Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence

The State of Higher Education for LGBT People

April 8, 2011
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Why Should We Care About Campus Climate?

Reviewing the Literature through a Lavender Lens
Climate In Higher Education

How students experience their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes.¹

Discriminatory environments have a negative effect on student learning.²

Research supports the pedagogical value of a diverse student body and faculty on enhancing learning outcomes.³

1 Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005
LGBTQQ Campus Climate

Suggest poor perceptions of campus quality of life for people who are LGBTQ.¹

Document experiences of harassment and violence.²

Examine best practices to improve campus climate.³

¹ Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004; Evans & Broido, 2002; Garber, 2002; Malaney, Williams, & Geller, 1997; Waldo, 1998.
Changes in Psychosocial Well-Being During Stages of Gay Identity Development

Halpin & Allen, 2004
Campus Climate & Retention

Positive Experiences with Campus Climate + Positive Perceptions of Campus Climate = Success

For Students:
- Positive educational experiences
- Healthy identity development
- Lower rates of substance abuse

For Faculty & Staff:
- Increased productivity
- Increased sense of value & community

Persistence & Retention
2003 National Campus Climate Assessment

NASPA/NGLTF sponsor climate assessment for historically underrepresented/underserved students, faculty, & staff on 30 college campuses

Rankin, 2003
Perceptions of Climate - “ism’s”

**Racist?**
- People of Color (33%)
- White People (17%)

**Sexist?**
- Transgender (46%)
- Women (26%)
- Men (18%)

**Heterosexist?**
- LGBQQ (55%)
- Heterosexual (35%)
Why now?

2010
Who are the Respondents?

**2003**

- 1669 participants
- LGBQ (n = 1600)
- Transgender (n = 69)
- 10 states
- 13 institutions
- Paper/Pencil

**2010**

- 5149 participants
- Queer spectrum (n = 4187)
- Trans spectrum (n = 695)
- All 50 states
- All Carnegie Basic Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education
- On-line
“Troubling Terminology”

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Two-spirit
- Butch
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Bigender
- Woman loving women
- Man loving men
- Man who loves men
- Pre-op
- Transgender
- Intersex
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Cross dresser
- Questioning
- Boi
- Androgynous
If a respondent indicated a current gender identity as something other than their “assigned birth sex” they were placed into one of three groups:

Transmasculine
Transfeminine
Gender non-conforming
Gender Identity

- Woman (n=2489)
- Man (n=1963)
- Transmasculine Spectrum (n=174)
- Transfeminine Spectrum (n=104)
- Gender non-conforming (n=417)
- Missing (n=2)
Voices
Gender Identity

• “I am a full time M2F [Male-To-Female] grad student….None of my professors or fellow students in my field of study (fine Arts) has ever expressed an[y] distaste at my presentation. It's the rest of the campus I worry about.”

• I am FTM [Female-To-Male]. I do not feel safe enough to be out as trans, so I live stealth on campus, which honestly makes me sad because it prevents me from doing as much activism as I would like to.
Sexual Identity

- 33% Gay or similar, not queer
- 20% Lesbian or similar, not queer
- 12% Bisexual, not lesbian, gay, or queer
- 15% Queer
- 16% Heterosexual
- 2% Asexual or don’t know
- <1% Missing
University Position

- Administrator (n=333) - 7%
- Staff (n=1071) - 21%
- Faculty (n=498) - 10%
- Graduate Student (n=863) - 17%
- Undergraduate student (n=2384) - 46%
So What Did We Find?

The Results
Overall Comfort Levels – National

- Campus Climate: 71%
- Department/Work Unit: 77%
- Classroom: 65%
Homophobic Climate

- 2003: 43%
- 2010: 31%
Experienced Harassment

2003
• 36%

2010
• 21%
Voices

• “If I choose to come out to a class, it generally means that the rest of my opinions will be considered ‘leftist’ and ‘radical’ by the rest of my classmates.”

• “Professors have pathologized my experiences as a member of the LGBT community by claiming that participating in activism within the LGBT community is indicative of mental illness.”

• “Mine is a Catholic university. Questions of sexuality and gender identity are largely ignored - probably in the hope that they will go away. The administration works actively against GLBTQ groups and activities.”
Intersection of Identities/Harassment

- People of Color and White people experienced harassment at similar rates (21%, respectively).

- Black/African American/African/Caribbean respondents attributed the harassment to race more than sexual identity or gender identity.

- This theme does not apply to other racial identities.
Responses to Campus Climate

Behavioral (Individual) & Institutional (Campus)
Behavioral Responses

Respondents who have seriously considered leaving their institution due to the challenging climate:

One-third of Queer spectrum (33%)
One-third of Trans-spectrum (38%)
Voices – Why did you stay?

“I considered leaving because there was a string of anti-transgender hate crimes, but stayed because I was involved in the campus-climate response to the hate crimes.”

“I considered leaving because of the whiteness and heteronormativity that accompanied it. The reason I decided to stay was so that I could try and make a difference in my few years here.”
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Feared for their physical safety</th>
<th>Queer spectrum</th>
<th>Trans spectrum</th>
<th>Concealed their identity to avoid intimidation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>• LGBQ - 20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• LGBQ - 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>• Feared for physical safety</td>
<td>• Queer spectrum - 13%</td>
<td>• Trans spectrum – 43%</td>
<td>• Queer spectrum - 43%</td>
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Fears for one’s physical safety and hiding one’s identity due to fear of intimidation were significantly higher for LGBQ and/or Transgender People of Color.
“[A person] rallied students with the cry ‘we can either accept homosexuals or BURN THEM AT THE STAKE! ARE YOU WITH ME?!’ A large group of people were yelling and saying ‘burn them!’ and there I was in the midst of it all with a rainbow flag on my bag, alone and scared.”

“I considered leaving my campus because during my first semester….I was physically assaulted on campus on my way home. The university’s response was less than adequate.”
Implications for LGBT Substance Abuse
Summary Review of Extant Literature

LGB individuals are more likely to:
(1) Use *alcohol and drugs*
(2) Have higher rates of substance abuse
(3) More likely to continue heavy drinking in later adulthood

- 20 to 25% of gay men and lesbians are heavy alcohol users, compared to 3 to 10% of heterosexuals
- Substantially higher numbers of LGB individuals used cannabis (56%) and cocaine (23%) than the general population (20% and 8.5%, respectively)

(CSAT, 2001; McKirnan and Peterson, 1989)
Youth Drug Use and Abuse

Examined relationship between sexual orientation and adolescent substance use

- LGB youth were 190% more likely than heterosexual youth to use substances.
- Bisexual youth were 340% more likely than heterosexual youth to use substances.
- Lesbian youth were 400% more likely than heterosexual youth to use substances.

Marshal et al. (2008)
Why are there high rates of substance use and abuse?

Mood-altering substances are used by LGB individuals as a means of coping with the stress of living in an anti-gay society.

Substance use also disconnects people from feelings of shame and anxiety, fosters social comfort in social settings, facilitates the acting on feelings long suppressed or denied, and braces people for rejection by others.

(Cabaj, 1996, 2000)
Substance Use & Abuse Among LGB People

Examined experiences with heterosexism, internalized homophobia, and substance use and abuse (N = 824).

(Weber, 2008)
Substance Use & Abuse Among LGB People

Having at least one alcohol or drug abuse disorder (DSM IV TR)

Internalized homophobia

Heterosexist events

p < .01

F(1,757) = 10.18

F(1,757) = 4.40

(Weber, 2008)
“That’s So Gay” Matters
LGB students (≤ 25 yrs)

Hearing “that’s so gay”

- Being accepted on campus
  - .29**

- Frequency of headaches
  - .31**

- Frequency of trouble eating
  - .32**

** p < .01

Woodford, Howell, Silverschanz, & Yu (in review)
Campus Climate Matters to LGB Students

More likely to experience or witness harassment (Climate)

AOR 1.87***

AOR 1.53***

Sexual Minority Status (LGB)

More likely to have a drinking problem (CAGE)

AOR 1.40**

** p < .01  
*** p < .001
Summary - Negative Climate and Substance Abuse

- More likely to personally experience incivility: AOR 1.64***
- More likely to witness hostility: AOR 1.53***

Drinking problem

*** p < .001
Challenging Experiences with Campus Climate

Negative Perceptions of Campus Climate

Lack of Success

For Students:
- Negative educational experiences
- Unhealthy identity development
- Higher rates of substance abuse

For Faculty & Staff:
- Decrease in productivity
- Decreased sense of value
- Decreased health and well-being

Decrease in Persistence & Retention
Over the Rainbow

Where are we now?
Increase in Number of LGBTQ Centers

2005

2010
In 2010...

Negligible number of College & University LGBT Inclusive Structures and/or Policies

- 300 (7%) of colleges/universities have institutional support (centers, offices, person) for LGBT issues and concerns
- 578 (13%) colleges/universities include sexual orientation
- 282 (6%) colleges/universities include gender identity
- 307 (7%) colleges/universities offer same-sex health benefits to faculty/staff

(Sources: http://www.hrc.org/issues/workplace.asp; http://www.transgenderlaw.org/college/index.htm#policies; http://www.lgbtcampus.org)
Beyond the Rainbow

What’s Next?
Campus Climate - Potential Best Practices

1. Develop Inclusive Policies
2. Demonstrate Institutional Commitment
3. Integrate LGBTQQ Issues and Concerns in Curricular and Co-Curricular Education
4. Respond Appropriately to Anti-LGBTQQ Incidents/Bias
5. Considerations for On-Campus Housing
6. Offer Comprehensive Counseling & Healthcare
7. Improve Access & Retention Efforts

Thoughts for campuses on the forefront…

- Curricular integration
- Outreach to “hidden” communities
- Intersections of identities
- Lobbying for inclusion of sexual identity and gender identity on national assessments (NSSE, CIRP, Common Application, etc.)
Questions..?
Thank You!

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