

JoeHahn

He/They

Dear LGBTQ+ Director Search Committee,

I am excited to submit my application for the LGBTQ+ Director for Western Washington University. I currently serve as the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator for Benton County, Oregon. For the past five years I have worked professionally within and outside of higher education focused on creating equitable communities. My passion for LGBTQ+ services began in high school as a member of the Gay-Straight Alliance. As my own identity as a queer person blossomed, I saw the importance of helping others explore and celebrate their identities. As a college student I was involved in many LGBTQ+ programming including the annual drag show, Day of Silence/Night of Noise, and GSA Day, a recruiting event for local middle and high schoolers to see the LGBTQ+ college experience. As a graduate student and professional staff member I transitioned into supporting students and fellow faculty and staff as they planned these events and services. In my current role I have been hired as a consultant and guest speaker for student leadership trainings and other topics. During my time professionally at Western Oregon University, I helped create the Wolf Pride Network, an LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff network that created the first LGBTQ+ scholarship for students.

As a gay and nonbinary Black person, I know the importance LGBTQ+ services have on the lives of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff and I use intersectionality to inform my work. These services not only create community, but also can be lifesaving and affirming. In my current role I have collaborated with local LGBTQ+ community members and organizations and have developed the first LGBTQ+ trainings for our county staff members including a Pronouns Guide. I stay up to date on Safe Zone trainings and other related materials, and I integrate national and worldwide events and legislation into my policies, trainings, and practices.

I hope to bring my experience from the western Oregon region up to Western Washington University. As LGBTQ+ Director I will continue current services such as Queerintation and the Black LGBTQ+ Thriving Collective while also creating space for new programs, services, and trainings such as support for LGBTQ+ people with disabilities. I will use my experience collaborating with governmental and community agencies to ensure students, faculty, and staff have support on and off campus. Using my experience supervising, I will help professional and paraprofessional staff develop holistically including reflections on their own identity development and how their identities relate to their role and work.

At a time when many LGBTQ+ students and their rights are attacked, I want to help them see that Western Washington University supports and honors the identities of all LGBTQ+ people. I will create and continue programs and trainings that address inequities rooted in cissexism and other forms of oppression. I also know many community members may be well-intentioned but uninformed, potentially causing harm to others through microaggressions. Using restorative justice and compassion, I hope to connect with all faculty, staff, and students at Western Washington University so they can learn how to support the LGBTQ+ people on campus, in Bellingham, and anywhere else in their lives.

Thank you for reviewing my application materials. Western Washington University has been recommended to me by many alumni and staff, including a former supervisee of mine who is currently an Assistant Residence Director at WWU. The compassion and care the Western Washington University has for the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized populations matches my values. My partner also works in higher education, and we are excited about the opportunity to join the Western Washington University community. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my candidacy further.

-JoeHahn (mononym of Joe Hahn)