

Thursday, September 24, 2015

## OU welcomes 'Orange is the New Black' actress Laverne Cox for lecture event

The Oakland University Student Life Lecture Board and Gender & Sexuality Center will soon welcome well-known actress and LGBT advocate Laverne Cox as the first speaker in its annual educational lecture series for the campus community.

Cox's lecture, titled "Ain't I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood," is scheduled for **7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 8**, at the O'rena, Recreation and Athletics Center. Free event tickets for students, faculty, staff, alumni and the general public are available now at the Center for Student Activities Service Window at 49 Oakland Center.



*Actress and LGBT advocate Laverne Cox comes to OU on Oct. 8.*

The transgender actress is best known for playing Sophia Burset on the Netflix series "Orange is the New Black," but also produces documentaries that focus on transgender issues. Cox has also had appearances in an impressive host of television series that includes Fox's "The Mindy Project," Bravo's "Girlfriend's Guide to Divorce," the MTV romantic comedy "Faking It," "Law and Order," "Law and Order: SVU" and many more.

Her work on television, movies and elsewhere – combined with her message of moving beyond gender expectations to live more authentically – has landed her a spot on the cover of TIME Magazine, where she was also named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2015. She was also named one of Glamour Magazine's 2014 Women of the Year.

Grace Wojcik, coordinator of OU's Gender and Sexuality Center, said Cox's visit to the University represents our commitment to diversity and inclusion in all its forms. She added that the LGBTIQ community at Oakland has grown tremendously in the 10 years since the Gender and Sexuality Center was founded.

"Ms. Cox is one of the most prominent transgender voices of our time and her message will resonate with anyone committed to justice and equality," said Wojcik. "In light of the 17 transgender women of color murdered in the U.S. so far this year, it is critical that we draw attention to the disparate treatment transgender people, specifically transgender people of color, face – even as other issues in the LGBT community like same-sex marriage gain support and legitimacy in the eyes of the law."

Jean Ann Miller, director of the Center for Student Activities and Leadership Development, said Cox was one of the Student Life Lecture Board's first choices to speak on campus this academic year. The lecture board is made up of students, faculty and staff.

"The Student Life Lecture Board lecture series is a unique tradition to Oakland," said Miller. "We've been doing it for such a long period of time, and the caliber and diversity of lecturers we've had here is something to be proud of."

The popular series – held to educate, inform, motivate and entertain OU students and the community – has welcomed past speakers such as Dr. Jane Goodall, Maya Angelou, President Jimmy Carter, James Earl Jones, Kurt Vonnegut, Oprah Winfrey and many more. The first lecture series was held in 1979.

Visit [oakland.edu/csa](http://oakland.edu/csa) for more information about the Center for Student Activities, the Student Life Lecture Board and its annual series or the Gender & Sexuality Center.