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Ohio University College of Arts & Sciences, "WOUB Gay Perspectives: 'My Gender Means Freedom'" (2013). *All Forum Articles*. 214.

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WOUB Gay Perspectives: ‘My Gender Means Freedom’

October 14, 2013

Categories: In the News, News, Students in the News

Tags: history news, ohio University, psychology news, Ryan Vollrath, women's and gender and sexuality studies news, WOUB

“My gender means freedom,” says **Ryan Vollrath '14** in WOUB’s “[Gay Perspectives: Ohio University Student Tells Coming Out Story](#)” video.

Vollrath is studying History and Psychology and pursuing Gender and Women’s Studies Certificate in the Ohio University College of Arts & Sciences.

“It’s freed me in a lot of ways in terms of my ability to relate to other people and experience the world,” he says. “I identify as a queer, gender-non-conforming individual....It’s kind of like when you’re in between sizes at a clothing store. You know you’re not straight, but the best size that fits next is gay male, I suppose.

“The idea of female and male within our society as a social construct is extremely limiting. Females are defined by what it means to be non-male, or females are defined by their relationship to men. And masculinity is often constructed in such a way as to maintain patriarchy and male privilege. So transgression of either role, often does result in being ostracized. So for me rejecting both labels is a way of saying I don’t play by anybody’s rules because in my opinion the rules are constructed by a patriarchy that exists to serve and for men.” [See the WOUB story on National Coming Out Day.](#)



<https://youtube.com/watch?v=>



At the student Leadership Awards Gala in April 2013, Vollrath, won both the Stonewall Leadership Award and a Pepsi Ohio University Campus Leadership Scholarship.

Ohio University Orientation Programs staff received multiple awards for presentations

At the Region VII conference of the National Orientation Directors Association held in Toronto in March 2013, Vollrath, an orientation leader in the College of Arts & Sciences, and Tracy Gundy, student coordinator and administrative orientation leader, won “best overall communication” and “best overall presentation” in the undergraduate case study competition. Their case study focused on social programming at orientation and the challenges of diversity and ethics. The duo also presented a session on how Ohio University’s values demonstrate the importance of student staff cohesion in successful orientation programs.