

RODERICK COOK



Roderick is a proud Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies major from Coaldale, Pennsylvania by way of Nesquehoning. In their time at Penn, Roderick has found a home in the Penn LGBT Center and has been dedicated to fighting for LGBTQ justice and community-building, particularly for transgender and gender non-conforming people (GNC). They co-founded the organization Penn Non-Cis, a group specifically for trans and GNC people, led a team of youth activists in organizing a trans justice conference, and served on the Penn Lambda Alliance in four different positions. Roderick also organizes with Penn Students for Justice in Palestine and has interned at both the Leeway Foundation in Philadelphia and Lambda Legal in New York City. They are personally and politically invested in working with trans communities and addressing issues facing gender non-conforming people through writing, fostering spaces to build community, and organizing simultaneously against racism, anti-blackness, misogyny, colonialism, classism, and ableism. They enjoy drawing, microblogging, and playing video games with friends. Next year, they will strengthen their engagement in Philadelphia communities as a part of the Philly Fellows Program.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

BLACK LGBTQ WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL RESOURCE CENTERS AND FORMATION OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Demie Kurz, School of Arts & Sciences, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program

College campus cultural resource centers are designed to provide women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and other communities with friendship, mentorship, support, and, most importantly, a safe space where their experiences and identities are centered. This project explores what happens when one brings multiple identities into the cultural resource centers. Using the University of Pennsylvania as a case study, this project looks at how Black LGBTQ women, who embody experiences that bridge multiple cultural resource centers, feel safe, or unsafe, welcome, or unwelcome in these spaces. Through interview-based research, this project illuminates the similarities and differences among these women and, perhaps more importantly, the complex ways that they take it upon themselves to form intentional communities that prioritize Blackness, LGBTQ identity, and womanhood within and outside of the cultural centers themselves. Highlighting the participants' experiences and taking into consideration their suggestions, this project aims to help pave the way for important changes at a multitude of levels in order to make Penn and similar institutions safer for Black LGBTQ women.