

Dukinfield Interview

[00:05] Jen: *Today is April 19, 2018, and I am here with Louie, do you mind giving your last name?*

[00:14] Louie: Dukinfield.

[00:14] Jen: *Louie Dukinfield. I am Jen Wachtel, and the interview is taking place in the **LGBTQ equity center** in Marie Mount Hall*

[00:25] Louie: Room 2218

[00:26] Jen: *Room 2218, in the, I said Marie Mount Hall, at the University of Maryland College Park. Okay great. So, can you state your name again and tell me a bit about yourself?*

[00:41] Louie: Yeah, uh, my name is Louie Dukinfield, I am a senior, third year senior, um, I don't mean I've been a senior for 3 years, this is my third year as an undergraduate, and I am a psychology major, um, and **LGBT studies certificate**. I am from Virginia and I am a queer student here.

[01:08] Jen: *Great. And what brought you to the University of Maryland?*

[01:12] Louie: Well, I first came to the University of Maryland for a, uh, 1 week leadership program in high school and before then I had really not thought about the University of Maryland at all and I came here and I really liked it. So when it was time for me to look for colleges I, uh, I kept it in mind and I came and visited and I liked it again, I took a tour, I learned more about it, it had a really wonderful psych program, and it was, uh, one of the **highest ranked LGBT friendly colleges**, which was a big plus for me, and I got accepted into the **Scholars program** here and it just seemed like the right choice and I really have not regretted making the choice to come here.

[01:58] Jen: *Great. And what is your definition of community?*

[02:02] Louie: [sigh] Oh boy

[02:05] Jen: *Yeah, we go right into it.*

[02:08] Louie: Yeah, that's. That's a tough question. I think. Well, for me like, community means everything, in the way of like the queer community, um, so, I can't separate myself and my own identity from being a queer person or being an LGBT person in anything that I do really, so it really, my community is very much, just, everyone who has come before me, everyone who is here now, and everyone who will come after me, who identifies as some part of the LGBT

community. And, I really wish I had a better answer, I just, I feel like, I feel like to me community is just everything.

[2:55] Jen: *Alright. What was your first contact with the UMD LGBTQ community, and what was the nature of that contact? So, some examples we have on here are an event or private party, or some other event.*

[3:09] Louie: You know, I really don't remember. I remember coming to the University of Maryland knowing the **LGBT equity center**. I frequently speak to people who are, have been on campus for 4 years, who have been out all 4 years, and have no idea the equity center even exists and I always think have you ever even Googled like "UMD LGBT" because you'll get that right away, like, you'll find, there's over 25 groups on campus, like, that are LGBT oriented. And so how people have like never even bothered to like look at it, or Google it, or anything like that, and I always find that kind of mind boggling, cause I guess I came to the university already knowing that this office existed

[03:53] Louie: I really, I can't think of what the first thing I did was. I do know that there's **Quelcome**, which is like the queer welcome, that they do at the beginning of each fall semester, and I'm quite sure I went to **Quelcome** my freshman year. And that may have been my first like encounter with the community here? Although I did know that this place was around. But I, that'd be my best guess of my first like, event that I went to, but I really can't remember. Like genuinely, I just can't.

[4:30] Jen: *It's fine if you can't remember. So, as a follow up question to that, what changes have you witnessed or participated in with respect to this community here at UMD?*

[4:39] Louie: Oh, okay.

[4:40] Jen: *So if you don't remember, it could be Quelcome, it could be this center, any changes?*

[4:47] Louie: Yeah, uh, I feel like I'm thinking about changes in my own, like, participation rather than the changes that have come with this place. There's only so many changes that have taken place in like 3 years. But I think there's been a lot more involvement, I feel like I've seen a lot more people seem to get involved in, we've seen **Quelcome** become a really large event. Um, and, we've seen a lot more participation in like small groups here, um, and a lot more small groups have been created, like **TCOM**, which is for queer people of color here. And **disabled queers**, like I remember when those, uh, when people started having ideas for such groups on campus.

[5:33] Louie: We've also seen a lot of other new groups come up, like there is now a **reading and writing group** over in Tawes, and there's, um, there's one in the psych department called **Rainbow Room**, that's kind of come up in the last year, and there's been changes to other other groups like over in the Cambridge community, it used to be called **CCQA, Cambridge**

Community Queers and Allies. Now it's called **Queer Talks**, to reflect a group there called **Real Talks**, about like, it's like a racial dialogue group. So there's been some changes in like names, and things like that. And, yeah that's some of the things that have changed, I think just a lot more participation has come up, and a lot more initiative to create groups and clubs.

[6:26] *Jen: So, you sort of got into this, but which organizations do you belong to, and why did you decide to join?*

[6:32] Louie: Okay. Um, so I, I've been involved with the **Equity Center**, there's really no membership, or anything like that. But, I've been involved, I've been going to a lot of the small groups since my freshman year, and I now co-facilitate **TransU**, and facilitate **Male Identified Queers, or MIQ**, and I also co-facilitate, um, what used to be **CCQA and is now Queer Talks**. I've been co-facilitating for this past year. And I've also been co-facilitating **Rainbow Room**, in the psych department, and I've been involved with the **#transterps** campaign here at the **equity center**, which came up last semester. That's been really fun, that's been a new, that's been another change, there's been a lot more forward action on trans inclusion, which is wonderful. I also have been involved in the **Lavender Leadership Honors Society**, and a lot of the workshops they do, more just as a participant. And, um, what else...

[7:46] Louie: Oh there's uh **Pride Month**, there's also been uh, I call it **Queer Camp, or Quamp** as I call it, which personally I think is a better name. Not gonna lie, I think they should call is **Quamp**. But at first, it was called **Queer Camp**, then it was called **Hearth**, and then it was called **Q-Camp** this past year, and that's been another change, the name of the place that we go, or the camp that we go to. It's like a weekend retreat, this past year it was only 2 days, where usually it's been 3 days, like a Friday Saturday Sunday. This year it was just Friday Saturday. And I was helping to facilitate this past year. Um, and, I've also been involved with the **Health Center**, with creating a trans and nonbinary inclusive like **health guide**, health and wellness guide, um, that was fun.

[8:50] *Jen: So you mentioned that you were a co-facilitator for a couple of groups, so were those officer positions, or were you elected?*

[8:58] Louie: No, those are not officer positions. They are, they're more volunteer positions I guess? I'm not really sure. It's more like they, well, so for here the **Equity center**, the two small groups that I'm involved in, **MIQ** and **TransU**, they just kind of, they put out a call for people looking to facilitate the groups, usually people who have been, like, "members". I say "members" in quotes, it's kind of a, you can show up, you can not show up, it's very, it's a very non binding kind of group. It's like people who want to come can just come check it out, you can leave, you don't ever have to come back again, you can come back every time, and I just volunteered to facilitate those groups. With **Rainbow Room**, I was asked by someone if I could help to start up the group and then co-facilitate, which I agreed to do, and then with **Queer Talks**, it was kind of similar where um they were looking for people to facilitate for the next year, and I'd been involved when it was **CCQA**, and I said sure, I'd be happy to help out.

[10:06] Jen: *Were there any organizations you considered joining but decided not to, and why?*

[10:13] Louie: Um, I did consider joining the “**frarority**”, which is the gender neutral fraternity/sorority, it’s a “frarority”. And I did, I rushed and received a bid, if that’s the right word, I don’t even remember, but I decided not to join. I just heard it was very full of drama, and a lot of partying, and things like that and that’s really not my scene. I’m not a super social person, to be honest. It didn’t seem like I would be super happy there, it would be more like a, I was more interested in it for like the work that they were doing and the like community but it just, in the end I just felt like it wouldn’t have been a good match socially.

[11:02] Jen: *In regards to LGBTQ civil rights at UMD, what challenges do we still have, and what things still need to be done?*

[11:10] Louie: Hm, well I think just education, is like the big picture kind of thing. I think there’s just a lot of small things to be done, especially, again, with education, so being able to educate staff and faculty, and people like that, about using people’s pronouns, and respecting people’s identities, and using inclusive language regarding uh sexuality and gender, and there’s just, there’s been a lot more, of people tend to, to now understand a little bit more, like to not assume everyone is straight, per say, but there’s still a lot of assumptions that everyone is cisgender, you know, that trans people just don’t exist anywhere, and I think there’s just a lot of education to be like hey, you know, if you change it to say this instead of that, change that one word, suddenly you’re becoming much more inclusive to the people in your groups here, in your classrooms, or hey, you know, make sure when you call on people in class that you make sure you’re using the right pronouns, or including that in your “get to know” thing in the beginning of class, or things like that. I think there’s just a lot of small level inclusion that would make a huge difference. Which isn’t really civil rights related I guess, I know that was kind of, uh...

[12:35] Jen: *You can answer however you want.*

[12:36] Louie: That’s what came to my mind first, um, there’s a lot of bills currently in like the **UMD senate** that involve civil rights for queer students, um, I think just being able to like, get those to move through, they take a long long long time. I think that would be very helpful as well. And those usually have to do with like documenting gender and pronouns, and things like that on like university systems, and being able to change names, and things like that. They involve bathrooms, where we can change bathrooms to be gender neutral, and being able to fund things like that, and um, also gaining funding for, you know, or putting money into the **health center and their trans inclusion programs**, I’m pretty sure those are some of the things that are currently looking to go through, but I’m not as involved in the like, regulation and law sort of side of it so I can’t give you the best answers.

[13:56] Jen: *What would you want future UMD students to understand about being LGBTQ on campus right now?*

[14:03] Louie: Do you mean other future queer students, or future students in general?

[14:09] Jen: *Both, if you'd like to answer for both.*

[14:13] Louie: I think for future queer students, I'd like to be able to tell them that this place is very inclusive. It's, I mean of course there's lots of work to be done, but it's really, it's blown me away in a way that I didn't expect it to be so inclusive, and have so many things going on, just in all, like even the **health center providing trans health care**, like I did not know that going in. And I found that out and I was like wow, that's incredibly convenient, and very, forward, not forward, but uh it's very unusual for a college campus and things like that, so I think being able to tell future students like

[15:01] Louie: Hey if you're looking for like a place that really gives a shit about LGBT stuff, like, you should consider the University of Maryland strongly

[15:10] Louie: Of people who are looking to get into this field, even just field of study, we have an **LGBT certificate and minor program**, through the **Women's Studies office**, the certificate being more than a minor, less than a major, and I think a lot of people might overlook its general inclusion and go more for, like a, somewhere they consider a more liberal place, like colleges in California, which also may be very inclusive of queer students, but it may be easily overlooked on the University of Maryland campus. And for just other students in general, um, I don't know, I don't really have a message for the non queer students really.

[16:00] Louie: Except just, do your research, know your things, and don't be a dick.

[16:05] Louie: That's kind of like my general, do your best, know what things mean, please That's not very UMD specific.

-----End of main questions, moves to supplemental questions-----

[16:17] Jen: *That's okay. So we've actually answered, we've actually gone through the main questions, so um, but it looks like we have some more time, would you be open to me asking some supplemental questions?*

[16:25] Louie: Absolutely, absolutely. Ask me whatever you'd like.

[16:30] Jen: *Okay, so, so you've mentioned your education, so can you tell me what is your major, and why did you choose it, and did you change it at any point?*

[16:40] Louie: I did not, I came to the University of Maryland looking to do the psych program, the psychology program, I signed up to do a B.S. in psychology, and I'll be graduating next month with a B.S. in psychology, which I didn't expect to do in 3 years, that was the major change. I expected to do it in 4 to 5, and I learned in November that I'm getting out of here in May, which was a bit shocking, I won't lie, cause I really didn't have any plans, I was hoping to do like an internship this summer, and you know like start really looking into more career based

stuff, but then suddenly they're like 'Just kidding you're gone', like, you're all done, don't worry about any of that. I'm like you're going to throw me into the real world and like, I wasn't ready. That was the major change. But yeah I didn't change it. I did not come in looking to do an **LGBT studies certificate** though, I added that my sophomore year? It might have been my second semester. It was either my second or third semester, I added a **certificate in LGBT studies**. I guess I wasn't really aware of the program completely, I knew there was a lot of like classes and things, I guess I didn't realize the, you know, the scope of what you could do with these classes. And I didn't have a minor yet, I just had a major, and I wasn't really sure, I wanted to add something else, I didn't want just a major, but I wasn't quite sure what I wanted, and then I was like wait a minute, I can do more than a minor and in LGBT studies?

[18:17] Louie: Hell yeah, of course I'm gonna do that. So um, that was really fun.

[18:25] *Jen: Alright, has activism been a part of your UMD story, and what has your experience with activism been like at UMD?*

[18:33] Louie: Um, yeah I would say it has been part of it, not as much as a lot of other people. I like to think that I tend to do more background work than direct immediate activism, cause that's where I feel most comfortable, but I like to do a lot of activism like, if I'm sitting in a class and a professor says something, like, you know, that might be problematic, or may be incorrect, or may need to be rephrased, after class I always make the effort to say like hey, you know, I noticed this, and I was thinking that there's a much more inclusive way to talk about that, can we, can I share that with you, or if there's a lack of understanding, like can I talk to you about, you know, trans inclusion in, you know, and how that plays into it.

[19:22] Louie: Or like just I often find places where I can educate, where it's not necessarily like, it wasn't made to like, it wasn't, you know, maybe like a biology class and someone replaces the word sex with gender but it doesn't actually make sense cause it should be sex, gender wouldn't make sense in that scenario, that'd be somewhere where I'd be like hey, you know, can I take some time to explain to you the differences between sex and gender and how we understand them and how that might have been the wrong choice of words? You know, so it's a lot of I guess what I consider activism, is very one on one, or small group kind of activism. But it's very applicable to day to day things.

[20:10] Louie: Or I recently went to a non-LGBT related leadership seminar, last Saturday and like the nametags didn't have pronouns on them, which for me, everywhere I go is very LGBT oriented, and it was very strange for me and I was like hey you know, have you ever considered that and they were like 'Yeah we have, you know can we get some more information.' And I just like, talked about some things like that, and how they can add a few little things here and there into their program to make it super inclusive. And they were very all ears and they really wanted to do that, they just didn't really know how, so that's, I think that's where I tend to find myself doing the most activism, is just very like, finding ways, places that I can make things more inclusive.

[20:57] Jen: *Okay, so you mentioned a professor, or you mentioned interaction with a professor, there was a question on here about professors, were there any professors or staff that had made a particularly strong impression?*

[21:10] Louie: Um, in what way? In any way?

[21:17] Jen: *So in terms of LGBTQ inclusion, hearing about your story here at UMD.*

[21:23] Louie: Um, yeah I, well, **Luke** was my professor, whose office we're in right now, so of course I've had lots of queer professors, and things like that, and that's always been nice to see, it's been nice to see real working queer professionals, trans professionals, things like that, like real queer people in the workplace? That's been very nice.

[21:47] Jen: *Are you able to share their names, or the nature of their instruction?*

[21:53] Louie: Yeah, so okay, I had **Luke Jensen** here, who's, uh, who works here at the **Equity Center**, as well as in uh, oh, I don't remember, they work, I think it's part of the **Senate**? Or part of the like, I dunno, I really don't remember, they work to advance like inclusion and diversity. It's not the **Office of Diversity and Inclusion** though, that's something different, I believe it's the part of the administration that came up after the murder of **Lieutenant Collins**, like they were there with them, and they were my professor for **LGBT 350**, which is Speakers Bureau, which is where we go around to different, like groups of about 3-4 students go to different classrooms, that sign up for these panels, and we have a panel discussion with the class surrounding queer issues, and we do like a Q&A, and we speak about our stories, and we answer questions, and we just discuss many different subjects of queerness, um, and, let's see and I've also had um...

[23:09] Louie: So I'm involved in **College Park Scholars**, or I was involved, I still am, cause I'm currently working with **Queer Talks**, and **Ben Parks** is the person who oversees **Queer Talks**, and he is one of the people also overseeing Scholars in general. And he is an out member of the community, and has been very nice, and very, he's very knowledgeable. It's been lovely working with him, we always try to bring queerness to different things in **Scholars**. I'm actually going, after this, to go talk to some people, some scholars staff, who wanted to learn more about the community, and **Ben Parks** and I were just like hey, if anyone wants to come ask questions, talk about different issues, talk about different terms, learn things, have their questions answered, I would be there for about an hour and a half, and that's actually where I'm going after this, to just talk to people, you know, clarify things, talk about issues, whatever they want.

[24:21] Louie: And right now I currently have 2 queer professors, for um my LGBT comedy class and my LGBT seminar, it's like queer theory, and that's been lovely, there's been a number of professors, there's also been, I did have a professor. I know I mentioned before, specifying in like a so, in my anatomy class, I had a professor who used the term 'gender' in a way that they should have used word 'sex', because it was related specifically to like biologic stuff, it was like

oh it's influenced by gender, and I'm like no, its not, its influenced by sex, like its only influenced by the physical nature, it doesn't matter how this person identifies, the word sex is more appropriate here, so afterwards I just like mentioned it to her and she was very like 'oh my gosh you're so right, I'm so sorry I'll make sure to correct that right away'. Like very, I wasn't really sure how it would go, and it was very refreshing to hear someone take that issue seriously, cause I think a lot of people are like okay whatever, like queerness isn't applicable to this class, and I'm like no its applicable everywhere, like there are queer students in this class, and, you know, creating a more inclusive nature is always applicable, but it was very nice to hear her be very understanding, and that she clearly already understood the issue, and realized why that was the wrong thing, didn't even need me to explain it really, and I went back on that power point the next day and it was all changed, she had changed the wording and everything, I guess that really caught me off guard, I was expecting it to be like 'Oh why is that' and I was certainly very ready to educate and explain, but it was just, that was nice, that made an impact on me, as someone who I knew wasn't involved in the community, that she was very understanding. That was a very long answer, I'm so sorry

[26:24] Jen: *Oh no no, that was a wonderful answer, thank you. And um, do you have any last comments about your experience at UMD?*

[26:32] Louie: It's been great, I just, I dunno, I'm kind of really sad to leave, not only am I kind of, I dunno, I'm a little scared to be thrown out in the real world, but um, I'm really sad to have to leave the great experiences I've had here with this community, and the people I've met, and the students I've worked with, and the faculty I've worked with, and I uh, I dunno, I feel like they've provided a lot of support for me, and have opened up a lot of doors, and provided a lot of opportunities that I wouldn't have got elsewhere, at any other college, and I dunno, I'm just really sad to leave, its like I know I'll be back, maybe not as a student, but I'll definitely come visit every year at least, I still do that, I still go to my elementary school every year, and visit all the teachers, I'm one of those people, like once you meet me, you'll always hear from me, like I'll call you when I'm 80, don't worry, like you know, you'll receive that phone call, so yeah no, I'm sure I'll be back to visit everyone here at the **Equity Center**, and at **Scholars**, and different professors. I know I'll be around, so. But yeah, overall it's been a really amazing experience, that like I really, I guess I couldn't have imagined it, going into it, like going into this school I knew it was inclusive and I knew that it would be a nice place, but I guess I never really imagined the scope of all the opportunities that would open up for me and all the things I would get to do, even my freshmen year they did this like 2 page thing in the Terp magazine about me and um, it was this whole article, and I just could never have foreseen anything like that, I really uh, yeah

[28:26] Jen: *Is there anything else?*

[28:28] Louie: Well I brought a few things, if you want things, I don't know if you, I don't know what you do and don't want, so I figured I'd offer some stuff.

[28:39] Jen: *Okay so this is the end of the interview, I'll take a look at what you've brought, thank you.*