# Oxford Launches Groundbreaking Pride Network for LGBTQ+ Alumni



As the rainbow flags fly proudly across the globe for Pride Month, the prestigious University of Oxford marks this year's celebration with the launch of the Oxford Pride Alumni Network (OxPAN). This innovative initiative aims to connect over 35,000 LGBTQ+ Oxford graduates worldwide, providing them with a platform for mutual support, professional development, and communal celebration.

The brainchild of alumnus Christer Holloman, OxPAN aspires to bridge geographical distances and establish a global community where LGBTQ+ Oxford alumni can thrive. “Through a variety of engaging events, both online and in person, the network will provide valuable resources to support alumni in their career development and personal growth,” Holloman says. “We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive space for LGBTQ+ alumni to connect, share experiences, and build meaningful professional relationships.”

At its core, OxPAN seems to be driven by a commitment to fostering inclusivity within the long-standing institution. Oxford, renowned for its academic excellence and historic traditions, hasn’t always been able to provide visible platforms for its LGBTQ+ members. This new network aims to change that narrative.

The initiative marks its commencement with a noteworthy webinar featuring David Isaac CBE, the Provost of Worcester College. This interactive session will navigate the current landscape of LGBTQ+ rights and legal protections worldwide. "The LGBTQ+ community has a rich history at Oxford – but hasn't always been entirely visible or openly celebrated," Isaac reflects. "The Oxford Pride Alumni Network is a very positive step forward to recognise the contribution of LGBTQ+ alumni to the life of the University, to allow our graduates to be part of a supportive global network and to help shape the future of Oxford."

The webinar promises to be the first of many events under the network’s umbrella. Following the online launch, in-person gatherings are set to take place in London and New York on 27 June. These events are designed to further solidify the bonds among alumni, offering them not only a chance to meet and network but also to celebrate their shared identities and experiences.

Claire Grainger, Acting Director of Alumni Engagement, underlines the importance of this new initiative to the university’s overarching values. “Oxford is stronger because of the diversity of our students, staff, and alumni. The Oxford Pride Alumni Network celebrates this strength and creates a space for LGBTQ+ alumni to connect and flourish. It ensures that LGBTQ+ voices are heard and empowers them to thrive both personally and professionally.”

This sentiment speaks to a broader movement within educational institutions striving to acknowledge and honour the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals. Whereas such environments were once steeped in exclusionary practices, initiatives like OxPAN represent a significant shift towards inclusivity and recognition.

The establishment of OxPAN represents more than just a network; it paves the way for a multigenerational dialogue among Oxford’s LGBTQ+ alumni. The opportunity for recent graduates to interact with more established professionals in various fields allows for an exchange of wisdom, mentorship, and support – crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and advancement within the community.

As OxPAN gains momentum, it promises to be a beacon for LGBTQ+ alumni, offering them a robust support system and solid footing in both their professional and personal lives. For many, it may well become a critical lifeline and a testament to how far the fight for equality has come.

The oxfordpridealumni.org website serves as the portal for those eager to join this burgeoning community, heralding a new era of visibility and connection for Oxford’s LGBTQ+ alumni. This initiative stands as a powerful reminder that while institutions maintain their historical traditions, they are also capable of evolving to embrace all members of their community fully and equitably.

As the first strides of OxPAN are taken, it’s clear that the University of Oxford is making significant efforts to elevate and empower its LGBTQ+ community, providing a model that other institutions would do well to follow.