

Grad's passion for health education and sexual violence prevention makes an impact

By Kaitlyn Beickel, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2025 graduates](#).

Alyssea Immonen has a strong passion for health education and sexual violence prevention, which was integrated into nearly every facet of their college career.

"My major is a bit of a mouthful, I'm a social and cultural analysis major," Immonen said. "There's a couple different concentrations that folks can choose from there, I'm particularly focused on queer and sexuality studies."

Immonen, who goes by gender-neutral they/them pronouns, was born in Missouri, lived in Arizona for several years, but spent the majority of their life in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

"All my family is there now. I've got two younger siblings, my parents, my grandma, our pets at home," said Immonen, who is also a student in Barrett, the Honors College. "Being long distance is tough, but it's been exciting so far."

Immonen, who spent eight years of their childhood living in the East Valley, knew they wanted to return and attend Arizona State University for their college experience.

"My dad actually went to ASU, I do come from an alum family. I wanted to get away from home but still have a little bit of familiarity," Immonen said. "I feel like I'm a bit of an enigma in that I love Arizona summer weather. I like it when your skin hurts a little bit — I call it lizard mode, but I don't hate that. A bit of nostalgia."

Beyond the nostalgia and love for the warm weather, it was the program at New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences on the West Valley campus that won Immonen over.

“Honestly, ASU had a really good program for what I was looking to do because I knew LGBT studies was going to be important to me,” Immonen said. “In my exploration of programs at other schools, they focused primarily on women and gender studies — and that’s important. I wanted that to be part of my degree for sure, but I wanted some more explicit sexuality focus.”

Their studies led them to an on-campus student job with ASU’s Sexual and Relationship Violence Program, which offers education, prevention and confidential advocacy to cultivate a survivor-supportive community.

Immonen said that the job was the perfect combination of their two passions: health education and sexual violence prevention work.

“I just felt so lucky to find this group of people that also cared as much as I did,” they said. “And were willing to put in the effort in such a practical way. Because we are in an age group that is unfortunately disproportionately impacted by this issue.”

In addition to their work with the SRVP team, Immonen headed a student organization — One Love at ASU — which focuses on preventing unhealthy and abusive relationships while cultivating healthy ones.

“The One Love Foundation is fantastic. They’re the leading nonprofit in relationship health education, particularly focused on teaching young people about the signs of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, as well as preventing abuse and relationship violence,” they said. “They have a number of chapters at high schools and colleges across the nation.”

For five semesters, Immonen served as the executive director of One Love at ASU.

“We started out at West. We did eventually expand and tried to have a pretty decent online presence as well so that folks could reach us from wherever. In my time, we were able to table at all four ASU campuses,” they said. “We held two healthy relationships fairs, which between them reached about 300 students, which is just amazing.”

As Immonen looks ahead toward life after graduation day, they plan to continue their studies with a Master of Public Health program.

“I actually am planning on committing to Simmons University tonight, which is very exciting. It’s an online program, so I’m hoping to stay in the Valley,” Immonen said. “I am working on securing an adult job. I’m not quite sure where that will end up being yet, but I definitely want to stay in this realm of public health, health education and violence prevention, because that is just so important to me.”

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Text image(s)



Alyssea Immonen