

# in[QUEER]ies

An AEJMC Newsletter Addressing LGBTQ Issues and Interests

Volume 14, Issue 1

## ABOUT THE LGBTQ INTEREST GROUP

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer interest group (LGBTQ) was established in 2003 with the desire and ability to create dialogue and support scholarship about LGBTQ concerns that should be discussed in classrooms nationwide.

Our mission is to help journalism and mass communications professors integrate LGBTQ issues and perspectives into JMC education and to support research into these issues and perspectives.



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## Counting down to April 1

Talking with a colleague this week, we both had the realization that the yearly April 1 AEJMC deadline was creeping up on both of us.

Without fail, every year, I have that day of realization followed by a rumbling in my stomach and a serious reality check: *What can I finish before April 1?*

Maybe I'm oversharing, or maybe you experience that same feeling. Or maybe you're the person I wish I was. You have this all under control. You were online waiting for the AllAcademic portal to open in January (#goals).

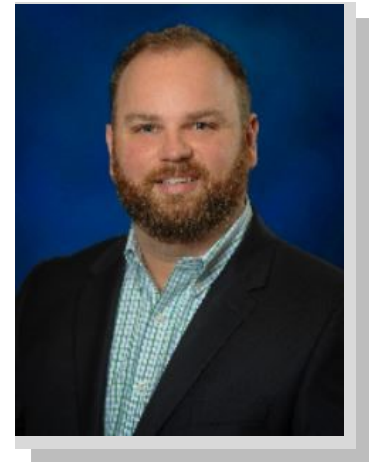
Whether you're like me or like "the dream" me, I hope you plan to submit your research to the LGBTQ Interest Group this year. Toronto is shaping up to be an amazing conference, and I would hate for you all to miss out. Also, don't let your friends and colleagues miss out either. Share our paper call with them. We'd love to have new faces around this year.

Aside from the panels that have already been slated for this year, we're working on offering some interesting options for this year's conference.

We've been working with the AEJMC History Division to plan an excursion to the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives in Toronto. I'll share all of the specifics once everything has been completely finalized. Right now, it looks like the tour will be on Wednesday after lunch. The archive is within walking distance of the conference hotel so it should be pretty easy to get there and back without missing anything that afternoon.

In the meantime, please check out the CLGA website at <https://clga.ca/>. The archive boasts the world's largest collection of LGBTQ+ periodicals, which has me excited.

We still have some planning to do for August, like the IG social, but we've also done quite a bit already. Vice Head **Nathian Rodriguez** and I spent the fall putting together a program that offers a diverse slate of research, teaching and PF&R panels for the 2019 conference. Please read his piece on page 2 for more details.



**ROBBY BYRD**  
Interest Group Head

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## 2019 conference program promotes collaboration, partnerships

**P**rogramming for the annual conference is always one of the most exciting, as well as hectic, parts of the head's and vice-head's duties.

**Robby Byrd** and I have been busy working out partnerships with other divisions and interest groups and have finalized what we think is an excellent and edifying panel lineup. This year, in Toronto, the LGBTQ Interest Group (IG) will be part of five panel sessions extending from Wednesday, Aug. 7 to Saturday, Aug. 10.

### □ Wednesday, Aug. 7

Our series of collaborative panels kicks off with two PF&R panels cohosted with the Minorities and Communication Division (MACD). The first, *"Strange Fruit: Podcasting and Diverse Stories from GLBT Community,"* is on Wednesday, Aug. 7 from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. This PF&R panel addresses the unique issues of racial minorities in the mass media, using podcasting as a platform for diverse storytelling. Intersectional identities that include LGBTQ identities will be highlighted.

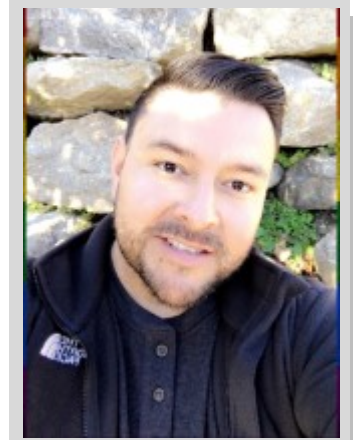
### □ Thursday, Aug. 8

On Thursday, Aug. 8, both groups once again join forces for *"Community Partnership as Pathway to Combatting Transphobic and Transnormative Media Narratives,"* from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. Panelists will highlight significant areas of concern for transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) identified individuals seeking health care, as well as offer avenues to address methods of responsible community-based research. This panel brings together scholars from across the U.S. and Canada to share their own experiences in this fight and to highlight the vital nature of community-based research collaborations in the marshalling of resources for their efforts.

### □ Friday, Aug. 9

Interest group members will enjoy two teaching panels on Friday, Aug. 9. The first Friday panel is entitled *"Testing Tolerance and Tough Topics in the Classroom and on College Campuses."* This teaching panel is a partnership with the Council on the Status of Women (CSWM) and runs from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. Panelists will

address the question: In what ways can professors create a classroom where students engage with controversial material and complex topics, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability, without coddling students or allowing them to dodge tough questions? This panel will discuss the overall atmosphere



**NATHIAN SHAE RODRIGUEZ**  
Interest Group Vice Head

on college campuses regarding controversial topics such as race, gender, abuse, mental health, violence, and sex.

Also on Friday, the LGBTQ IG partners with the Religion and Media Interest Group (RMIG) to cohost *"Teaching and Reporting on the Intersection of Religion and Sexuality,"* a teaching panel from 3 to 4:30 p.m. This panel was created in response to the juxtaposition of traditional religious views toward LGBTQ individuals and modern world religious leaders coming out in support of LGBTQ issues. Panelists will tackle questions on how minority perspectives should be represented in reporting and to what extent can the conflict be reported to reveal the changes in the religious landscape while accurately presenting the status quo.

### □ Saturday, Aug. 10

The final LGBTQ IG panel is on Saturday, Aug. 10 from 9:15 to 10:45 a.m. and is a partnership with the Cultural and Critical Studies Division (CCSD). This research panel, entitled *"Queerbaiting and Rainbow-Washing: Have Corporate Media Improved Representation or Co-Opted LGBTQ Communities?"* will focus on queer-targeted corporate media. A round-table format will provide insights from the panelists' diverse research programs in public relations, journalism, social media, and advertising. The panelists will make recommendations for media practitioners and offer

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## Call for papers from the LGBTQ Interest Group

**A**EJMC's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Interest Group seeks submissions of original research on any topic related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender presentation, and journalism or mass communication for the 2019 AEJMC conference in Toronto.

Both faculty and students are strongly encouraged to submit their unpublished work. Papers employing all methods of inquiry and theoretical frameworks are welcomed. Monetary awards are provided for exceptional scholarship as detailed below.

We especially welcome scholarship dealing with – but not limited to – topics such as:

- Representations of bisexuality, sexual fluidity, and other sexual orientations that do not fit cleanly within the boundaries of “straight” or “gay.”
- Representations of genders and sexualities not covered explicitly in the “LGBTQ” acronym, such as asexual, intersex, pansexual, polyamorous, non-monogamous, questioning, two-spirit, non-binary, and gender-non-conforming people.
- The intersections between LGBTQ content and public policy, including but not limited to policies in the Trump era, the Reagan era, and during other recent administrations.

In previous conferences, papers included analyses of audience perceptions of LGBTQ characters on TV, LGBTQ social media activist strategies, and coverage of transgender bathroom legislation. Given the prominence of Toronto's LGBTQ community, communication scholarship with ties to Toronto and Canada are also encouraged.

Paper submissions must comply with the AEJMC uniform paper call. Papers may be no longer than 25 pages, excluding tables, figures, and references; and contain no identifying information. Please refer to <http://www.aejmc.org/home/scholarship/submit-clean-paper/> for detailed information on submitting papers for blind review.

The deadline for submission is 11:59 p.m. CDT, April 1, 2019. Any submissions after this time cannot be accepted.

Each title page must identify whether the paper is a student or faculty submission.

### Awards

The LGBTQ Interest Group is pleased to provide monetary awards and recognition for top student and faculty papers:

#### □ **Top Student Paper Award**

The LGBTQ Interest Group encourages graduate student submissions in its Top Student Paper competition. To be considered for the competition, papers must be wholly the work of students. The author(s) of the top student paper award will receive \$200 and a certificate in recognition of their work.

□ **Top Faculty Paper Award:** The top faculty paper submitted to the LGBTQ Interest Group will also receive an award. Papers written solely by faculty, or papers co-authored by faculty members and students, are eligible. The author(s) of the top faculty paper award will receive \$200 and a certificate in recognition of their work.

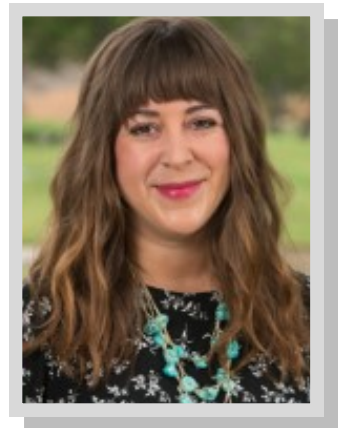
### Additional Information

Additional information about the LGBTQ Interest Group can be found on our Twitter page, <https://twitter.com/aejmclgbtq>. Questions regarding submissions should be emailed to the LGBTQ Interest Group Research Chair, **Chelsea Reynolds**, at [chreynolds@fullerton.edu](mailto:chreynolds@fullerton.edu).

The LGBTQ Interest Group urges all submitters to submit at least a day or two before the deadline so they can check to make sure that the uploaded document does not contain any self-identifying information in its properties. An early submission will allow any and all individuals to fully check submissions as they are entered into the system so that a resubmission prior to the deadline is possible.

### Call for Reviewers

The LGBTQ Interest Group anticipates a large number of submissions to the Toronto 2019 AEJMC conference. In order



**CHELSEA REYNOLDS**  
Research Committee Chair

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## Taking the solutions journalism approach to report and teach diversity issues

**A**s usual, my students discuss the news at the very beginning of the class; they are asked to apply what they have learned to analyze the current events.

This has been a popular warm-up before the class.

Recently, one of the students who is most passionate about our weekly discussion told the class that she couldn't participate that week because she "had to tune out the news." She is a vocal LGBTQ activist who loves politics and reality TV equally. When other classmates asked her why she had to get away from the news, she responded: "I don't know. The news just makes me depressed these days, especially this week."

She is not alone in experiencing this. Research has shown that negative news and scandals are more likely to lead to "fatigue," which eventually makes the audience tune out the news. Such tuning-out is correlated with lower empathy and political engagement.

Traditional journalism is gravitated towards revealing problems. The predominant theory of change in journalism suggests that journalists should act as whistleblowers and expose wrongdoing and that drawing attention to social problems will eventually spur other parties (e.g., government, NGO, activists) to come up with solutions that lead to social changes and reforms. As a result, most journalists engage their reporting around problems.

When our students tell us that they feel overwhelmed, we usually suggest they take time off from media and practice self-care. But self-care is apparently not enough. We have thrown around the term "self-care" so often that it almost feels like a buzzword that we use when we have no direct solutions to the problem. Is there any solution other than self-care? What can journalists do to make consuming news more constructive and less draining?

Solutions journalism might be one way to go. Instead of focusing on the problem, solutions journalism investigates the solutions. However, focusing on solutions doesn't mean that journalists will downgrade their role in exposing problems. As a matter of fact, solutions journalism requires journalists to situate the

solutions closely in the problems; in this way, reporters who practice solutions journalism are able to be both whistleblowers and solution seekers.

This approach is particularly important in reporting diversity-related social issues, including LGBTQ issues. The news fatigue that marginalized group members experience is severe; they live with the issues described in the news on a daily basis. Reporting social issues in a more positive tone through investigating evidence-based solutions might decrease the negative emotions and news fatigue that marginalized group members experience.

Solutions journalism might also be a more effective way to communicate social issues regarding marginalized groups with the social majority members who might otherwise be indifferent to these issues.

Different from advocacy journalism that takes sides, solutions journalism believes in news objectivities. While advocacy journalism and solution journalism are both fact-based, solutions journalism emphasizes 1) giving the opposite sides voice, 2) thorough investigating the effectiveness and limitations of the solution, and 3) refraining from glorifying the solution providers or victimizing the communities that might benefit from the solutions.

It is time for journalists to take the solutions journalism approach to address diversity issues. As educators, we should also consider embedding the solutions components into our teaching. Ultimately, we want to cultivate a generation of students who are not only knowledgeable scholars but also engaged citizens.



**MINJIE LI**  
PF&R Committee Chair

# Self-care is not selfish

**I**t's been a long time since I've actually taken the time to sit down and write something.

You would think that being in graduate school means that I should be writing all of the time, but in reality, this has not been the case, especially over the last semester.

The fall semester for me was a time where I should have been working on my thesis so that I can graduate, but instead that did not happen. I've found that not being enrolled in coursework has halted my progress on reading, research and ultimately forward progress on my thesis, which is coming along at a super snail-like pace.

Just thinking about all of the responsibilities I currently have: thesis, teaching two undergrad classes, working a full-time job, planning my wedding, trying to stay centered, maintaining relationships with the people who are important to me, is overwhelming and sometimes stressful. Unfortunately, that is the nature of the beast as an academic, we wear many hats – sometimes those hats are worn well and sometimes those hats are neglected.

I've come to learn however that when our batteries are in the red, we need to be recharged in order to manage the many hats that we wear. While health communication is not my area of expertise, it is a hot area to study, explore and find meaning in health-related messages. So, with an effort to try and find some balance, I have decided to focus on self-care and why it is especially important for graduate students to implement a self-care routine.

I'm sure many of us are not surprised that LGBTQ individuals are more likely to experience social stress and mental health related issues at a higher rate than those who do not identify as LGBTQ (Kulick, Wernick, Woodford, & Renn, 2017). While academic environments provide the necessary space to explore complex ideas and facets of one's identity, they are also places where marginalized individuals frequently experience microaggressions related to one's sexual orientation (Woodford, Kulick, Sinco, & Hong, 2014).

For many queer students, especially queer students of color, effectively navigating the academic landscape can be very draining and stressful as we are constantly battling aspects of imposter syndrome.

As a more experienced graduate student, I no longer have full on meltdowns on campus because there are self

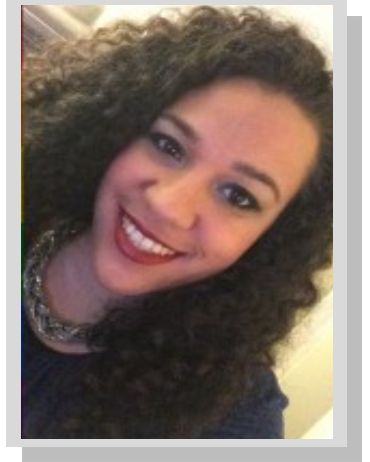
-care practices I employ before I become so overwhelmed to reach a breaking point.

So, one thing that I have done as part of my self-care routine is talk with my partner about the things I'm stressed about. If you're not a talker, then journaling might be a meaningful way for you to get your thoughts out of your head.

Just being in the position to vent about the things that are stressing me out has helped me manage my level of stress related to grad school. Additionally, I often go get a massage to relieve the tension and toxins that are being stored in my body.

Most recently I have changed my diet and that has helped me feel physically better because the foods I'm eating are not weighing me down. The last part of my self-care regimen is allowing myself time to spend with the people I love and care about socially, without talking about work or school. Being in a space where I don't have to always think/talk about "how is grad school" or "how's it going on your thesis" doesn't elevate my anxiety.

The most important thing I can say about self-care is that practicing self-care does not mean you're being selfish. It means that you need to recharge your battery in order to be the best version of yourself. While that may sound very cliché, self-care routines are highly individualized, and you have to find out what works (and what doesn't work) for you, but you can always start off by following the Five B's: boundaries, bodies, breath, being grateful, and being curious (Blum, n.d.).



**ARYANA GOOLEY**  
Graduate Student Liaison

Blum, A. (n.d.). Self-care is a big deal for LGBT people. *Gay Therapy Center*.  
Kulick, A., Wernick, L. J., Woodford, M. R. & Renn, K. (2017). Heterosexism, depression and campus engagement among LGBTQ college students: Intersectional differences and opportunities for healing. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64(8), 1125-1141.

Woodford, M. R., Kulick, A., Sinco, B. R., & Hong, J. S. (2014). Contemporary heterosexism on campus and psychological distress among LGBTQ students: The mediating role of self-acceptance. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84, 519-529.

## ‘Young Sheldon’ without any big bang

**R**un, Sheldon, run! It’s a phrase I’ve resisted shouting at the TV as a warning to a young Sheldon Cooper on the certified CBS hit, *Young Sheldon*, now in its second season of providing the prequel to the man at the center of *Big Bang Theory* during its 11 seasons (also on CBS).

As lovable as the nine-year-old young character is, brought to life with a lot of heart by **Iain Armitage**, there is an uncomfortable phoniness to it all. In fact, *Young Sheldon* revives the dissonance created watching certain scenes from the 1994 motion picture, “Forrest Gump.” Just as Forrest navigated his affable and naïve self through the horrors of violent southern Segregation in Alabama and even the deadly jungles of South Vietnam, we see a young Sheldon tackling the all-too-real realities of life in 1980s Midland, Texas with almost too much of a sense of wonder and escape.

“Run, Forrest, run!” was introduced as a handy, and wise warning to avoid certain pain, or even death. As I watch *Young Sheldon* I’ve come to care about the character, but I feel a strong need to warn the happy lad that an ugly, sometimes painful reality can be hiding behind nearly every corner.

But because of the approach the producers and writers of the show have taken, young Sheldon’s life is devoid of any of the heart-breaking realities that a smart, articulate, fastidious and even prissy little boy would truly face.

In *Big Bang Theory*, we see the character Sheldon as a *nearly* fully actualized adult, the now titled Dr. Sheldon Cooper who has power to

construct the family and world in which his life plays out. But the experience of an overachieving child genius performing leaps ahead of grade level in red-state Texas in arguably less understanding times than we live now, somehow doesn’t ring true.

The producers of *Big Bang Theory* have never fully committed to whether the Sheldon Cooper character is on the autism spectrum or exhibits some aspects of Asperger’s syndrome. Moreover, *Big Bang Theory* has steered clear of even a suggestion that Sheldon is anything but heterosexual (right up to his marriage to fellow scientist Amy Farrah Fowler). Likewise, *Young Sheldon* is asexual (as might be expected of a nine-year-old boy), but as any young gay boy can retell in the impending years lying ahead in adolescence, the declaration that “You’re gay!” or frequent placements of the words queer, fairy and faggot, are well-known, even by age 9.

Young Sheldon is depicted as questioning of his family’s faith – apparently allowed to raise questions about existence of God at the Cooper family’s fundamentalist Baptist church. A greater flight of fantasy doesn’t exist – in reality, not only would he never be

allowed to pose such questions, before he ever spoke more than a few words he would have been bullied into either silence, or alienation from the children *and* adults. Many of us grew up in churches like the one depicted in the show where a welcome mat for diversity of thought and belief *did not exist*.



**ANDREW STONER**  
Newsletter Editor



**IAIN ARMITAGE AS ‘YOUNG SHEDDON’**



AEJMC's 102nd Annual Conference, "Investing in our Futures," runs Aug. 7-10, 2019 in beautiful Toronto, Ontario. The Sheraton Centre Toronto is the host hotel. To learn more about this year's confab, visit:

<http://aejmc.org/events/toronto19/>

## 'Young Sheldon'

Continued from page 10.

The school experiences of the boy are just as papered over as at church – while his complete lack of physical ability in any athletic endeavor are showcased, the requisite ridicule and scorn those engender are nowhere to be found. Perhaps the producers are hoping we will assign such missing elements to the fact that older students would be less inclined to bully an adolescent child, but there is an ideological function underway here to make more perfect in retrospect that which was more than likely painful and pitiful in real time.

Reminiscent of the "saintly" memories attached to loved ones that in the first days and weeks after they have departed life, a certain golden patina is cast upon reality, with all context lost. We forget the painful moments and elevate the positives. This seems to be the underpinning of *Young Sheldon* into its first two seasons on CBS.

Why this is problematic is that it serves to erase and eliminate painful aspects of LGBTQ history that need to be told, and mourned. Would we be content with stories that erased slavery or its vestiges found in Jim Crow laws, or denial of the Holocaust? We wouldn't, so why are we here?

If the argument is that we cannot tell the truth about the real life of a child such as this and still be funny, we've missed previous examples. Others have found comedy amidst the pain and kept the tale true – most especially **Chris Rock's** *Everybody Hates Chris* (UPN/CW networks) during four seasons of funny story telling.

Make no mistake, enjoyable and even noteworthy performances from *Young Sheldon's* star, Armitage and *Designing Women* alum **Annie Potts** (as grandmother, 'Meemaw') make the show highly watchable. The producers do seem to get that the character as a boy needs some softening – recognizing his tone-deaf personality traits that arouse humor from an adult when found in children can be enough to put a child in time-out (or turn the channel).

Regardless, we still yearn for more realness amidst the comedic retelling of the early years. We love you Sheldon, but if we're going back in time with you, we want to do so with the wisdom and compassion of the years since. We have **Jim Parsons's** voice narrating the neatly wrapped up lessons in most episodes, but those lessons never include how a boy like Sheldon finds somewhere, deep inside himself, the perseverance to succeed and thrive. It is a story lying just beneath the surface of many a gay man, lesbian woman or transgender person. As a result, we want to wrap our arms around this character and protect him from the mean-spiritedness that seems ready to pounce at so many points in life, but in *Young Sheldon*, we find a façade that looks little like real life.

The caution of, "Run, Sheldon, run!" isn't offered as a means to spoil the fun, but as a call for more realness so that maybe in the telling of his story second-time through, some of those brutes along the way will perhaps learn some of what we, as LGBTQ people have learned, in all-too-real moments of real life – young and old.

## Honoring our award winners

**A**t the 2018 AEJMC conference in Washington, D.C., the LGBTQ Interest Group honored the top papers submitted.

On this page are the 2018 paper winners, including, the top faculty paper awarded to **Robyn King, Richard Mocarski** and **Heather Meyer** of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, **Natalie Holt** and **Debra Hope** of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, **William Butler** of the University of Alabama, and **Nathan Woodruff** of Trans Collaborations. Their paper, *The Rise of Transgender and Non-Conforming Representation in Media: Impacts on the Population*, used interviews with individuals identifying as

transgender and gender non-conforming to investigate representations in popular culture media.

The top student paper was awarded to **Minjie Li** for a paper he wrote while completing his Ph.D. at Louisiana State University. His paper, *Media Representation of Transgender Civil Rights Issues: A Quantitative Content Analysis on Media Coverage of the 'Bathroom Bill' Controversy*, examines how national mainstream news outlets and LGBTQ news outlets represent a transgender civil rights issue, the "bathroom bill" controversy.



**Robyn King** and **Richard Mocarski** accept the Top Faculty Paper Award from **Joseph Cabosky**, outgoing head of the LGBTQ Interest Group, for their paper *The Rise of Transgender and Non-Conforming Representation in Media: Impacts on the Population*.



**Minjie Li** and **Joseph Cabosky** after the Top Student Paper Award was presented for Dr. Li's paper, *Media Representation of Transgender Civil Rights Issues: A Quantitative Content Analysis on Media Coverage of the 'Bathroom Bill' Controversy*.



**L.G.B.T.Q.**  
INTEREST GROUP  
ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION



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**Dr. Erica Ciszek** of the  
 University of Houston during  
 her paper presentation  
 at the 2018 AEJMC Conference  
 in Washington, D.C.



## From the head

Continued from page 1.

Also, take a look at research chair **Chelsea Reynolds'** CFP on page 3. Chelsea worked to update our call to reflect the IG's interest in attracting more inclusive research, specifically research on the representations of genders and sexualities not covered explicitly in the "LGBTQ" acronym and gender-non-conforming people.

I look forward to seeing how we all respond to this call. We have a history of answering the challenge of the CFP and expanding the scope of LGBTQ+ research presented at AEJMC. I have no doubt that this year will be no exception.

Elsewhere in this issue of in[Queer]ies, you can read PF&R chair **Minjie Li's** piece on teaching issues of diversity (page 4), and graduate student liaison **Aryana Gooley's** piece on self-care (page 5).

I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter, and please send me any news items you would like to have published in future issues of in[Queer]ies.



## Conference panels

Continued from page 2.

directions for future research in queer media studies.

Aside from the great programming lineup, we also have great opportunities for leisure and socializing among interest group members. Our interest group social will be held off-site on Thursday, Aug. 8 at 8:30 p.m. In addition to the social, the LGBTQ IG has partnered with the History Division for an LGBTQ walking history tour of Toronto with the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. We will be announcing more details about the social and the collaborative excursion as August approaches.

Finally, be sure you attend this year's member meeting scheduled for Friday, Aug. 9 at 7 p.m. With so many great panels, paper presentations, and meetings, we know that y'all will be busy.

We hope each of you are able to attend the great programming panels, our top paper panel, business meeting, and walking tour. *See you in Toronto!*

## Call for papers

Continued from page 3.

to provide valuable feedback to our authors — especially grad students and junior faculty — we request the assistance of our members in reviewing manuscripts.

Those interested in judging should visit the All-Academic site through the AEJMC website or go to <https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aejmc/aejmc19/> and create an account (username and password) in the All-Academic System. Go to the right side of the page and scroll down until you come to "Click here to create new username and password."

Please create your account by Friday, March 8, 2019. This will allow for assignments of papers to proceed quickly, and you will have immediate access to your assigned papers to judge soon after the All-Academic system closes for paper uploading.

Creating your user name and password now will also allow you to submit, judge, and download papers all from the same created account. You will not be able to view anything yet with All-Academic, but creating your user name and password will allow for a more efficient process of updating the site for the Toronto, Canada, 2019 Paper Competition. Note: Each year is unique, and if you created an account last year, you will need to do so again this year.

E-mail LGBTQ IG Research Chair **Chelsea Reynolds** with any questions or concerns: [chreynolds@fullerton.edu](mailto:chreynolds@fullerton.edu).



**Dr. Jason Shepard** moderated the LGBTQ co-sponsored panel on offensive and free speech at the 2018 AEJMC Conference in Washington, D.C. C-SPAN broadcast the panel live across the nation.