

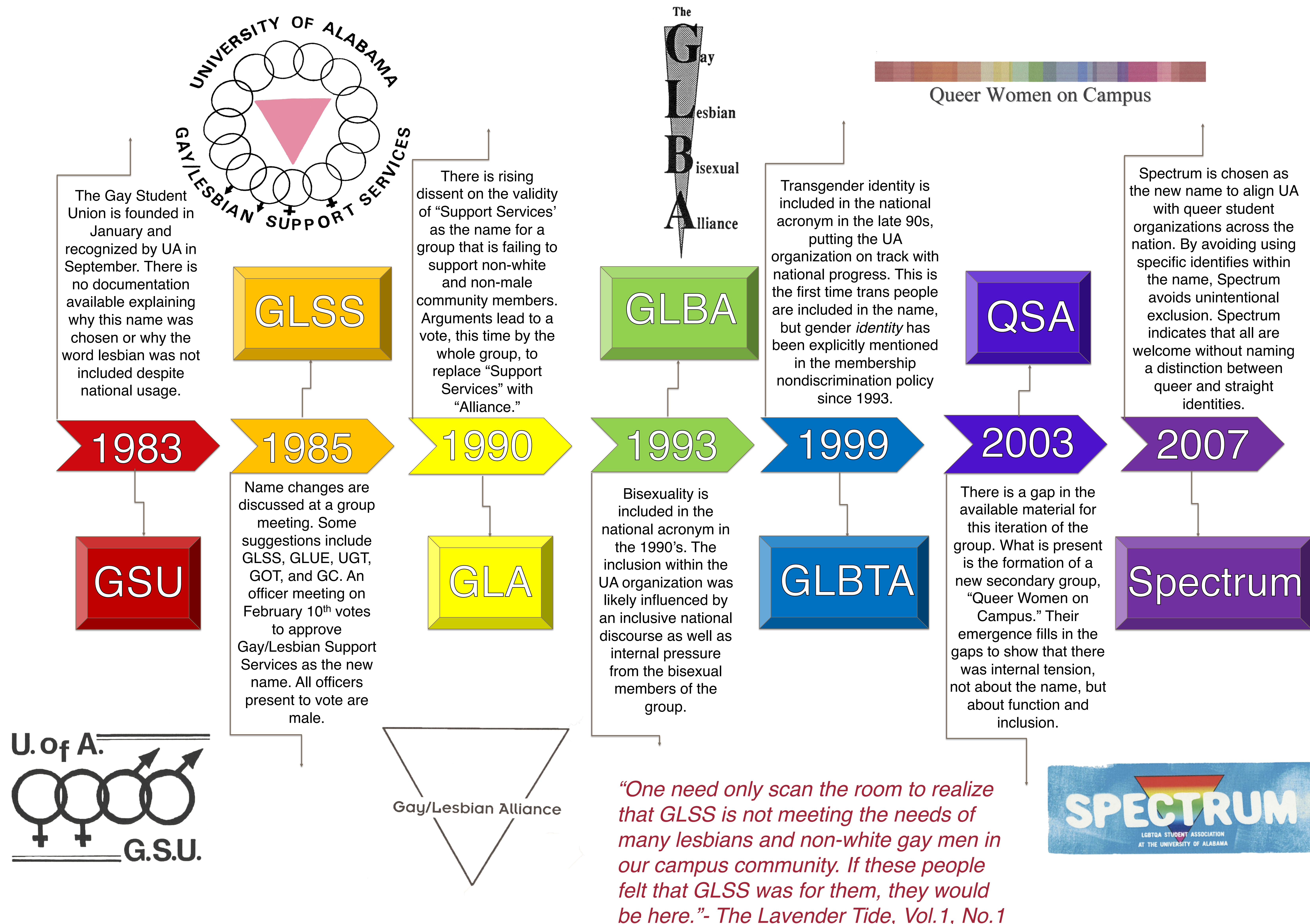
# The Power of Naming: Language and the Construction of Queer Community

Monica Bello

Dr. John Giggie

*The University of Alabama and The Invisible Histories Project*

## How the Name Changes



## Introduction

When presented with the opportunity to research an archival collection for the first time, I began by creating a timeline for personal use. I intended to use it as a tool through which I would be able to contextualize what I found in the archive. As my work progressed, I began to see the timeline connecting the actions of the group to the language shifts in the organization's name.

As a public relations student, the first thing I analyze in any organization is their internal relations and how they seek to define themselves. Then, I analyze how well that definition is being communicated externally. Finally, I look at how the organization is being perceived by the people they are reaching.

By analyzing the queer student organization at the University of Alabama, I learned about how they constructed queer community, how they attempted to serve that community, and what function the community played in their lives.

## Conclusions

Shared language and the act of naming oneself are two of the central axes of the queer experience. They are part of discovery and acceptance of identity, as well as the discovery and construction of community. This is why I believe following linguistic shifts is an important part of examining our own queer communities on campus, locally, and nationally.

It is important to note that name changes represent more than what gets printed on flyers. The changing organization name is indicative of power and representation. The power given by the name should be reflective of forward progress toward inclusivity and greater democracy. That being said, names are as aspirational as they are powerful. They should represent our actions just as much as our intentions and desires.

## REFERENCES

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