His conservative, Hmong mother told him it would be better that he were dead than gay the first time Fresno State student Shai Chang approached the topic of homosexuality.

“I asked her what she thought of gay people, and she immediately was like, ‘are you gay?! Are you gay?!’” Chang said. “Basically, she made it seem like she had wasted her time raising me if I was gay, that it would be better if I was dead.”

Chang and several other “queer students of color” shared such experiences at a panel discussion on Wednesday. Many of them touched on the complexities of being both gay and of a minority race.

The discussion was hosted by the Cross Culture and Gender Center (CCGC) at Fresno State to give queer students of color a platform to voice their issues. Joury Robles, lead student coordinator of LGBTQ+ programs and services at the CCGC, moderated.

Five students of varied ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations spoke at the event. At the introduction, each student identified his or her most salient identities:

- **Jose Leanos**: Anthropology student, Mexican-American or Chicano, homosexual male.
- **Danika Brumbeloe**: Fashion merchandising student, biracial (black and white), bisexual/queer, “bi to the core.”
- **Cecilia Knadler**: Women’s studies and criminology student, from Lima, Peru, fluid lesbian/queer.
- **Shai Chang**: Sociology student, Hmong-Asian, gay.
- **Polet Campos**: Anthropology student, “queer-Catholic-Chicana.”

Although all the students hold unique identities, they face many similar issues of intersectionality. That is, they face a combination of oppressive institutions such as racism, sexism and homophobia.

“Our struggles are all very different, but they are all very significant,” Chang said. “We go through oppression twice – first, from our ethnicity and then from our sexuality. It’s really hard to be oppressed not just once but twice.”

Bridging the language barrier

One of the biggest obstacles Chang said he faced in expressing himself and his identity to his family was finding the right words. Articulating his sexuality is unique—
Election came down to 50 votes

Military women honored during week-long celebration

By Justin Johnson
@justinjohnson

Fresno State celebrated women who served the country for the first time this year, during the third week of Women’s History Month.

“It’s a very important week to recognize, because women in the military are such a small population that we need to bring our stories out,” said Tiffany March, a deaf-education major at Fresno State who is serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Brown acknowledged Deborah Sampson as the first woman to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. She disguised herself as a man so she could serve in the Revolutionary War against Great Britain.

A dinner held Wednesday night celebrated female service members as well as veterans gathered to share their experiences and personal stories.

“In the future, I hope that the celebration gets bigger, and, hopefully, we can celebrate here at Fresno State and invite other women in Fresno County as well — not just Fresno State,” said Cindy Chavarria, a criminology major who serves in the Army National Guard.

Female service members seek recognition and hope to break down gender stereotypes with this newly declared week of support for female troops.

“In the military culture, it’s so male-dominated, and even the business and you hear about the male stories all the time. It’s rare that [you] hear about the women’s military stories,” March said.

According to the Cal Vet website, women make up 14 percent of the active duty U.S. Armed Forces and 18 percent of the Guard and Reserves. Women also make up 8 percent of the total U.S. veteran population and 10 percent of the veteran population in California.

“A lot of the combat duties are barely transitioning for some of the branches. There has been a lot of testing. Some females are going through school of infantry to train to become infantrymen, but they haven’t actually filled those positions yet,” said Jessica Montano, information systems major and Marine veteran.

For more information visit, Veterans Services in the Joyal Administration Building.

The new ASI college senators include Kaile J. Hunt for Arts and Humanities; Nicholas T. Georgouses for the Craig School of Business; Chelsea M. Montes for Health and Human Services; Ga-Liliell Dillard for the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology; KC Rivera for the Kremen school of Education; Cameron G. Lane for the Lyles College of Engineering; Lennell Rivera for Science and Mathematics and Isahai I. Ali for Social Sciences.

The new senators-at-large are Alex Gallo, Deyvon Sereen, Blake Zante, Michael O. Nzambi, Mayra Casillas, Cora Y. Cha, Ally Zavalha and Manwinder Singh.

A total of 2,355 votes were counted in this year’s election.
We go through oppression twice – first, from our ethnicity and then from our sexuality

LGBT from Page 1

ly difficult given the limitations of his family’s native language. “InHMong, there isn’t a word to describe what gay is or what lesbian is.” The closest word is a Thai word, but it more closely describes transgender people. Many HMong can’t understand that they are very conservative and close-minded – they see the LGBT community as a source of problems.

Chang was not the only panelist who discussed problems with limited vocabulary to describe a subject as complicated as human sexuality. Campos said Spanish does not encompass a word for bisexual or queer, which made her coming out complicated and difficult. She said the term that kept coming up was “tortilla.” Usually, “tortilla” is used in a derogatory way to describe a lesbian or bisexual. The term comes from the tortilla-making process which involves putting tortilla dough back-and-forth. “I mean what kind of shit is that? The word was really hard to have that sort of pushed on to me. It’s one of those things where my identity isn’t taken seriously because I’m just a ‘tortilla.’

Oppression on campus

Most of the students had felt some type of oppression while on Fresno State’s campus. Some of the instances were obvious as felt by Leanos, Brumbeloe and Campos. Leanos said he first felt like an outsider in a freshman anthropol- ogy class when he presented his career goal of study sub-groups in the LGBT community.

“After that, the professor never called on me, and no one would sit by me. I felt isolated,” Leanos said. “I sort of gave up after that. I don’t say much about LGBT in classes anymore. The experience shut me up.”

Brumbeloe and Campos were targeted by the professors who recently visited campus. Brumbeloe said the professors saw a rainbow bracelet on her wrist and verbally said the preachers saw a rainbow. Campos said people will see her as opposed to her. “I’ve lost jobs because of the public eye, they feel confined to what the job was.”

Leanos said he has experienced oppression at work for both his race and sexuality. “I’ve lost jobs because of the way I looked, because I was racially profiled,” Leanos said. “Even though I was more than capable and interviewed well, at times when I had short hair, I looked like a gangster, and that wasn’t conducive to what the job was.”

Leanos said he has an expectation to be looked down on by white co-workers, because of his race and that coupled with the neg- ative ways he sees open LGBTQ+ co-workers treated is enough to make him hide his sexual identity.

Connecting to family and community

Being a part of a family or community is often a huge part of an individual’s identity. For some of the students on the panel fitting in is a complex art. For others, their sexuality has helped strengthen their ties to such groups.

Leanos has had a positive experience and said his coming out drew his family closer together. “I don’t feel safe just for being a woman, and then for being Chi- cana and then for being queer,” Campos said.

Chang expressed a sort of catch-22 in balancing his cultural, familial identity with his sexual- ity. He says in Asian culture indi- viduals are seen as representing their families more than just themselves. “There’s a term that means losing face,” Chang said. “It’s like dishonor. The moment I tell them when I am gay, I will be disowned because they don’t want to associ- ate with me being gay and being HMong.”

Chang said he loves HMong traditions and would be happy to have a HMong wedding but that would be almost impossible. He said he feels a sense of self-op- pression and stops himself from connecting to HMong culture be- cause he knows eventually he will be rejected. “You have to lose your tradi- tion to be gay. You can’t be both.”

Leanos expressed a sort of familial identity with his sexual- ity. “As she gets closer to ele- mentary school, I worry about administrators or other parents who might not want her to hang out with their children because of me,” Knadler said. Campos said, “My dad thinks it’s a good thing because it will be a cheaper wedding since I can’t marry a woman in a Catholic church and those are expensive.”

Campos said her family is more concerned for her safety and warns her about being open with the right people. Exploitation is a worry for Campos, who as a Lati- na says she feels fetishized and when people learn of her queer status, they assume she is open to anything. Campos and her family also fear she could be targeted for corrective rape given the machis- mo in Latin cultures.

“Don’t feel safe just for being a woman, and then for being Chi- cana and then for being queer,” Campos said.

Chang expressed a sort of catch-22 in balancing his cultural, familial identity with his sexual- ity. He says in Asian culture indi- viduals are seen as representing their families more than just themselves. “There’s a term that means losing face,” Chang said. “It’s like dishonor. The moment I tell them when I am gay, I will be disowned because they don’t want to associ- ate with me being gay and being HMong.”

Chang said he loves HMong traditions and would be happy to have a HMong wedding but that would be almost impossible. He said he feels a sense of self-op- pression and stops himself from connecting to HMong culture be- cause he knows eventually he will be rejected. “You have to lose your tradi- tion to be gay. You can’t be both.”

In society

All of the students on the panel expressed dodging labels in one form or another. Many times, in the public eye, they feel confined to stereotypes. Chang said once people know that he is gay, they think he is at- tracted to every guy he comes in contact with. “Everything I do is gay, ev- erything I touch is gay,” Chang said. “I can’t hang out with guys without people assuming things. Sometimes I will hear guys saying I was hitting on them, and I’m like, ‘Wow don’t flirt yourself.’”

Brumbeloe said people will see the parts of her they want to see. If it is convenient for people to think of her as black and straight, then that is all she becomes to them. “They don’t hear that my favor- ite color is purple and that I sew clothes,” Brumbeloe said. “They see, ‘OK we got this black girl and she’s bi – OK got it.’ Then there’s this stamp they put on me. People say I didn’t know black girls could be bi, and I’m like ‘Yeah, we come in all different colors.’

The next step

The panel concluded by dis- cussing how other people can be stronger allies. They all agreed that people do not need to relate to their problems because it is of- ten dismissive. Instead they said they just need someone to listen. The discussants also agreed they and other queer people of color would benefit from more visibility. They felt events and dis- cussions like the panel would be beneficial.

“We should have more talks like this because it promotes di- versity, one of Fresno State’s missions, one of Fresno State’s goals,” Chang said.
The Fresno State men’s basketball team fell to Utah 80-69 as its comeback effort fell short in the first round of the NCAA tournament Thursday night in Denver.

The Bulldogs had to play catch up basketball for most of the game after trailng big early but went on a 10-0 run after senior guard Julien Lewis scored seven straight points to help give his team its first lead of the game at 49-48.

“Tonight, we didn’t do a great job at the start of the ballgame,” Fresno State fifth-year head coach Rodney Terry said. “We didn’t make decisive plays, we didn’t make good decision-making plays in the first half. I thought we were much, much better in the second half. As a direct result of that, we had a ballgame with seven minutes to go.”

Mountain West Player of the Year Marvelle Harris helped sparked the comeback early in the second half but it wasn’t enough to withstand a barrage of 3-pointers and stifling defense from Utah.

Sophomore 7-footer and projected NBA lottery pick Jakob Poeltl also fueled the Utes with 16 points and a career-high 18 rebounds in the big win as the Bulldogs were outrebounded 38-15 in the match.

Utah went on a huge 19-2 late in the game to give it its biggest lead of the game at 16. The Utes never relinquished the lead after falling behind for the first time all night.

Poeltl scored on a crafty play as he got fouled to stop the run and control the rest of the game.

With their season on the line, the ‘Dogs made one last push and scored nine straight points to cut the deficit to eight with two minutes left in the game.

Harris led the Bulldogs with 24 points and junior forward Karachi Edo and Lewis each chipped in with 14 points apiece.

“This team is going to fight, we’re going to play Bulldog basketball and we did everything we could to win the game but today we came up short,” Edo told the Mountain West Network after the game.

“Hopefully the guys that come back next year are ready to play Bulldog basketball and represent this university.”

Junior guard Lorenzo Bonam had 17 points and Brandon Taylor added 16 for the Utes, who will try for their second-straight trip to the Sweet 16 when they face Seton Hall or Gonzaga on Saturday night.

The loss terminates the Bulldogs’ season and snaps a nine-game win streak that dated back to Feb. 17.

“We came a long way,” Harris said. “We didn’t just want to make the tournament, we wanted to win, of course. But we came a long way. I’m proud of the program, players, coaches and community. We showed a lot of grit and toughness this season.”