

HUMANS OF SGA Stories

Muhammad Kara

Born in Turkey, Muhammad Kara, grew up with divorced parents and was raised primarily by his father and stepmother. Having lived without his biological mother for so long, Muhammad built a very close relationship to his stepmother, whom he views as a “mother figure”. He officially met his biological mother, however, when he was 17 years old. At the age of six, he and his family moved to Texas. This transition sparked a “big culture shock” for him, as he was separated from his extended family members and brought to an entirely different environment.



“My parents got divorced when I was four, and then my dad moved to the states and frequently went back and forth because he was working here. On one of his trips he met my stepmother and then from there they got married, and then when I turned six they brought my siblings to the United States.

When I left Turkey, my biological mother was also there, so I did not officially get to grow up with my biological mother, I really just grew up with my stepmother. I didn’t get to meet my biological mother until I was 17 whenever she was brought to the States as

well, so that impacted me in the sense that I didn’t really know most of my actual biological parents; my dad was always working and he was never really around, and then my biological mom was thousands of miles away in Turkey so that made me have more trust and form a bigger relationship with my stepmother who I find is more like my mother figure. That impacted me in that I’m a very close-knit individual, so I don’t let a lot of people into my life, but when I do I invest in them heavily.

Moving from Turkey to Texas was a big culture shock and a culture change. Everybody in Turkey - all my grandparents, my cousins, everybody - I don’t really have a relationship with them because I was super young when I moved here so that relationship never fostered. I just really know my main, immediate family and more specifically just my stepmother.”

“Basically the minute I came to Dallas, my father focused heavily on us forgetting our Turkish roots and quickly assimilating to the American culture. He put us in front of a TV which basically taught us english. From there it was always about changing our culture to fit the American mold.”

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"I knew that I was gay in sixth grade, and all the way through junior year I kinda kept to myself and pretty much suppressed it so I didn't really ever accept it, think about it, or any of that until about junior or senior year of high school. That's when I officially confronted myself about it and the person that I am and being comfortable in my skin.



During orientation, whenever I first came to UNT, the day I came out was also the same day that gay marriage was legalized, so I used that as a kind of crutch to first come out to my stepmother who I had a good relationship with. From there, that altered our relationship a little bit, and that kind of put a step back in my leadership just because I was very confident in myself. I was very confident that my stepmother would automatically accept me just the way I am, so that hindered our relationship and my own leadership because once I wasn't confident in myself because my support system was the one that gave me my confidence. I didn't know how to be an effective leader cause I would not be true to myself, not my authentic self. I wasn't comfortable in my own skin but UNT really changed that and made me flourish. I met some amazing mentors and individuals that just brought that out in me. They were the ones that really motivated me and encouraged me to be comfortable in my own skin and gave me tools and measures to make sure that the leader that I wanted to be was also the leader that was comfortable within his own skin.

Ever since I've accepted that fact and accepted my own sexuality it's done nothing but flourish my leadership and it's been an active role in my leadership because I represent a marginalized population that is still facing a lot of oppression. I get to be a voice and I get to do things that are not always done

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within these leadership roles. Going all the way from the start of college when I was an orientation leader, then a student coordinator, then on multiple executive boards, I always brought that identity with me because that identity was not always portrayed in these executive boards. I always brought that track of mind with me just to make sure that that identity was always shown and present. In a way it hindered my ability to lead because I wasn't comfortable with it, but once I accepted it and was comfortable in my own skin it flourished my leadership."

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"Being one of the only few presidents that are openly gay and that is not the majority religion-wise, as a Muslim and realizing not many of those individuals are represented on campus with leadership, I constantly want to make strives and efforts to bring up all minorities and even the majorities to make decisions that are for them."

"A lot of students realize that once I've attached this title to my name as the President, that's all I am. And all my identities and my human-self are no longer present. I am just seen as Muhammad Kara, SGA President, no longer Muhammad Kara. So, the way I try to balance it is to be very authentic and genuine with these individuals and people that I interact with. During the 8 to 5 time-frame I try to be myself but I also represent a lot of students. As many folks know, you never stop being a leader so the presidency always follows with me wherever I go. It could be on the weekends, it could be everywhere, but I always remind students and all these individuals that I'm a human first, and then a student, and then the SGA President. I'm not Superman nor do I know all the answers, I'm still growing professionally and personally just as much as every other UNT student."

-Muhammad Kara



**"I'm a human first,
and then a student,
and then the SGA
President."**



**"I am a hot mess just like
everyone else but we're all works
in progress."**