

## Queer Student Alliance Readies Pride Week Activities

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The Queer Student Alliance is kicking off a Pride Week at Tulane University with its Coming Out Forum today (Oct. 11). Formerly known as Mosaic, the group recently amended the name to one that gets right to the heart of who they are and what the organization stands for.



Queer Student Alliance leaders (from left) Ben Thompson, Evan Landers and Alex Stork are revamping the organization to involve more students at Tulane who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. (Photo by Alicia Duplessis Jasmin)

"Mosaic was simply too generic," says Ben Thompson, vice president of external affairs for the Queer Student Alliance. "We all agreed that it was important to change our name to something that students could immediately recognize and relate to."

The group's membership has fluctuated between a handful and several dozen students over the years, but Thompson hopes that restructuring and changing the name will create better visibility around campus and help to recruit and maintain more members.

“Our purpose is pretty simple,” says Thompson. “We want to provide a safe and accepting environment for people who identify as queer and to provide social and activist opportunities for people who want to get involved.”

This year, there are approximately 20 active members of the alliance, but Thompson anticipates that number growing because of a push in publicity and an increase in student activities. The first of those activities is the Coming Out Forum, where students can hear the stories of others, share their own and ask questions of the panel. The event takes place today at 7:30 p.m. in the Race Room of the Lavin-Bernick Center on the uptown campus.

“As a queer person, it's really good to know that there is an organization on campus that you can go to and find people who you can identify with,” says Thompson. “It's also good to know that there is an organization taking an activist stand on issues that are important to you.”

While the organization is known for its fun social events including its popular Mr. Sophie Newcomb/Ms. Paul Tulane drag pageant, it also is dedicated to the empowerment and uplifting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students at Tulane.

For more information about the Queer Student Alliance at Tulane and for a complete list of events, e-mail the organization's president, [Evan Landers](#).