# Tracing Transgender Awareness on a University Campus through Content Analysis of its Campus Newspaper

**Stacey Ewing & Colleen Seale | University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries**

## Background

### History of the Newspaper
- Florida Alligator founded 1906 as UF’s student-run newspaper (https://ufdc.ufl.edu/alligator/).
- Independent from UF since 1973, as the Independent Florida Alligator.
- Now fully archived in the UF Digital Collections (UFDC).
- Coverage includes not only news about UF, but also content from outside UF including national, college & local community news.

### Purpose of this analysis
- Fulfills our role as librarian allies and UF’s goal to be an inclusive, diverse campus.
- Leverages the recent completion of the newspaper’s digitization.
- Contributes to Digital Humanities research.

## Methodology

### Methodology
- Used text search features on both platforms to search the keyword “transgender” through the OCR of PDF files (UFDC) and HTML text (Alligator.org).
- Search results were entered on a spreadsheet by date ascending and by content type: News (Local) and (National), Opinions/Letters to the Editor and Editorial, and Events.
- Columns added for title, word counts, notes on the context of word usage, and permalinks to the articles.

### Search Results
- Search of 1973-2020 issues generated 266 results, which revealed not only the word “transgender,” but also variants of the word.
- A gap of several critical years was also exposed and a search feature at the Independent Florida Alligator’s website (https://www.alligator.org/search?as=1&o=date) was used to fill in the span.
- Inconsistencies were found in search features of both online versions of the newspaper.

## Key Findings

- **October 9, 1997** First mention of "transgender" was published in a “Letter to the Editor” on National Coming Out Day.
- Early word usage included “transgendered” and “transgenderism” (these terms are now considered inappropriate).
- First instance of "Trans" was found in 2013 and used as an adjective.
- "Transphobia" use first appeared in 2014.
- Growth in transgender awareness demonstrated through nationally recognized speakers invited to campus: Kate Bornstein, S. Bear Bergman, Janet Mock, & Laverne Cox.

## Next Steps

- Extensive analysis is planned.
- .txt file dump obtained from UFDC and analysis forthcoming using Notepad++ and other text mining tools.
- Explore why original search results were irregular on UFDC platform.
- Search additional terms and alternate spellings such as non-binary/nonbinary, genderqueer, two-spirit, gender non-conforming, etc.
- UFDC is migrating to a new CMS, which will have different search features that can be used for our research.

---

### Selected Timeline

1997

- More than Two Boxes - a discussion on transgendered & two-spirited issues held

2000

- First Director of LGBT Affairs, Tamara Cohen, appointed

2004

- First Trans Health Month held

2007

- RuPaul, keynote speaker: Pride Month

2011

- Trans* Days, a three-day campaign

2013

- Laverne Cox & Janet Mock speak on campus

2014

- First Trans Health Month held

2015

- First Trans Health Day of Remembrance held in Gainesville

2016

- First public Transgender Day of Remembrance held in Gainesville

2017

- WST4930 1st class taught on transgender studies

2019

- Transgender day of Remembrance held at Depot Park

---

**Image Credits:**
- "More than Two Boxes" - UAA 10945
- "Pride Month" - University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries
- "First Trans Health Month held" - University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries