” Bhatt told CNN in a 2013 interview. “I mean, my name became a common name—at least at schools and in technical communities.



Building Better Organizations Students and Batteries

Dr. Yi Cui is well-known as a preeminent researcher of nanotechnologies for better batteries and other sustainability technologies. He’s also an educator and entrepreneur, serving as a professor at both Stanford University and DOE’s SLAC and as director of Stanford University’s Precourt Institute for Energy.

Dr. Cui has worked on a wide range of topics including batteries, thermal textiles, water filters, and air filters to remove particles and viruses, just to name a few of his research areas. Among all this, he takes the time to mentor over 120 PhD students and postdoctoral fellows to nurture the next generation of talented researchers coming up alongside him.

Pioneering Partnerships and Belonging

Lady Idos became the first-ever Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer in 2018 for the US Department of Energy’s Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. Idos’ Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Accountability (IDEA) Office drives institutional efforts to improve diverse representation, sustain a welcoming environment, promote opportunity parity, and remove barriers to fair access for career advancement. As a child, Idos immigrated to the United States from the Philippines, and remembers the challenges of feeling like an outsider. In college, she was a student leader where she set the foundation creating a community for other students of color to improve engagement and retention. That was the start of her career in diversity and inclusion.

source:doe.gov/history.com



Educational Resources About AAPI History And Culture

- We Are Not a Stereotype: Created by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, this video series provides historical context and personal experiences that break down AAPI stereotypes.
- Stop AAPI Hate: This organization leads the anti-AAPI hate movement, uniting people and communities against racism. Read about AAPI hate incidents and the impact they have on communities nationwide. Find safety tips, mental health resources, and legislative policies that support the AAPI population.
- Asian Americans: This PBS miniseries shares the historical contributions and challenges of Asian Americans. Through personal stories and academic research, the three-episode collection sheds light on the ways Asian Americans shape U.S. history.
- AAPI Equality Alliance: Community organizations work together under a collective umbrella to advocate for the rights and needs of AAPI populations. The alliance distributes newsletters that inform readers about current events and ways to support the AAPI community.
- Stand Against Hatred: Asian Americans Advancing Justice, founded in 1991, provides online resources and training in support of the AAPI population. Available resources include intervention training, AAPI stories, and legal support.
- NextShark: This news source provides coverage of Asian and Asian American current events. Find information on culture, lifestyle, business, entertainment, and political stories from around the world.

SAVE THE DATE - COMMUNITY CONVERSATION




CHATogether.
BUILDING EMOTIONAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH THROUGH CHILD-PARENT THEATER

Join us as we present a virtual skit titled, "Parents Have All the Solutions?", followed by a panel discussion on how to effectively communicate with children when they are going through mental health difficulties.

AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

HOW TO REGISTER:

- Scan the QR Code OR
- Visit the link: <https://form.jotform.com/2206267555210153>

PANELISTS

- Esther Yuen, MD, PhD
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Founder of Yale CHATogether
Yale School of Medicine
- Sam Xu, MD
Psychiatry Resident
Brown University/Buster Hospital
- Xiaoli Ouyang, MD
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
MedStar Georgetown University Hospital
- Janie Cao, MD, MPH
Psychiatry Resident
Bayler Scott & White Health
- Szu-Hui Lee, PhD, ABPP
Clinical Psychologist
Harvard Medical School
- Brandon Lee
Actor
Bard High School Early College
Queens
- Ren Li, MBA
Actor
Conover Education
- Francis Tablan
Host
Yale CHATogether

YALE CHILD STUDY CENTER
Bard High School Early College
Queens

Zoom
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM EST

Thursday, May 19, 4:00pm ET

This episode of America250's "Community Conversation" series will celebrate Jewish American and Asian American Pacific Islanders Heritage Months.

In this program we'll explore American immigrant experiences from these groups, and honor the influences that these groups had, and continue to have, on the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

Link for registration [here](#)

Wednesday, May 18, 6-7:30pm EST or 3-4:30pm PST

In celebration of AAPI Heritage Month, CHATogether and United Chinese Americans (UCA) are co-hosting this event.

"CHATogether: Building emotional and relational health through child-parent theater" is a live skit performance on "Parents got all the Solutions?" about a teen-parent conflict centered around AAPI mental health and how it turns into a healthy compassionate conversation.

Zoom RSVP via QR or [this form](#).

Jewish American Heritage Month

The Contributions of Jewish Heritage

Jewish American Heritage Month is an annual recognition and celebration of Jewish American achievements in and contributions to the United States of America.

President George W. Bush proclaimed that May would be Jewish American Heritage Month on April 20, 2006. The announcement was an achievement in the effort of the Jewish Museum of Florida and South Florida Jewish Community leaders for a celebration of Jewish Americans and Jewish American Heritage. Resolutions were introduced by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania urging the president to proclaim a month that would recognize the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture. The resolutions passed unanimously, first in the House of Representatives in December 2005 and later in the Senate in February 2006.

The below proclamation expresses the import of this dedication:

When the first Jewish settlers came to this land, they sought a place of promise where they could practice their faith in freedom and live in liberty.

During Jewish American Heritage Month, we celebrate the rich history of the Jewish people in America and honor the great contributions they have made to our country.

As a nation of immigrants, the United States is better and stronger because Jewish people from all over the world have chosen to become American citizens.

Since arriving in 1654, Jewish Americans have achieved great success, strengthened our country, and helped shape our way of life. Through their deep commitment to faith, family, and community, Jewish Americans remind us of a basic belief that guided the founding of this Nation[...].

The Jewish people have enriched our culture and contributed to a more compassionate and hopeful America.

The Jewish Book Council has a great reading list that highlights and speaks to the American Jewish experience throughout history.

Sources: [White House Archives](#), [theweitaman](#), [JAHM](#), [Jewbelong](#), [jcrc ny.org](#), [the gothamist](#), [nytimes](#), [adl.org](#)



“The Jewish American experience is a story of faith, fortitude, and progress.

It is a quintessential American experience - one that is connected to key tenets of American identity, including our Nation’s commitment to freedom of religion and conscience.

This month, we honor Jewish Americans - past and present - who have inextricably woven their experience and their accomplishments into the fabric of our national identity”



How to Celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month

1. **VISIT A JEWISH MUSEUM OR A SITE OF HISTORICAL JEWISH INTEREST:** Visit a Jewish museum, a Holocaust memorial museum, New York City's Tenement Museum... the list goes on, and nearly all of these museums offer online experiences and exhibits, too. You can also visit an historic synagogue for a look at your local Jewish history.
2. **MAKE SOMETHING JEWISH:** Whip up your *bubbe's* favorite recipe or choose from [one of ReformJudaism.org's many, many recipes of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic origins](#). Not a big cook? Enjoy lunch from your local Jewish delicatessen!
3. **BAKE CHALLAH:** Check out "[All Things Challah](#)" for 14 of our favorite challah recipes plus helpful hacks for baking, braiding, and more. Here's to inspiring your own venture into the world of making challah!
4. **LEARN ABOUT NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY:** [Take our 10-question quiz](#) to find out how much you already know – and maybe learn something new! You can also explore [the Jewish American Heritage Month website](#) to learn more about, well, Jewish American heritage and history.
5. **LISTEN TO A JEWISH PODCAST:** Looking for something new to binge? There are plenty of Jewishly themed podcasts out there – including a few produced by ReformJudaism.org! Not sure where to start? [Here are six Jewish podcasts](#) to help you engage with your Judaism from home.
6. **RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY:** Try to determine when the first members of your family immigrated to America, then create a family tree for future family members to cherish. Take it a step further by recording an interview with your oldest living relatives to create a digital history of your family's Jewish history.
7. **LISTEN TO JEWISH MUSIC:** Are you into contemporary Jewish rock music yet? Head to [JewishRockRadio.com](#) or check out [ReformJudaism.org's Spotify playlists](#) to find your new favorite tunes.
8. **WATCH A JEWISH MOVIE:** Originally written for Jewish American History Month, [this list features 10 films](#) that celebrate the happy, sad, and hilarious aspects of American Jewry. You can also [browse our "film" tag](#) to find other Jewish movies, documentaries, and more that we've written about on ReformJudaism.org.
9. **RAISE YOUR VOICE, JEWISHLY:** As Jews in a democratic society, we have the privilege and the responsibility to make our voices and views heard on ethical and moral matters. [Check out the work of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism](#) to learn how to get involved in Jewish social justice work on a national scale.
10. **DO A JEWISH ACTIVITY WITH YOUR KIDS:** Cooped up at home and running out of ideas? We've rounded up [our favorite Jewishly inspired crafts, recipes, activities, videos, and more](#) to keep your family occupied during days spent at home – all while learning about and embracing Judaism together.
11. **TAKE A CLASS ABOUT JUDAISM:** Learn more about Jewish spirituality, ethics, practice, and community through the Union for Reform Judaism's [engaging classes](#), like [Introduction to Judaism](#) and [A Taste of Judaism®](#). Many congregations have weekly Torah study on Shabbat (Saturday) mornings, too, in addition to other ongoing learning and worship opportunities.
12. **SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE JEWISH ORGANIZATION:** Do your part to further and strengthen the work of the Jewish people by making a one-time or recurring contribution to a Jewish nonprofit that's near to your heart.

Source: [reformjudaism](#)

SPOTLIGHT

The Jewish Student Union

As we celebrate Jewish Heritage Month, the communications team of the DEI Committee had the pleasure of interviewing the chair of the Jewish Student Union, Elizabeth “Sonny” Werther.

Sonny is a Tut 3 House student, who is proud of her Jewish identity and would like people to know more about Judaism and Jewish values in general. She explained that after a regrettable antisemitic incident at UNIS a couple of years ago, a discussion with her family prompted her to approach the Director of Student Activities and Service Learning, Mr. Zakaria Baha, to see if it was possible to create a forum for Jewish students. The Jewish Student Union was launched at the beginning of this school year and currently has around 10 members, all of them Tut House students.

The Jewish Student Union is a comfortable and safe place where Jewish and non-Jewish students meet and discuss Jewish values and other aspects of the Jewish culture, including Judaism and related traditions. It should be noted that the Jewish Student Union is also open to students who are not Jewish. Sonny emphasized how the diversity at UNIS has shaped her worldview. In fact, one of her goals as the Chairperson of the Jewish Student Union is to find ways to promote more interaction and collaboration with other student clubs such as the Asian American Pacific Islander Student Union and the Equity and Inclusion Board because in her opinion, they are working toward the same objective.



Sonny is not very religious, but she feels that the UNIS curriculum does not cover the main world's religions as extensively as it should. She wishes that there were more conversations about the values that each religion embodies. She intends to continue to take advantage of every opportunity, especially the main Jewish holidays, to bring awareness about Judaism and Jewish values at UNIS. Even though it is relatively new, the Jewish Student Union has brought together Jewish students at UNIS and allowed them to discuss issues related to their identity, their history, their values, and their religion in a safe environment. That is something that Sonny is especially proud of, and next year, the Jewish Student Union intends to reach out to Middle school students who might be interested.

Keep the conversation going Sonny!

PODCAST CORNER

CAN WE TALK? - The Jewish Women's Archive Podcast

Every month, Can We Talk brings stories and conversations about Jewish women and the issues that shape their public and private lives. Please visit the [website](#) to see the rich content. We have included a link to a recent episode.

[Episode 74: A Half-Century of Women Rabbis](#)



Stand Up Against Antisemitic Hate

Millions of Jews in the United States and around the world are confronted with various forms of hate and Antisemitic violence.

As reported in the New York Times Article “*Antisemitic Attacks in New York Are at Highest Level in Decades*” on April 26, 2022, “The number of antisemitic incidents in New York increased by 24 percent last year to the highest level in decades, including a surge in the number of assaults, as well as both criminal and noncriminal incidents targeting Jews, according to an annual report released on Tuesday by the Anti-Defamation League.”

While there’s been a surge in anti-Asian crimes in the city, statistics show that Jews are still the most targeted hate crime victims.

Of the 524 hate crimes recorded in the city last year, 198 were designated as anti-Jewish and 131 as anti-Asian. Although most crimes do not end with arrest and convictions, we must all diligently stand up against antisemitism.

The ADL provides educational programs, anti-bias programs called “**No Place For Hate**”, training and resources for grades K-12, as well as in college and university settings.



The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum (DHHRM), is committed to teaching the history of the Holocaust and advancing human rights to combat prejudice, hatred, and indifference.

Through this tool kit, they provide some of their resources and share information from other trusted sources.

[Download this fantastic toolkit on ISSUU!](#)

BOOK CORNER



WHISTLE: A NEW GOTHAM CITY HERO by E. Lockhart

Representation Matters!! Say hello to Sixteen-year-old Willow Zimmerman who has much to say. When she’s not on the streets advocating for her community, she’s volunteering at the local pet shelter. She seeks to help all those in need, even the stray dog she’s named Lebowitz that follows her around. But as much as she does for the world around her, she struggles closer to home—taking care of her mother, recently diagnosed with cancer. Her job as an adjunct professor of Jewish studies does not provide adequate health insurance—and Willow can see that time is running out.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the UNIS Libraries

You Are What You Read.

Book bans in public schools have recurred throughout American history, and have long been an issue of concern to PEN America, as a literary and free expression advocacy organization.

Over the past nine months, the scope of such censorship has expanded rapidly. In response, PEN America has collated an Index of School Book Bans, offering a snapshot of the trend. The Index documents decisions to ban books in school libraries and classrooms in the United States from July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

While this is the first time PEN America has conducted a formal count of books banned, the organization has fought back against book bans for decades. In 2016, PEN America published *Missing from the Shelf: Book Challenges and Lack of Diversity in Children's Literature*, which described instances of 'soft censorship' taking place in schools and libraries in response to parents' challenges of books.

The report also highlighted the disproportionate targeting of books by or about people whose identities and stories have traditionally been underrepresented in children's and young adult literature, such as people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, or persons with disabilities.

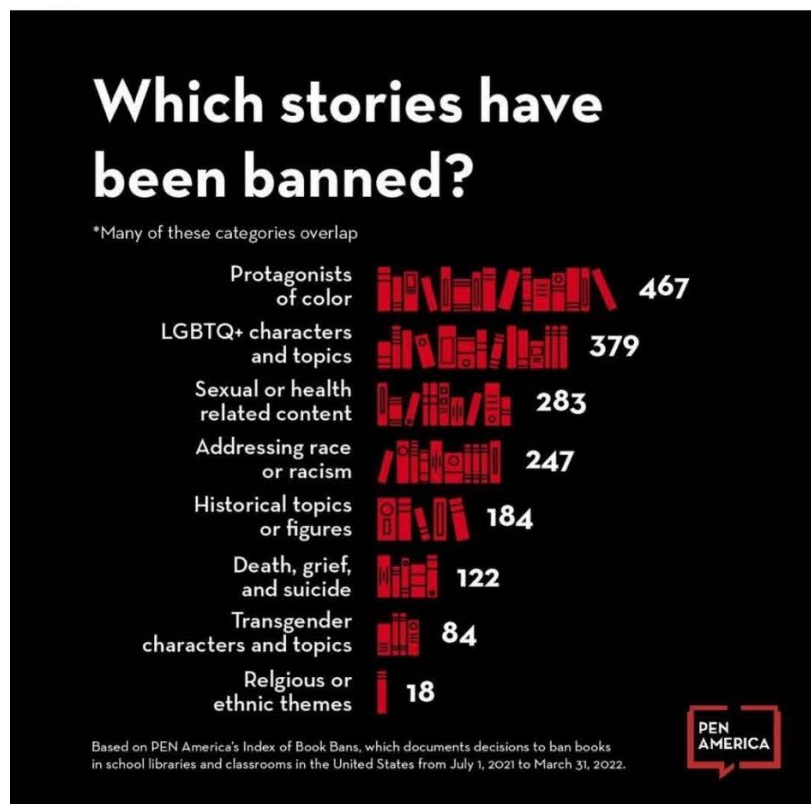
Today, state legislators are introducing — and in some cases passing — educational gag orders to censor teachers, proposals to track and monitor teachers, and mechanisms to facilitate book banning in school districts. At the same time, the scale and force of book banning in local communities is escalating dramatically. In recent years PEN America has typically encountered a handful of such cases each year. The findings in this report demonstrate a profound increase in both the number of books banned and the intense focus on books that relate to communities of color and LGBTQ+ subjects over the past nine months.

School book bans take varied forms, and can include prohibitions on books in libraries or classrooms, as well as a range of other restrictions, some of which may be temporary. It is important to note that some decisions to remove or restrict books can be the outcome of established, appropriate processes, but nonetheless are of concern because they result in diminished access to literature for young people, or the diminished ability of librarians or teachers to use particular educational materials. Book removals that follow established processes may still improperly target books on the basis of content pertaining to race, gender, or sexual orientation, invoking concerns of equal protection in education.

In total, the Index lists 1,586 decisions to ban books between July 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022. This includes bans on 1,145 unique titles, though the same title can be banned in libraries, classrooms, or both, in different districts. The banning of a single book title could mean anywhere from one to hundreds of copies are pulled from libraries or classrooms in a school district.

As parts of the country are banning books, we were curious to learn more about what UNIS is doing to encourage all types of books for our learners.

Source: pen.org

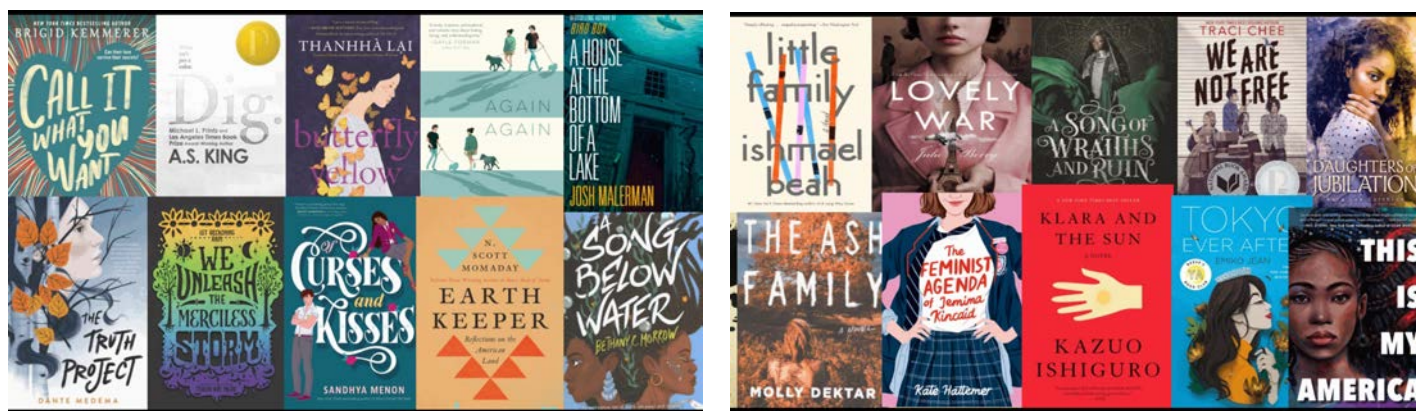


DEI in the Tutorial House LIBRARY

The Tutorial House library has been active in diversifying its fiction collection. In the past year, two thirds of the books acquired for pleasure reading have addressed some form of diversity such as LGBTQ+ characters as well as African American characters.

Most of our books are multicultural and some of them are written by non American authors: Nigeria, Japan, and the Middle East for example are well represented. In addition to this literary collection, the students are offered a wide range of books on racism and tolerance.

Books are advertised and displayed. Below is an example of what is sent to students through Schoology and on display screens.



How Diverse and Inclusive Are Your Books at Home?

Use this Home Library Questionnaire to find out!

This [tool by Lee & Low Books](#) will help you to:

- Reflect on your home library
- Broaden the types of books you read with your children
- Diversify your child's summer reading
- Choose books that are inclusive of all people, backgrounds, and cultures



NEWS CORNER -Juneteenth

New Mayor Adams Designates Juneteenth as a Paid New York City Holiday

On June 15th 2021, the Senate unanimously passed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday. It was signed into law by President Joe Biden on Thursday June 17th 2021.

Juneteenth which falls on June 19th, is so many things. Yes it recognizes the end of slavery in America which as history demonstrated wasn't as easy and as straightforward as President Abraham Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. What Juneteenth really speaks to is black faith, optimism and resilience.

There will be celebrations all over the country. In NYC, [Juneteenth NYC](#) will be hosting a 3 day virtual summit, festival and concert which will culminate with a concert in Prospect Park in Brooklyn.



PRIDE AT UNIS

Meet the Sexuality and Gender Awareness Club

The Sexuality and Gender Awareness Club (SAGA) is a TUT House club designed to create a safe space and to help create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students. We started as a Gay Straight Alliance in 2002 when students were not out to anyone other than possibly 1 or 2 close friends. The overall environment at UNIS was not friendly to queer students and the administration was less than supportive of a GSA. (I continue to appreciate the strength of the queer students and allies who helped establish the club.) Much has improved over the years and the current administration shows consistent support of LGBTQ+ students.

Students within the club decided 10 years ago that issues related to gender (trans, fluid or non-conforming, etc) were not being addressed sufficiently and the club changed its name to SAGA. In recent years we have successfully lobbied the administration to create gender neutral bathrooms in the school, hosted a panel including a veteran from the Stonewall riots to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Gay Rights Movement, presented various workshops for fellow students and decorated the lobby to celebrate Pride Month. This year SAGA has had an active membership of about 20 TH students. This is a student run club and each year the students determine the topics they want to discuss. This year for example members gave presentations on such topics as: queer theory, NYC ballroom culture, queer representation in the media, and queer identity/expression across various cultures.

SAGA has been at UNIS for 20 years now. What in your opinion has been the reason for its longevity?

Personally, I think one of the reasons for SAGA's longevity is simply the fact that queer people, members of the LGBTQ+ community, have always been around. School, especially, is a time where many people go through the process of figuring out their identity and sexuality, and no matter what someone identifies as in the long run, high school is a period of exploration. SAGA exists, first and foremost, to act as a community space for students who are any step in the process of figuring themselves out, but no matter what it's a place for queer students and allies to seek other people like themselves. I think SAGA has lasted for so long because there have always been queer people around, and to me, it's incredibly important for said queer people to have a space that they are welcome to be themselves in. Also, the leadership structure of SAGA, in which each year a T4 president will elect a T3 co-president who will take their place when they graduate, allows for new perspectives and new priorities every year, and is a good way to keep the leadership roles lively.

What have been the most impactful changes you have seen at UNIS with LGBTQI issues?

I've been at UNIS for a long time, and I think the biggest development that I've noticed is the celebration of Pride Month. When I was in Junior School, Pride Month wasn't something that I heard a lot about. If celebrations or events were happening in the school at all, it would've most likely been amongst the older students. But now, taking last year as an example, Pride Month is now something that's celebrated widely by the school. Thanks to SAGA, last year we had pride flags hanging in the lobby, a fundraiser, and a pledge drive against homophobic bullying where we offered out free pride flag stickers, with which we ended up collecting over 100 signatures for! Another few great changes is the inclusion of a gender-neutral bathroom, which allows students who may not feel comfortable using gendered bathrooms to have a place to go, as well as in more recent news, the addition of pronoun stickers that one can attach to their UNIS ID.

Do you feel that the needs of LGBTQI students are being proactively and sufficiently being met at UNIS by the administration?

On the awareness and acceptance side of things, I think the administration has been doing quite well. However, there are a few roadblocks that exist, especially for transgender students who are attempting to socially transition—speaking from personal experience, at the moment, something such as a name change in the Veracross system requires a legal name change, something that not all trans students are able to achieve. I'm not sure if this is an issue that can be solved by the administration or simply a technological limitation, but nonetheless by next year I am planning to look into methods of hopefully making a social transition a little bit more accessible for students who seek it. I also believe that there should be more LGBTQ+ oriented education resources for students, for example in mandatory units like sex ed, which is something that can be achieved by just altering the curriculum slightly to provide for better representation on those topics.

How can other groups like the PA help support SAGA's mandate?

Having a platform such as this to speak about SAGA's role in the school is a great opportunity, and I would love to continue corresponding with the PA in regards to any future plans for the club, as with LGBTQ+ issues, I feel it's important to have input from parents as well as students. It's also crucial to share more educating resources for parents, about topics like how to breach LGBTQ+ issues with your child, or how to support a young queer kid. If desired, I can find some of said resources to be included in a newsletter for, say, Pride Month, for example. Other than that, simply having the PA's support for any future endeavors would be wonderful.

What are the SAGA plans for the 2022/2023 school year?

What are the SAGA plans for 2022/2023 school year. I don't have any specific plans as of yet that would be achievable during the span of just one year, but I would like to start working more with the Student Council and the UNIS administration in regards to making the school even more accessible and welcoming to young LGBTQ+ students, as well as hopefully getting the ball rolling to instate more than one gender-neutral bathrooms in the school in the future. But administrative duties aside, the most important responsibility for next year will be continuing to cultivate the community that is SAGA, so that young LGBTQ+ students will always have a space to feel welcomed.

Thank you Mr. Dennis Lacey | TUT House (T1/T3) Counselor, and Daniel Parr | SAGA President, for sharing their club.

Ways to celebrate Pride / Things to do!

- VISIT nycgo.com for fun events and activities to enjoy with your little ones.
- WATCH a [Pride Family Movie Night](#)
- DO [Great Family fun-filled ideas](#)
- JOIN the June 26th for the annual NYC Pride March!
- PARTICIPATE in one the [Great Pride events throughout NYC](#)

PRIDE IN NYC

Commemorating Stonewall

Millions of people all over the world will celebrate Pride this year, with joyful parades, parties and other special events throughout June. We hope that everyone truly understands the origins of Pride and its significance for the movement of and for LGBTQ+ equality?

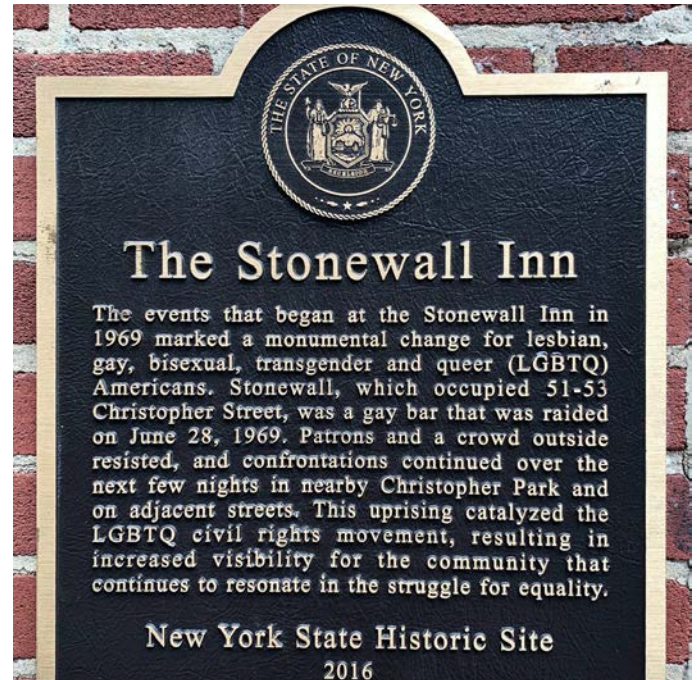
In early July 1969, a US soldier stationed in Long Binh, Vietnam, opened his army newspaper and came across an article that would change his life. Among the stories of the ongoing war, specialist Henry Baird noticed an unusual headline. Over the past week in New York City, hundreds of homosexuals had fought police in a week-long riot in Greenwich Village, following a botched police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a mafia-run bar frequented by LGBTQ+ people.

Years later, Baird would recount to a radio producer that his “heart was filled with joy. I thought about what I had read frequently, but I had no one to discuss it with. And secretly within myself I decided that when I came back stateside, if I should survive to come back stateside, I would come out as a gay person.”

Baird’s story is echoed in the accounts of thousands of LGBTQ+ people across the world.

The first Pride celebrations took place during the last week of June in 1970 as part of a one-year commemoration of the Stonewall Riots, an uprising of LGBTQ+ patrons and supporters at the Stonewall Inn. The Stonewall Inn was a club in the West Village of New York City that welcomed gay patrons at a time when the New York State Liquor

Authority did not give licenses to establishments that served a gay clientele. To get around the law, the mafia-connected owners of the Stonewall Inn and other gay taverns paid off the police, essentially bribing them to look the other way. In spite of these payoffs, the police conducted a raid at the Stonewall Inn, entering with a warrant in the early hours of June 28, 1969. As the police began arrests, a crowd formed outside the club and began throwing pennies and other objects. Within hours, a full-blown riot had erupted. Subsequent demonstrations continued for several days, with hundreds of New Yorkers coming out to express solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.



L. Craig Schoonmaker, a longtime activist in New York, proposed “Pride” as a slogan that would embody the spirit of the commemoration and tie together various events. Mr. Schoonmaker stated his reasoning as—“The poison was shame, and the antidote [was] pride.” At the time, people were “very repressed, they were conflicted internally, and didn’t know how to come out and be proud. That’s how the movement was most useful. The purpose of Pride was not just to commemorate those who fought back against police violence at the Stonewall Inn, or to protest unjust laws. It was also to counter the sense of shame and self-hatred that scarred the lives of LGBTQ+ people. Schoonmaker could not have anticipated that Pride would one day be embraced by millions throughout the world.

“We’ll never have the freedom and civil rights we deserve as human beings unless we stop hiding in closets and in the shelter of anonymity”

“We’ll never have the freedom and civil rights we deserve as human beings unless we stop hiding in closets and in the shelter of anonymity,” one participant told the New York Times. “We have to come out into the open and stop being ashamed, or else people will go on treating us as freaks. This march is an affirmation and declaration of our new pride.”

“We have to come out into the open and stop being ashamed, or else people will go on treating us as freaks. This march is an affirmation and declaration of our new pride”

This heightened activism and organizational infrastructure made it possible for Pride celebrations to spread and keep the memory of Stonewall alive. Scholar Greggor Mattson explains, “Nationally coordinated activist commemorations were evidence of an LGBTQ movement that had rapidly grown in strength during the 1960s, not a movement sparked by a single riot.” In subsequent years, the Stonewall riots would increasingly be remembered as the catalyst for the modern gay rights movement. That is not entirely correct. Activists seized the opportunity to commemorate Stonewall at its one-year anniversary, and subsequent Pride celebrations perpetuated its memory. It was the commemoration of Stonewall-more than the riots themselves-that helped to propel the movement forward.

After Stonewall, things could never go back to how they were before. While the Stonewall riots were a spontaneous eruption of anger against police harassment, they had been a long time in the making, and while the riots lasted only a few days, their repercussions continue to this day.

The sight of LGBTQ+ people simply enjoying themselves has been as important to the movement as any political slogan – it has made LGBTQ+ people visible to each other. When army specialist Baird read about the Stonewall riots in 1969, he saw himself in them, and his world changed forever. The purpose of Pride has been to continue that process – to make people visible to themselves, to revolutionize their lives, and to begin to transform social attitudes towards sexuality and gender.

Source: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) [cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com) [identiversity.org](https://www.identiversity.org)



BOOK CORNER



THE DAYS OF BLUEGRASS LOVE - LGBTQ YA Romance

[The Days of Bluegrass Love](#) was originally published in the Netherlands in 1999. It was a groundbreaking book and has since become a beloved classic throughout Europe, but has never been translated into English. Until now!

Release date: May 17, 2022 – a tender, intense, unforgettable story of first love.



UNIS EVENT May 17th - Pride Month Film Club



In celebration of Pride Month, the NEW2UNIS Film Club in collaboration with the DEI Committee presents the movie **Disclosure** on **Tuesday, May 17th 2022 from 7pm - 8pm.**

It is streaming on Netflix. We encourage you all to watch the movie and join us for this very topical discussion. Because as we all know, Representation Matters!!!

From producer Laverne Cox (Orange is the New Black), DISCLOSURE is an unprecedented, eye-opening look at transgender depictions in film and television, revealing how Hollywood simultaneously reflects and manufactures our deepest anxieties about gender. What emerges is a fascinating story of dynamic interplay between trans representation on screen, society's beliefs, and the reality of trans lives. Reframing familiar scenes and iconic characters in a new light, director Sam Feder invites viewers to confront unexamined assumptions, and shows how what once captured the American imagination now elicit new feelings. DISCLOSURE provokes a startling revolution in how we see and understand trans people.

Tuesday, May 17th 2022, 7pm - 9pm

Zoom link; <https://unis.zoom.us/j/99610021521>

Meeting ID: 996 1002 1521





Billy Porter - Actor

The *Pose* star became the first openly gay black man to win the dramatic lead actor Emmy in 2019, the year he turned heads for debuting gender-neutral red carpet looks.



Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa - Showrunner

Promotes and accents LGBTQ characters and storylines including a transition arc on Netflix's *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.



Greg Berlanti - Filmmaker, Showrunner

Berlanti is a mega producer with many shows in the pipeline across platforms, fought to put the first same-sex kiss between two men on network TV in *Dawson's Creek*.



Andy Cohen - Host, Producer

As a Bravo's executive, he became the first openly gay host in American late night. Cohen also uplifts and advocates for the LGBTQ community.



RuPaul Charles - Host, Producer

RuPaul's *Drag Race*, quickly became a hit among the LGBTQ community and throughout the years, the series gained momentum and has become a major hit for mainstream audiences.



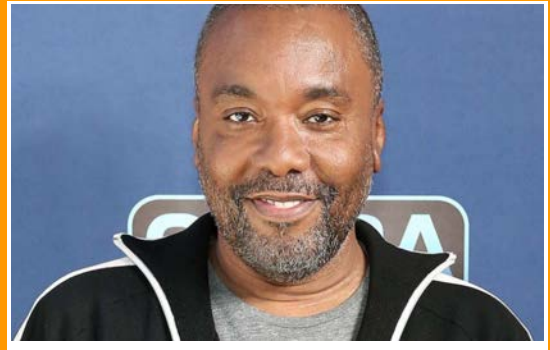
Steven Canals - Showrunner

The writer made history with *Pose*, which features the largest number of trans actors ever on scripted TV, which boosted trans and person-of-color representation on and behind the camera.



Lil' Nas X - Pop Entertainer

He has shattered many barriers with his explicit music videos and lyrics. He came out on the last day of pride in 2019 and has unapologetically turned heads ever since.



Lee Daniels - Filmmaker, Producer

On his Fox drama *Empire*, the creator infused broadcast TV with a rare portrayal of a queer African American man. Daniels also cast the third openly transgender actor to play a major trans character in a U.S. TV drama.



Laverne Cox - Actor, Producer

Orange Is the New Black star (a role that earned her three Emmy nominations, a first for a trans performer), will appear in Netflix's *Inventing Anna* and is an executive producer of the Sundance doc *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen*, debuting June 19 on Netflix.



Bowen Chang - Actor, Comedian

After 45 seasons, it's hard to believe there are any firsts left for *Saturday Night Live* — but Yang arrived at 30 Rock in 2019 as the cast's first Chinese American castmember and only its third openly gay male.



Kate McKinnon - Actor

During her Golden Globes tribute to Ellen DeGeneres, thanked the comic for blazing a trail for LGBTQ people on TV. With her joyful impersonations of DeGeneres, Elizabeth Warren and Ruth Bader Ginsburg McKinnon has only broadened that path.



Kristen Stewart - Actor

She successfully splits her time between studio fare and festivals. In 2019, the bisexual actor could be seen as French New Wave icon Jean Seberg in Venice premiere title *Seberg*, as a secret agent in Sony's *Charlie's Angels*. Stewart stars alongside Mackenzie Davis in the same-sex rom-com *Happiest Season* from Clea DuVall.



Janelle Monáe - Actor, Entertainer

Since coming out as queer in 2018, Monáe has released album *Dirty Computer* (a Grammy-nominated exploration of female sexuality), opened the 2020 Academy Awards telecast as a "black queer artist". She stars in the second season of the Amazon thriller *Homecoming* and in the horror feature *Antebellum*.



Lena Waithe - Actor, Filmmaker, Producer

After her 2017 Emmy win for writing a semi-autobiographical coming-out story on *Master of None*, the multihyphenate wasted no time in creating series (*The Chi*) and features (*Queen & Slim*) that highlight Black America and the LGBTQ community - all while mentoring new voices and achieving milestones.



Lilly Singh - Comedian

The first late night show hosted by a bisexual woman of color, albeit one that airs at 1:35 a.m., Singh's *A Little Late* pulls 670,000 nightly viewers and recently scored a second-season renewal. Singh, who was tapped to emcee the 2020 GLAAD Media Awards, remains a digital force with 15 million YouTube subscribers. She came out of the closet in 2019.



Howard Lee - President & GM, TLC

Lee has cultivated one of the most inclusive schedules in all of TV, let alone basic cable. TLC standouts include transgender docuseries *I Am Jazz* and *Lost in Transition*, makeover show *Dragnificent!* and, for the first time, a same-sex couple on the popular *90 Day Fiancé* franchise. Lee and the network are both involved in the anti-bullying campaign "Give a Little."



Rachel Maddow - News Broadcaster, Journalist, Activist

Rachel Maddow became an AIDS activist, joining Act Up and the AIDS Legal Referral Panel. She became the first openly gay woman to be a Rhodes Scholar. Maddow host her own show, "The Rachel Maddow Show" on MSNBC since 2008. She continues to be a public LGBTQ activist.



Anderson Cooper - News Broadcaster, Journalist

In 2003 he got his own show on CNN, "Anderson Cooper 360." In 2012, he became the news story when he came out as gay. "The fact is, I'm gay, always have been, always will be, and I couldn't be any more happy, comfortable with myself, and proud," he said at the time.



Michael Sam - NFL Athlete

In 2014, Michael Sam came out as gay in an interview with ESPN and made history that same year. He was drafted by the St. Louis Rams, becoming the first openly gay man to ever be drafted into the NFL. Unfortunately, Sam was let go from the team, and in 2015, he announced he was leaving the sport for good.



Beanie Feldman - Actor

From Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird* to Olivia Wilde's *Booksmart*, openly queer Feldstein has bucked convention as a staple of female-fronted, coming-of-age indies. The L.A. native's most high-profile was in the installment of *American Crime Story*, playing Monica Lewinsky in the Clinton-impeachment-focused season.



Celine Sciamma - Filmmaker

The French writer-director found global visibility with her 2019 period lesbian romance, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, which won best screenplay and the Queer Palm at Cannes. But Sciamma has been exploring queer identity in her work for years, notably in 2011's *Tomboy*. Behind the scenes, Sciamma is a staunch advocate for female directors and was a key organizer of the 2018 women's protest at Cannes.



Janet Mock - Director, Producer, Writer

The activist and best-selling author made history as part of the creative team of *Pose*, the series on which she cut her teeth as writer, producer and first-time director. Mock proved she was no one-hit wonder, signing an overall deal in TV and a first-look pact for films with Netflix — Ryan Murphy on his rewrite of industry history *Hollywood* and set out developing a slate of originals highlighting trans characters and people of color.

Source: [thr.com](https://www.thr.com), [insider.com](https://www.thesite.com), [lgbt speakers](https://www.lgbtspeakers.com)

BOOK CORNER

Read about Pride and queer activists with one of these books.

- [Pride Colors](#) by Robin Stevenson. Ages: Newborn to 3
 - [Our Rainbow](#) by Little Bee Books Ages: 2-5
 - [GLAAD. This Day in June](#) by Gayle E. Pitman Ages: 4-8
 - [Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag](#) by Rob Sanders Ages: 5-8
 - [Pride: The eCelebration and the Struggle](#) by Robin Stevenson Ages: 9-12
 - An award-winning history of LGBTQ rights, featuring activists from around the globe.
- Check out this roundup of [books for kids, tweens, and teens featuring LGBTQ+ characters](#).



About the PA DEI Committee at UNIS

“The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee was formed during the 2020-2021 academic year to collaborate on efforts across the school community in support of the fundamental UNIS principle that acknowledging, understanding, respecting, and accepting diverse beliefs, ethnicities, cultures, and lifestyles are critical underpinnings of a successful education.

This committee will work vigorously towards equal access for all community members to participate fully in the life of the school, particularly to better involve Black American families at the school and to bring to light current events related to racism in the U.S. and globally.”



MORE DEI at UNIS



@eib-unis
@unisjsu
@unisblack
@blackatunis
@unis.saga.club

Equity & Inclusion Board - unis.org/eib
UNIS Jewish Student Union
Black Student Union
Black at UNIS
SAGA Club at UNIS



[About UNIS - Diversity Equity Inclusion](#)

[To join the PA DEI Committee](#)