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## Interview with Hope Estes on August 13, 2021

Hope Estes

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# Hope Estes 8:13:21

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

spu, felt, haven, people, campus, lgbtq issues, club, conversations, students, grew, friends, lgbtq, meeting, events, group, christian, human sexuality, called, professors, remember

## SPEAKERS

Rebecca Cavanaugh, Hope Estes

### Rebecca Cavanaugh 00:02

All right. So let's start with some background information. Can you tell me a little bit about where you grew up the politics, you know, family size, were they progressive or traditional affirming

### Hope Estes 00:17

was great. I grew up, I spent the latter half of my childhood in Vancouver, Washington. But I lived kind of up and down the West Coast, until then a little bit in California and Oregon. To get most of my childhood in Washington, grew up in a family of five, my parents are still married. Um, I grew up in a very Christian and very conservative, household. Religion, you know, our Christian faith was mine, it was like my whole world, I went to public school for most of my childhood. But outside of school, you know, all of my social activities. Pretty much every part of my day was influenced by my family's fear. So it was a huge part of the development of my worldview, and you know, everything. You know, just really everything in my childhood was all about our faith.

### Rebecca Cavanaugh 01:21

And so what did your family and yourself, think about LGBTQ plus issues? You know, as you're growing up? What kind of conversations did you have about that in your community?

### Hope Estes 01:32

Um, I, it sounds so cliché to say, but I had an uncle who was gay, you know, when I was a child, and so even, even as a young child growing up in a church that really didn't talk a whole lot about gay people, I grew up at least, like, acknowledging that, you know, gay people did like exist. And I like to say that I grew up in kind of love the sinner Hate the sin household, but in it, hate the sinner Hate the sin, religious group. So like, the, the church that I was part of growing up with was probably more anti gay than my own parents were. But it was definitely a very love the sinner Hate the sin. You know, the Bible says it's wrong. And so we believe it's wrong, but obviously, you know, everyone is made in the image of God. And so we love everyone equally. That was kind of what I was taught as a child.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 02:34**

Yeah. Thank you. Um, and so I guess, before you came to SBU, did you have any convictions about that, that are notable or?

**Hope Estes 02:47**

Yeah, you know, I, when I was in high school, a group of students at my school my senior year tried to start a GSA, I was not part of that group. But I had friends who, who were gay, who I knew were gay at that point. And I was like, really, already by that age, I was wrestling with that with, you know, how do I reconcile these like people I know and love with what my face and my parents and everybody around me are teaching me about homosexuality from the Bible. And then this group of students tried to start a GSA at my high school, which was a public high school, but in a very conservative area. And I remember, the teacher who I'd really loved in middle school came to a school board meeting for this high school GSA. It was like a hearing about it, because it was a huge deal. And he said that if we let this GSA start and have, you know, meetings on campus that are high school, that it was only a matter of time before a neo nazi group started at my high school, and I remember at the time being like, okay, I feel like I need to maybe re examine my thoughts on this issue, because I know that that is right. I know that that is a wrong way to think about it. And I think that's when I started really admitting that they were like, in consistencies, which would with between what I was seeing in the world before me and what I had already always been taught. But it wasn't until college that I really started to like, actually question my belief that homosexuality was wrong.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 04:26**

Yeah, thank you for sharing on that. And so at SPU, you were a student, correct. What? What was your major?

**Hope Estes 04:38**

It was Sociology? I graduated in 2013. So I was there from fall '09 to spring 2013. I was also Uscholar. Yeah.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 04:55**

And so why did you decide to come to SPU

**Hope Estes 05:00**

My sister had gone to su she was four years above me. So she was about to graduate as I was coming in. And we were really close. I liked the idea of being in the city with her. But I also really loved the idea of SPU, I visited a lot when she was a student. She really loved it. She was also a Uscholar, loved being Uscholar, her cohort was really close. And, you know, I loved the idea of going to a Christian school because I was still pretty deeply faithful at that time in my life. And I wanted to like kind of Metropolitan experience of being in Seattle, but with a real strong Christian foundation. So it all worked out really well.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 05:46**

Yeah. I guess now, I kind of want to, I want to get back to the question of, yeah, I want I want to ask more specifically about how you mentioned, just before your view on LGBTQ Plus, you know, homosexuality, in terms of Christianity, how that perspective changed, as somebody that still identified as straight. Can you describe that for me?

**Hope Estes 06:15**

Yeah, you know, by the time I was entering college, I was already, I think, somewhere in my heart, I already knew that I No, no, no longer believed that homosexuality was wrong. But I think I it took me a lot a while to, like, say it out loud, even to friends or like my sister. And it took me even longer to say it out loud to my parents, which is, which makes me kind of sad now, because my parents have been on this journey with me, you know, but back then they were more conservative than I was even. And then I started taking social sociology classes. You know, I was very lucky that my very first quarter in school, I got to meet Dr. Neuhauser, who really was a was a really big part of like my awakening slash. I don't know. So it's sort of like breaking a chain of this like doctrine that I had been taught, right. So I met professors, like Dr. Neuhauser, who, who really mattered a lot. And we're pretty open with students, even with students who were young and still really scared about this idea. They were really open with their beliefs. And I thought that was really cool. And, and then I made friends, and then my sophomore years when I started going to Haven. And at that point, I knew I was pretty firm in my belief at that point. But I didn't know how to talk to anyone else in my life about it. And then a dear friend had heard about haven. I don't know how she heard about it, because it wasn't really advertised at the time. But she heard about it from another friend. And she asked me to go with her once. This was probably halfway through my sophomore year. And I immediately fell in love with it. I knew that this was a community I wanted to be a part of. And it was that community that really gave me like the language I needed to like, say out loud to my family, that I didn't believe that being gay was a sin anymore. And it gave me the resources I needed to like have those really tough conversations with myself and with my parents and with other friends who were maybe not there yet. Other people in my faith community who were not there at that point yet. Yeah, so healing was really what gave me that like, last big push I needed.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 08:44**

Yeah. Thank you. And So, okay, so you mentioned that haven really helped you find this space to have those conversations. Do those conversations ever extend to other places on campus, like in your dorm or faculty and staff members?

**Hope Estes 09:19**

Yeah, you know, I remember talking to my other friends who were not like I had one friend who had like, pulled me into the Haven group. But I had all these other friends from classes and from the dorms who were not part of it and I was really open with them about everything that I was like learning and everything that was like really like for you know, for a while for the first like year maybe that I was involved in a group it was like I had this like firing me I was like, so angry at like, everything I had been taught and So excited to be learning this cool new stuff, this new truth about the world and about humanity. And I was so eager to share it with all my friends. So there were a lot of conversations that I had with friends and other faculty members. And it was also a time when a lot of those conversations were happening in other spaces on campus, you know, with, with or without me, like, you know, I had

this little sphere of influence, but then there was also just lots of stuff happening at once around campus and Haven was gaining, gaining more visibility and other things related to LGBTQ issues. We're also getting more visibility. So it was a, it felt like a really big moment of change on campus. For this issue, and for, you know, queer students.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 10:51

Yeah. Can you describe how some of those conversations went with other students? Was it usually positive? Or was there sometimes pushback or just space to agree but disagree? or disagree with, you know, civilly?

**Hope Estes** 11:07

You know, I did not have a lot of conversations where someone openly disagreed with me, I remember a lot of conversations where people did agree with me, or like, they mostly did, and maybe they were like, trying to get they're trying to understand a certain, you know, concept, or maybe like, I was never went for debating, but I do remember sometimes like having debates about like, specific passages in Scripture. But then there were also lots of conversations where, like, people didn't know what to say, or I could tell that they disagreed with me, and they weren't going to budge. But maybe they wanted to be polite about it. So I think, and I remember, like, I remember one time walking home from an event that Haven had sponsored, and on the way back to the dorm, overhearing a guy that I was that I knew from class, but I wasn't really friends with he was like, maybe 50 feet ahead of me. And he didn't know I was behind him as he was walking back with a friend. And I remember him saying something like, I disagree with, like, so much of what we just learned, but I like don't know how to talk about it, because I don't feel like I like, I feel like people will be mad at me if I like say, I disagree with this stuff. And I definitely felt that sometimes talking to people like they were they didn't think it was worth it to disagree, because, I don't know. I don't know why people do that.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 12:38

Yeah. Did. Did you have any professors that ever facilitated conversations in the classroom? about these topics?

**Hope Estes** 12:46

Yeah, other sociology professors did, you know, which I guess, is not really surprising, you know, in in conversations about discrimination and conversations about, you know, discrimination against people based on their gender, or, you know, misogyny and the patriarchy. There were lots of conversations about that, but not as many. In other classes, I remember a few in like, Ufound 2000, or 3000, maybe not as much in in 1000. The professors that I took the two and 3000, with were a little bit more progressive. And I remember some of that, but it was like, we could only like dip our toes into those conversations and like a larger group of students who were who represented like a pretty broad spectrum of belief about this issue. Yeah.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 13:53

Yeah, thank you. Um, I kinda want to ask ya, I want to ask about how your faith if you're, if you still identify as Christian, how it grew or changed in relation to this, you know, personal growth that you also went through.

**Hope Estes 14:20**

I would say that my faith grew. And I mean, it changed pretty radically in college, left college. very much a completely different Christian that I entered in. But for a while, it really seemed like my faith was growing like I felt like I was like, breaking free of these old beliefs. And like I said, like, it felt like I was unlocking these truths about the universe, not just about like LGBTQ issues, but about issues of race and class and, you know, issues related to like immigration and all of that stuff. And it all felt very connected and I felt like I was for The first time in my life I was encountering people who were deeply Christian, deeply faithful, devout people, who also like, cared a lot about justice and wanted to talk about it and wanted to talk about, like, what are our responsibilities to society as Christians. And so there were times in college where I felt like I was kind of on fire, you know, for Jesus. But I really struggled to find a church home in that time, as well. And the issue of homosexuality was really like, the biggest barrier to me finding a church home, I felt like every time I started to go to a place, and I go for a few months, and I really like it, I would find out that the pastor like, secretly hated gay people, or one time, I really thought that I had found my new church home, and then I found out that you couldn't, according to like church bylaws, you couldn't officially register as a member if you were gay. And I just never could find a place that like, fit what I needed from a church, like, you know, spiritually and pastorally, and also, like, aligned with my growing and rapidly changing political views. So by the time I left school, I still called myself a Christian. And I really tried a continued for years to try to go to church. But no, I don't consider myself a Christian now.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 16:29**

Yeah, thank you. How did it? So how did it feel, being in this super progressive city, while also living and, you know, being in this community, at SPU? Where there's often very different ideas than what you know, Seattle as a whole would have? Was there any tension in that, from your experience?

**Hope Estes 16:58**

You know, not as much as I think, you know, looking back, I think there could have been more and maybe that's just because I didn't interact with the city with the rest of the city a whole lot. You know, I, I don't know if people still talk about the SPU bubble. But that was a thing that was like a term that we use back then. And it was definitely a real thing. You know, I lived on campus for two years, and then I lived, you know, in Ballard. So I was still pretty close to campus, and I don't, and, you know, all of my, like, almost all of my social groups were still like, based around SPU. Um, so I don't feel like I experienced a whole lot of, like, tension, I was definitely aware, even at the time that SPU on the whole was more conservative than the rest of the city and a little bit more like insular. But I just cherished those experiences that I got to have of like, being out in the city and like, experiencing, like, a broader swath of society and like, learning about political issues, like firsthand and seeing, you know, stuff like that, you know, getting to know like Capitol Hill, getting to understand like the gay community in Seattle was was really great, but it never felt like a huge tension.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 18:24**

Thank you. Great, let's now shift more specifically to Haven and your involvement in activism, or leadership. If not, specifically activism. Why did you feel called to that? No,

**Hope Estes 18:44**

I, so my friend brought me to the group. And I felt very drawn to it, I started going really frequently. And at the end of my sophomore year, I'd only been, you know, coming to meetings for like, three or four months, but all three of the leaders were graduating. And they needed new leaders. And so they approached me and a couple other people and asked if we wanted to be involved, you know, moving forward, and I had no idea like, what, what it was gonna be like, I didn't know what I was gonna do. And I also wasn't sure about like, what I could do for the group as a straight person. But I was also not the only straight person on our on the leadership team for at least for my junior year. So we were like, well, I guess we just guess we just do it and we figure it out. But it felt like it felt like I didn't have a choice. I felt like I absolutely had to do it because this was this was rapidly becoming like the most important issue in my life. And I had all these new friends and I could see the hurt that they were experiencing at the hands of the church and at the hands of their families, you know, on because of, you know, anti gay views in the church. And I felt like I had to be a part of this. This was like, my calling for that time. Yeah.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 20:19**

Yeah, that makes sense. And so, what did you want to see in your leadership? Like, what were your goals going into it? What were the things that, you know, if you, maybe it was just creating continuing to keep that space is a safe space? Or were there any specific goals that you really were looking for?

**Hope Estes 20:43**

Yeah, um, in, you know, in addition to just basic goals of like, continuing to have this space and growing it growing our visibility on campus, we wanted club status, because we didn't have a status back then. When I came, Haven had, just recently, I don't remember when, but just recently had been granted, I think, what they called student interest group status. And from what I understand, it was sort of a made up status that the administration made. So it felt like just a phone that they had thrown at him, like, hey, then is asking for club status, we're not going to give it to them. But we'll tell them that there's some kind of official student interest group, so that we could officially book rooms to meet on campus that was that was like the stated reason was like, You don't necessarily have the right to book a classroom to have a meeting, you know, during like evening hours, unless you're like an official group. And so this was the way to do it. Because there had been times before I joined haven that haven had to meet like in secret off campus, because they didn't even have the right to do that. But this was a way for the administration to say like, No, you can meet on campus, but without giving us the like, benefits and rights of club status. So that was like our main, like, future goal. Like we want club status, we want to be like on equal footing with other clubs.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 22:16**

Yeah. And so what are some of the ways that you, you and your leader and your leadership and your teammates, what are some ways that you guys worked towards that?



**Hope Estes 22:34**

Well, there were letters written to the administration to the like student life. I don't know. If like the, maybe the Vice President of Student Life. At one point we requested to the board of trustees to remove the statement of human sexuality, or at least revise it, they did not do that. They there were, I think at one point, we might have petitioned to ASSP to get club status. But I don't think it ever went to a vote. I think that the like, administrators nixed that before it went to a vote with like the ASSP Senate. You know, we we tried to like advertise on campus as much as we could. That was a fight for a while. But then we got we got permission to like put up posters eventually. So we did that we, my fall of my junior year. So this is my first year as a haven leader, we really wanted to go to involve-O-Rama. I don't know if that's what they still call it. But that was the club fair. And our argument was, we're an official student group. So we should be able to go but because we were not technically at Club, we weren't a registered club. They said no. And I got some advice. Me and the other leaders got some advice from some professors who were really trusted about what we should do about it. And they advised to not do anything to just let it slide. And then we'll you know, we'll find another fight. I didn't want to do that. And so we set up our own table at the very end of the line of tables that involve around that year, against, you know, what we had been told, and I think we got maybe about half an hour and before an administrator came and told us we had to break down our table and leave. But I think we made t shirts. And like, I brought my little clipboard and I was like, I felt like such a rebel. Trying to sign up people to haven you know? It was like, it's so funny, but it felt like such an important fight at the time and we never got club status, not while I was satisfied. But I think they did. Just Just a couple of years later, it was pretty soon after I graduated.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 25:03**

It was. Yeah, thank you for sharing all those. Yeah, they were able to get club status in 2013.

**Hope Estes 25:15**

Right. So it was like, right after I graduated.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 25:18**

I think it may have been the fall right after because that's when Adam had, he described it all and how it happened. I think he mentioned that he was right after you graduated. Kind of off of that then. You kind of more, like you did a lot of work into just like, you know, come to this come to these meetings. Like, that's a great thing. Like, how was what was your like, go to way of doing that. Even just like in your own, you know, friendships and getting to know people?

**Hope Estes 25:59**

Oh, yeah. Like, if I just like, saw people around, and I was trying to convince them to come. I mean, I think I told people, I think we all told people that, like, haven was just a place for people to come together and talk about sexuality, like that was, you know, it was, it's, you know, I like have followed him and over the years, and it seems like it is much more now, like an explicitly queer group, like it's for queer students. But it was more like a GSA back then. And so it was more like, let's all just come together and like, discuss, because it was, it was an issue that because we were on a Christian campus needed, like discussion all the time. Sometimes we would call it a discussion group. And sometimes we



would call it a club. Or, you know, a support group. But that's how I would talk to people about it to do like this, just this group, where we come together, and we talk about sexuality. We talk about sex, gender, and we learn stuff from each other, we learn stuff from other people. And we talk about, you know, what it's like to be part of these communities on campus and, and what our role is and how our faith plays into this. Yeah, and I don't know if I like recruited a lot of people that way. But I do remember having those discussions, I think more, a lot more of the recruitment came from other members, just like, you know, occasionally bringing a friend here and there, and that's where we got people in. But we were never a very large group, at least not back then.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 27:34**

Right. Um, how did you guys? Did you ever get any pushback in terms of planning a meeting? Or, you know, getting, you know, so you were hoping to have a certain speaker come to the campus to talk during a meeting? Was there any pushback from Admin? Because you didn't have club status at the time?

**Hope Estes 27:59**

Yeah. No, nothing I remember in my time, so I led the 2011 and 2012 school years. I don't remember any pushback during the planning process. I remember like, you know, sometimes hearing like chatter, negative feedback from people who disagreed with the subject, like after an event, you know, we hosted this thing called pastor panel. And then there was this thing that we called gender diversity panel, where we had people representing different, you know, gender experiences, come and talk to us. But I don't think we ever like, not in the time that I was there, I don't think we ever faced, like opposition, like any protests, or like, I don't think an administrator ever told us we couldn't host an event. So that felt lucky at the time. Felt like, you know, at least they're giving us stuff.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 28:56**

Yeah. And were there ever any, like smaller events? Maybe that weren't even specifically, like, Haven related, but just smaller conversations that may have happened in dorms or? Yeah, like, more like unofficial ones. Do you remember any?

**Hope Estes 29:17**

Yeah. I don't know about smaller events. I mean, so my senior year, I was also involved in the young Democrats. And we also talked a lot about like, LGBTQ issues, especially the first quarter of the year, because that was fall 2012 and that's when the referendum 74 campaign was going on. So that's when like, gay marriage was about to become born in Washington, and it was, oh my gosh, it was such a big, such a big deal. Um, and so that, you know, that year, REF 74 stuff, like really consumed a lot of conversations on campus. And so it was a really cool moment, because it was like that conversation was everywhere, at least on like the lease, like the gay marriage conversation was kind of everywhere. Um, and then there were also other events that were like, bigger events that were not explicitly about like LGBTQ issues, maybe they were about like sex, or they were about like gender, where they were about like the patriarchy or something like that, where they were like, you know, themes related to the LGBTQ experience, like woven throughout, like I remember once. I think this might have been an annual thing back then there was this staging of these essays were like kind of

very short plays, that were all edited by Eve Ensler who wrote The Vagina Monologues, but it was called a memory, a monologue, a rant and a prayer. It was like this collection of essays, it's like book that she had edited. And we like staged a bunch of readings of these a few times, and I think, Sophia, the like, feminist club, hosted that back back in the day. And so there were, you know, LGBTQ themes in there. And there was this big event, I remember in the spring of 2011, called let's talk about sex. I don't know if they still do that either. I think they did it a few times. And that was the first time where like, it seems like half of the school came and had these like, big like, really, like, intimate, uncomfortable, but like really important discussions about like sex and sexuality. And they were hosted by Tina Sellars, the professor. And they were really cool. And they were, I remember there being like, a really long q&a portion of the night. And there were questions about like, homosexuality and LGBTQ issues, then. So there were all kinds of little discussions about that little events where that was a part of the theme, even if it wasn't like a haven event.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 32:15**

Yeah, you mentioned Sofia, that feminist club. I was wondering if did Haven and Sophia ever, like, do joint events? What can you share about that? Because it's come up with it's come up in our research. And we were kind of wondering what role that they played in regard to LGBTQ plus topics and Haven?

**Hope Estes 32:41**

Yeah, I feel like we did do joint events sometime. Or if we didn't, there was a lot of overlap in the membership. And like the people who like went to regular meetings, like I went to Sofia meetings for a little while, and then I got pretty busy with other stuff. But like, I had other friends who had like, come to haven meetings, sometimes who also went to Sofia meetings pretty frequently. And yeah, but I can't for the life of me remember for sure if we ever co hosted official events. But it never felt like we were like, in conflict with each other. And like, you know, back then I didn't have a concept of like, what turf was, you know, and like, it never felt like any, like, I never thought that like any kind of feminist cause could be, could ever be in conflict with like people who were fighting for LGBTQ rights. And now I understand that sometimes there are sometimes there can be like clashing values. But I was not aware of that at the time. And I don't think that Sophia like was that ever to be. But yeah, I wish I could remember more about that.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 34:08**

No, no worries. What you said helps. Let's see. I guess I kind of just want to ask, what are your most notable memories about your leadership in Haven? You may have already shared some of them. But how do you feel like you made an impact or helped to pass the baton is as a you know, straight woman?

**Hope Estes 34:44**

Yeah, yeah. Um, my, one of the very first meetings like the first or second or maybe third meeting of the year, my junior year so this would have been my you know, my first Quarter as a as a Haven meter, there were some incoming freshmen who, who joined the group, like really quickly, you know, they came to the first couple meetings of the school year. And I remember this one meeting, I wish I could remember which one it was, but it was one of the first where there was a student who he had a lot to

say during the meeting. But he didn't say, like, what his sexual orientation was, and, and, like, back then we didn't like, didn't talk about pronouns a lot. And we also didn't, we didn't like, wanted to not pressure anyone to talk to, like, name their, you know, orientation. And I remember at the very end of this meeting, you know, we were just doing like introductions talking about, like, what are some events that we want to do this year? What are some, like goals that we have, and this student stood up, and he had brought his roommate with him, you know, this, this kid that he had only known for, like, a week at this point, or something. And he stood up, and he came out to us in this meeting, and he said that he did, like, never told anyone, but like, his closest friends from high school that like he hadn't told his family or like, anyone else that's, you know, sp, it hadn't told his roommate that. And I remember his roommate, like standing up, and you know, this is just like, a regular straight guy. And they hugged and he was like, you know, I'm here for you, like, I love you. And that was like, a really, is a really cool way to like, start that time feeling like, Oh, we like actually can do like a little bit of good. Like, maybe we can't like radically change this like school forever. But at least we can like give, if we can give a few students a feeling of safety so that they can come out while they're here. You know, that's worth whatever annoyance we have to go through when like struggling with the administration. So that was a good moment, and a really good way to like start my term as a leader. What else? Oh, you know, when when ref 74 passed, that was just just an unbelievable high for like, weeks, you know, when we knew it was going to pass, it seemed pretty likely at the time, like, you know, like the campaign was doing well. And the young Democrats were involved in it as well. And I think Sofia might have been involved in as well. So they were like, you know, posters around campus. And like, everybody had, like, I had a lawn sign, like in my window, and I would like, take it with me, I had, everybody had pins. And it was, you know, we were all like, so excited for this, like, huge thing. And at that point, I think only like maybe five other states had passed, you know, gay marriage laws. And so it was, you know, this new big thing. And then it passed. And I remember going to like a party and capitol hill on the street that night, like election night 2012. And literally just dancing in the street with a bunch of my like, friends from school. And I made a rainbow cake with like rainbow layers of cake, and then rainbow frosting. And I brought it to the next Haven meeting. And we call it the gake. I remember like sitting in that room, eating the gake, just like marveling with all my friends at like what a momentous day that was. And then I remember going to some of the first on the first day that like, gay marriage became legal. There was this big celebration at city hall where like a bunch of people signed up to be like the first gay couples getting married in Washington. And me and some of my friends went and like, watched these couples, like come out of the courthouse come down the steps are come out of City Hall come down the steps and there was like, streamers and like champagne, and it was so exciting. So those were like, you know, big, good moments. I also will never forget that involve-o-rama being like kicked out of this club event. And I remember other people from other clubs being like, this is not fun. Like, this is ridiculous. You shouldn't have to leave but you know, so it was nice to know that we had like support from other clubs at least. Those are some big moments.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 39:49**

Yeah. Thank you for sharing those. Yeah. If you have no other like stories, I'd love to move into the reflection time. How do you feel that you're in leadership in Haven? The activism that you were involved in? How do you feel like that impacted your calling? After you left SPU?

**Hope Estes 40:13**

Hmm. You know, so I was a sociology major. So at the same time that I was, you know, getting really involved in him, and I was also learning a lot about other injustice and inequities in the world. And I knew, I knew that I wanted to do something as a career that like, served humanity or served the public and I didn't really know what that was yet. Um, and then I went to grad school eventually, and got a Master's in Public Administration. And now I work in the public sector, I work for my state's Department of Transportation. And you know, equity is a small but very important, like thread, through my whole career through everything I do every day. Because I'm always having to think about like, who are the historically marginalized communities that are represented in like, a project that I'm doing like outreach for because I do public outreach. And so while like, specifically LGBTQ issues are not like a huge part of my you know, everyday work life. Like the fight for equity in the fight for justice is is very much still part of it. And I don't think I would ever want a career without was not at least a little bit of it.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 41:49**

Yeah. That makes sense. What, what is your relationship with SPU now? How do you feel about SPU? This can be very specific to what's been going on in the last year.

**Hope Estes 42:06**

Yeah, yeah. Um, I still have so many beautiful memories of my time in SPU. And I'm really grateful for it. And like, most of the majority of the people who I would call my closest friends, I met there. And we all have my friends and I represent a pretty broad spectrum of like, current relationship to SPU. But all of us have, like, things that I don't know sort of make us cringe sometimes when we think about or, you know, just make us like, roll our eyes. You know, I'm, I'm very disappointed that the Board of Trustees has not, I feel like they're not making a good faith effort to grow or change in any way. And I am sad, because I feel like I'm, I'm at this point in my life in my career, where I finally have resources that I could give to the university and like, I want to be able to do that someday I'd like to be able to, you know, give back to the school that, you know, gave me a lot of good in my life. But I've had to tell, you know, the students who call for you know, from the, like, fundraising office several times recently that like, I will not donate to SPU until they change or remove the statement on human sexuality. And so it's like, it feels weird to take this like hard line on this one issue. But like, man, is it ever an important one? And with us, do you like in the news so much recently, and you know, in my own, like, Instagram feed and my Twitter feed? Sometimes I feel a little bit of, like, shame and embarrassment, but like, I gave so much money and so much time to this institution that has not really grown very much in the almost decade. I've been away from it.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 42:06**

Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. And so you've kind of mentioned but what do you still think needs to be changed? At SPU?

**Hope Estes 44:23**

I think the statement on human sexuality needs to be drastically changed or at least removed, or, I guess removed or at least changed to reflect a broader and more modern understanding of, you know, what sexuality is and what you know, I think that like the dignity is a really important discussion when

talking about sex and about human sexuality. And I think that the statement on human sexuality lacks any real discussion dignity. And it could be like, I don't think it necessarily needs to go away entirely. I think it could be a really good document a statement of what we believe about sex and dignity as University. But as it stands now, you know, it's just a, it's just a statement of doctrine. And I think it's outdated. I think it's pretty clear that a significant portion of the student body and the faculty disagree with it. And it's embarrassing for the school. It's gone on this long, I think.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 45:39**

Yeah. And so what would you tell the LGBTQ plus community, the haven leadership, the just the students that are SPU now and future students that will be continuing to do this effort? What would you tell them as they go forward? That's a tough one. You know, because I'm not a member of the LGBT community, myself, I, I often don't feel like I have any, like, Great advice to share. I think that something that I've had to learn in order to like, tamp myself down sometimes in moments of anger at SPU is that like, why, while this university is important, it's an important part of the life journey of the students that come through it, that there's so much outside of it and after it, and like, even if we continue, even if, you know, Haven and other advocates, and the faculty and all these people who want these changes to happen for students and for faculty, even if they continue to fail, and the Board of Trustees continues to hold this hardline, that there's still so much good to be done. In on campus and in the world, and they're still like, it's still worth it to have this community, it's still worth it to fight these fights, to try to get equal treatment, equal employment opportunities, equal, you know, club opportunities, it's like, always worth it to keep doing it, even if it keeps failing. Yeah, thank you. Um, is there anything that I didn't ask about, that you believe is important for our research? Or just, you know, your story?

**Hope Estes 47:42**

I wrote down some notes of things I wanted to say, but I think I said, Yeah, I think I said this a little bit toward the beginning. But, you know, for, for all the faults that I see now, in the institution of Christianity, and in the, you know, the employment discrimination that SPU is currently, you know, engaging in and the statement on human sexuality, for all the faults in there, like, SPU is still like, for myself, and I'm sure for other people, like the first Christian community I encountered in my life where there was like, any kind of progressive attitudes and like, you know, it, like compared to my beliefs, and my politics, and my, you know, whatever I believe about like, the world in a higher power, now, it feels so conservative. But compared to where I came from, such a huge step up. And like, that's not nothing like that. Still, that still matters. So I like I'll always be so grateful for like, the professors who I had in my life who like modeled a way to be a really faithful Christian while also wrestling with these like modern issues, and being willing to have their minds changed. There's so many really good people that I'm so grateful for.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh 49:34**

Yeah, thank you for sharing that. So now, I just kinda want to ask if there's any documents or emails or photographs from your time, or social media posts that you would be willing to share that you feel are relevant. Yeah, this is a pretty broad question. Yeah. Yeah. I know that you're mentioned several times in some Falcon article. And we do have access to though. Yeah. And I do have access to the Haven Facebook page. Great. But are there any, like specific emails? Maybe that you feel are relevant? Hmm.

**Hope Estes** 50:18

That's a good question. Sure, there might be, I might, I must have like some kind of emails or I'll look through my email records and see if there's anything or maybe I have some like, I don't maybe I have, like some posters that we made for events are something that I definitely have pictures of lots of pictures of people holding rec. 74 signs. I have pictures of that cake, the cake.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 50:51

I would certainly love whatever you can give.

**Hope Estes** 50:55

I have some of those. I also have, um, we were also featured just like very in just a passing way in this Christianity Today article in like 2012, early 2013. That was about groups like us, but on other campuses to see if I can dig that up.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 51:18

Yes, that would be so helpful. What was it a Seattle or a Christian? Today?

**Hope Estes** 51:23

Christianity Today? Yeah. It's like a magazine. And I have I know that I have like a screenshot of it like a PDF of it. So yes, they put I remember they put it behind the paywall somewhere cool.

**Rebecca Cavanaugh** 51:42

I will. I will certainly send a follow up email. Yeah, just do things. But there's no rush and getting that to me. But that would be very helpful.