



Life After Rice –LGBTQ Perspectives on Life in Business and Academia

Panelists

Brandon Mack



Brandon Mack is an Associate Director of Admission at Rice University. He has been an integral member of the Office of Admission since 2009, and is well known for his advocacy and outreach to under-served students. He is also the sponsor of the Rice Pride student organization. In addition to his day job, Mack is a community activist and academic dedicated to issues related to the intersections of race, gender, and sexual orientation. He has conducted research on effemiphobia, the negative related to effeminate gay men by other gay men. His work has been featured in a GLAAD Media award winning article. His current research project focuses on the impact of bathroom bills on transgender college students. Mack graduated from Rice University in 2006 from Wiess College with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology & Political Science. In 2013, he earned a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration & Supervision from the University of Houston. He is a third year doctoral student in Higher Education Leadership & Policy Studies from the University of Houston.

Ryan Levy



Ryan Levy has been a vocal advocate for LGBT rights and equality for the last two decades. As a student leader at Rice and then the University of Texas, Levy introduced and passed the first ever student government bills calling on the UT administration to extend equal housing, health and recreation benefits to same sex couples. He organized the first public forums on gay adoption laws and protections at the UT Law School, bringing together legal experts and legislators. Levy was the first openly gay associate hired by national law firm Zelle Hofmann, and Levy immediately worked to get the firm to be a leader in equality by offering same-sex partner health benefits. Ryan served on the leadership board of Lambda Legal's South Central Office, as an organizer for the Dallas Gay & Lesbian Bar Association, and a volunteer and fundraiser for Black Tie Dinner. Ryan began volunteering for the Human Rights Campaign in 1999 and quickly became involved in local leadership. In 2004, Ryan married his longtime partner Ian Eastveld in Toronto, Canada. The next year, the two held a commitment ceremony in their hometown of Houston and relocated permanently to the bayou city. Once in Houston, both Ian and Ryan dove head first into community involvement. Ryan became the chair of the HRC Houston Federal Club and Ian became the chair of the HRC Houston Gala, setting national records for fundraising. After a decade of volunteer work for HRC, Ryan was elected to the HRC national Board of Governors and became co-chair of HRC's political activities in Houston. He worked and lobbied to repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell, organizing meetings with local and national elected officials, collecting signatures, hosting letter writing campaigns, and hosting public forums. After years of work, DADT was finally repealed in 2010. Since then, Levy has worked on



numerous campaigns to pass an inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act, Repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, and campaign for and testify for passage of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance and the National Equality Act. Ryan also served as an Advisory Board Member for Rice University's Center for the Study of Women Gender & Sexuality. In 2016, Ryan was named Grand Marshal of the Houston Pride Parade for his decades of activism. Last year, he completed his term on the National Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign.

Ryan is a winemaker by profession. He is a Chef and Certified Sommelier, having trained in France at Le Cordon Bleu, in California at UC Davis, with Master Sommeliers and star winemakers in Napa, and began creating his first wines in 2007 under his label, NICE. A native Houstonian, Ryan graduated with honors from Rice University and earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University Of Texas School Of Law. Ryan calls himself a "recovering" attorney- since leaving the practice of law he co-owned the restaurant "Republic" in Dallas with Le Cordon Bleu classmate and fellow winemaker Ian Eastveld and now makes wine and teaches wine classes and culinary classes at Nice Winery's Houston headquarters. His wines have won top honors in the Houston Rodeo Wine Competition where he was awarded Best in Show out of over 3,000 wines and received 94 point ratings and acclaim from both Wine Enthusiast Magazine and the Beverage Testing Institute. Ryan crafts 24 wines from vineyards in Texas, California, Argentina, and Washington state.

Chloe Doiron



Chloe Doiron of the Naik Lab at Rice University graduated from The University of Oklahoma in 2012 with a degree in engineering physics. She joined the applied physics program at Rice in 2012, earning a master's degree in 2016. Her current research is focused on using alternative materials for high performance selective thermal emitters. As a transgender woman, Chloe has been very active in serving the gender and sexually diverse community at Rice and beyond. She was awarded the Rice Alumni Pride scholarship in 2016 for her advocacy and service, in particular to the transgender community and raising awareness of how Rice can better serve transgender students.



Christa Robbins



Christa Robbins (pictured left), Class of '97, Baker College - Originally from San Antonio, Christa graduated from Rice with a Mechanical Engineering degree in December 1997. She has worked most of her career in natural gas Project Management at El Paso Corp./Kinder Morgan, and has spent the last 12 years in leadership positions.

Although they have been together for 16 years, Christa and her wife, Kristy, were married in 2006. They live in the Houston Heights and have an 8 year old son named Townes. Between their busy work and school schedules (Kristy is a veterinarian), they spend their time as a family hanging with their multitude of animals at home, traveling, enjoying Houston's arts programs, and hanging with friends.

Kendall Toarmina Pang



Kendall is a management consultant with PwC. She helps companies achieve their goals through effective strategies and initiatives in the area of people and organization. With an MBA and undergraduate degrees from Rice and five years of combined experience in change management, talent acquisition, and human resources policy, working in the US and Argentina, Kendall has strong business experience, analytical skills and advanced Spanish language.

Kendall's perspective also includes a lens on diversity and inclusion. She co-led the Rice University MBA program's first ever Diversity and Inclusion conference and was named a Woman of Power by Outsmart Magazine in 2017. Kendall served as president of her LGBTQ MBA club and currently leads the university's LGBTQ alumni association. She lives in Houston, TX with her wife and their dog.