

LGBT+ COLLEGE STUDENTS: WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?

by

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DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who have been killed, harassed, and ostracized for being daring enough to love someone and live true to their identity. It is also dedicated to all those people who live fearful closeted lives in countries where it is illegal and punishable to love someone that is of the same gender as you or for you to live in your affirmed gender.

You are loved and we will persevere.



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I would like to thank primarily my family members for helping me to get to this point in my life. I would also like to thank my University family members including #DeathSquad, The Core, and my Terrible Lemons. I also would like to thank the Honors program, Dr. Wilmanski and Dr. Wifall. Finally, I would also like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Rivera-Colon, and the Sociology, Urban Studies, and Anthropology department, specifically pointing out my two University fathers, Dr. Surrey, and Dr. McLaughlin, and all the past and present brave queer students of Saint Peter's University.

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the idea of LGBT+ individuals being recruited, retained, and led to their greatest potential through the process of higher education. Queer people are a continuously growing population in the United States and since the market of higher education is already competitive, LGBT+ prospective students can be one of the solutions for many tuition-dependent institutions.

The first section analyzes the best practices for recruiting queer students to a college or university. The methods include enhancing online marketing materials including admission websites and participating in LGBT+ college fairs. The next part focuses on once students are enrolled, how institutions can retain queer students through supporting their safety and creating LGBT+ resource centers, GSAs, and brave and safe spaces. After students make the decision to stay at their original institution, the next step is encouraging students to work on their skills and develop themselves to their ultimate self which is the next part of the paper. The development is achieved by connecting students to available resources including professors, administrators, and other queer students. The thesis concludes with specific recommendations for Saint Peter's University utilizing the Campus Pride Index ratings how LGBT+ inclusive college and university campuses are.

It is hoped that the ideas included in this thesis are highly evaluated by the University administration and that they work towards achieving these goals. If this is not accomplished at the present moment, it is hoped that future students that read it will take the charge of being an advocate for queer students past, present, and future of Saint Peter's University.

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VII. Bibliography**52****I. Introduction**

In the ever-changing world of higher education, many tuition-dependent institutions¹ try to find new and exciting opportunities to fund their ventures to ensure that they are viable. Recruiting new students is a very difficult undertaking. In a competitive market, colleges and universities need to be creative and unique in their approaches. Once applicants become registered students then the challenge becomes ensuring their retention as students. Various efforts including academic affairs, student affairs, and other divisions and departments, are implemented to try to keep students matriculated in their programs. At the same time, students, while they are hopefully being retained, need to also develop valuable skills, both inside and outside the classroom, to aid them in having a successful future. This will lead them to become valuable and successful alumni and alumnae of their college or university. With the current trends of students and worldwide populations, the number of openly and secret LGBT+ individuals are expected to rise (Newport 2018). This can be attributed to society becoming more accepting of sexual and gender minorities (GLAAD 2017).

To guarantee that universities and colleges across the United States, including Saint Peter's University, are working towards these goals, I recommend that these institutions make a conscious effort to appeal to LGBT+ students through recruitment efforts, retention, ensuring the mental and physical health of these students, and helping them excel and thrive in their formative time as undergraduates. I think given

¹ Tuition-dependent institutions are colleges or universities whose main source of revenue is charging large amounts of tuition and fees to cover the cost of the institution's operational expenses (Carlson, 2014).

Saint Peter's University's strategic location in Jersey City, right across from New York City, make it an optimal location for queer students to attend as both Jersey City and New York City have a large amount of LGBT+ centers, cultures, and communities.

A. Population Trends

LGBT+ population trends have not been major areas of research in the world until the onset of the global AIDS epidemic. Now research has become a common trend focusing of the mental and physical health of queer individuals (Coker, Austin, and Schuster 2010) (Russell and Fish 2016). There is only so much data can be found through census data and self-reporting systems². In colleges and universities, questions regarding sexual preference and gender identity usually are omitted unlike identities like race, age, or ethnicity. In a recent poll by Gallup conducted in 2017, it is estimated that about 4.5% of the US population identifies as LGBT+. This is a .4% increase in one year and a full 1% from when the poll was first conducted in 2012. According to census data, this suggests that about 11 million or more people currently living in the United States identify as LGBT+ based off of census data. The data found by Gallup also reveals that younger populations tend to identify more queer than other generations (Newport 2018). It stands to reason that future generations will also become more and more open-minded and queer-identified as they progress and new generations reach

² The United States Census Bureau reports that since 2010, an average of 95.4% of people surveyed responded. This could mean that there are more than 14 million potential participants who have not responded including undocumented people who may have not responded.

adulthood. These more openly queer generations will be looking for educational degrees to advance their career opportunities and improve their life chances.

Further, there are other cohorts of queer individuals who have not attended college for a litany of reasons including economic, social, or personal issues. These potential students may also want to go back to college and finish their degree or start their degrees. These students may come with their own challenges such as lack of previous education and knowledge in various areas fundamental to a college curriculum or success in college. These students may also come at various other stages in their life. Many of them could be considered adult learners who may have full-time or part-time jobs outside of their course load which will require special attention and diligent work by higher education professionals to ensure that they thrive academically. In addition, as adult learners, they may be uncomfortable with their younger classmates regardless of sexual orientation.

B. Intersectionality

Throughout this paper, we will explore what colleges and universities can do to help LGBT+ students. While this paper is focused specifically on LGBT+ college students, it is important to realize that being a queer student does not fully incorporate participants' wholeness. The identity of a queer student only covers their sexual identity, and their student status. There are many other factors such as race, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, political affiliation, ability, life experiences, et cetera. These identities are essential in understanding in how these queer students move in the world

(Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012). The social world will also perceive people with various identities differently. This is reflective of Goffman's notion of presentation of self: that we are all actors who try to dictate how others perceive us versus the reality of how we are perceived (Goffman 1959).

Elements of the person's identity are affected as well; this is, in part, due to the fact that society judges and stratifies people based on their identity. For example, a black queer person would have a different experience on campus in comparison to a heterosexual white person. Due to the black queer person's past experience, they may try to act more heterosexual so they can be perceived as straight, even though their most salient identity may be their race. These differences are important because they highlight the need of diversity and inclusion in our world and the way our identities shape how we operate in society (Rockenbach et al, 2016). Even though this paper will not focus on the many intersecting identities that influence the college application and campus life of a student, it is important to recognize that they are still important to society and these students' lives.

C. Terms

There will be a plethora of terms used throughout this entire paper. These terms are vital to understanding the primary arguments of this thesis. The terms listed are also not universally accepted as the only proper definition, but these provisional formulations are how they will be utilized in this paper. Indeed, these terms are continually expanding and people's association with a particular term may or may not be completely

representative of their identity. The identities of individuals are also fluid. Readers should refer to this page so they can have a better understanding of what the thesis is trying to convey:

- **LGBT+:** This term refers to the community comprised of sexual and gender minorities. This acronym specifically names lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and communities. While this may be the more publicized groups there are many other groups, that fall in the acronym such as asexual, pansexual, genderqueer, gender fluid, etc. (Mardell, 2016).
- **Queer:** This term in some articles is referred specifically to people who are not straight or do not follow the gender binary. For purposes of this thesis, it will be interchangeable with LGBT+ (Mardell, 2016).
- **Typical College-Aged Student:** Refers to students who go straight to college from high school. The age range is usually from 17-22 (Fishman).³
- **Adult College Student:** Students who did not go straight to college from high school and usually do not fall within the typical college-aged student range of 17-22 (Gross 2018).
- **Prospective Students:** Students who are looking into attending college. Typically, these students will “shop” around at a few different schools; this is why schools compete to try to entice these students to attend their school, especially at tuition-dependent institutions (Walcott).

³ Although the presumptive college-aged student falls within the range of age from 17-22, it should be noted that the actual average age of United States college students is about 26 years old (Fishman)

- GSAs: Gay-Straight Alliances are usually student-run organizations at colleges and universities that serve to promote queer culture and assists students in finding allies and communities (GSA Network).
- LGBT+ Resource Centers: Specific centers whose sole purpose is to aid LGBT+ students in their transition to college and university. There are variations in what the different centers offer but the services are always there for support and improving campus life for students, faculty, and staff members alike (Smith, Cohen, and Diabate).⁴
- Closeted vs. Out: Due to the heteronormative society that we live in, queer people feel the need to clarify that they are not straight and that they are some form of queer. Being out or out of the closet refers to being public about your sexual or gender identity. When someone is closeted, it refers to not being public about how you identify in terms of sexual or gender identity.
- PFLAG: stands for Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is an organization for straight family members and friends of queer people to meet and plan advocacy for their queer loved ones (PFLAG).⁵
- Homophobia and Transphobia: These terms are used to describe people who do not support queer people in regards to their gender identity and expression and/or sexual orientation. They usually assign to the belief of a cisgender heteronormative world (Renzetti and Edelson 2008).

⁴ <https://oiiir.illinois.edu/lgbt-resource-center/about-lgbtrc/mission-and-goals>

⁵ <https://pflag.org/about>

- **Brave and Safe spaces:** Safe spaces are used for queer students to feel safe in their expressions, thoughts, and ideas. These are not necessarily physical places, but it can be by who you are surrounded with. Safe spaces operate with the understanding that everyone is accepting of what the person is sharing. Brave spaces, on the other hand, recognize that even in safe spaces it is possible that not everyone will be accepting of what is being shared. That is why the choice to share in these spaces is considered to be brave while sharing in safe space you operate assuming everyone agrees (Ali 2017).

D. Structure of Paper

This thesis will follow the chronological order of how college students apply to college. First, recruiting LGBT+ students is looked at. This will include different ways for universities to attract queer students. It will include the online culture of queer prospective students including LGBT+ friendly universities and colleges catalogs. It will also examine how colleges and universities can recruit LGBT+ students through the resources they already have. This will include showing resources for queer students that the institutions of higher education offer and also explicitly mentioning sexual orientation and gender in public statements about tolerance and diversity.

The paper will then examine retaining LGBT+ students. This is done through a variety of methods such as the mental and physical health of queer students. The attitudes of heterosexual students, faculty, staff, and administrators towards queer

students will also be examined. This part will also include the formation of brave spaces for queer students and the helpfulness of GSAs and LGBT+ Resource Centers. Related to retention, this thesis will also touch on how to assist these queer students in gaining valuable skills as they progress in their undergraduate career. This will include the use of Student Involvement Theory and how promoting LGBT+ students to leadership positions can affect their long-term and short-term goals. Short-term goals for these students could be excelling both academically and socially. Long-term goals include gaining a job and finding a strong community that they can rely on as they move on from college. Also, this part of the thesis will focus on how connecting LGBT+ students to various resources, on and off campus, can give students a positive outlook on their time in university or college.

The paper will conclude with recommendations drawn from research reported on and what universities across the country can do to ensure recruitment and retention of LGBT+ students in their institution of higher education. I will also go into specific recommendations that Saint Peter's University can implement that will greatly improve their appeal to and retention of LGBT+ students as well as enhance the culture and safety of queer students both on and off campus.

II. Recruitment of LGBT+ Students

Tuition-dependent colleges and universities survive by attracting new students. Increasing, or even maintaining current levels of enrollment, while also balancing out the cost for upkeep of a school is paramount of any institution that needs to continue

surviving in today's modern era. Schools compete for students from all across the country. They must offer competitive financial aid packages to try to attract students as well as quality programs and attractive facilities. Often times, targeted outreach is done to try to attract students from different historically underrepresented communities (e.g., racial or ethnic minorities). One such group that is in need of more targeted recruitment is the LGBT+ community. As mentioned previously, queer people are starting to be more open about their sexuality and/or gender identity and expression showing an increase in the number of queer people in the nation.

In order to ensure that LGBT+ students are being reached in recruitment strategies, there are a few steps that can be taken. One of them is emphasizing the various offerings a school has in regards to LGBT+ services and academic programs on their admission websites (Mathis and Tremblay 2010). Students who are closeted may feel a bit nervous about attending a school that may not be accepting of their identity. Admissions websites usually feature various resources such as an academic programs related to gender and sexuality or organizations on campus that are putting on events to promote queer culture on campus. Mathis and Tremblay offer a scale of determining how integrated admissions is with its LGBT+ resources. The highly integrated model includes a fully collaborative and communicative mindset where both departments work together to achieve the goal of recruiting new students and in particular recruiting queer students. The bottom rung of the scale is that there is no online information for LGBT+ students which can be seen in Figure 1 below (Mathis and Tremblay 2010). This could also be applied to a variety of different aspects of other identities and targeted

recruitment. The inclusion of LGBT+ resources that a campus has online is vitally important to the new queer population of students that exists.

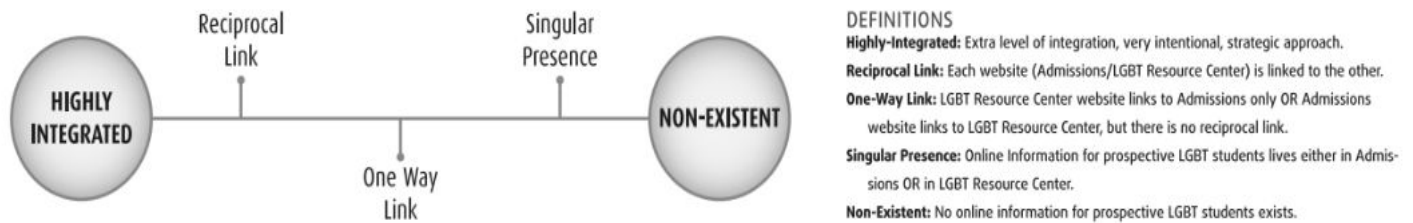


Figure 1. Continuum of Prospective LGBT Student Websites

Source: Mathis, D., & Tremblay, C. (2010). Pride on the Other Side: The Emergence of LGBT Web sites for Prospective Students. *College & University*, 86, 45-50.

Frequently, queer students feel most comfortable when they are online. This is due to the option of being able to connect with other queer people and research topics related to the LGBT+ community while still remaining anonymous (Marston 2019). While being online is a great benefit to queer people, in 2019, queer people are still the victims of attacks and bullying both online and in person⁶. This sometimes occurs even with the people that are supposed to love and protect them the most, their family. This leads LGBT+ people to retreat online to form a family with people they meet over the internet and it helps them learn more about the various issues regarding LGBT+ rights and activism (McConatha 2015). This also ties into when they are searching for colleges and

⁶ According to Amnesty International, an international non-governmental and non-profit organization, is a global human rights organization. Amnesty International found that queer people everywhere are still being persecuted because of their sexual or gender identity. They also reported that same-sex marriage is only recognized in 24 countries (*Amnesty International*, 2018).

universities. When they are trying to find their school, they will endeavor to find an institution that will accept them for who they are. College and university mission statements often times profess that they are inclusive, but without properly showing that they are taking action, this leads prospective students to believe that it is not true and that they 'talk the talk but don't walk the walk' (Mathis and Tremblay 2010). Schools must validate their affirmation of queer people by publicly displaying it through statements of inclusion explicitly stating non-discrimination policies against sexual and gender minorities. This will allow them to show their outward support for the students that identify within these categories.

Another important component of admissions is acquiring the demographic data concerning which students are applying and accepting their offers to attend their institution. This is why some researchers are calling for admission applications to include an optional question for students to disclose their sexual and gender identity and expression. Most applications already ask questions in regard to their race/ethnicity, religion, and other topics. LGBT+ students should have this option as well. It affirms their identity and shows that the schools are queer-friendly (Windmeyer 2012). Some proponents of this measure claim that some applicants may not know their sexual identity or do not feel comfortable disclosing that information. They suggest surveying students once they get to campus and advertising their inclusiveness through brochures and websites (Chandler 2015). By making the question optional, it allows for students to opt-out of answering the question and stay closeted. This information also improves how queer students, out or closeted, will feel about the institution and allows

for professionals on campus to work (Windmeyer 2012). Being able to collect and assess how many queer students a college has on their campus, it affords LGBT+ centers an opportunity to know how big the population they are targeting is and allows for more directed programming.

III. Retention of LGBT+ Students

Once students are officially enrolled, they will determine whether they want to stay in the school, or go elsewhere or discontinue college. When students begin attending their institution of higher education, many will begin growing and developing new morals and different beliefs. They will begin interacting with diverse populations with whom that they may have not been previously associated. These experiences are exceptionally important in the developing college students. Students who begin interacting with a heterogenous group of students have shown to increase their cognitive ability. All interactions with diversity, including in the coursework and curriculum, have shown to be beneficial not only for cognitive development but also empathetic development (Bowman 2010). This is especially important in retaining students from all diverse identities including queer students. Non-queer students cannot express the experiences that queer students can; therefore, it is imperative that they are purposely targeted to be retained.

A great deal of research has been done about racial and ethnic minority student retention rates. Historically, minority students have a lower retention rate when compared to more privileged populations. As a response to these low retention rates,

different universities have taken programmatic steps to try and keep these students enrolled in their schools (Lisberg and Woods 2018). Conversely to this day, many schools do not track the retention rates of their queer students on campus (Windmeyer, Humphrey, Barker 2013). Data tracking how many queer students are on campus is useful because it allows for more information on what issues are occurring in the LGBT+ population on their campus. This is especially true for students who are on religious campuses. Many religions and queer people have long been at odds because of different ideas. A significant amount of religion and religious organizations have historically been one of the major sources of LGBTQ shame, stigma, discrimination, hatred, and exclusion in our society (Thoreson 2018).

Nonetheless, this hostility does not stop queer people from attending religious schools. Research demonstrates that some religious schools have actually been beneficial for queer students. They have allowed for the spiritual and personal development of queer students. Queer people will negotiate where they feel comfortable and where they belong in the spiritual context of the school they are attending (Mayhew 2016). This is extremely important due in part to the fact that queer students have indicated that they will end up transferring either due to violence and other harassment that occur on campuses.

In 2019, hate is still prevalent in our society. While media coverage of attacks against sexual and gender queer people are rarely covered, there are still significant acts of violence that are still committed against LGBT+ individuals. The Federal Bureau of Investigation Hate Crime Statistics reported that of 7,106 victims of hate crimes 1,249

or more than 17% of those crimes are committed on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Also, according to this data, queer identifying individuals fell victims to rape at a higher level than any other minority group (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2017). LGBT+ individuals also have to not only deal with outside threats from other people, but also must deal with psychological damage from heteronormative stories and speech from the media, friends, families, and influencers stating that there is something wrong with them or that they need to change. A Center for Disease Control study on health-related behaviors in high school aged individuals (Kann et al 2017) stated that compared to their heterosexual counterparts, LGBT+ students are about two times more likely to feel sad or hopeless, three times more likely to have seriously considered attempting suicide, about three and half times more likely to have made a suicide plan, almost four times as likely to have attempted suicide, and more than three times as likely to have been treated by a doctor or nurse for a failed suicide attempt (Kann 2017).

This data is also alarming when earlier data is considered. In 2013, it was reported that LGB individuals were only twice as likely to have attempted suicide in the past (Johnson et al, 2013). Clearly, this is a prevalent issue in the queer community, especially among adolescent-aged students. Though most of this data is on high school aged students when talking about typical college-aged students, these students who have had these experiences will be attending college. It is then on the colleges and universities to ensure that these students have access to proper resources that can assist them in their healing process. Educational events for LGBT+ students also need to be targeted at heterosexual students in order to ensure that they will not be violent

against their queer classmates. Colleges and universities must take steps to ensure that queer students are able to access the necessary support that they will need. Suggestions to combat the minority stress (Johnson et al, 2013) that students may face is to have information ready about student's risk, publicly sharing queer-inclusive services that are offered, emphasizing the protective and supportive stance that schools should have for their queer students, training all staff on matters pertaining to LGBT+ students and suicide prevention, and creating organizations and spaces that help support queer individuals such as GSAs, and PFLAG organizations (Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2008).

While I agree with these recommendations, I also think that there are still more environmental factors that need to be examined. Inside the classroom, queer studies are often left out of curriculum. In a fairly recent push, many states have begun incorporating queer studies and LGBT+ history into their kindergarten to senior year of high school curriculums. This was an effort to be more inclusive and more accurate when dealing with the history of the United States (Moorhead 2018). Inclusion of these topics is also important in a college curriculum. By having programs and courses that also cover these topics, queer students will feel more included and will want to take these classes and join the programs so they can learn more about their identity and the history of their identity. The absence of these key factors has an adverse effect. It may lead queer students to believe that their history is not worth studying or analyzing; and, in turn, may lead them to start searching for other colleges or universities that may offer them.

Other environmental factors that students interact with play a critical role in how they perceive schools and how they perceive themselves. Attitudes of college students now have become more accepting of queer students but they are all not completely accepting of queer people just yet (Holland, Matthews, and Schott 2013). This can be extremely volatile in the case for queer students because they can become targets of bullying, harassment, and even more violent acts. This stress can also lead to students becoming more isolated, alone, and depressed which can precipitate suicidal or harmful thoughts and behaviors. Moreover, students who are both queer and hold other minority identities felt even less safe, comfortable, and welcomed at their institutions (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, and Frazer, 2010). One study found that if non-queer students get to know, interact, and empathize with LGBT+ students, it will lead to more acceptance as does the presence of GSAs and centers specifically for queer students. The investigation also showed that women, when compared to men and white people as compared to other minorities, are more accepting of queer people in general (Worthen 2012).

Also, as students progress in their college careers, they become more accepting especially if a student in the college of arts and sciences and identifies as either Democrat or Libertarian in comparison to Republicans and non-party affiliated students (Holland, Matthews, and Schott 2013). There are a few reasons for more acceptance being in these identities as opposed to others. As mentioned previously when students are well-integrated, in terms of diversity, they begin to develop more empathy for communities other than their own (Bowman 2010). It therefore stands to reason that

students who are later in their college careers have had more experience with diverse population and are therefore more accepting. Students who are a part of liberal arts programs, in colleges of arts and sciences, usually are required to take courses in the social sciences which means they may have had some exposure to queer studies. Specifically, students involved in Gender and Sexuality studies programs will definitely have more exposure to LGBT+ issues through their coursework. Students who also identify as Democrat or Libertarian are usually leaning more liberal on the political spectrum while Republican students lean more towards the conservative side. The conservative spectrum of politics is historically hostile against LGBT+ rights. The coining of the term of a homosexual agenda that was going to ruin the fabric of society is evidence of this antipathy (Morgan 2006).

When we have students that are affirmed in their identities, they feel more accepted and more positive about the environment that they are in (Rankin 2003). It is then imperative to ensure that queer students stay enrolled in a college or university. Positive attitudes towards schools will result in queer students wanting to stay enrolled and hopefully enjoy their experiences in college. In order to ensure that queer students are safe mentally and physically, colleges and universities need to take measures to educate populations that are typically not as accepting of the LGBT+ community. By integrating these people into LGBT+ programming, they will come to understand the experience of queer students on campus in the world and on campus. Hopefully, the people gaining this new exposure will become more accepting. This will facilitate queer students becoming happier and feeling safer and more comfortable in the college and

university they attend. Another valuable part of getting queer students to stay enrolled is by having specific places and resources that are dedicated to them such as brave spaces and LGBT+ centers.

Society today has proven time and time again that hate speech and exclusionary practices are on the rise. With rollbacks on protections for LGBT+ individuals from the government and a greater resurfacing of backward harmful attitudes and beliefs related to race, gender, and sexual orientation, many people are feeling unsafe and at risk. Most recently the United States Attorney General's Office has allowed discrimination against transgender individuals in the workplace (Dinielli 2017). In times of stress, where can LGBT+ people turn to? Through various LGBT+ organizations, brave spaces have become more and more common. Many colleges and universities, high schools, and other public institutions have begun setting up brave spaces for LGBT+ individuals and their allies. The aim of these spaces is to make queer students feel safe and comfortable. They are able to express themselves without fear of being ridiculed, outed, ostracized, or abused.

Brave spaces aim to aid LGBT+ students by giving them a place to speak out and be heard. Usually, these spaces are a way for students to get connected to other queer community members as well as resources. Brave spaces typically operate under the assumption that everyone participating in the space are not going to antagonize or belittle other members in the group. This is the main difference between a brave space and a safe space. Safe spaces proceed on the assumption that everyone in the space is accepting of queer people. While this is the hope, it is not always true because some

people will abuse this space. Brave spaces, on the other hand, operate under the assumption that there may be someone who does not agree with what they believe, but that you are brave enough to share it in this space. Usually, brave and safe spaces are commonly denoted by an inverted pink triangle or a rainbow flag, as pictured below. The inverted triangle is a reclaimed symbol from Nazi-era Germany. During World War II, homosexuals were labeled with this triangle when they were put in concentration camps as they waited to be exterminated (<https://www.algbtical.org/2A%20SYMBOLS.htm>). Many LGBT+ organizations advocate for brave spaces.



Image 1: A group of photos showing a Rainbow Flag, an inverted pink triangle, and two variations denoting a safe space.

Source: <https://www.algbtical.org/2A%20SYMBOLS.htm>

For example, the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) sells safe space kits that schools can utilize to set up their own safe spaces. A report from GLSEN informs readers that schools that had safe space practices and resources saw a decrease in suicidal ideation in queer students, decreased levels of harassment, and assault based on sexual and gender identity. In addition to those findings, the same report showed that heterosexual students had a more accepting view of queer students and queer students perform better academically when safe spaces were present. Safe spaces improve the way students function at school. They allow LGBT+ students to have the same access and opportunity as their heterosexual counterparts. It also helps them in terms of health because of the reduction in suicide attempts and assaults (Kosciw, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, and Truong, 2018). This will also help keep students enrolled in school. It will give them a sense of belonging and will allow them to know that there is a place on campus that they can turn to when they need help or assistance.

The creation of safe spaces also does not need to come from students. Faculty, administration, and staff members should also take on the initiative of ensuring queer students are supported by finding resources to create safe spaces for students on campus. This can be done through a variety of ways. Resources are available for employees of colleges and universities to make their campuses more accepting. In an autoethnography, two junior faculty members at a higher education institution took it upon themselves to create a safe space on campus. They expressed their fears of not being granted tenure some day and also push back from other faculty and administration as a result of completing it. They did their own research to assess what

was the best way to introduce safe spaces onto their campus (Young and McKibban 2014). They then implemented the program for the entire community at their school and it was a major success that allowed for queer students to feel more connected and included at their college.

Another form of ensuring safety is through LGBT+ resource centers. As of 2016, there is an estimated 250 LGBT resource centers around the country. These centers allow for students who identify within the LGBT+ seek assistance during their time in college. The support can be from counseling to sexual, mental, and social support as they make the transition into college. They also work on the global level responding to events that attack the queer community. One instance of this was the shooting at the Orlando gay bar, Pulse, in 2016 (Barry 2016). Many resource centers hosted vigils and rallies in the wake of such events. When resource centers are not present on campuses, many queer students gravitate to off-campus sites to help them with their transition, a predominant location are gay bars (Sandoval, 2016). This is not the case for all queer students though, most LGBT+ students are often very resilient in their robust search for belonging. They often times may form their own safe spaces, one such place are campus libraries. Libraries that offer literature written by queer authors and on topics affecting the queer community are especially considered safe spaces for queer students (Wexelbaum 2017). This is empirically true due to queer students at times performing at a higher level than heterosexual students. They also tend to exhibit stronger reflective and critical thinking skills due to their proclivity to trying to appear non-queer from a young age (Wexelbaum and Hoover, 2014). One of the first steps to

ensuring that campus is serving its queer students is assessing how LGBT+ friendly a campus is. The nonprofit organization, Campus Pride, offers an assessment that will evaluate the campus and then offer recommendations on proper steps to take to ensure that the campus becomes inclusive (Campus Pride, 2013). Further, LGBT+ resource centers have a few essential elements that should be included.

One of the main components of a resource center is hiring staff members whose main job descriptions are to run the center and advocate on behalf of queer students, faculty, and staff. This center should also have referral mechanisms to counseling resources specifically designed for queer students which also include opportunities for queer group counseling. There should also be a system set up for HIV/STI testing and a task force specifically in place for advocating for queer inclusive policies such as trans-inclusive health care policies and healthcare for same-sex partners (Campus Pride, 2019).

An important component of a well-functioning LGBT+ safe space and the queer-friendly campus is the availability and visibility of a student-led group specifically representing queer students and/or a Gay-Straight Alliance. These groups are dedicated to providing safe spaces for queer students and their straight allies. The groups can also act as a way for queer students to connect with older queer students and find mentors. These organizations can also lead to a safer campus for students. Studies have also shown that organizations that are dedicated to issues experienced by LGBT+ students and the overall visibility of queer students leads to more tolerance, acceptance, and accepting attitudes toward queer students (Worthen, 2012). Another

study has shown that when GSAs are connected to social justice activities it leads to a greater sense of belongingness to schools and higher GPAs (Toomey and Russell, 2013). Though there are no studies in regard to the effectiveness of GSAs on student retention, it can be speculated that at least the presence of an active GSA or queer student group can positively impact a student's experience on campus, thus leading to higher chance of retention for queer students.

For tuition-funded institutions, retention is just as important as recruitment. Getting students in the door of a college or university is the first step, but then it must be ensured that students stay enrolled. Proper channels need to be set up to ensure that queer students feel safe and cared for. Holistic systems attentive to queer students can be organized in various ways. One such way is ensuring that students are welcomed and given a strong sense of safety on campus. This can be completed by having public policies regarding bias-related incidents. There should also be a center for students can go to that is specifically for queer students to receive help and support with various issues related to their experience while on campus. This can include group and individual counseling for queer students and also a board of advocates on behalf of the queer students, faculty, and staff on campus that advocate for the rights of queer people on campus. Finally, guaranteeing students on campus are aware of queer student groups and Gay-Straight Alliances will improve the climate for queer students and also allow for straight students to become more accepting and tolerant of queer students.

III. Ensuring LGBT+ Students Thrive

Hand in hand with recruitment and retention is what can colleges and universities do to ensure that once their queer students arrive on campus that they continuously thrive. This means to make sure that students are developing themselves both inside and outside of the classroom. Inside the classroom, the student should develop academic abilities. Outside of the classroom, skills that students should start to develop can include self-management, problem-solving, diversity awareness, and self-confidence skills (Azdell, 2010). This does not mean that these skills are solely learned in or out of the classroom, but rather through the college and university experience, students should be able to greatly enhance their set of hard and soft skills that will aid them in their careers and professional life.

To improve these skills, student must feel connected to the institution which they are attending. This can be enacted through a variety of ways at colleges and university. Most institutions will focus their time on programming and connecting students to the various resources that the institution will offer. Helping students achieve their maximum potential also ties into retention. Part of retention is also informing students are aware of what the school has to offer. Once students become aware of what there is available at a college or university, then they will feel more comfortable and will make concerted efforts to become leaders on their campus.

When specifically speaking about queer college students that become involved in their LGBT+ organizations on campus, there is a very detailed way of mapping how they develop. Kristen A. Renn notes that students who get more involved in their LGBT+

group on campus go through a transformation that could affect them through their entire time in school and also in the future as they become professionals in their field (Renn, 2007). Specifically, Renn mentions students who will need to create their own organization due to the absence of one on their campus. There are certain types of institutions that one can expect the absence of an organization for LGBT+ individuals from. Studies of colleges and universities in North Carolina have found that larger versus smaller schools, schools located in urban and suburban locations versus small town and rural campuses, and the more students that are on federal loans are more likely to have LGBT+ resources including student organizations (Kane 2013). LGBT+ organizations are especially missing at religious campuses. One would expect this from these religiously-oriented institutions. LGBT+ students at colleges and universities like these tend to look at their institution with a more unfavorable view than their heterosexual and cisgender colleagues do. This is due to the historic feud between queer and religious groups (Rockenbach et al, 2016). This is not to suggest that private, religiously-affiliated universities are univocally terrible environments for their queer students, faculty, and staff, but it does mean that they will have to make stronger efforts to certify that their students are safe. A proper way to counteract this is to have spiritual programming specifically designed and implemented to reach queer populations and other minority populations (Rockenbach et al, 2016).

Students who find themselves in hostile environments will take action and create an organization representing their group. Queer students reported searching for a social network: a place to explore their identity and as a response to an incident of

homophobia when joining an LGBT+ organization. When they joined, if they felt uncomfortable with the group, then they would try to form their own queer community or join another queer group. Often times when students joined these groups, they became what Renn calls LGBT+ student leaders or activists. The difference between these two groups is that student leaders were in formal leadership positions. They got things done through their position such as advancing issues related to the queer community. Activists were those students who were not in formal leadership positions, but were still leaders in the sense that they were head advocates for issues on campus. They were also found to be more connected to queer adult mentors both on and off campus in comparison to the student leaders (Renn, 2007). One could assume this is because student leaders find mentors in the administration of their college or university which may be lacking in queer senior administration. Renn also notes that students who become leaders also become very tuned in with other social justice issues. They will then springboard into being activist and advocates for the needs of communities that are outside of their own identity.

Being involved in LGBT+ organizations also had a lasting impact on how students planned for life after they completed their undergraduate career. Queer student leaders will take the leap and change their major to those more aligned with activism and advocacy such as political science, women and gender, and ethnic studies, and other social sciences. They also would note that the change of majors is because they wanted to align their career paths to work with queer populations (Renn, 2007). This is also instrumental in theories of career development as students will search out majors

to better assist with their long-term career goals. Students who develop skills through leadership positions and will find and explore career opportunities through various mentors on and off campus (Sung, Turner, and Kaewchinda, 2011).

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research is extremely important in today's world. Queer students have had struggles that have been historically been ignored. Colleges and universities are institutions that are meant to form students to become critical thinkers, future leaders, and overall better people. Institutions that are dependent on tuition from their students may find it very advantageous to put a strong effort to gaining queer students. While this is not a solution that satisfies all demands of higher education, it is something to be considered seriously. Individuals who identify as queer, openly and secretly, are on the rise and are expected to continue to rise. Therefore, it is my recommendation that colleges and universities put resources to recruiting, retaining, and assisting in the overall formation and betterment of queer students. A great guide for ensuring that these goals are met can be found by the Campus Pride Index⁷. This non-profit assists colleges and universities with making sure that they are doing all they can to ensure queer students, faculty, and staff are safe and able to excel while at the institution (See Appendix).

⁷ <https://www.campusprideindex.org/>

A. Saint Peter's University and Jersey City

Saint Peter's University, inspired by its Jesuit, Catholic identity, commitment to individual attention and grounding in the liberal arts, educates a diverse community of learners in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately and promote justice in our ever-changing urban and global environment.

Saint Peter's University is located in Jersey City, New Jersey. Jersey City is consistently ranked as one of the most diverse cities in the United States; it has been awarded the most diverse city three times within the past four years (Zeitlinger 2018). Moreover, Jersey City also received a perfect score by the Human Rights Campaign for their support and protection LGBT+ people who live and work in their municipality (Human Rights Campaign 2016, 2017, and 2018). Jersey City is also home to the largest full-service LGBT+ center in New Jersey which offers services including HIV testing and prevention, gender transition assistance, support, social groups, and internships.⁸ With all of these great happenings and Saint Peter's University being in the heart of the city, it is only logical that the University makes the effort to be a haven and home for potential and current queer students.

Saint Peter's University is currently unlisted on the Campus Pride Index. Therefore, conducting my own assessment of the University will require me to utilize the information that is available through the University's website and my first-hand

⁸ <https://hudsonpride.org/about/>

knowledge as a student at the University. I will use the previously mentioned checklist utilized by the Campus Pride Index to assess what Saint Peter's should do to increase its inclusiveness of queer people. After the assessment of where the University stands, I will offer specific recommendations for Saint Peter's.

1. LGBT+ Policy Inclusion

Saint Peter's University currently does have a statement regarding hate crimes which can be found in Campus Safety's policies. This policy does include gender and sexual orientation, but it fails to recognize gender expression as a possible reason for a hate crime.⁹ Saint Peter's does have a system for a change of name, but it does require a court order noting the change of name which can be very costly for transgender students trying to accomplish this.¹⁰ There is currently no way for a student to change their gender identity at the University. There is also no way for a student to disclose their sexual orientation and in terms of gender identity; there are only two options, male and female.¹¹ It should be noted that as a student I am unable to access the health insurance policies of the University so I am unable to assess if the University's insurance policy covers same-sex partners.

⁹ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/campus-safety/policies/#hatecrime>

¹⁰

<https://www.saintpeters.edu/enrollment-services/files/2012/07/CHANGE-OF-INFORMATION-FORM-rev8.8.16.pdf>

¹¹

<https://www.saintpeters.edu/undergraduate-admission/files/2012/07/2019-Web-App-form-fillable-edit12-20.pdf>

2. LGBT+ Support and Institutional Commitment

There is currently no office or resource centers on the Saint Peter's University campus that has responsibility for LGBT+ students. There are also no current on campus employees whose responsibilities include LGBT+ support services. It should be noted that there is a Safe Space on the Saint Peter's Jersey City Campus, but there is no indication of this at all on the University's website. There is also no standing committee dedicated to LGBT+ issues or LGBT+ alumni group. There is an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Saint Peter's University which briefly mentions PRIDE, the student organization for LGBT+ individuals.¹²

3. LGBT+ Academic Life

Saint Peter's University does have a gender and sexuality studies program which offers LGBT+ specific course offerings.¹³ There is an effort to recruit and retain a diverse faculty which includes members who are a part of the LGBT+ community and those that study it. There is also an Office of Faculty Development, but there is no indication if there are development opportunities in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity issues.¹⁴ There is no LGBT+ faculty organization at Saint Peter's University, but the student organization, PRIDE, does include faculty.¹⁵

¹² <https://www.saintpeters.edu/centers-institutes/office-diversity-equity-inclusion/>

¹³ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/gender-and-sexuality/>
It should also be noted that the website for the Gender and Sexuality program sometimes refers to the program only as a Women's Studies program.

¹⁴ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/faculty-development/>

¹⁵ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/pride/>

4. LGBT+ Student Life

In terms of student life, Saint Peter's meets all the requirements it is able to.¹⁶

The University has a student organization called PRIDE which stands for Protecting and Respecting Individuality Diversity and Equality.¹⁷ This group regularly plans events for queer individuals and other identities that intersect with these identities. There are also internships at Hudson Pride which students can take advantage of.¹⁸

5. LGBT+ Housing and Residence Life

Saint Peter's University does not currently have LGBT+ specific living facilities, nor does it have gender inclusive housing for new or returning students. There are also no single occupancy rooms and shower facilities for queer students unless they have a disability which requires them to have a room to themselves. Resident Assistants are trained on LGBT issues and concerns, but there is no indication on the website if administrators are trained on these issues.

6. LGBT+ Campus Safety

The Saint Peter's University Campus Safety does have procedures in place for reporting acts of bias and sexual misconduct that is available for students to access in the NET.¹⁹ There is currently nothing on the website that indicates Campus Safety officers and administration must go through trainings in regards to sexual orientation

¹⁶ It should be noted that Saint Peter's University has banned new Greek life organizations from forming on its campus

¹⁷ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/pride/>

¹⁸ <https://hudsonpride.org/work/>

¹⁹ <https://catalogs.saintpeters.edu/handbook/studentconductandjudicialsystem/>

and gender identity or expression issues. There is also no showing of active hate crime prevention or active outreach to LGBT+ students or PRIDE.

7. LGBT+ Counseling & Health

On the Saint Peter's website, it is indicated that there is counseling for students exploring their sexual orientation but there is no indication of counseling in regards to gender identity and expression issues.²⁰ There is no access to HIV testing on campus, but it does have resources to clinics that will be able to perform them.²¹ There is also nothing on the website to indicate that the student health care covers ongoing counseling and hormone therapy for trans students nor are there LGBT+ inclusive health information or information on safe sex.

8. LGBT+ Recruitment and Retention

There is no indication on the Saint Peter's University website that it participates in LGBTQ admission fairs, nor are there scholarships specifically for queer students or mentoring programs for queer students transitioning to college. There is also no indication of a lavender or rainbow graduation for queer students nor LGBT+ inclusive training for admissions counselors.

9. Recommendations for Saint Peter's

First, it is imperative that Saint Peter's should list themselves on the Campus Pride Index. Listing the University will give them a more accurate view of where they stand in terms of LGBT+ inclusiveness. This is also extremely important since some of

²⁰ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/caps/counseling-services/>

²¹ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/health-services/off-campus-resources/>

the University's competitors are listed such as Rutgers University, Montclair State University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, and Stockton University. Saint Peter's being on list will also give the institution the possibility of being awarded one of the most LGBT+ friendly campuses in the nation. Being listed, will give the University more publicity and a better reputation with queer students nationwide, especially if we strive to improve the campus culture in regards to queer individuals.

Saint Peter's should implement training for all employees and outsourced employees on a two to three-year recurring cycle on issues related to the LGBT+ community. This can be accomplished by creating a stronger connection with Hudson Pride which offers trainings in regards to LGBT+ health and cultural sensitivity.²² Another possible connection between Saint Peter's and Hudson Pride is the establishment of a satellite office of Hudson Pride at Saint Peter's which could serve as an LGBT+ Resource Center for the queer students on campus. The person or people who would run the center could also give the trainings on campus for student, faculty, and staff in regards to safe space and offer counseling for queer community members. This also aligns with the Saint Peter's strategic plan, Pathways to Distinction. One prominent goal of the strategic plan is "Prominent Community Partnerships" which includes promoting partnerships between community organizations on campus and greater student engagement in the external community.²³

²² <https://hudsonpride.org/training/>

²³ <https://www.saintpeters.edu/strategic-plan/>

The Gender and Sexuality program at Saint Peter's should also become more robust and actively participate in the recruitment of new students. This will allow Saint Peter's to show active collaboration of admissions with the program and also show the University's explicit dedication to members of the queer community. Saint Peter's should also continue to try and recruit academics who research gender, sexuality, and ethnic studies to make it a beacon of academia in the field.

In terms of student life, there should be a stronger collaboration between queer faculty members and queer students, specifically those in the PRIDE student organization. Saint Peter's should also try to better connect with LGBT+ alumni who can speak with current members of the University community about their experience while attending. They could also be targeted for being donors to a specific scholarship for queer students on campus. Saint Peter's should also look into hosting a graduation ceremony or celebration specifically for queer students and students of queer parents and guardians.

Saint Peter's seriously needs to evaluate their housing and residence life systems in place in terms of LGBT+ individuals. With the upcoming new residence halls, it should be paramount that part of the building be dedicated to gender inclusive housing and that there be a dedicated living space for queer students to find other members in the community in the building they are living in. This will allow for residents to feel safe and know that they have a place that they can go to in times of need.

The University also needs to enhance its admissions process for queer students. Besides becoming listed in the Campus Pride Index, Saint Peter's should inquire about

participating in LGBT+ admission fairs. Admissions should also begin including an optional question regarding students' sexuality and have more gender inclusive options for when they have to select their gender identity. This will allow students feel more cared for when they are applying to the school. The institution should also revise any policy that does not include gender identity or expression to include it and begin using gender inclusive language when writing new policies or publications (e.g., people for and with others instead of men and women for and with others). Saint Peter's should also review its health insurance policies for students, faculty, and administration to verify it covers same-sex partners, hormone therapy, and ongoing trans counseling services. Finally, the University should also have systems instituted for students to disclose what their preferred name and gender pronouns are so they can be affirmed in their identity and are not forced to speak with professors and staff members about what can be a very personal subject.

Saint Peter's has a long way to go. There is a serious need for resources available to LGBT+ individuals. A conscious effort must be made to accommodate these students. Queer students have a lot to offer to the richness of diversity at Saint Peter's. Given Saint Peter's strategic location in Jersey City, it stands to reason that this is a logical next move for the University. If these actions are taken, then it will greatly improve the campus climate for all members of the community and can strengthen the University to greater degree.

Appendix

Questionnaire for Campus Pride Index (<https://www.campusprideindex.org/>)

LGBT+ Policy Inclusion Questions

1. Does your campus prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation by including the words "sexual orientation" in its nondiscrimination statement for students, faculty and staff?
2. Does your campus prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression by including the words "gender identity" and/ or "gender identity or expression" in its nondiscrimination statement for students, faculty and staff?
3. Does your state recognize civil unions or marriage for same-sex couples?
4. Does your campus offer health insurance coverage to employees' same-sex partners?
5. What other benefits does your campus offer equally to both different-sex partners of employees as well as same-sex partners of employees? Please research your responses thoroughly.
6. Does your campus include LGB issues, concerns, and/or representations of LGB people in the following...
7. Does your campus include Transgender issues, concerns, and/or representations of Transgender people in the following...
8. Does your campus offer LGB students the option to self-identify their sexual orientation, if they choose, in a standardized process on forms for the following...
9. Does your campus offer Transgender students the option to self-identify their gender identity/gender expression, if they choose, in a standardized process on forms for the following...
10. Does your campus offer Transgender students who have not legally changed their names the ability to have the name they go by on the following records...
11. Does your campus offer Transgender employees who have not legally changed their names the ability to have the name they go by on the following records...
(sauce of secrets)

12. Does your campus offer Transgender students the ability to change the gender designation on their campus records and documents with only a request to do so from the student, regardless of if they have had gender confirmation/reassignment surgeries?
13. Does your campus offer students the ability to have the pronouns they use indicated on the following records...

LGBT+ Support & Institutional Commitment Questions

1. Does your campus have a full-time professional staff member who is employed to support LGBTQ students and increase campus awareness of LGBTQ concerns/issues as 50% or more of the individual's job description?
2. Does your campus have an LGBTQ concerns office or an LGBTQ student resource center (i.e., an institutionally funded space specifically for LGBT, gender and sexuality education and/or support services)?
3. Does your campus have an ongoing Safe Zone, Safe Space and/or Ally training program that are offered at a minimum annually to educate students, faculty and/or staff on LGBTQ issues and concerns?
4. Does your campus have an ongoing, visible network of people on campus who identify openly as allies/advocates for LGBT people and concerns?
5. Does your campus actively seek to employ a diversity of staff/faculty/administrators, including visible, out LGBTQ individuals?
6. Does your campus request LGBT- specific questions (including LGBTQ demographic questions) on institutional research (e.g., climate assessments) in which it participates in order to be inclusive of LGBTQ issues and experiences?
7. Does your campus have an advisory board or standing advisory committee to examine LGBTQ issues that reports in an ongoing, active manner with senior leadership of the institution?
8. Do senior administrators (e.g., chancellor, president, vice-president, academic deans, senior diversity officer) attend campus LGBTQ events/activities in a visible, ongoing manner?
9. Do senior administrators (e.g., chancellor, president, vice-president, academic deans, senior diversity officer) explicitly include the terms "sexual orientation," "gender identity/expression" and "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender" when publicly discussing multicultural and/or diversity issues on campus?
10. Does your campus have an active, visible LGBTQ alumni group that is supported by the institution's alumni office?

11. Does your campus have a policy requiring at least one gender-inclusive restroom (defined as restrooms not segregated into men's and women's spaces and welcoming to students who identify outside of the gender binary) in all newly constructed or significantly renovated buildings (similar to the legal standard under ADA accessibility)?
12. Does your campus provide gender-inclusive restrooms in at least half of administrative and academic buildings?
13. Does your campus have a listing/map in print to locate gender-inclusive restrooms and/or provide an easily accessible and/or searchable download online resource?
14. Does your campus offer private locker and shower rooms that are readily available to Transgender students in...

LGBT+ Academic Life Questions

1. Does your campus have an LGBTQ academic offering (e.g., Gender and Sexuality Studies, Queer Studies, etc.) that offers one or a combination of the following...
2. Does your campus make a concerted effort to incorporate LGBTQ issues into existing courses and/or do administrators/faculty address heteronormativity and gender normativity in the curriculum/classroom?
3. Does your campus have a significant number of books/periodicals in the campus library/libraries that speak to the experiences of...
4. Does your campus subscribe annually to academic journals and databases that primarily focus on LGBTQ issues/concerns and make these resources readily available for academic/research purposes?
5. Does your campus offer training opportunities for new faculty/staff/administrators during their orientation program which incorporate topics around sexual orientation?
6. Does your campus offer training opportunities for new faculty/staff/administrators during their orientation program which incorporate topics around gender identity/expression?
7. Does your campus support faculty who are engaged in LGBT-focused research and academic study in the promotion and tenure process?
8. Does your campus actively recruit faculty for their LGBT-related academic scholarship?
9. Does your campus have any specific academically focused LGBTQ student organizations (e.g., LGBTQ Medical Association, STEM, Out Lawyers Association)?
10. Does your campus have a LGBTQ faculty/staff organization which meets at least twice an academic year?

LGBT+ Student Life Questions

1. Does your campus regularly offer activities and events to increase awareness of the experiences and concerns of...
2. Does your campus regularly hold social events specifically for LGBTQ students? (e.g., queer prom, movie nights, open mic nights, etc.)
3. Does your campus have visible, active LGBTQ representation and/or leadership roles in the following areas/organizations...
4. Does your campus have visible, active LGBTQ representation and/or leadership roles in following office/departments through volunteer and/or paid student positions...
5. Does your campus offer annual funding that is ongoing and committed specifically to student leaders for attending statewide, regional and/or national events for LGBTQ awareness, personal development, enrichment and leadership (such as conferences, trainings, camps, etc.)?
6. Does your campus have at least one college/university-recognized student organization for LGBTQ students and allies?
7. Does your campus have any college/university-recognized student organizations for Transgender students and/or which primarily serve the needs of Transgender students?
8. Does your campus have any college/university-recognized student organizations for LGBTQ graduate students?
9. Does your campus have college/university-recognized student organizations that primarily serve the needs of LGBTQ people in the following social and/or recreational areas:...
10. Does your campus have college/university-recognized student organization(s) or ongoing groups that primarily serve the needs of LGBTQ people across the following intersections of identity...
11. Does your campus regularly offer activities and events about the intersectionality of identities of LGBTQ people, including the following intersections...

12. Does your campus regularly offer LGBTQ awareness trainings for professional and student staff (which may or may not include Safe Zone, Safe Space and/or Ally training) in the following areas/departments/offices...
13. Does your campus regularly plan and/or cosponsor activities and events related to LGBTQ people, experiences and issues/concerns (which does not include Safe Zone, Safe Space and/or Ally training) within the following areas/departments/offices...
14. Does your campus provide resources for identifying LGBT-friendly employment and workplace information for internships, career services and job opportunities?

LGBT+ Housing and Residence Life Questions

1. Does your campus offer LGBTQ students a way to be matched with an LGBT-friendly roommate on the application for campus housing?
2. Does your campus provide an LGBT-focused living space, LGBTQ theme floor and/or LGBT/Ally living-learning community program?
3. Does your campus offer gender-inclusive housing (defined as housing not segregated into men's and women's spaces-- including double and multiple occupancy bedrooms--and welcoming to students who identify outside of the gender binary) as a standard option available through the on-campus room selection process for incoming students?
4. Does your campus offer gender-inclusive housing (defined as housing not segregated into men's and women's spaces and welcoming to students who identify outside of the gender binary) as a standard option available through the on-campus room selection process for returning students?
5. Does your campus provide the following options in at least half of housing and residence life living areas...
6. Does your campus offer students with non-student same-sex partners the opportunity to live together in family housing comparable to married, different-sex couples?
7. Does your campus allow housing and residence life staff with non-student same-sex partners to live together in residence hall apartments comparable to married, different-sex couples?
8. Does your campus provide annual trainings for housing and residence life professional and student staff that speak to the experiences and concerns of...
9. Does your campus provide a visible reporting mechanism for LGBTQ students to share roommate conflicts or housing issues/concerns in order to provide a roommate change, an immediate intervention and/or a quick administrative response as a result of student safety concerns?
10. Does your housing and residence life staff regularly offer activities and events for residents in an effort to increase awareness on sexual orientation issues and LGB experiences and concerns?

11. Does your housing and residence life staff regularly offer activities and events for residents in an effort to increase awareness on gender identity/expression issues and Transgender experiences and concerns?

LGBT Campus Safety Questions

1. Does your campus have an easily accessible, visible and known procedure for reporting LGBT-related bias incidents and hate crimes that is distinct from generic reporting procedures?
2. Does your campus have a bias incident and/or hate crime reporting system for LGBTQ concerns that includes the following...
3. Does your campus provide regular, ongoing trainings for public safety officers, as well as for students, faculty and staff, on identifying hate crimes, hate crime prevention and how to report and respond to bias incidents and hate crimes?
4. Does your campus police/public safety office do annual outreach to LGBTQ people and/or meet with LGBTQ student leaders/organizations each year?
5. Within the last two years, has your campus provided training for public safety officers on LGB experiences and concerns and/or anti-LGB violence?
6. Within the last two years, has your campus provided training for public safety officers on Transgender experiences and concerns, which includes specific awareness about anti-Transgender violence and the ability of Transgender students to use gender-specific facilities that are in keeping with their gender identity?
7. Does your campus actively seek to employ a diversity of police/public safety officers, including visible, out LGBTQ individuals?
8. Does your campus provide support for victims of same-gender/same-sex sexual violence and intimate partner violence?

LGBT+ Counseling & Health Questions

1. Does your campus offer a support group(s) that assists individuals in the process of acknowledging and disclosing the following identities and their related concerns?
2. Does your campus offer LGBT-supportive counseling services, with a staff that is knowledgeable of the needs and experiences of the following identities and their related concerns?
3. Does your campus regularly offer a specific training for students and staff to identify at-risk students inclusive of LGBT individuals for depression, suicide and mental health issues?
4. Does your campus actively distribute condoms, dental dams, and LGBT-inclusive information on HIV/STI services and resources?
5. Does your campus offer free, anonymous, and easily accessible HIV/STI testing on a regular basis?
6. Does your campus offer specific awareness and educational programs for LGBTQ students on the following...
7. Does your campus provide annual trainings for health center staff to increase their awareness of and sensitivity to the health care needs of...
8. Does your campus offer a student health insurance policy which covers ongoing counseling services for Transgender students who need such counseling, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?
9. Does your campus offer at least one employee health insurance or HMO plan which covers ongoing counseling services, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?
10. Does your campus offer a student health insurance policy which covers the initiation and maintenance of hormone replacement therapy for Transgender students who need such therapy, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?
11. Does your campus offer at least one employee health insurance or HMO plan which covers the initiation and maintenance of hormone blockers and/or

hormone replacement therapy, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?

12. Does your campus offer a student health insurance policy which covers gender confirmation ("sex reassignment") surgeries for Transgender students who need such surgeries, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?
13. Does your campus offer at least one employee health insurance or HMO plan which covers gender confirmation ("sex reassignment") surgeries for Transgender employees, Transgender partners of employees and dependent Transgender children of employees (18 and over) who need such surgeries, as consistent with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care?

LGBT+ Recruitment & Retention Efforts

1. Does your campus actively seek to recruit LGBTQ students, similar to other targeted populations (e.g., students of color, women in engineering, athletes, international students)?
2. Does your campus actively seek to retain LGBTQ students, similar to other targeted populations (e.g., students of color, women in engineering, athletes, international students)?
3. Does your campus provide any annual scholarships specifically for LGBTQ students?
4. Does your campus offer programs that incorporate topics around sexual orientation in new student orientation programs every year?
5. Does your campus offer programs that incorporate topics around gender identity/expression in new student orientation programs every year?
6. Does your campus have an annual Lavender or Rainbow Graduation (i.e., a special graduation ceremony for LGBTQ students and allies)?
7. Does your campus have an LGBTQ mentoring program to welcome and assist LGBTQ students in transitioning to academic and college life?
8. Does your campus participate annually in at least one admission fair targeted toward LGBTQ prospective college students?
9. Does your campus have a specific college admissions brochure/website that highlights LGBTQ programs and services?
10. Within the last two years, has your campus trained admissions counselors on the experiences and concerns of LGBT students?
11. Does your campus offer any emergency funds or resources to help LGBTQ students who are "outed" or come out to their parents/families and then lose financial support to be able to stay enrolled for the semester/year?
12. Does your campus offer direct, readily-accessible FAFSA assistance specifically for LGBTQ students who need a "dependency override" (due to abusive, neglectful or absent parents) to assist the student with the FAFSA process?

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