

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Loyola, Do Better

Clemente Ortiz · Sunday, November 19th, 2023

Loyola is not only a school but also a community. I have been taught here to love one another and treat others the way I want to be treated. The brotherhood is what we first heard about Loyola from the first campus tours—that the love we all should have for each other should also be unconditional. Men and women for and with others. God in all things. For the most part, this type of love is prevalent at Loyola. But in an especially troubling instance during my tenure, this has not been the case.

Loyola is diverse. We come from all sorts of backgrounds and locations around the county. This is something that we, as students, celebrate wholeheartedly, as seen in events such as CUBfest. *However, when it comes to sexual identity, the average Loyola student can agree that the majority of students identify as straight.* From the conversations around the commons to the masculine aura of our most popular activities, heterosexuality consumes us.

Being gay in this community is really tough. I walk a fine line between being masculine enough to fit in while also staying true to who I am. Walking this line has made me feel less authentic at times. Although everyone's experience is different, I have to assume that people in the LGBTQ+ community at this institution have to deal with similar things every day. I hear degrading language toward my community being tossed around as haphazardly as the phrase "Go Cubs" was, quite frankly, alarming.

Last year, hate knocked me off my balance. I was attacked online for simply stating my opinions and for sticking up for my fellow Cubs on the issue of sexuality. I was called all sorts of slurs, felt ostracized from the Loyola community and even felt the catapult that was the dealing of a death threat. I felt like I had no support at this time. The worst part of it all was that there was no immediate action plan in place to alleviate this incident. There was a sporadic response, which few seemed to pay attention to. The sticker launch at the Christmas mass and the email by Fr. Gregory Goethals, S.J. '73 seemed like they had little impact. Many didn't know (and still don't know) the details of what happened and it became the job of rumors and false information to fill in the blanks.

Yes, the administration handled it awkwardly and under the veil of secrecy, but we, as students, created this climate. We created false comfort in using slurs. We were the ones who weren't holding ourselves accountable for our mistakes.



Loyola, we need to do better. How can we uphold the Grad at Grad values if we aren't "Loving" towards all? How can we uphold the Grad at Grad values if we aren't "Committed to Justice" in fighting against all types of hate? **How can we uphold the Grad at Grad values if we aren't "Intellectually Distinguished" enough to know that the way we use words matters?**

I am here to offer a solution to the entire community: Hold your peers and yourself accountable. This has been referenced often in Loyola academics but maybe not so much in the social sphere. If you hear a friend say something, stop them—help them realize how much their language hurts. If you see a friend that looks off or sad, check in on them. The worst thing someone can do is go through what I went through alone.

Teachers, I know you are busy, but if you can spare a moment, please check in on your students. There is a lot of hate and prejudice in this community and having discourse about it is not only a good idea but also a moral responsibility.

Students who continue to use this language: At Loyola, this is not tolerable. For too long, there have been instances of micro-aggressions being thrown around campus that build up to macro effects. We need to change to stay true to our values and not just create a facade of a progressive school. But also to be that progressive school. Not just for our good, but for the greater good of our world.

(Image of campus from the [school website](#))

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