



Alumni Spotlight

Ricardo Almodovar '16

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Ricardo Almodovar chose Millersville University for practical reasons—cost, location, and curriculum. What he gained was the skillset to support his goals of impacting change and empowering others to do the same.

Knowing that he wanted to work with underrepresented communities, Ricardo chose to major in International Studies and Spanish and minor in Psychology. He found mentors who taught him that the opportunity to initiate change comes from hard work and the right team; one mentor in particular, who eventually became Ricardo's director, emphasized the value of the power of the people. Ricardo quickly recognized the significance of networking and building strong relationships that can grow into partnerships.

Since graduating in 2016, Ricardo has continued to expand on his credentials, earning an English as a Second Language Certificate and completing training in the School of Unity and Liberation Curriculum for social justice. He has been published in the *Gay Journal* regarding the importance of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) people voting and presented at multiple institutions, including Lehigh University, on the Know Your Rights initiative.

Ricardo's most proud career achievement was founding the Amor y Rabia (Love and Rage) LGBTQ Committee in Allentown, PA. Amor y Rabia stands against homophobia, transphobia, racism, and other biases towards people of color. He organized community events for Pride and other social events, and also helped to ban conversion therapy, lobby against the transgender ban in the military, and advocated for transgender people of color seeking asylum in the US.

Ricardo remembers that his time at the Ville had its challenging moments, but being able to lean on his supportive community is still a practice he relies on today.

"I've learned over the years that self-care is important. Take walks, go hiking, spend time with friends and loved ones, and don't overexert yourself."

With that in mind, Ricardo believes it's imperative to be an active member of your community—whether that's as an alum, in your neighborhood, or another aspect of your life—"It is important to pave the way for the future."

How is Ricardo paving the way? He was recently named the Neighborhood Enhancement Projects Coordinator for the Lancaster City Alliance, which seeks to strengthen communities to drive social and economic development.

"My goal is to build a strong base of leaders in Lancaster that is a force to be reckoned with. A force that can lead with strength, power, determination and overall, love for one another. In order to do that, we will be opening a center where we will organize trainings, workshops and opportunities for leadership development in Lancaster. I can't do it alone, though."



To get involved with Ricardo, visit www.lancastercityalliance.org.