

Malik Lee
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BUF 4900
Dr. Adomaitis

Professional Development Critique #2

On March 3rd, 2023, at 1:00 p.m., I attended the LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Students collective session virtually through Zoom hosted by Laura Westengard. While in the session Ms. Westengard along with guest speakers Ms. Leigh Gold and Mr. Dan Ryan to name a few, shared information on the various ways New York City College of Technology can improve when it comes to allowing students to be safe as well as feeling comfortable expressing themselves or their concerns. I learned what an active safe space should look, as well as the ways to allow one to be comfortable while being around me or another student while being at City Tech. During the session Ms. Westengard discussed the importance of treating others with respect, kindness due to not being familiar with one maybe enduring in their personal lives, guest speaker Ms. Gold shed light on how important it is to respect one's pronouns while engaging in conversation allowing one to not feel dismissed.

After attending this session, I learned the importance of allowing people from different walks of life to feel comfortable in my presence. Being someone who is a part of the community it was significant for me to help create a safe space for other students along with in-coming students to see how City Tech is a welcoming school and cares for their students. While in the session there was a discussion on creating a club or a group to welcome LGBTQIA+ students to join, creating a sense of family such as the creating of "Pride club". The Pride club was put into place with meeting conducted in the school's cafeteria and library to provide one with a hang out space used to connect with other students who maybe like them. While attending I learned Ms. Gold uses her office as a haven for anyone who needs to talk about their problems or report a situation but really having someone they can rely on.

Before attending this session, I haven't expressed interest in extracurricular activities/clubs since being at City Tech. However, joining this meeting I've gained insight on way to make the college a safe space for other individuals. When one is not comfortable with their surrounding multiple things can occur such as depression or trauma and its importance for one to feel they have someone to confide in for advice or a shoulder to lean on. It's great for schools to open up that door for students to feel acknowledged without feeling left out or an outsider. By the faculty creating this opportunity will allow students to give them their trust and letting them in emotionally to their feelings being 100 percent vulnerable in a space where there is no judgment.

This session taught me various ways to make City Tech a queer visible school to allow queer students to feel they matter. Creating more events for more LGBTQIA+ students to network or connect to others with hopes on expanding the club. This session opened my eyes to the importance of what it means to have a safe space to be yourself with the fear of judgement from others or worrying about one's opinion. Having a safe space is beneficial to one's mental health providing tools where one's able to let go of stress which can lead to anxiety attacks, depression

or even break downs. This session was importance due to being a senior it is great to see how City Tech goes above to ensure their students are taken care of.