

# Out for Undergrad (O4U) Expands National Board of Directors

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, December 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Out for Undergrad (O4U), the leading not-for-profit dedicated to helping high achieving [LGBTQ2+](#) undergraduates reach their full potential, announces expansion of its national Board of Directors with the appointments of Courtney Schatt and Gibby Kuria, both former leads of O4U Conferences. Courtney is Vice President of CAO Strategic Initiatives at JP Morgan Chase and former Management Consultant at Accenture and Client Solutions Manager at Facebook. Courtney has deep experience within the O4U leadership community having served as member of a sponsoring firm 2016, O4U Business (O4UB) Programming Director 2017, Sponsorship Director 2018, O4UB Conference Director 2019 and O4U Strategic Implementation Team 2020-2021.

Courtney said: "O4U has transformed both my personal and professional life over the last decade. After supporting the organization in several roles from Sponsor to Conference Director, I'm excited to serve in a new capacity to help shape the future of O4U and to continue impacting the lives of young LGBTQ2+ people."

Gibby Kuria is a Senior Mechanical Design Engineer at Moxion Power. Gibby brings significant O4U experience beginning as a student in 2015-2016, member of the 2017 O4U Engineering (O4UE) Admission & Sponsorship Team, 2018 Sponsorship Team, 2019 Sponsorship Team Lead, 2020 O4UE Conference Team Lead, 2021 O4U Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) and 2022-2023 O4U Strategic Advisor

Gibby said: "The impact of O4U on my life has been immeasurable, both personally and professionally. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity and excited about the important work ahead."



Gibby Kuria, O4U Board

Cindi Love, O4U Executive Director said: "We are so proud and honored that Courtney and Gibby have chosen to dedicate their leadership gifts and time to O4U's community. As they have indicated, O4U played and continues to play a major part in their personal and professional development and we are so fortunate that they are now paying that experience forward and modeling that type of contribution for the next generation. We celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2024 and Courtney and Gibby will also serve as the Board level advisors to our planning of our year-long series of events to recognize our students, volunteers, sponsors and alumni."



Courtney Schatt, O4U Board

Since 2004, O4U has designed and produced annual high-impact personal and professional development conferences offering full scholarships and mentoring to more than 8,000 LGBTQ2+ students. In addition, more than 1000 individuals have participated in O4U's leadership

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Our leadership development process supports individuals in building capacity for effective and empathic leadership, resiliency, authenticity and clarity about what matters most in life and work.”

*Dr. Cindi Love, O4U Executive Director*

development process. Structurally, the O4U organization is flat with only two full-time employees. Each year an average of 100 volunteers create and produce all O4U experiences including conferences, year-round mentoring, O4U's Breakthrough Speaker Series, Learning Community, alumni community and more. Volunteers are given opportunities to manage revenue and expenses well beyond the typical experience at their career stage. They interact with senior leaders in over 200 of the world's leading corporations and persuade them to invest in sponsorship of O4U. They also develop robust programming that engages industry leaders and social activists from around the world. In so doing, each of those volunteers participates in what is informally known as the

O4U “classroom to the boardroom” leadership development and succession planning process.

Research supports several key findings about LGBTQ2+ leaders and why corporations can gain competitive advantage when they hire high achieving LGBTQ2+ individuals. Karen Whitney,

President Emerita of Clarion University and the Interim Chancellor for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) states:

"The successful LGBTQ2+ leader possesses an awareness of their existence within and outside of the dominant culture. Through this cultural understanding, coupled with both life and leader experiences, the leader-navigator creates and perfects their style within a context that manages the patriarchal, gendered, heterosexist structures of power, privilege and bias... The LGBTQ2+ leader-navigator knows they are living and leading in a time that has been filled with a history

and culture of contempt for LGBTQ folk. They know they exist outside the majority culture. They know that they came to owning and expressing their identity with risk and courage."

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/how-lgbtq-leaders-navigate-predominantly-nonlgbtq-world>

LGBTQ2+ employees and undergraduates surveyed in the recently released Out to Succeed 2.0 study are "more empathic and resilient than their peers. Resilient individuals, research shows, are better able to weather organizational change—a decided plus for businesses navigating roiling markets and a volatile geopolitical landscape." [https://outleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Out-to-Succeed-2.0-FINAL\\_9\\_27.pdf](https://outleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Out-to-Succeed-2.0-FINAL_9_27.pdf)

In spite of these research findings and numerous institutional interventions that aim to prevent sexual and gender identity stigmatization and discrimination, LGBTQ2+ employees still encounter an unequal workplace experience. Out to Succeed 2.0 additionally states: "Trans and non-binary employees are more likely than other LGBTQ2+ employees (9% vs 7%) to say they are uncomfortable being out at work, and many feel it hasn't been good for their careers. Black lesbian employees are 1.6x more likely than other LGBTQ2+ employees (41% vs 26%) to say they've felt uncomfortable or insulted by comments made by colleagues about the LGBTQ2+ community, and are much more inclined to cover: 76% avoid talking about their lives outside of work, and 71%—the highest of any demographic sampled—say they change their appearance, mannerisms, or way of speaking to hide or downplay their sexual orientation."

Love continues: "We have so much work to do and we will not stop until LGBTQ2+ and otherwise diverse individuals can travel an unobstructed path to an inclusive work environment. We are grateful for our many out O4U leaders like Gibby and Courtney who have worked tirelessly to



Out for Undergrad (O4U) Guidestar Platinum Ranked 501(c)3

bring us to our 20th anniversary and we are so confident in their positive influence on the workplace of tomorrow."

Dr. Cindi Love

Out for Undergrad

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