



Lambda 10 Project

Meet Alyn Libman

By [Robert Bergin](#)

Alyn Libman may be on a mission to change the way you think about frat guys and transgendered people. If that's the case though, he's being awful chill about it. Libman, a fourth year American Studies major, acknowledges that he may be the nation's first openly transgendered member of a Greek community, but that distinction doesn't seem nearly as important to him as the friendships he's created as a brother of Alpha Delta Phi.

Daily Californian: Did you see yourself joining a fraternity when you came to Cal?

Alyn Libman: Oh no. I was very anti-Greek. I just had all these stereotypes and I figured y'know, I wouldn't fit in and even if I did I wouldn't get a bid. So I just never bothered. And then my sophomore year a friend invited me over to his fraternity house for lunch. And I would never have looked at him and thought, "Oh you're a frat boy."

DC: Yeah, a lot of people get that.

AL: Right. So I went over to the fraternity and it turned out I knew a few guys from classes. So I just started hanging out over there like every day, and then they bid me. And I was really shocked. So I thought, well I'll be honest with them and that'll just kill the offer. Because I really didn't want to join, y'know?

DC: And then they said, "Hey, whatever. You're cool." That's pretty hilarious. So, I know not all transgendered people get an operation because of the high cost or whatever. Did you have an operation?

AL: Yeah, I did. I was only out to a handful of people at the time; I came out more as I was pledging. Some of the new members actually don't know.

DC: Yeah, there's no real organic way to weave that one into a conversation.

AL: Right, it's not the sort of thing that really comes up at a party. I'm out to about ninety-five percent of my house, and I guess when this prints it'll be one hundred percent. I'm very open about it and the people I'm out to are receptive and all that. It's never been an issue.

DC: When did you have your operation?

AL: Well, it's not like an operation, per se. The process is basically glorified liposuction. I did that right before I turned 20, so November 2004.

DC: How long had you known that you were a man?

AL: Oh, as long as I can remember. It was just a matter of figuring out the language to describe it. Y'know, you grow up and through socialization people tell you you have a certain anatomy, therefore you're a girl. But, I mean, I was always a tomboy and just never really identified with women.

DC: I guess I wasn't really expecting you to be so laid-back about all this. It seems like such a huge thing, but you're pretty nonchalant.

AL: I mean everyone has a point in their life when they start to question who they are. Part of going through adolescence is questioning our values and identities. This was just about making myself at home in my own skin. In a sense I think being transgendered is a gift, just because I have a perspective that a lot of people don't have.

DC: What do you mean by that?

AL: Well, for example, a lot of men sort of pooh-poo the discrimination that women deal with, but I've felt that. I know what it feels like for people not to respect my opinion or my authority because of their perception of who I am. Since I've been a man, people have questioned me a lot less.

And at the same time I've been able to be a part of a fraternity and know what it means to bond with other men on a familial level, who aren't necessarily your blood relatives. So I get to take all these perspectives and combine them so I understand peoples' experiences better. That's what I think is cool about it.

DC: Do you know how many other transgendered, or even gay people, are in the Greek community?

AL: Yeah, there are quite a few out people. Mostly men, but there are a few lesbians. I was a part of the Greek Queer-Straight Alliance two years ago, and there were quite a few people in that club but I'm pretty sure I was the only transgendered person.

DC: What's the status of that club?

AL: I don't know if it's actually meeting. I've been pretty busy with some other stuff. I actually got a grant from the Center for Race and Gender to create a zine

for the Bay Area transgendered community. I'm calling it Nocturnal transmissions.

DC: Nice. So how has being in a fraternity changed you? Or has it?

AL: I think I've learned a lot about how men interact with each other. Not to make it sound like a sociology experiment or anything. It's just, prior to joining a fraternity most of my friends were gay because I grew up as a figure skater, and a lot of figure skaters are gay. So I was already comfortable with the gay community. So this has just been about making friends I wouldn't have had otherwise, and also coming into my own masculinity with people that I consider role models on some level. We're just good guys who like to hang out.

DC: Yeah, that seems like sort of a theme with a lot of guys. A lot of the really good friends I have at my fraternity are people I wouldn't have considered interacting with otherwise, but I'm really glad I know them and live with them.

AL: And you know, some of the best moments I've had at college have been just sitting around the living room late at night talking with the guys about whatever. Religion. Politics. And then all of a sudden it's six in the morning, y'know?

DC: Yeah, it's always nice to have the assurance that you can go into your living room at three in the morning and know...

AL: Someone's going to be there. Right. It's a cool social environment, and it's cool to know that people will always have your back.

DC: They're your bros.

AL: Yeah, exactly.

http://www.dailycal.org/article/21119/meet_alyn_libman



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