



IN THE COMMUNITY

News and Views For NASA Members



Campus Pride

Brendan Van Akstine, NASA Communications Administrator

March 12th to 21st marks the return of Campus Pride Week, an annual celebration of LGBTQ2S+ people and communities at the University of Alberta. The 10-day long celebration includes workshops and symposiums, a bake sale, a drag show and so much more, and everyone is encouraged to participate. One event that was notably absent from last year's Pride Week, which will be returning this year, is the Campus Pride Parade happening on Wednesday March 14th.

Pride Week has been taking place on campus since 2014, and was first initiated by students who wanted the University to take a more active role in affirming the presence of LGBTQ2S+ people on campus. Last year, the steering committee responsible for making decisions about Pride Week decided to hold a rally rather than a parade. While the response to the rally was positive, some expressed concerns over the absence of the parade on campus, and in early 2018 NASA's Equity and Diversity Committee offered to take the lead on organizing the 2018 parade, which is scheduled to take place over the noon-hour on Wednesday March 14th. The parade will start at the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science, looping through the main quad and several buildings before ending at the Van Vliet Centre, where an after-event featuring food, entertainment and an exhibition of various community groups will be available for participants and the public.

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While some might question the ongoing need for such events, viewing them as a relic of a less tolerant time when members of the LGBTQ2S+ community had to stand up and fight for their rights and against discrimination, it's important to remind ourselves that in spite of all our progress towards more tolerance, acceptance and equality, many of the hard-won rights we tend to take for granted today can all too easily be eroded. Even today people are still threatened and attacked because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

"It's by building bridges, finding common ground and creating solidarity among diverse groups that we continue to move forward and advance everyone's rights"

-NASA President Elizabeth Johannson

Pride is important because it celebrates how far we have come, but it is also important because it reminds everyone that there is still a long way to go; it's about creating visibility and a sense of belonging for people who may not have it, and about giving hope to people who are still struggling with their identities.

So why is NASA taking a leadership role? Unions have often been on the front line in the fight for equality for LGBTQ2S+ people. At its heart, the union movement is the struggle of working class people to improve their lives, and the story of working class gays and lesbians in the trade union movement is as old as the early days of union organizing, when workers began to collectively demand improvements in their working conditions and fight for better pay, hours and benefits. Unions have been some of the earliest and strongest supporters of the LGBTQ2S+ community, and it is a natural extension for unions and labour groups to work on LGBTQ2S+ issues and concerns.



NASA members participate in the 2016 Campus Pride Parade

This flows from the perspective often seen and heard at union gatherings that *workers' rights are human rights*. Unions have made significant gains for LGBTQ2S+ workers across Canada, and they continue to be a powerful force for equality and justice in the workplace. NASA President Elizabeth Johannson agrees – “It's by building bridges, finding common ground and creating solidarity among diverse groups that we continue to move forward and advance everyone's rights” she said, “I hope that everyone, regardless of how they identify, will come out, show their colours and join the celebrations.”

While NASA has taken the lead on the parade, there is a diverse group of other stakeholders organizing a wide array of events for Pride Week. More information and a calendar of events is available at <https://www.ualberta.ca/pride-week>

Worksite Meetings with Elizabeth Johansson

Brendan Van Alstine, NASA Communications Administrator

The University of Alberta is a big place, and NASA has members working in a wide variety of worksites doing an even wider array of jobs. While some concerns are shared broadly across our membership, the issues and concerns that members may be dealing with in one worksite can vary greatly from those in another. One of our goals as a union is to connect with NASA members in their various worksites to discuss their priorities and concerns. To date, NASA President Elizabeth Johansson has attended dozens of worksite meetings across campus.

If you would like to have Elizabeth meet with you and your colleagues for an informal meeting over your lunch hour to share your concerns and hear directly about what NASA is working on, please contact the NASA office (nasa@ualberta.ca) with “Work Site Meeting” in the subject line to set up a date for a visit. We’ll even bring cookies!



NASA President Elizabeth Johansson Meets with members from various worksites across campus

NASA's New Mission and Vision Statements were approved by the membership at the Spring General Meeting on February 28, 2018.

Vision: A better future for ourselves and others.

Mission: To improve the economic, social, and working conditions of our members through representation and advocacy, and contribute to the improvement of those conditions in society.

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