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## 2020 HGSC SPEAKER VICTOR MADRIGAL-BORLOZ



In late 2017 the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed Mr. Madrigal-Borloz as UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for a three-year period starting on January 1, 2018. In this capacity, he assesses the

implementation of international human rights law, raises awareness, engages in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, and provides advisory services, technical assistance, capacity-building to help address violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual

**MADRIGAL-BORLOZ continued page 3**

## VICTOR MADRIGAL-BORLOZ WEBINAR

[https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tjUkcu2orjotHtabEz3Dj4Yv858jSLU\\_6aqj](https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tjUkcu2orjotHtabEz3Dj4Yv858jSLU_6aqj)

## MAY 28 7:30 PM

# DEAR HGSC MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

How things can change! Ready for something different? I know I am. And we have a great speaker for you later this month!

First, I understand how challenging these times are, and offer heartfelt sympathy to everyone who has suffered or lost loved ones in this pandemic.

HGSC has two interesting items to report. First, we have elections for six slots on our board of directors. So please re-up your membership at hgsc.org, and vote.

Second, I'm thrilled about our virtual get-together and speaker described on the cover. I think you will not want to miss it.

The genesis of Victor's United Nations position was quite dramatic, even gripping. When a UN motion in Geneva about creation of his position and mandate was made, Saudi Arabia immediately counter-moved to end all debate—without any action at all. China, Russia, Arab countries and a swath of African countries concurred. Thankfully, this counter-motion failed.

But there were several more rounds of motions to stymie creation of his position, and votes thereon. Conservative countries managed to insert limitations to the mandate based on not interfering with internal affairs of States, respecting State sovereignty and

respecting local norms and customs—even at the cost of continuing violence and discrimination.

Victor has acted effectively on the UN mandate. He has traveled the world and is working on, among other goals, ending the criminalization of same-sex relations worldwide. He meets with and advises governments, and submits reports to the UN Human Rights Council.

Shifting gears, early on in my board service I was pondering what the mission of HGSC should be. I located as many Ivy League and peer university BGLTQ alumni group mission statements as I could, and conducted a non-scientific thematic analysis to see how comparable groups see things and if we were missing anything.

The alumni groups' missions' themes, ordered in decreasing prevalence, are: social/networking, maintaining connection to the university, fostering safe and affirming environment on campus, supporting students, education, advocacy, professional development, service, addressing unique university BGLTQ concerns, mentoring, visibility, and cultural activities. HGSC's mission and actions are consistent with these themes, and I mention these themes to help you think about how you might participate. Also, just because an interest isn't on this list doesn't mean

you and HGSC friends can't collaborate on that interest, and have fun doing it.

In a normal year, I would be flying from Los Angeles to attend the Annual Dinner and to hear our speaker with you in Cambridge. This year I will be seeing him from my living room. I hope you will too, so put it in your calendar and please join us for this event. Our guest is arguably the most influential BGLTQ activist in the world, doing incredibly important work.

This will be my last letter as your HGSC president. (Though I have been asked to stand for re-election to your board of directors.) Meredith Cartwright, an excellent Canadian lawyer with an interest in human rights, has generously agreed to be President next year. And Joseph Barretto, an accomplished New York City non-profit management consultant, has agreed to serve as Vice President. Thus, HGSC is in very capable hands.

In closing, it's been another great year of connecting with Harvard alums on the board and in our community. It will only get better. Stay well, thanks to my fellow board members (including several now completing their terms) thanks for the opportunity to serve and all the best.

**John Sylla, AB '81**  
**HGSC Chair**  
[president@hgsc.org](mailto:president@hgsc.org)

**MADRIGAL-BORLOZ** *continued from the COVER*

orientation or gender identity.

Victor Madrigal-Borloz, a Costa Rican jurist, is a senior visiting researcher at the Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program. He will be in residence at Harvard Law School from July 2019 to December 2020. Until June 2019 he served as the Secretary-General of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), a global network of over 150 rehabilitation centers with the vision of full enjoyment of the right to rehabilitation for all victims of torture and ill treatment until June 30, 2019.

A member of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture from 2013 to 2016, Mr. Madrigal-Borloz was Rapporteur on Reprisals and oversaw a draft policy on the torture and ill-treatment of LGBTI persons. Prior to this he led technical work on numerous cases, reports and testimonies as Head of Litigation and Head of the Registry at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and has also worked at the Danish Institute for Human Rights (Copenhagen, Denmark) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (San José, Costa Rica).

Mr. Madrigal-Borloz is a founding member of the Costa Rican Association of International Law (ACODI), a founding Board member of the International Justice Resource Centre (IJRC), and a founding Board member of Synergia-IDH.

# THE OPEN GATE FOUNDATION FALL TERM 2019 GRANTS

The Open Gate was founded in 1987 to enable alumni to make tax-deductible contributions to support LGBTQ life and scholarship at Harvard University. Due to generous gifts and legacies, the Open Gate has been able to disburse more than a million dollars over the years, including major funding for the F.O. Matthiessen Visiting Professorship of Gender and Sexuality, with part of the substantial bequest of Harvard Medical School faculty member Edmund C. Lin, Ph.D. '57. Year by year, the Open Gate depends on annual donations, which may be directed to it at One Corliss Place, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Student organizations, individual students, faculty members and other Harvard affiliates are warmly encouraged to submit grant requests, following the process outlined at [http://hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/grant\\_application](http://hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/grant_application)

To give some idea of the range of activities the Open Gate supports, here is a list of grants for Fall Term, 2019.

## **\$48,000 additional contribution to Matthiessen Professorship endowment**

### **Grants to Organizations (\$9,536)**

**Assoc. of Black Harvard Women:** Black Queer Art Gallery Event in honor of LGBTQ+ History Month. The purpose of this gallery is to center the experiences and creative processes of Black Queer Artists. The gallery will be a walk-

through event that features the work of two local Boston Black drag queens.

**Harvard Black Community and Student Theater:** Travel expenses for Dr. K. D. Sulkan to speak at viewing of film *Paris is Burning* by Black CAST.

**Harvard Alumni Association:** Sponsor of Stonewall 50 and Veritas: LGBTQ+ at Harvard: Past, Present and Future a commemorative panel presentation, symposia and celebratory event to be held during Stonewall 50 Pride Week at the Harvard Club of New York, on Monday, June 24, 2019.

**Harvard GSAS Latinx Student Association:** Support for three speakers at showing of *Mis XXY Años* by queer Blaxican filmmaker Ebony Bailey celebrating trans identities and activism in Latin America, featuring Lía García, a trans activist who used her 30th birthday as her formal coming out experience, giving performances throughout Mexico City.

**Harvard GSAS Latinx Student Association:** Film screening of "Pelo Melo" a film about a young boy who struggles with his sexuality and gender expression and Blackness in Venezuela. After the screening there will be a reception and discussion of issues raised. Joint sponsorship with LGBTQ@GSAS, WEB du Bois society of GSAS and GSAS Student Center intellectual and Cultural Fellows.

**OPEN GATE** *continued page 4*



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 SEXUALITY CAUCUS  
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 2019-2020**  
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**OPEN GATE continued page 3**

**Harvard WGS Department:** Alysia Abbott is author of *Fairyland*, A Memoir of My Father, which details her life growing up in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury as the only child of gay poet and writer Steve Abbott.

**Harvard Queer Students and Allies:** Expenses for Hotspot, the annual queer-friendly dance for the Harvard BGLTQ community to be held 10/29/19 to establish QSA's presence on campus for the first-year students.

**Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club:** Expenses for the production of "Fun Home" in the Agassiz Theatre that grapples with issues of loss, growth, discovery, sexuality, grief, and love through Alison Bechdel's powerful story.

**LGBTQ Caucus at Harvard Kennedy School:** Support for the LGBTQ Caucus's fall planning retreat in Bridgewater, VT. We will engage in a series of team-building exercises to celebrate diversity, exchange stories of identity and vulnerability, and plan our long- and short-term Caucus goals.

**Sexual Health, education and advocacy:** Speaker Fees for "Sex Week at Harvard" a series of six events to further the understanding and celebration of all sexual orientations and gender identities with and beyond the Harvard community.

**Grants to Individuals (\$4,046)**

Funding for Undergraduate thesis ex-

penses. In Study 1, I am confirming that stereotypes about sexual health and promiscuity for queer people are still salient and prevalent. Study 2 investigates whether these stereotypes impact the way non-queer people express prejudice and discrimination against queer individuals in a healthcare context. In Study 3, I directly test whether these stereotypes impact queer individuals and their healthcare experiences using stereotype threat paradigms.

Support for a study of the High Line's queer ecology pre-development, the spatial complexity of shrubby undergrowth and queer cruising thickets of Abney Park Cemetery, and the eco-activist approaches of queer artists in Ørstedsparken. Research uses three specific sites to investigate the relationship between queer urban space and emergent plant communities.

Research project to better understand how institutional heteronormativity does or does not impact the K-12 system. Funds for the winter trip will partially cover expenses to discuss policy mechanisms within Sao Paulo's Centro de Cidadania LGBTI. This organization provides inclusive policy efforts for queer and trans\* communities in Sao Paulo.

Fellowship to obtain a CDE (Certified Diversity Executive) credential through the Institute for Diversity Credentials to assist her work as co-chair of the QERG (Queer Employee Resource Group) at Harvard.

# VIRTUAL BOOK EVENTS

## MEREDITH TALUSAN FAIREST MAY 29, 7PM

[http://www.harvard.com/event/virtual\\_event\\_meredith\\_talusan/](http://www.harvard.com/event/virtual_event_meredith_talusan/)

*Fairest* is a memoir about a precocious boy with albinism, a “sun child” from a rural Philippine village, who would grow up to become a woman in America. Coping with the strain of parental neglect and the elusive promise of U.S. citizenship, Talusan found childhood comfort from her devoted grandmother, a grounding force as she was treated by others with special preference or public curiosity. As an immigrant to the United States, Talusan came to be perceived as white. An academic scholarship to

Harvard provided access to elite circles of privilege but required Talusan to navigate through the complex spheres of race, class, sexuality, and her place within the gay community. She emerged as an artist and an activist questioning the boundaries of gender. Talusan realized she did not want to be confined to a prescribed role as a man, and transitioned to become a woman, despite the risk of losing a man she deeply loved.

Throughout her journey, Talusan shares poignant and powerful episodes of desirability and love that will remind readers of works such as *Call Me By Your Name* and *Giovanni's Room*. Her evocative reflections will shift our own perceptions of love, identity, gender, and the fairness of life.

Co-hosted by HGSC

## ERIC CERVINI THE DEVIANT'S WAR THE HOMOSEXUAL VS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA JUNE 5, 6PM

[http://www.harvard.com/event/virtual\\_event\\_eric\\_cervini/](http://www.harvard.com/event/virtual_event_eric_cervini/)

In 1957, Dr. Frank Kameny (PhD '56), a rising astronomer working for the U.S. Defense Department in Hawaii, received a summons to report immediately to Washington, D.C. The Pentagon had reason to believe he was a homosexual, and after a series of humiliating interviews, Kameny, like countless gay men and women before him, was promptly dismissed from his government job. Unlike many others, though, Kameny fought back.

Based on firsthand accounts, recently declassified FBI records, and forty thousand personal documents, *The Deviant's War* unfolds over the course of the 1960s, as the Mattachine Society of Washington, the group Kameny founded, became the first organization to protest the systematic persecution of gay federal employees. It traces the forgotten ties that bound gay rights to the Black Freedom Movement, the New

Left, lesbian activism, and trans resistance. Above all, it is a story of America (and Washington) at a cultural and sexual crossroads; of shocking, byzantine public battles with Congress; of FBI informants; murder; betrayal; sex; love; and ultimately victory.

In conversation with Timothy McCarthy

Co-hosted by HGSC and *The G&LR*

Michael Lally:

## I Want To Call It Poems

a feature documentary about the LGBTQ+ activist  
told for the first time on screen by director Rachel E. Diken

"it's about this deep and abiding and  
relentless yearning for a healing to  
take place in all of us and between all of us"

from Michael Lally's *The Healing Poem*

## HELP THE HEALING



Visit

[https://ifundwomen.com/projects/  
documentary-post-production](https://ifundwomen.com/projects/documentary-post-production)

# DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN GET CLASS GIFT CREDIT FOR YOUR DONATION TO THE MATTHIESSEN ENDOWMENT?

FOR INSTRUCTIONS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/matthiessen](https://hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/matthiessen)

## THE GENERATIONS PROJECT

Support our preservation of the LGBTQ+  
Movement through cross-generational  
storytelling programs.  
Relive the past to live the future.



[www.generationsproject.org](http://www.generationsproject.org)



## CANDIDATES FOR HGSC BOARD

For the 2020-2021 term, we are running six candidates for six open positions. We are an all volunteer board and we are committed to using the talents and wisdom of the people who have stepped forward.

We are always seeking volunteers in other capacities as well, either at the chapter level or for projects led by the Board of Directors. Please reach out to [president@hgsc.org](mailto:president@hgsc.org) for more information.

The election will run May 18th to May 25th.

Candidate statements: [hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/candidates](http://hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu/candidates)



## CONNECT WITH HGSC WEBSITE

[hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu](http://hgsc.sigs.harvard.edu)

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[Harvard Gender and Sexuality Caucus](#)

## HARVARD COLLEGE

# Lavender Graduation

## A CELEBRATION OF BGLTQ ACHIEVEMENT

From the Office of BGLTQ Student Life: Nothing was going to stop us from celebrating the achievements of this year's graduating class of BGLTQ students. We won't have a live ceremony, but we are thinking creatively about how to make Lavender Graduation something special and memorable for all of our seniors. We're working with our colleagues in Harvard Communications on a virtual gallery that will include student photos, celebratory messages, performances, and more, and we'll be mailing stoles and tassels to all of the graduating seniors who request them. Many thanks to the Harvard Gender and Sexuality Caucus for adding to the celebration with the new HGSC Leadership Award!

## THE HGSC AWARD

This year, in partnership with the Office of BGLTQ Student Life, the Board of Directors of the Harvard Gender & Sexuality Caucus has established The HGSC Award, an award of at least \$1,000 that goes to a graduating senior for that individual's efforts in the field(s) of queer activism, leadership, and/or community service, all broadly defined. The Award picks up from the former HQ83 Fellowship, which was first established by the Class of 1983's BGLTQ alumni group at their 20th reunion. The Fellowship was meant to be "a no-strings attached award...that goes to a graduating senior as a way of saying 'Thanks'...along the lines of a kinda/sorta MacArthur Genius Award." With the establishment of the new award, the Board hopes to continue to highlight and celebrate BGLTQ seniors and their leadership and service. The first recipient of the HGSC Award will be announced during Lavender Graduation's weeklong celebration.

## WGS ANNOUNCES CUMMINGS PRIZE WINNERS

The Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality (WGS) is thrilled to announce the winners of this year's Eugene R. Cummings Senior Thesis Prize in LGBT Studies.

Each year, through the generosity of The Open Gate, the Harvard Gender & Sexuality Caucus's private, charitable foundation, WGS awards a \$1,000 prize to the best senior thesis on a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender Studies topic from any department or program at Harvard. The thesis must focus on LGBT subject matter, rather than touching on LGBT issues tangentially.

This year's winner is Sai Shanthanand Rajagopal ('20) a joint concentrator in WGS and Biomedical Engineering, whose thesis is entitled *Capturing Authenticity in Indian Transmasculine Identity: Design of a Novel Penile Prosthesis*. Because this year's crop of submissions was so outstanding, the prize committee also chose to award an honorable mention certificate to Constance Bourguignon, a joint concentrator in

WGS and Romance Languages and Literatures, for "No Way to Speak of Myself": Lived and Literary Resistance to Gender in French.

Rajagopal and Bourguignon are the recipients of multiple accolades. Both students were selected as Rhodes Scholars and will study at the University of Oxford next year. Bourguignon's thesis was also chosen to receive Thomas Temple Hoopes Prizes for excellence in original undergraduate research.

Eugene R. Cummings, the son of an Irish immigrant schoolteacher from Fall River, Massachusetts, was a gay student at the Harvard Dental School who ended his life on June 11, 1920, just days short of receiving his degree, after being interrogated and informed that he would be expelled by the "Secret Court" that purged gay men from Harvard in 1920. The prize was established to ensure that his name and experiences will not be forgotten and that future generations will have opportunities for self-expression that were denied to Mr. Cummings.

## FO MATTHEISSEN PROFESSOR MEL Y CHEN

This year's F.O. Matthiessen Visiting Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies, Mel Y. Chen, of the University of California Berkeley, was in residence at WGS during the spring 2020 semester. Professor Chen offered two courses: *Women, Men, and Other Animals*, an undergraduate seminar, and *In These Times: Queer, Feminist, Experimental Methods*, a graduate seminar.

Although Professor Chen's visit was unfortunately cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, their presence continued to be felt as they moved their courses online from their home in California. Julie Chung, a student in Chen's *Women, Men and Other Animal* course, penned an essay for Harvard Magazine on the ways the course helped her expand her notion of what an "ideal" classroom is by using the online format to connect students across miles and timezones.

WGS is grateful to the HGSC for their support of the Matthiessen Professorship. This generous gift has allowed us to bring outstanding teachers like Mel Chen to campus.

The F.O. Matthiessen Visiting Professorship of Gender and

Sexuality was created at Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) through a successful \$1.5 million funding campaign by members and supporters of the Harvard Gay and Lesbian Caucus (now the HGSC).

The resulting endowment enables Harvard to regularly invite eminent scholars studying issues related to sexual minorities -- that is, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people -- or to sexuality, to teach in the FAS for one semester every year, or two semesters every other year.

F. O. Matthiessen (1902–1950), founder of the field of American Studies, was a distinguished gay Harvard professor. He is considered "the most eminent American literary critic of the first half of the twentieth century." For his time, Matthiessen was an unusual example of a gay man who lived with his sexuality as an "open secret." He and his partner, artist Russell Cheney, were together for 23 years until Cheney's death. Because of his unique position as a prominent Harvard scholar and his inspiring commitment to his life partner, he is a fitting choice for a named chair in this field.



# CHAPTERS

## ASIA - Japan

Laurence W. Bates, JD '86 - laurence.w.bates@gmail.com

## AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Dick Nugent, MAUD (Master of Architecture in Urban Design) '85 - australasia@hgsc.org

## CALIFORNIA - Los Angeles

Kevin Wegener, HBS '08 - kwegener@mba2008.hbs.edu

## CALIFORNIA - Palm Springs

Robert Karl, PD '92 (School of Dental Medicine) - Palm\_Springs@hgsc.org

## CALIFORNIA - San Diego

Don Epstein, MBA '83 - don.epstein@me.com

## COLORADO

Jamie Henderson, AB '79 - swimmer@tde.com

## FRANCE - Paris

Elliot Marks, AB '99 - elliotjmarks@gmail.com

## LOUISIANA - New Orleans

Brian Sands, AB '83 - bsnola@hotmail.com

## MASSACHUSETTS - Boston/Cambridge

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## NEW YORK - New York City

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## UNITED KINGDOM - London

Javier Romero AB '95 - jromero@post.harvard.edu

## WASHINGTON, DC

Eric Wolff, AB '88 - ericwolff@me.com

If there aren't any chapters near you, consider coordinating one in your city or region. We are currently seeking chapter heads for HONG KONG, BARCELONA, GERMANY, TORONTO, LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN, ARIZONA, SAN FRANCISCO, MIAMI, TAMPA/ST PETERSBURG, GEORGIA, HAWAII, CHICAGO, INDIANA, MINNESOTA, MICHIGAN, NEW MEXICO, LONG ISLAND NY, UPSTATE NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA, OHIO, PORTLAND OR, PHILADELPHIA, AUSTIN, SEATTLE, WISCONSIN.

Prior chapter leadership experience is helpful, but is by no means mandatory. Contact [president@hgsc.org](mailto:president@hgsc.org).

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# HGSC BOSTON 2020 VIRTUAL SPRING SOIRÉE



# SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

For inclusion in the next newsletter, send your HGSC event photos to [newsletter@hgsc.org](mailto:newsletter@hgsc.org).

For help publicizing events to HGSC members, contact us at [news@hgsc.org](mailto:news@hgsc.org).

# HGSC FACEBOOK GROUPS

- [HGSC](#)
- [HGSC PEOPLE OF COLOR AND ALLIES](#)
- [HGSC TRANS AND GENDER VARIANT GROUP](#)
- [HGSC WOMEN](#)
- [HGSC BISEXUAL GROUP](#)

PLEASE REACH OUT  
TO US IF YOU ARE  
INTERESTED IN MODERATING  
A FACEBOOK GROUP

# HARVARD HELPING HARVARD

Is your organization hiring for entry-level opportunities?

Do you know of any remote/virtual summer internships?

Do you know of any short term projects, paid or unpaid?

During these unprecedented times, Harvard students need your help finding opportunities that build knowledge and skills.

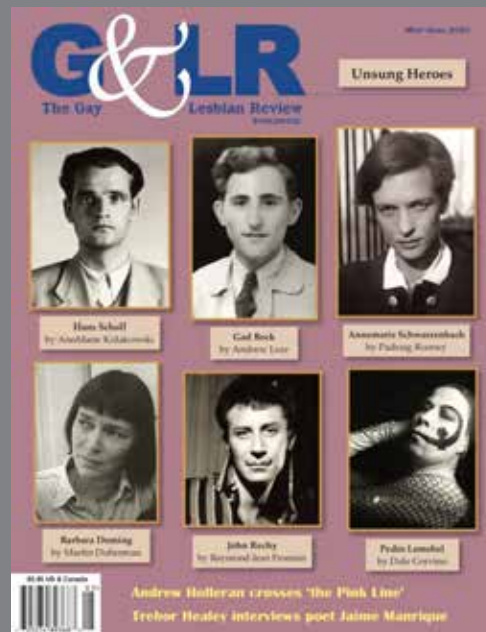
Alumni post for free, can opt to be a contact for sharing information with Harvard students, and can indicate their affiliation with the Harvard Gender & Sexuality Caucus.

To post opportunities go to [ocs.fas.harvard.edu/alumni-connect-students](https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/alumni-connect-students).

For questions please email [ocsjobs@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ocsjobs@fas.harvard.edu).

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_____ \$23	_____ free	Non-voting Membership
_____ waived	_____ waived	Contribution of \$100 or more to The Open Gate Foundation

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