



Policy Paper

LGBTQ+ Students

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PREFACE

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

This paper uses the acronym “LGBTQ+” to refer to anyone who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Two-Spirit, Asexual, Pansexual, and other identities and sexualities that are not cisgender or heterosexual. The terms “trans” and “transgender” are used interchangeably. The plus sign indicates the intention to recognize a diverse and fluid range of gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. Throughout the paper, the term “Queer” may be used interchangeably with “LGBTQ+.”

Though the term MOGAI (Marginalized Orientations, Genders, and Intersex) has been offered as an alternative to LGBTQ+, this paper opts for the latter term because it, currently, is more widely recognizable. As language and nomenclature continue to evolve, this terminology choice may be revisited.

A NOTE ON SCOPE AND LENS

Not all groups and individuals under the umbrella term “LGBTQ+” face the same issues and barriers. The identities and communities to which the term refers have distinct experiences and face distinct challenges. Unfortunately, it is not in the scope of this paper to address all of these important issues. Readers may find that certain nuanced discussions (e.g. bi-invisibility in some LGBTQ+ communities, or the differences in stereotypes and stigmas surrounding gay men and lesbians), are not approached in depth. Instead, this paper attempts to explore more general issues of inclusion, awareness, and respect.

The paper addresses topics of oppression that cannot fully be understood without a much greater examination of intersectionality and the role of racism, ableism, ageism, and other forms of discrimination in the oppression of LGBTQ+ individuals. In the interest of maintaining a problem-solving-oriented scope tied closely to direct consultation, rather than an academic one, this paper treads lightly on issues of intersectionality has not adopted an intersectional lens on the whole.

This paper attempts to offer policy solutions into context of broad and complex topics; there are still many important issues to be discussed. This paper does not claim to serve as a comprehensive list of challenges faced by all or some students who identify as LGBTQ+, nor as an authoritative description of the nature of these problems, but rather, as a first step towards introducing some improvements.

LGBTQ+ VOICES

OUSA believes that it is important that the voices of marginalized populations drive discussion on issues of equity and social justice. Accordingly, this paper and its policy recommendations were written after thorough consultation with Ontario university students who identify as LGBTQ+. Interviews and focus groups were conducted at:

- Brock University
- McMaster University
- Queen’s University

- University of Waterloo
- Wilfrid Laurier University

Additionally, the principles and policies addressed in this paper were guided by the results of a survey on LGBTQ+ student experiences. This survey was conducted online by OUSA in November 2014, and received over 300 responses from Ontario students who identified as LGBTQ+.

OUSA would like to thank all the students and service providers who guided and informed the development of this policy paper.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On university campuses across Ontario, students who are LGBTQ+ face varying levels of discrimination, exclusion, and increased health and safety risks. In the Fall of 2014, OUSA conducted focus groups, interviews, and an online survey designed to gain insight into some of the experiences of LGBTQ+ students and to explore possible policy interventions. Guided by these student voices - and informed by best practices highlighted in existing literature - this paper offers recommendations to improve equity, safety, and inclusion.

Though deep-seated structural factors are the root causes of discrimination and prejudice, it is not in the scope of this paper to offer an academic exploration of these topics. Rather, this paper maintains a problem-solving focus, connected closely to primary research, and offers short-term prescriptions intended to improve the student experiences for LGBTQ+ students.

Resources

Resource allocation refers to ensuring that LGBTQ+ community and campus life are adequately funded and staffed. Many students who are LGBTQ+ encounter situations that make them feel isolated, so resources, services, and campus programming to support and promote Queer communities are essential. When asked in OUSA's survey what institutions could do to improve the university experience, over 22% of respondents expressed this desire, making it one of the most common suggestions. Currently, students and student groups are at the forefront of this effort. While student involvement is critical, it can mean limited resources. Moreover, it is important that institutions themselves – not just students – send a strong message of inclusion and support by hosting events as well as recognizing significant days, such as Trans Day of Remembrance.

Both the government and universities should increase the financial support available to supporting Queer communities on campus. The government should offer funding envelopes similar to those it currently offers some schools for goals such as first-generation students supports. Additionally, universities should contribute to the promotion of student-led LGBTQ+ and pride events and programming, possibly developing a process by which funds can be requested for this purpose on an ad-hoc basis.

Acknowledging the value of student-led initiatives, it is nevertheless the case that when the strongest or sole source of LGBTQ+ community or programming on campus is run by students, long-term planning, committee work, and logistics can be difficult. There should be full-time positions within university administration that liaise with and support LGBTQ+ student groups. These employees should work closely with students so that their efforts can retain some institutional memory, and their operations can benefit from a reliable avenue of communication with the school.

Lastly, universities need to turn to infrastructure to help improve the student experience for LGBTQ+ students. Permanent LGBTQ+ student space is not present at every campus, despite its benefits for community, comfort, and safety. In addition, gender-neutral bathrooms are essential for the safety and human rights of students who identify as trans and non-binary.

Additionally housing arrangements can be a profound concern for some LGBTQ+ students in particular. OUSA's focus groups and survey have revealed a demand for LGBTQ+ designated living spaces as an option for students who are concerned with living among potentially homophobic or transphobic individuals, who might face discrimination or violence, or who otherwise would like the opportunity to live in a climate removed from the influence of a dominant privileged group.

Policies

University policy-making refers to the explicit rules, protections, and procedures that the university has in place to ensure that LGBTQ+ students' rights are protected and that their needs are accommodated.

Names and perceptions can have significant impacts on a student's sense of comfort in certain situations as well as a student's overall sense of self. For students undergoing a sex or gender transition, identity and identifying records assume both a practical and symbolic significance. However, some universities do not have reliable processes for students to choose a preferred name or gender in their class listings, student cards, etc. Universities must adopt policies along these lines that allow the change to be reflected throughout all the services and staff that students might interact with.

Additionally, athletics and recreation is an area that can be particularly challenging to students who identify as Queer. Athletics and recreation participation has been shown to have a host of positive effects in students' mental health and overall well-being. However, there is resistance to the inclusion of trans and intersex identities in sport. Many sports and activities – as well as many spaces – are strongly divided along a binary understanding of biological sex conflated with gender and with notions of gendered bodies. Universities must strive to implement policies that promote inclusion and allow for gender non-conforming and intersex students to participate without barriers.

All of this should be capped with institutional equity statements recognizing LGBTQ+ students and asserting their rights. By making a clear and institution-wide statement that addresses equity for LGBTQ+ identities, universities can better express their commitment to inclusion, and send a positive message to Queer students and campuses as a whole.

Training and Education

Education involves raising the level of understanding and knowledge possessed by individuals when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues. This includes basic awareness of the diverse genders, sexes, and orientations that exist on campus, but also includes the ability to recognize and combat discrimination. Students who are LGBTQ+ are at increased risk for mental health concerns. Additionally, they may have unique mental and physical health concerns more generally. However, a number of respondents to OUSA's survey indicated that some campus health practitioners lacked sufficient knowledge to engage with them adequately or provide service; some even noted physicians who were dismissive, skeptical, or rude regarding their gender identities or sexual orientations.

OUSA's research corresponds with a growing body of literature on the negative effects of non-inclusive language and the invisibility of LGBTQ+ themes and issues in class. Classroom instructors often – unknowingly – promote an exclusionary environment by failing to use gender-neutral language and ignoring queer identities and figures in courses where such topics could be explored. Research indicates that the climate of invisibility these practices create can have deleterious effects on students' engagement, academic success, and satisfaction with their education.

Education and training can solve many of these issues. Growing research demonstrates how effective education in LGBTQ+ issues and identities can be. Additionally, a significant number of respondents to OUSA's survey highlighted such training as an urgent need. Campus service providers – particularly healthcare practitioners but professors and teaching assistants as well – should participate in such training to gain a better understanding of the diverse identities among the student body. This training can educate service providers on the needs and concerns of students with whom they will be engaging, and can allow course instructors to make classroom environments more inclusive, while equipping them to recognize and prevent heterosexism and cissexism in class.

INTRODUCTION

On university campuses across Ontario, students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, trans, two-spirit, non-binary, questioning, or who otherwise identify as Queer (hereafter “LGBTQ+”) face varying levels of discrimination, harassment, and exclusion. In some cases, they become the targets of deliberate, hate-motivated actions, but in other instances, the blame lies with ignorance or apathy. University experiences have a profound effect on LGBTQ+ students who may find themselves in uncomfortable or unsafe living arrangements, told where to go to the washroom, and so on.

Principle One: All students, regardless of sex, sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression are entitled to safety, inclusion, and respect both inside the classroom and in the broader campus environment.

The problems and solutions discussed in this paper surround the theme of ensuring the dignity of university students. Oppression and marginalization of people who identify as LGBTQ+ persist on our campuses, despite the fact that the right to be free of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.¹ Yet, studies show that many LGBTQ+ students face significant barriers throughout their university careers, including during classes, in their campus lives, and when accessing student or health care services.^{2, 3}

Principle Two: Though protective measures and accommodations for marginalized communities are important, government, universities, and members of campus communities including faculty, administration, and other students have a duty to strive to end the oppression that makes these measures necessary.

Surveys of LGBTQ+ youth in high school indicate disturbingly high rates of bullying and homophobic behaviour; such negative school experiences can even elevate truancy rates and diminish students’ academic performance and desire to continue into higher education.^{4,5} All members of the university community and the government should be firmly committed to ensuring this trend does not continue on Ontario campuses.

¹ *Human Rights Code*, Revised Statutes of Ontario 1990, s1.
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm

² Megan R. Yost and Stephanie Gilmore, “Assessing LGBTQ Campus Climate and Creating Change,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 58 (2011): 1351.

³ Sara B. Oswalt and Tammy J. Wyatt, “Sexual Orientation and Differences in Mental Health, Stress, and Academic Performance in a National Sample of U.S. College Students,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 58 (2011): 1258.

⁴ Steven R. Aragon, V. Paul Poteat, Dorothy L. Espelage, and Brian W. Koenig. “The Influence of Peer Victimization on Educational Outcomes for LGBTQ and Non-LGBTQ High School Students,” *Journal of LGBT Youth* 11 (2014).

⁵ C. Taylor and T. Peter with T.L. McMinn, T. Elliott, S. Beldom, A. Ferry, Z. Gross, S. Paquin and K. Schachter. *Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian Schools. Final Report.* (Toronto: Egale Human Rights Trust, 2011), 48-55.

Homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of prejudice are rooted in deep-seated societal and structural factors. It is these factors that must be dismantled in order to create a truly equitable and non-discriminatory society. Until this goal is reached, prescriptions such as those offered in this paper must be understood as interim goals, designed to improve the student experience of marginalized communities, but not as long-term solutions.

As a student-driven organization, OUSA's policy recommendations are guided by students' voices. In the Fall of 2014, OUSA conducted a small series of focus groups, interviews, and an online LGBTQ+ student experience survey designed to gain insight into some of the campus experiences of LGBTQ+ students, and to learn what changes are felt to be most necessary. After meeting with students and service-providers at five universities, and after analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from over 300 LGBTQ+ identified survey respondents from across Ontario, many common trends became visible.

Guided by students' voices - and informed by best practices highlighted in existing literature on combating heterosexism and cissexism - this paper offers recommendations to improve equity, safety, and inclusion through the following strategies: resource allocation, university policy-making, and education.

Resource allocation refers to ensuring that LGBTQ+ activities, services, and spaces are adequately funded and staffed. Financial resources are a major component of this, but personnel and infrastructure are also critical elements of this intervention.

University policy-making refers to the explicit rules, protections, and procedures that the university has in place to ensure that LGBTQ+ students' rights are protected and that their needs are accommodated. Appropriate policy-making can range from publishing equity statements to having navigable processes for preferred name recognition.

Education refers to increasing the level of understanding and knowledge possessed by faculty, staff, administrators, service-providers, and even other students when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues. This includes basic awareness of the diverse genders, sexes, and orientations that exist on campus, but also includes the ability to recognize and combat discrimination. Sufficient familiarity with these topics is especially important for physical and mental health care providers.

RESOURCES

FUNDING

Principle Three: Services, supports, and spaces for LGBTQ+ students should be well funded by the province and by institutions to ensure their capacity and continuity.

Many students who are LGBTQ+ encounter situations on campus that make them feel isolated or excluded.⁶ Campuses often present hetero- and cisnormative climates that

⁶ Ibid.

can make LGBTQ+ students feel unwelcome and invisible. Owing to these and other concerns, it is critically important that LGBTQ+ students who face these issues have access to safer spaces, pride organizations, and service-providers that allow them to connect with peers, feel safe and comfortable, and access services when needed. Funding must be available to ensure the presence and maintenance of these things on campus.

Though no space can be truly safe, OUSA points to a definition of the term offered by the New York coalition of safer spaces:

a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety. It is a space that is critical of the power structures that affect our everyday lives, and where power dynamics, backgrounds, and the effects of our behavior on others are prioritized. It's a space that strives to respect and understand survivors' specific needs. Everyone who enters a safer space has a responsibility to uphold the values of the space.⁷

Concern One: Many vital aspects of LGBTQ+ campus life are operated solely by students and their resources, which in some cases, limits operational and financial capacity.

The presence and prominence of pride centres (which are hubs of LGBTQ+ advocacy, community, and event organization that are present on many campuses) other resource centres, and safe social spaces is inconsistent across Ontario. In some universities, the only campus groups dedicated to LGBTQ+ interests are run entirely by students, often as clubs, and may lack the capacity to function as the sole community or advocacy hub. In other cases, more permanent, staffed LGBTQ+ resources exist through the student association, however since some student associations have limited revenue and are restricted in their space, this too may be inadequate in certain cases.

Recommendation One: The government should offer universities an LGBTQ+ campus life grant to fund, develop, or enhance LGBTQ+ supports and services as determined through consultation with students.

In order to ensure that campuses are equipped to respond to the funding needs of LGBTQ+ campus life, the government should introduce an LGBTQ+ support fund as part of universities' operating grants. Currently, the government of Ontario offers operational grants earmarked as investments in targeted areas. For example, some universities in Ontario receive grants for French language supports or grants to support First Generation students' transitions or to offer them bursaries. The safety, inclusion, and dignity of LGBTQ+ students should be a cause that the government approaches similarly, offering funding packages designed to improve LGBTQ+ student experiences or combat discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia on campus. The nature of the improvements sought, and the goal of the funding assistance, will vary from campus to campus, and can be used to develop new initiatives or enhance those currently offered. In many cases these funds will be best used in support of student-run initiatives.

⁷ "Developing a Policy." Coalition for Safer Spaces. <https://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/policy/>

Therefore, universities should – in consultation with students – negotiate the terms of these support packages with the government.

This fund would allow universities to contribute more resources to improving the university climate for LGBTQ+ students by pursuing strategies to combat homophobia and transphobia, boosting supports through the hiring staff to fill service gaps, or funding LGBTQ+ friendly programming or spaces. Depending on the needs of each campus, and based on the input of students, funding packages could support initiatives ranging from services to programming. Such measures can potentially improve the state of LGBTQ+ oriented services and community.

Recommendation Two: Universities should allocate funds to support and promote LGBTQ+ activities and services on their campus, in partnership and consultation with students.

In addition to dedicated funding from the government, universities should make LGBTQ+ focused programming and services higher priorities, broadly speaking. Whether this means hosting events themselves, or working with student associations to promote their events and services, universities should be willing to incur some of the costs associated with creating an inclusive, active and safe campus culture. To this end, universities should set aside a certain amount of operational money, or establish protocols through which student associations can request financial support on an ad hoc basis, so that funding is available to support LGBTQ+ campus life.

PROGRAMMING AND CAMPUS LIFE

Principle Four: It is important that universities recognize and celebrate the diverse orientations and genders that are present on their campuses.

“When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing” – this statement from Adrienne Rich captures that idea that people benefit greatly from seeing themselves reflected in the world around them. Whether among role models or in activities, even the simple acknowledgement of marginalized social identities is important to allow students to feel that they are part of a community.

Young people often find life as a student to be a particularly tumultuous, and sometimes seek comfort while experiencing particular social identities. The recognition of diverse orientations and genders can help offset feelings of alienation, depression, and even suicidal considerations.⁸

Universities are an opportune place in which to recognize diverse social placements. As an educational institution, part of their mission is to deconstruct and engage with these issues; as places in which youth are negotiating identities, they serve as important sites in which explore aspects of themselves. Universities should encourage the knowledge and exploration of diverse people, orientations, and genders.

⁸ LM Mintz, “Gender Variance On Campus: A Critical Analysis of Transgender Voices” *University of California, San Diego* (2011).

Principle Five: An inclusive campus environment should feature events, activities, groups, and other programming that acknowledges and supports LGBTQ+ students.

When asked in OUSA's November 2014 survey what institutions could do to improve the university experience for LGBTQ+ students, many respondents expressed a desire for more programming of Queer events and activities. Over 22% of responses to this question included suggestions along these lines, making it one of the most common responses. Hosting LGBTQ+ events would benefit students concerned about being harassed or disrespected at existing university functions, and could even ease frustrations surrounding social interactions that heterosexual or cisgender students tend to take for granted; for example, even expressing romantic interest as an LGBTQ+ person is more challenging, several respondents noted.⁹ Events and activities to increase the profile and recognition level of queer communities can improve the tone and culture of the campus.¹⁰

Accordingly, Larry Roper, during his term as Oregon State University's Provost of Student Affairs, writes of the cross-sectional role of student affairs in developing a holistic shift in an organization's culture. He writes that living arrangements, tone and setting of the classroom, and campus environment are the main three areas of focus. In regards to creating an inclusive environment for LGBTQ students, he proposes that visibility and voice play a substantial role.¹¹

Large, university sponsored LGBTQ+ events and activities would not only demonstrate that the campus is committed to being inclusive and respecting the rights of all its students, but would assist LGBTQ+ students to build community and connect with peers while being themselves in safer spaces.

Concern Two: Universities do not often support or promote specifically LGBTQ+ friendly events.

University-sponsored events designed to celebrate and recognize LGBTQ+ students are not common at every campus. OUSA's surveys revealed a strong desire for more, better advertised events. This suggests that LGBTQ+ programming might be sparse, and when it exists, it may not have sufficient promotion, support, and magnitude to reach everyone who would be interested. The result is that many students who might otherwise benefit from such programming, or who would wish to attend, may be unaware that it even occurs. This limits the extent to which LGBTQ+ communities can thrive and grow at university.

⁹ Results from unpublished online survey conducted by OUSA in November 2014.

¹⁰ Kristie L. Seelman, N. E. Walls, Kelly Costello, Karly Steffens, Kyle Inselman, Hillary Montague-Asp, and Colorado Trans on Campus Coalition. "Invisibilities, Uncertainties, and Unexpected Surprises: The experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming students, staff, and faculty at Colleges and Universities in Colorado (Executive Summary)" 2012. http://works.bepress.com/kristie_seelman/4

¹¹ Larry D. Roper, "The Role of Senior Student Affairs Officers in Supporting LGBT Students: Exploring the landscape of one's life," in *Special Issue: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Research, Policy, and Personal* 111 (2005).

Concern Three: Many LGBTQ+ students feel unrepresented and invisible in campus life.

For many people, university is a time for self-discovery and self-expression. Meeting people, planning for the future, and moving to a new city or living away from home can be stressful and emotionally trying. The university experience, outside the classroom as well as in, can be valuable and formative. Unfortunately, significant numbers of Ontario students who are LGBTQ+ find it exclusionary and unwelcoming.

When asked in OUSA's survey, 20% of respondents indicated that they do not feel "comfortable and included," on campus, and 19% do not "feel welcome at large university events or activities." This indicates that on many campuses, signals of exclusion are being sent. Studies have shown that a sense of inclusion among individuals in marginalized communities have strong implications not only for educational attainment, but for mental health and well-being, as well.¹² Likewise, campus climates perceived as hostile or discriminatory have been shown to have "deleterious effects" on these outcomes.¹³

Recommendation Three: Universities should host and promote observances such as days of remembrance and awareness weeks or months.

In order to demonstrate to students that universities understand, welcome, and include people who are LGBTQ+, administrations should host and promote campus events, activities, and observances that show respect and inclusion. Among OUSA's focus groups, participants expressed a desire to see these occasions, events, and significant days receive a higher profile and greater attention from universities. They suggested that this showed an institutional commitment to recognize and support these communities, the absence of which was indicated frequently as a source of distress by respondents to OUSA's survey.

This approach has also been suggested in academic discourse. Research suggests that participation in pride weeks, and holding ceremonies for Trans Day of Remembrance for example, can go a long way towards becoming more supportive of Queer communities - trans and genderqueer communities in particular.¹⁴ Panel discussions and guest speakers are other recommended approaches.¹⁵ In so doing, universities can send a message of respect, while helping to build community.

¹² Susan R. Rankin, "LGBTQA Students on Campus: Is higher education making the grade?" *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education* 3 No. 2/3 (2006) 111-117.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Beemyn, Brett Genny, Andrea Domingue, Jessica Pettitt, Todd Smith. "Suggested Steps to Make Campuses More Trans-Inclusive," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education* 3 no. 1 (2008): 89-94.

¹⁵ Seelman et al, "Invisibilities, Uncertainties, and Unexpected Surprises." 2012.

STAFF AND HR

Principle Six: Universities should support, collaborate with, and maintain relationships with LGBTQ+ groups and students on campus.

For LGBTQ+ resource centres, activities, and events to be impactful, they cannot be obscure. The resources and programming offered must be visible and widely available across campus, and this requires the participation of universities. Through their support, assistance, and participation, the profile, utility, and reach of LGBTQ+ resource centres, permanent social spaces, and events can increase.

In order to implement and promote such things, student groups and offices that run them should have an open channel of communication with the university. The support and cooperation of the university is essential, and sometimes is best guaranteed by dedicated, full-time staff employed in positions to do so, or to support student-run LGBTQ+ groups themselves.

Concern Four: Often, LGBTQ+ centres and services that are entirely student or volunteer run encounter difficulties retaining institutional memory, embarking on long-term projects, and ensuring uninterrupted continuity of the service from year to year.

Many LGBTQ+ groups on Ontario campuses are run entirely by students.¹⁶ Often there is a permanent lounge or resource space staffed and managed by the student association directly, but sometimes the association merely supports a more independent group of students. In other cases still, the strongest LGBTQ+ community presence may be a club that has no permanent space for Queer students whatsoever.

Student-led initiatives and communities are profoundly valuable and should continue to be encouraged. However, when students run the operations of a campus resource, centre, club, or space, it makes long-term planning quite difficult. High turnover as student leaders graduate can be disruptive, and initiatives that may take multiple years can fall off at any point without the institutional memory to sustain them. Furthermore, a largely transient population of leaders and managers can compromise student groups' ability to collaborate with wider sector partners through community boards, advisory councils, or committees, which can be extremely valuable.

Concern Five: Often, LGBTQ+ centres and services that are entirely student or volunteer run encounter difficulties coordinating with universities to secure the necessary resources, permissions, or assistance to plan their activities and initiatives.

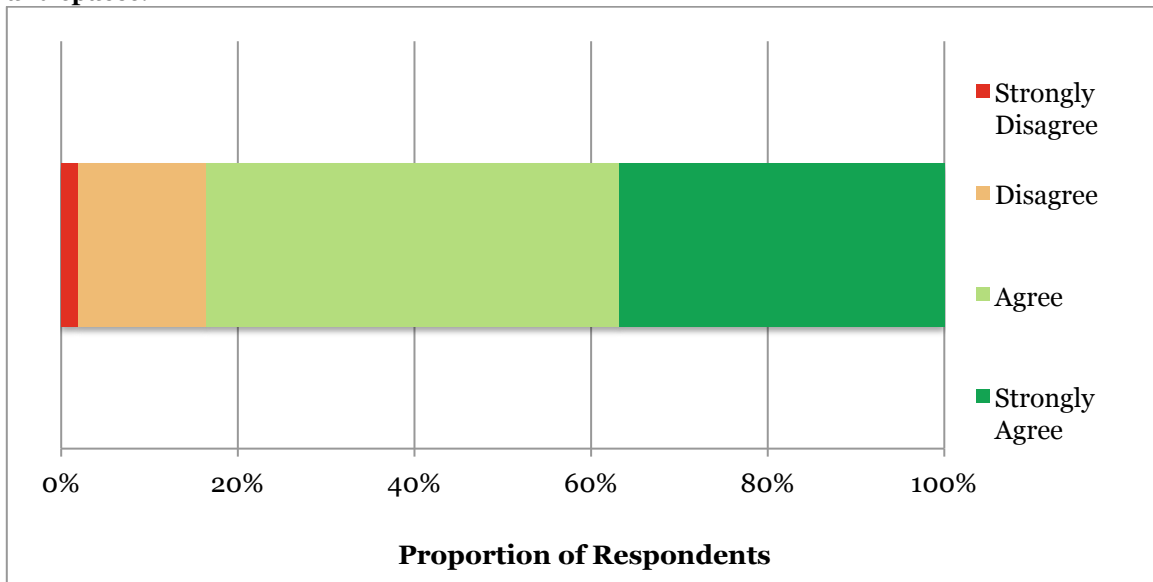
Moreover, when students are solely responsible for these valuable campus resources, it can make coordination with the university administration difficult, adding an extra level of challenge and delay when trying to book space for events or distribute promotional materials. Knowledge of changing practices and procedures (such as risk assessment forms, poster rules) is essential to ensure timely and effective planning. If student groups are too distant from the institutions, it may become increasingly difficult to operate within them and access their resources.

¹⁶ According to a sector scan conducted by OUSA, February 2015.

Recommendation Four: Universities should expand or create full-time staff positions to support or liaise with LGBTQ+ centres and services, to ensure a certain level of continuity, reliability, and institutional memory without compromising the autonomy and student leadership of these groups.

OUSA’s survey indicated that a substantial portion of Ontario’s LGBTQ+ students would like to see an increase in the number of full-time, university-employed staff involved with LGBTQ+ events, groups, and spaces, with 84% of respondents in favour (see figure 1, below).

Figure 1. “I wish the university employed more full-time staff to run LGBTQ+ groups, events, and spaces.”¹⁷



One possible model for this can be found at Wilfrid Laurier University, which recently created the position of Diversity and Equity Director. The Director oversees the equity-focused student groups at Laurier, which are similar in structure and function to campus clubs, but which operate through the university’s Diversity and Equity office. In this role, the Director acts as a liaison between the university and these important student groups, and helps them find opportunities to increase their presence on campus and make their voices heard.¹⁸

Another advantage of a full-time staff member working in support of student groups becomes evident when challenges within or among groups appear. As in all communities, LGBTQ+ communities contain intersecting identities and individuals facing marginalization among multiple, and often reinforcing, lines - such as race, religion, sexual orientation, mental health, disabilities and others. Students with intersecting marginalized identities may face discrimination in spaces intended to be refuges. In the case of Laurier, the Equity Director can play a role in helping these groups navigate these intersectionalities and work towards the elimination of discrimination in these contexts.

¹⁷ Results from unpublished online survey conducted by OUSA in November 2014.

¹⁸ Dr. Laura Mae Lindo (Diversity and Equity Director, Wilfrid Laurier University) in discussion with author, September 2014.

Naturally the groups that exist will be different on each campus, so the Laurier example may not be applicable everywhere. However, where possible, universities should expand the role of their staff to include positions that coordinate, facilitate, or liaise with, LGBTQ+ groups, centres, and spaces on their campuses.

There are some services that require trained professionals and dedicated, full-time staff. Counselors, crisis managers, and other accredited roles, particularly those that may interact with marginalized populations, should be filled by full-time professionals. However, student service providers offer tremendous value as well; peer support and guidance, as well as community facilitation to establish non-threatening space or resource centres are tasks best left to students. This balance and division of responsibilities is critical, and should be evaluated consultatively between students and universities.

Recommendation Five: Anti-harassment offices should include equity programming and equity training, in order to expand beyond a purely reactive approach.

The anti-harassment and anti-discrimination offices at many universities serve a primarily reactionary purpose. They are a recourse for students who feel that they have faced unfair or inequitable treatment, and wish to assert their rights.

Administrations should expand the role of these offices and make them more proactive. Rather than serving as a place for students to go when they have been wronged, they should be mandated and funded to conduct equity training, workshops, and other programming for the university community to combat harassment, discrimination, and the structures of inequity.

Additionally, though these offices operate under the guidelines of the OHRC and make reference to it, their websites and mission statements should also explicitly mention that they protect the rights of LGBTQ+ students. Historically, these offices have been valuable in combating race and religious-based discrimination, which may be how they are primarily viewed. To build on this, they should visibly advertise the fact that they are able to assist in cases of homophobia and transphobia.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Principle Seven: Infrastructure should meet the standards set out by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Students in Ontario should be offered facilities and infrastructure that conform to the standards of inclusivity and access set by the Ontario government. On this matter, the Human Rights Code reads:

Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Human Rights Code*, R.S.O., s1.

The Code therefore requires that all people, regardless of gender identity, have equal access to facilities. All students, including students who do not identify as cis-male or cis-female, are entitled to equal comfort, options, and accommodations when using services, goods, and facilities on Ontario university campuses.

Concern Six: Students that do not feel safe or comfortable in washrooms or change rooms designated for males and females are often not offered an alternative.

Many LGBTQ+ students, particularly students who are trans or non-binary, have identified facilities such as washrooms to be a point of anxiety and concern in their lives: 79% of respondents to OUSA's survey who identified as trans, genderqueer/fluid, or non-binary would prefer to use gender neutral bathrooms.

For many of these students, not knowing if they are in the "right" bathroom, or if they will be the target of harassment for using the "wrong" facilities introduces a completely unnecessary level of stress and danger into their lives.²⁰ This is a growing and important issue beyond university contexts; members of Toronto's trans community, for example, have expressed to the media that "what goes on with us in the bathroom is not trivial. You know that every time in public you need to go satisfy this biological need, you are in danger of persecution."²¹

Therefore, to not offer bathrooms that accommodate students who do not feel safe or comfortable in a "men's" or "women's" room must be viewed as an infraction of the Human Rights Code, which guarantees equal, nondiscriminatory access to facilities, and reasonable accommodation.

Concern Seven: Residence living arrangements can be potentially threatening for some students who are LGBTQ+.

Participants in OUSA's focus groups and surveys indicated great concern with the effects and dangers of living in homophobic environments, or in proximity to homophobic individuals. One respondent recounted instances of LGBTQ+ individuals encountering homophobic comments in residence, but not feeling as though they could confront it due to feelings of intimidation and insecurity. Another respondent reported experiencing such significant stress over being a gay first year student living in residence that they sought counseling. It is critical that these lived experiences are heard.

First year is an incredibly important time for all students, but particularly students who already identify as LGBTQ+ or are in the process of exploring their orientation or gender. Not only are these students in a brand new living environment, they are navigating this environment during what is often a highly important transitional time for identity expression: a survey done by the Pew Centre of American LGBT populations said that the average age that respondents "came out to themselves" was 17, and the average

²⁰ *Every Class*, Egale, 17-18.

²¹ Rebecca Tucker, "What goes on with us in a bathroom is not trivial: CBC documentary Transforming Gender gives members of the trans community a voice," *National Post*, Feb 26, 2015. <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/02/26/what-goes-on-with-us-in-a-bathroom-is-not-trivial-cbc-documentary-transforming-gender-gives-members-of-the-trans-community-a-voice/>

age for respondents to share that information was 20.²² Clearly, the time frame wherein students typically attend university aligns with a critical time in navigating one's sexual and gender identity.

In an ideal world, every residence floor or campus space would be a "safe space" for students exploring these questions. Early outreach and education in particular will prove to be essential in realizing the goal of residence life free of homophobia or oppressive practices; often, first year university provides the first exposure students have to someone who is "out" as LGBTQ. By working to dismantle assumptions and ignorance K-12 settings, the transition into university environments will change for LGBTQ+ students as well as their peers.

However, that reality is still far in the future; discrimination is a day-to-day experience for many LGBTQ+ students. In residence, the impact is compounded by the concentrated nature of the environment. When faced with oppression - one paper describes - a common coping mechanism is "the tactic of avoidance" (withdrawing from an oppressive space); however, this is not an option when the space in question is where you live, sleep, and spend a large part of your life.²³ The existence of an LGBTQ+ designated residence space can facilitate much needed healing and respite and allow students to take comfort as their true selves.

Living in residence can be particularly fraught for students who identify as trans, intersex, gender fluid or otherwise gender non-conforming. An issue arises on campuses where all on-campus housing is gendered. In these cases, students who are trans or non-binary may be excluded from being able to live on campus with their peers, or will be forced to live in a gendered room that does not align with their self-reported gender. By only offering housing based on a gender binary, students of other gender identities which fall outside of that either are not able to live in their preferred environment, and/or are forced to live in an environment where they may feel deeply uncomfortable or under threat.

Concern Eight: Some campuses do not offer permanent space for LGBTQ+ resources centres, pride centres, or social spaces, leading to infrastructural marginalization.

Many campuses do not offer permanent resource and social spaces for LGBTQ+ students, and some of those that do only offer temporary spaces or spaces shared with other groups, which can lead to disputes and conflicts over usage. The vast majority of Pride spaces, lounges, and resource centres in Ontario universities are managed or owned by student volunteers or through the student association.²⁴ This greatly impacts the resources, reach, and capacity of such centres. The health and prevalence of these

²² "A Survey of LGBT Americans Attitudes, Experiences and Values in Changing Times." Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends. June 13, 2013. Accessed March 1, 2015. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/>

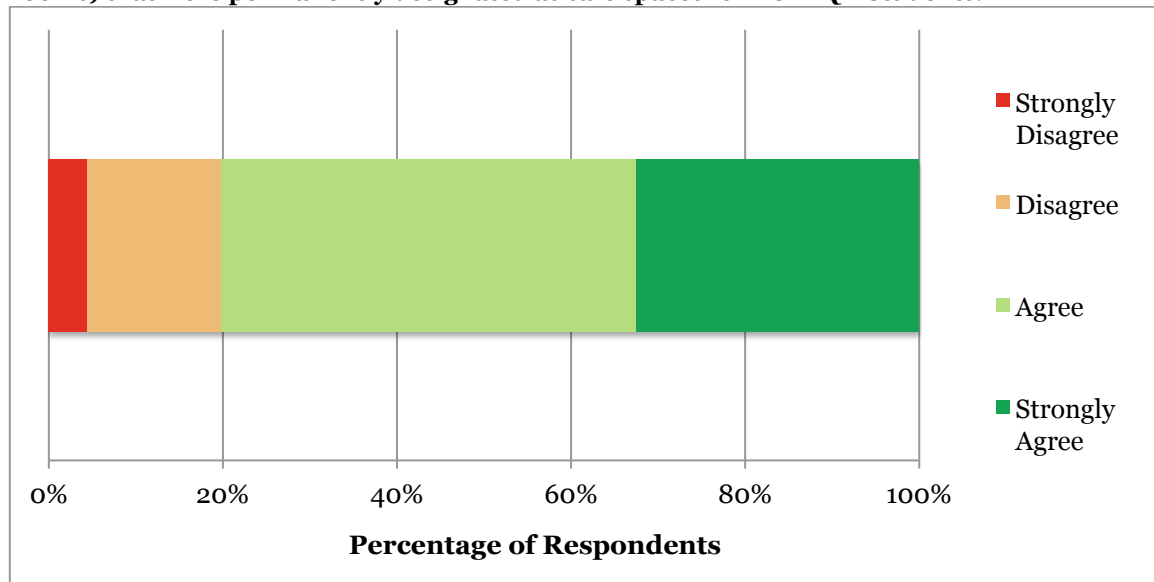
²³ Valentine, Gill, Nichola Wood, and Paul Plummer. *The Experience Of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual And Trans Staff And Students In Higher Education*. Equity Challenge Unit, 2009. <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=lgbt-staff-and-students-in-he-report1.pdf&site=369>

²⁴ According to a sector scan conducted by OUSA, February 2015.

sorts of LGBTQ+ spaces and resource centres is important, and many comments and concerns given voice in OUSA’s focus groups surrounded the health and condition of these spaces and resources.

The absence of a permanent space designated for LGBTQ+ students, even if only a lounge or social space, can be greatly detrimental to some students who want to know that they have a refuge from a wider climate they might find frustrating or unsafe. In OUSA’s survey, a large majority of respondents indicated a desire for more student space designated for LGBTQ+ students.

Figure 2. “I wish there were more student areas on campus (such as student lounges or club rooms) that were permanently designated as safe spaces for LGBTQ+ Students.”²⁵



Recommendation Six: Universities should establish accessible, gender-neutral washrooms and change-rooms widely across their campuses and mark their locations.

The issue of washrooms and change rooms should not be overlooked. Harassment and discomfort can arise daily for trans students in particular for whom “male” and “female” designated washrooms can be awkward, uncomfortable, and in some cases, unsafe.

Universities should convert all single-user washrooms on campus into gender-neutral washrooms. In most cases, this would require nothing more than a change of signage. Additionally, universities should construct new gender-neutral washrooms as necessary to ensure that these facilities are in accessible locations, and are reasonably convenient to access across campus. In addition to the construction of the facilities themselves, maps and lists of their positions should be available online and posted on maps around campus so that students are aware of their locations. Moreover, in all athletic areas or spaces where change-rooms exist, gender-neutral facilities should be provided as well.

²⁵ Results from unpublished online survey conducted by OUSA in November 2014.

Universities should seek to establish at least one gender-neutral bathroom in every building, and commit to ensuring that all new buildings must be equipped with such facilities.

Recommendation Seven: Universities should strongly consider offering LGBTQ+ oriented residence space, as well as gender-neutral housing.

During OUSA's focus groups, students raised the issue of LGBTQ+ oriented living space – sometimes called 'rainbow floors' – and their desire to see them become more common. As discussed in Concern Seven, first year students in particular face a time of uncertainty, change, and identity construction. Dealing with this anxiety and change should not be compounded by stresses and harm associated with exclusion and discomfort at one's living situation. Additionally, the creation of a rainbow floor or other living space can serve as "home base" or sanctuary, allowing students much-needed refuge from often inhospitable and sometimes threatening living environments. There have been studies that indicate that living in a LGBTQ+ "supportive" environment encouraged students to come out, suggesting that such living arrangements can have advantages beyond their role as refuges.²⁶

Though initially it may seem to some as though a separate living space for LGBTQ+ students runs contrary to notions of inclusion, it is helpful to recognize that exclusion and segregation are things done to a population against its will. In this case, LGBTQ+ friendly living spaces would be presented as an option, freely chosen by those who wish to have access to living arrangements apart and separate from the influences of the dominant or privileged group of people – sometimes called healing spaces. In this sense, it is fundamentally different from segregation. For some students, the safety afforded by this kind of space is integral to their sense of safety and mental health – this is particularly true of students who have been victims of harassment and abuse.

Universities should explore introducing (and where needed, expanding) safe and LGBTQ+ friendly living arrangements in their residences. Students should be able to indicate their interest in these kinds of residences on their residence application forms, with the understanding that they are provided for the safety and comfort of students who identify as LGBTQ+; which is to say, a student will not have to explicitly identify themselves as LGBTQ+ to live there, but rather, will indicate at least their commitment to upholding the values of the space and the needs of their peers. Additionally, they can indicate how strongly they wish to live in such arrangements, which may assist in sorting out logistics. No one who has not indicated willingness or desire to live in such arrangements should be placed there.

Depending on the institution (and the input from students and student groups at an institution) this LGBTQ+ oriented space may take many forms- it could be an entire residence floor, an area within a floor, a series of student suites, etc. In any case, input from LGBTQ+ should be sought out, and their recommendations should serve as the principle guiding force in the creation of these spaces.

²⁶ Susan D Longerbeam, Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas, Dawn R. Johnson, Zakiya S. Lee, "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Student Experiences: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of College Student Development* 48 no. 2 (2007) 215-230.

It should be recognized that simply providing the residence infrastructure itself is not adequate as a stand-alone effort. As noted several other places in this paper, LGBTQ+ populations are at heightened risk for mental health concerns, bullying, and other barriers to wellness. With this in mind, it follows that a living arrangement of people simultaneously navigating these barriers might encounter more difficulties than a typical residence environment. Therefore, adequate support to both students on that floor as well as student leaders and staff are essential; there will be an elevated need, and therefore there should be a corresponding elevation in resources and assistance. One such support would be an awareness of security concerns; grouping students can have the lamentable consequence of further othering of this group or making them easier targets for harassment. Working to ensure the safety of students in such spaces would be critical.

Though Queer-friendly residence spaces are not the ideal scenario (the ideal scenario being that we live in a world where cissexism, homophobia and other oppressive realities do not exist, and therefore all residence floors are equally safe and empowering), the option should be more widely available to more students than is currently the case right now.

Additionally, universities should offer gender-inclusive housing. In March 2015, it was announced that Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador would soon begin to offer a gender-inclusive housing option, where students living in the same apartment no longer have to be of the same gender.²⁷ In addition to this, a scan of American universities and colleges by Campus Pride found that 159 institutions offer gender-inclusive housing on their campuses.²⁸ Students believe this is a step in the right direction and all Ontario universities should provide gender-inclusive housing on campus, as it would make student housing more inclusive to trans or non-binary students.

Recommendation Eight: Campuses should make an effort to create room for designated LGBTQ+ social spaces and resource centres, while ensuring that students retain the sense of ownership of such spaces.

The lack of space offered at universities for LGBTQ+ resource centres and community or social use must be addressed. Universities should prioritize finding adequate, permanent space designated for LGBTQ+ students, in particular, study, rest, and social space similar to other student lounges.

In many cases this will require coordinating with student associations who currently take responsibility for these efforts. Student associations, and any LGBTQ+ centres they run, should be consulted in the designation of new space in order to ensure, among other things, that the location and nature of new LGBTQ+ spaces meets their students' needs and addresses the demand that exists on particular campuses.

Efforts to create new LGBTQ+ spaces should be undertaken with care, to ensure that the students who will use it determine the nature and climate of the space. The space should

²⁷ "Burton's Pond Apartments at MUN to become gender-neutral," *CBC News*, March 16, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/burton-s-pond-apartments-at-mun-to-become-gender-neutral-1.2996773>.

²⁸ "Colleges and Universities that Provide Gender-Inclusive Housing," Campus Pride, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://www.campuspride.org/tpc-gih/>.

not be overly administered or supervised by the institution, lest it become unwelcome and uncomfortable for students. Rather, students should feel a sense of ownership over the space. Universities, though they should provide the space, should step back to let students take ownership of it and feel as if it is truly for their benefit. Where this factor is ignored, initiatives intended to create LGBTQ+ student space can become frustrating experiences that create wedges and cause alienation.²⁹

POLICIES

INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSION

Principle Eight: Students should be addressed in a manner that they feel is appropriate and respectful.

Names and perceptions can have significant impacts on a student's sense of comfort in certain situations as well as a student's overall sense of self.³⁰ Students who desire reasonable accommodation in how they are addressed or documented in administrative processes - such as their preferred name or pronoun – do so because it is important to their comfort, sense of self, and well-being. Students are entitled to receive this consideration without barrier or unreasonable delay.

Students, particularly those undergoing a sex or gender transition, can have many reasons for wanting to change how they are addressed, named, or listed. In addition to asserting their sense of self, there are significant privacy concerns to keep in mind; students should not ever face scenarios where, for example, they are outed as trans by their birth-names being posted or announced in class. Such an instance would be a violation of their right to privacy and right to self-identify.

Universities have long been places for the safe exploration of self and society. Student comfort and safer spaces are essential to that mission. As such, universities should have clear policies to ensure that students can choose how they are to be addressed and named.

Principle Nine: An inclusive campus environment is dependent on the recognition of the intersecting identities of those within LGBTQ+ communities.

In order to preserve the dignity, safety, and comfort of members of LGBTQ+ communities, their intersecting identities must be taken into consideration in the planning of programming, activities, events, and supports. The experiences of certain marginalized identities can often only be understood with consideration of multiple systems of oppression such as the intersection where both racism and heterosexism occur.³¹ Carefully planned programs and supports can play an important part in changing campus culture to make certain campus spaces safer all marginalized students.

²⁹ See, for example Sandy D. Alvarex and Jeffrey Schneider, "One college campus's need for a safe zone: a case study," *Journal of Gender Studies* 17 no.1 (2008): 71-74.

³⁰ Seelman et al, "Invisibilities, Uncertainties, and Unexpected Surprises." 2012.

³¹ Catherine O. Fox and Tracy E. Ore, "(Un) Covering Normalized Gender and Race Subjectivities in LGBT 'Safer spaces,'" *Feminist Studies* 36 no. 3 (2010): 629:649.

If safer spaces are to raise the visibility of LGBTQ+ students and issues affecting these students, the mechanisms used to establish these spaces must acknowledge the intersectionality of their identities – they must be safer for everyone. Often during attempts to eliminate heterosexism and homophobia there is a tendency to give voice to individuals who identify as gay and lesbian - to the exclusion of other identities and orientations - when the terms queer or the LGBTQ+ acronym are used.³² Within the same vein, there can also be a tendency to overlook the experiences of racialized bodies and the role of racism in homophobia and transphobia.

Concern Nine: Students face procedural and social difficulties from registrars' offices when they wish to have their name changed in university documents.

For students undergoing a sex or gender transition, identity and identifying records assume both a practical and symbolic significance. However, some university processes lag behind the increasing need for identity change mechanisms – despite the existence of broader government processes that accomplish the same. Students looking to change their genders or names on university documents may face significant delays or outright refusal. In other cases, they may be held to an intrusive or unreasonable burden of proof before any change will be made, or they may discover failures of communication between central offices and the faculty and staff they encounter.

If institutions such as Service Ontario can facilitate a change on secure identifying documents, then universities – who largely use a student's name for administrative purposes, not legal identification - should be able to develop satisfactory practices.

Recommendation Nine: Universities should create policy that allows students to change their preferred names in the school's system and on their diploma.

Universities must adopt policies governing how staff and students can change their preferred names and genders. These policies must include, and make clear, what the point of contact is for this process and the administrative body responsible for implementing the change. The process should be centralized as much as possible in order for the change to be reflected throughout all the services and staff that students might interact with.

Processes should allow for the change of all possible documents, including class lists, learning management systems, email, identifying cards and documents, on-campus health records, and diplomas. Universities should advertise this service in order to ensure that the existence of this option is widely known and its processes understood. Furthermore, universities should re-issue diplomas on request to alumni who have changed their names on.

Recommendation Ten: Universities should have clear and explicit policy statements that express an institutional commitment to respect diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

³² Ibid.

While the Ontario Human Rights Code provides a solid framework to ensure protections for minority groups, it is still simply a “baseline” for the province. By making a clear and institution-wide statement that addresses equity for LGBTQ+ identities, universities can better express their commitment to inclusivity, and send a positive message to LGBTQ+ students and campuses as a whole.

This is of particular importance to trans or genderqueer students. Ontario is one of the few provinces in Canada that includes gender identity in its human rights code, so – as previously mentioned - trans-identified students at Ontario universities have a legal right to protection against discrimination. Universities have a profound effect on the lived experiences of students who are trans (where they live, who they room with, where they go to the washroom), and a statement that addresses gender identity explicitly serves two important functions. Firstly, it provides much needed recognition and visibility to these students, and secondly, establishes an environment where students have a reasonable expectation to be supported and accommodated through their university career.

Many universities have equity and diversity statements that address hiring and employee treatment, but lack similar statements for students. Though they may implicitly express commitment to LGBTQ+ rights through equity or anti-bullying offices, establishing an explicit institutional stance that publicly codifies LGBTQ+ inclusion is an important and meaningful commitment.

ATHLETICS AND RECREATION

Principle Ten: Students should have comfortable and dignified access to athletic services and activities, irrespective of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Athletic services and activities are being increasingly recognized as positive influences on student health and well being. They have been shown to contribute to life-long habits of teamwork, time management, personal development, concentration, and positive mental health.^{33 34} All students should have equal access to these activities and not face participation barriers.

Safeguarding students’ sense of self is as important in athletics as it is everywhere else. Notions that, for example, the presence of an intersex person or trans woman on a women’s team is an unfair advantage are instances of gender essentialism that create discrimination. Universities should have policies and practices in place to ensure that gender non-conforming students have access to athletics and recreation, and are never denied participation for reasons surrounding gender, sex, or orientation.

Concern Ten: Many aspects of athletics can be barriers for LGBTQ+ students who do not subscribe to binary gender identities.

³³ Kenneth R. Fox, "The effects of exercise on self-perceptions and self-esteem," *Physical activity and psychological wellbeing* 13 (2000): 81-118.

³⁴ Jeanick Brisswalter, Maya Collardeau, and Arcelin René, "Effects of acute physical exercise characteristics on cognitive performance," *Sports Medicine* 32, no. 9 (2002): 555-566.

Despite the benefits of participation in athletics programs or services, and while paying as much in ancillary fees as any student, students who are LGBTQ+ may encounter barriers to participating in athletic and recreation activities on their campuses.

Problems such as the absence of gender-neutral/single-use washrooms and change rooms, lack of access to single sex activity areas, or the traditional division of varsity (and often intermural) teams into boys' teams and girls' are challenges to engaging with athletics for some students. Overly and unnecessarily gendered spaces and teams might create or worsen feelings of alienation and prevent participation.

Students express concerns with accessing activities and services that are deeply connected to cisnormative or heteronormative assumptions. Until measures are undertaken to address both the practical and social challenges in this area, some students will face challenges participating fully in what their campus experience has to offer, and reaping the benefits thereof.

Concern Eleven: Many elements of the culture of sport revolve around binary divisions in biological sex and socially constructed notions of gendered bodies that fortify barriers to students who do not conform to these identities.

There is resistance to the inclusion of trans and intersex identities in sport. Exclusive, binary notions of gendered bodies characterize sports culture, where teams are divided exclusively along binary lines of biological sex conflated with gender. This can create barriers that prevent people from joining teams of a gender with which they identify, and even extend to the sometimes unnecessary division of sports by gender and sex rather than skill and ability based metrics.

Though not in a university setting, historical cases of gender barriers in sports spotlight this conflict. For instance, Renee Richards, an American tennis player that underwent gender transformation from male to female had to undergo a great deal of testing to prove that she had a pair of X chromosomes in order to compete in the United States Tennis Association (USTA). The USTA's argument was that males have a competitive advantage against women, exemplifying the prominence of assumptions and gendering of bodies in sports. Furthermore, putting Richards through this process and relying on an argument that is entrenched in traditional notions of sex and gender outline the difficulty navigating this issue.

It is concerning that there is such difficulty introducing inclusion for non-gender conforming and intersex identities in sports, as are the implications this has for the participation of transgender and intersex students in varsity athletics.

Concern Twelve: Choosing binary gendered teams while facing already barriers puts students who identify as gender nonconforming in a hostile situation.

Students who do not conform to binary cisgender identities may face severe stress, hostility, and difficulty in the process of engaging with gendered sports teams. This could sprout from transphobia and other forms of discrimination. In other cases, students could face resistance from those concerned with the integrity of sport, believing that the student is compromising the team or the play and is participating with the "wrong" team.

The struggle to find a place amid these potential issues and the resistance students may encounter in these scenarios is deeply problematic.

Recommendation Eleven: Gender inclusive campus recreation activities and intramural should be offered with inclusive programming and facilities.

Athletic departments, and any other university bodies governing athletic centres and activities, should encourage inclusivity in their procedures and practices. Universities should provide gender-neutral washrooms and changing spaces for students who might prefer these to existing gendered, multi-user spaces. Athletic centres should be aware of, and develop practices for, those students who do not subscribe to a binary gender identity, but who wish to enjoy the privacy and comfort afforded by single sex- or gender-activity spaces – such as female only weight rooms or activity studios.

Athletics are a particularly important place for inclusivity, and departments should strive to implement policies around inclusivity and respect. Athletics staff and volunteers should be made aware of inclusivity policies as part of their initial and ongoing training

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

STUDENT SERVICES

Principle Eleven: Student services should acknowledge, and be fully capable of supporting, the health needs of LGBTQ+ students.

Student services play an essential role in ensuring that students feel comfortable, safe, and respected on campus, so it is critical that these services are up to the task. In particular, the health needs LGBT and other Queer-identified students may be unique or unfamiliar to some healthcare workers. Such concerns can include, among others, transition medication for students who are trans and the additional mental health risks associated with stigmatization and marginalization.³⁵ Student services on campus must be able to anticipate and engage with these issues.

Ideally, this can be achieved through training and education. However, when the expertise or knowledge of service providers falls short, there should be a robust network of referrals so that students can be promptly and easily directed to a service-provider who can help.

Principle Twelve: Universities must recognize the increased risk and mental health concerns faced by students who are LGBTQ+, and must be committed to addressing these issues.

Without pathologizing being LGBTQ+, it is important to recognize that individuals who identify as such are at higher risk of health concerns in general, and mental health issues in particular.

Research consistently indicates that LGBTQ+ students are more likely to experience psychological distress and disorders, and are much more likely to experience suicidal

³⁵ Oswalt and Wyatt, “Sexual Orientation and Differences in Mental Health” 2011.

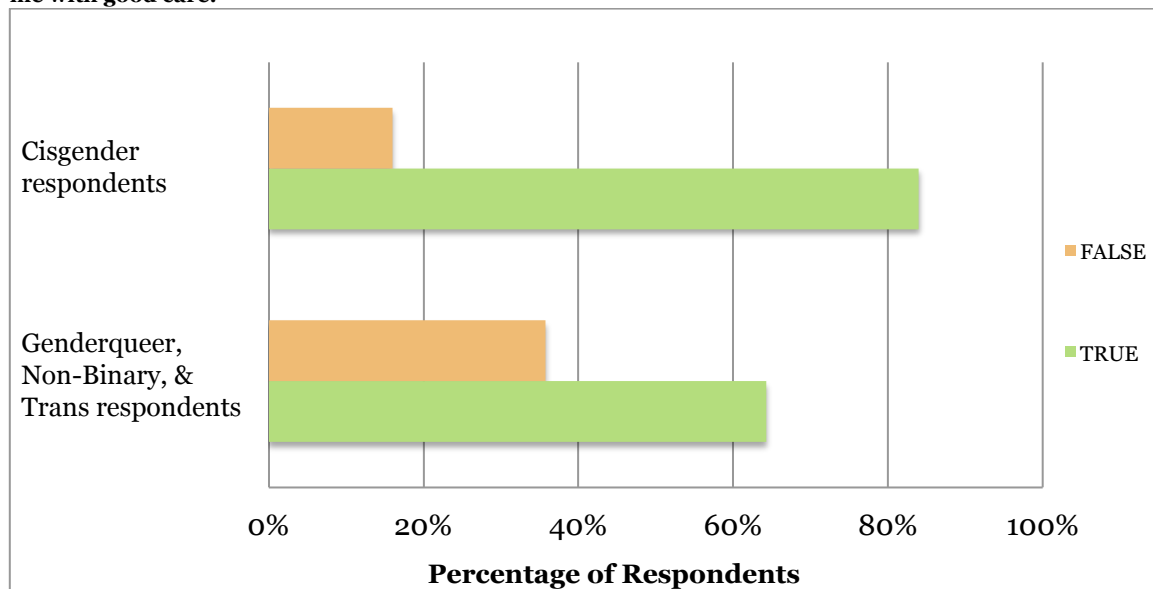
ideation.³⁶ Further examination indicates that these mental health concerns stem directly from (or are compounded by) the discrimination, harassment, or general discomfort LGBTQ+ individuals experience in a heteronormative society.³⁷

Working to create a campus culture where LGBTQ+ students do not experience exclusion should remain a priority. Yet other factors (family tension, high school experiences, etc.) have the capacity to adversely affect the mental health of LGBTQ+ populations, even if the university climate were to become ideal. Therefore, it is imperative that universities acknowledge the elevated need of LGBTQ+ students to access supports and resources. Just as importantly, students accessing mental health resources should be treated with dignity, by service providers who understand the unique difficulties they face or can refer them student to a provider with that expertise.

Concern Thirteen: Physical health providers on campus are not always sufficiently well versed in trans and other LGBTQ+ health issues to provide adequate care.

OUSA’s research reveals that in many cases, healthcare practitioners on Ontario campuses lack experience with the concerns of LGBTQ+ students. While the majority of LGBTQ+ students who reported having used healthcare services indicated a positive experience, a considerable number indicated otherwise. This was particularly true for students who identified as trans, non-binary, or genderqueer, nearly 40% of whom rated their experience badly (see figure 3).

Figure 3. “In my experience, medical providers on campus have had the knowledge necessary to provide me with good care.”³⁸



Respondents who elaborated on their negative experiences described encountering physicians who were unfamiliar with same-sex sexual activities, or perhaps more

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Results from unpublished online survey conducted by OUSA in November 2014.

troublingly, who expressed open discomfort, disbelief, or ignorance surrounding non-binary gender identities.

Another common complaint was that physicians would assume respondents were heterosexual, or would be dismissive of orientations outside of a heteronormative framework. This was noted as a barrier or source of discomfort, particularly when a student had sexual health concerns. A doctor patient relationship requires trust, and it is hard to cultivate trust amid skepticism and presumption.

In addition to physical health concerns, just over a third of survey respondents who had used mental health services (54 out of 157, or 34%) indicated that mental health workers did not have “the knowledge necessary to provide good care.” Again, elaborations revealed the impression that practitioners were unfamiliar with the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students, or were skeptical of their gender identities or orientations.

Inadequate knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues is a particularly serious concern considering that students in this demographic more commonly use mental health services than students who identify as heterosexual.³⁹ There is a great (apparently unmet) need for experienced and knowledgeable service providers for students who are LGBTQ+.

Recommendation Twelve: Universities should provide training and professional development for all campus health care providers - including physicians, counselors, and other medical staff – in order to increase their understanding of medical, mental, and sexual health needs of LGBTQ+ students, and of how to refer them appropriately to additional assistance.

In addition to the negative encounters described above, responses from OUSA’s focus groups indicated a belief that campus health care providers are given some training on LGB issues, but are lacking training in trans issues. Another response suggested that current training only deals with these issues superficially, not substantively or usefully. Others noted that such training tends to be run by students rather than professionals, and though it is laudable and desirable for student voices and perspectives to engage with the university community in this way, a more professional training regimen would have a greater impact.

A consistent impression, then, and backed by the accounts described by a number of survey respondents, is the need for more and better training on LGBTQ+ issues and identities. One analysis reveals various categories of training programs:

- category 1: understanding LGBT concepts and developing awareness of biases,
- category 2: understanding LGBT issues and recognizing discrimination and heterosexual privilege,
- category 3: becoming support persons to LGBT individuals, and
- category 4: becoming advocates to create LGBT-affirming campuses⁴⁰

³⁹ Oswalt and Wyatt, “Sexual Orientation and Differences in Mental Health” 2011.

⁴⁰ Michael R. Woodford, Christopher L. Kolb, Gabrielle Durocher-Radeka, and Gave Javier, “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Ally Training Programs on Campus: Current Variations and Future Directions,” *Journal of College Student Development* 55, no. 3 (2014): 317-322.

Training programs for campus healthcare practitioners should have at least third-category objectives: helping participants become informed and understanding support persons for students who are LGBTQ+. Explicitly setting out these goals is helpful in moving past a superficial or remedial understanding of LGBTQ+ concepts towards training for something more applicable and impactful.

Significant work has been done recently – mostly concentrated in the United States – towards developing training methodology with proven effectiveness. Notably, the *Gay, Lesbian & Straight Alliance Network* (GLSEN) has developed guides, programs, and kits that it distributes to GLSEN chapters and other interested parties across the country. GLSEN’s training program is meant for primary and secondary school settings, but much of it can be adapted for use in a postsecondary context.

GLSEN’s approach has been statistically demonstrated to positively affect respondents’ knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues in a quantitative study that used devices known as the Sexual Orientation Competency Scale and the Privilege and Oppression Inventory.⁴¹ Even after controlling for previous knowledge levels and LGBTQ+ awareness, the study revealed that GLSEN training improved participants’ scores on these tests.

The features and steps contained in GLSEN’s training program are as follows:

- Outline facts, information, and statistics about students and youth who are LGBTQ+
- Through group work, discuss ways that anti-LGBTQ bias harms everyone
- Discuss shared beliefs and attitudes about LGBTQ people, recognizing biases and preconceptions
- Discuss what the advantages, disadvantages, and barriers would be to coming out
- Provide examples and ideas of how to intervene when encountering homophobic behaviour or comments in a school setting⁴²

Using GLSEN’s approach - or another with proven effectiveness - universities should institute training for student service providers that aspires to a third or fourth category goal set as outlined above. Depending on the expertise available on-campus and the population to receive the training, specialists may need to be recruiting externally to conduct the training. This will help to ensure that students who are LGBTQ+ will find supportive service at their campus.

The skills and ideas taught in these training sessions should be reviewed, on a cyclical basis, against the standards of current literature on the medical, mental, and sexual health needs of LGBTQ+ students, and should be done in consultation with student associations and LGBTQ+ groups on campus.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Principle Thirteen: Students should not be made to feel excluded or invisible in their classes.

⁴¹ Byrd, Rebekah, & Danica G. Hays, “Evaluating a Safer spaces Training for School Counselors and Trainers Using a Randomized Control Group Design,” *Professional School Counseling* 17 no. 1 (2013).

⁴² *GLSEN Safer spaces: A How-To Guide for Starting an Allies Program*, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network.

All students deserve to feel welcome and included in their classes. To be represented and visible, to have role models in one's field, and to be acknowledged by one's instructors is essential. Conversely, students should not encounter comments, actions, or assumptions in class that ignore or disregard them or their experiences. Classrooms should be inclusive and welcoming to all students, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Our society can be inherently "invisibilizing" of some LGBTQ+ students, particularly those of non-binary, non-cisgender gender identities. Those in a position of authority in the classroom should be cognizant of this fact and make a concerted effort to be inclusive.

Additionally, instructors and teaching assistants must convey course material in a manner that is respectful to all students. Recognizing that discussions surrounding gender and sexuality may arise, or that in unfortunate cases, comments may be made that are inappropriate and alienating, instructors should be knowledgeable about LGBTQ+ issues and identities, should be able to recognize inappropriate behaviour and intervene, and should be aware that students who are LGBTQ+ sit in their classes.

Principle Fourteen: Gender inclusive language is an important tool to create safe and inclusive environments.

It is integral to the education of students that they feel comfortable in their environment. As such, it is important that professors who teach those students use language that is not inherently alienating.

Language choices, though they may seem trivial to some, can have strong effects. Exclusively using gendered pronouns or heteronormative examples when posing problems sends negative signals to students who are LGBTQ+, and further contributes to feelings of invisibility. Language that is careful and gender neutral, on the other hand, creates a safer environment where students feel respected, recognized, and where they can more fully participate in learning.

A study on the effects of implementing gender-neutral language argues that the practice (though only of limited usefulness in attempting to affect short term attitudinal change) is vital in encouraging equality, and may foster wider understanding in the long term.⁴³

Concern Fourteen: Course content can often be exclusionary, and can omit or even deny LGBTQ+ histories and realities.

Outside of programs specifically devoted to Gender or Queer Studies, genders, sexes, and sexualities outside of a cisnormative, heteronormative conception are rarely acknowledged in curricula. This is to be expected in some subjects; there would be little opportunity for a conversation about gender in a calculus syllabus, for example.

⁴³ Sara Koesar, and Sabine Sczesny, "Promoting Gender-Fair Language: The Impact of Arguments on Language Use, Attitudes, and Cognitions," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 33, no.5 (2014).

However in other subjects, particularly those in the arts and humanities, which examine history, literature, important thinkers, and social trends, there should ought to be an effort to include broad-ranging and diverse perspectives on a multitude of topics. In many instances this does not occur, leaving some students puzzled and frustrated by this lack of representativeness. Students should not have to take a Queer theory course before they encounter mention of LGBTQ+ issues or individuals.

Research from the San Diego State University demonstrates that multicultural and gender-inclusive education is vital in creating equitable and fair paths to academic success.⁴⁴ Encouraging intersectional analysis and eschewing exclusion results in academic standards that can play a role in empowering and acknowledging marginalized groups. 60% of teacher respondents even noted that inclusive programming has encouraged them to revise their lenses and engage in new critical thought and teaching practices.⁴⁵

Many instructors have no knowledge of the issues affecting LGBTQ+ students, or even that such students are often present in their classes. A majority of respondents to OUSA's survey (63.2%) indicated that they were sometimes made uncomfortable or excluded by comments or assumptions of their professors in class: 38.1% said this was sometimes the case, 19% said it was often the case, and 6.1% said it was always the case. Clearly, too many students feel as though their identities are routinely disrespected or dismissed in the classroom.

Concern Fifteen: University instructors will often fail to use appropriately gender-neutral language during class.

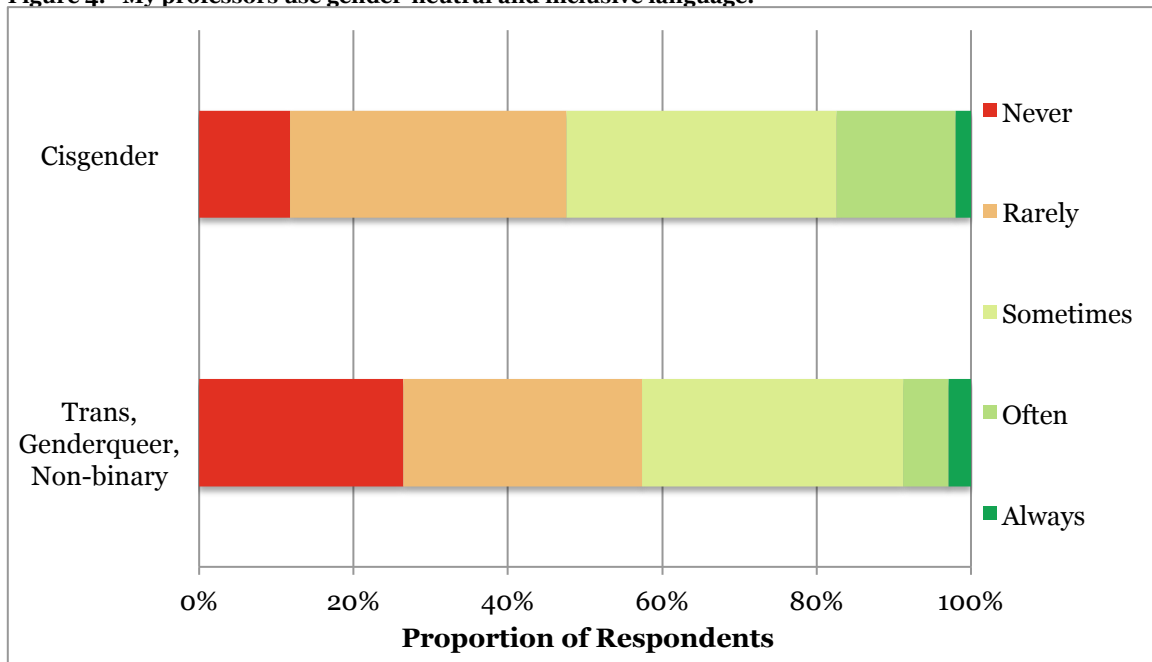
In many cases, gender neutrality is taken to mean only the rejection of the masculine as default, and the use instead of, for example, "he or she." However, gender-neutral language must account for genders beyond the classic binary, or else some students will feel marginalization as a matter of routine.

OUSA's survey showed that many students who are LGBTQ+ shared similar concerns with 50% of respondents saying that their professors rarely or never use gender-neutral and inclusive language (34.9% and 14.7% respectively). A further examination of these numbers is even more revealing. Students who identified as Trans, Genderqueer, or Non-Binary were much more likely to say that their professors never used gender-neutral language than students who identified as cisgender.

⁴⁴ Cathy Zozakiewicz, Alberto J. Rodriguez, "Using Sociotransformative Constructivism to Create Multicultural and Gender-Inclusive Classrooms: An Intervention Project for Teacher Professional Development," *Educational Policy*, 21 no. 1 (2007).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Figure 4. “My professors use gender-neutral and inclusive language.”⁴⁶



This suggests that a greater awareness of, and consideration for, gender identities other than cis-man and cis-woman is needed in the classroom, particularly as it pertains to the language that is employed. Just as the exclusive use of a masculine pronoun as default is now widely deemed inappropriate and exclusionary, it is imperative that post-secondary institutions and instructors use language that is acceptable and non-alienating to all students.

Concern Sixteen: The Quality Council is not required to review the gender inclusivity of a program

The Government of Ontario, through use of the Quality Council of Ontario Universities, oversees the quality of university programs. Currently, all programs must meet a standard set by the Quality Council utilizing the Quality Assurance framework. The Quality Assurance Framework is not meant to impede upon the academic freedom of the institution or the instructor, but rather, sets a baseline standard of quality that university programs must meet. Within the Quality Assurance Framework, the Quality Council reviews instruction based on student feedback among other things. As such, the province has the framework in place to be able to review the gender inclusivity of programs through those channels, yet does not currently do so.

The review process utilized by the Quality Council occurs every four years for an existing program. The review consists of an examination of an institution’s subjective measurement tools, including student-completed teaching assessments compiled over the four years, the program’s own Degree Level Expectations, faculty qualification and success, and student graduation rates. These metrics are vague and are ends - rather than means - focused.

⁴⁶ Results from unpublished online survey conducted by OUSA in November 2014.

Recommendation Thirteen: Instructors and teaching assistants should be required to participate in training programs to broaden their understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and issues.

Similar to service providers, professors and teaching assistants will often find themselves in situations where it will be important for them to demonstrate understanding and respect for marginalized persons in their class. When disrespectful, homophobic, or transphobic comments are made in class, it is imperative that whomever has the position of authority make known that such comments are unacceptable. This not only helps to prevent recurrence, but also sends a clear signal of support and respect to those in class whom such comments may harm, allowing classes to become safer spaces.

To ensure that instructors and teaching assistants are in a position to recognize inappropriate comments and are equipped to handle such situations, ally training – of the same standard and rigour of that discussed above (see recommendation twelve) - should be mandatory. Where possible, it would be beneficial for LGBTQ+ members of faculty participate and assist with such programs.

These training sessions should not be a burden on instructors and teaching assistants. Where participants are paid hourly, this training should count as time spent in their capacity as an employee or contractor, and should be compensated accordingly.

Recommendation Fourteen: Faculty should be encouraged to incorporate perspectives from LGBTQ+ figures and on LGBTQ+ issues into their lesson plans where such additions would be relevant and would enrich the course.

This recommendation comes with the caveat that ultimately faculty should decide what is within their course curricula and how they choose to deliver their teaching. However, improved visibility/awareness of LGBTQ+ realities in the classroom, where possible, could do much to improve the experiences of students who are typically ‘othered’ in academics.

Visibility is a crucial component of empowering marginalized communities. “You can’t be what you can’t see” is a maxim used to indicate that identifying one’s own experience within the experience of a successful person (who shares this identifying trait) greatly increases one’s expectations of achievement.

This is particular importance for LGBTQ+ students. For one thing, information-seeking and “research” is often a crucial part of an individual’s coming out process.⁴⁷ The act of inclusion is therefore more than just tokenism or a metaphorical tip of the hat—it has the capacity to make a profound difference for LGBTQ+ students. This general sentiment was evident in the responses of many participants in OUSA’s survey, one of whom noted, for example, that the dearth of LGBTQ+ themes in curricula seemed to suggest a “taboo” on the subject, and another who listed the absence of LGBTQ+ reflections in curricula among the biggest barriers facing queer communities on campus.

⁴⁷ Bradley J. Bond, Veronica Hefner, Kristin L. Drogos, “Information-Seeking Practices During the Development of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals: The Influence and Effects of Coming out in a Mediated Environment,” *Sexuality & Culture* 13 (2009): 32-50.

The lack of Queer representation in courses where it could be appropriate may, in many cases, be because such representation was never considered. Stigma and discrimination have kept LGBTQ+ issues and individuals on the margins and invisible in many arenas, including academia. Professors should feel encouraged to counter this trend by deliberating on how discussion of LGBTQ+ issues or thinkers might enhance their lesson plans, where relevant. Conducting an assessment such as this, even informally, may reveal areas where more diverse perspectives can be gainfully included in a variety of subject matters.

Recommendation Fifteen: All faculties and departments must set the standard that instructors employ gender-inclusive language in their lectures and slides.

All university departments should make it very clear that professors are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that recognizes and reflects respect for a nuanced and non-binary understanding of gender. When instructors discuss gender or relationships, even in a passing comment or by way of framing an example, they should be mindful of the many identities and orientations that may be present in that very class, and use neutral language. While understanding the workloads can be quite high for faculty, both faculty and university staff have a shared responsibility to put their students' sense of self and safety first.

Recommendation Sixteen: The Quality Assurance Framework should mandate a review of the gender inclusivity of a program

Within the Quality Assurance Framework, attention should be given to gender inclusiveness as a mark of quality. By adopting such a standard, the Quality Council will be mandated to review the inclusiveness of each program, and will be able to make recommendations and approve new course changes along those lines. By setting out a province-wide standard for gender inclusivity in courses, there will be less variance among universities, and there will be oversight from a higher body than each individual university.

ORIENTATION PROGRAMMING

Principle Fifteen: Orientation programming lays the foundation and first impression of a student's post-secondary institution and should be inclusive.

First year plays a crucial role in shaping the academic career of a university student. It is in this year that students are most likely to withdraw from university or develop harmful habits that will be detrimental to their health and academic success.⁴⁸ Orientation is a vital part of introducing first year students to their new social and academic environment. Accordingly, this introduction should be inclusive and positive, and should set the tone for success and engagement.

⁴⁸ Rachael E. Maunder, Matthew Cunliffe, Jessica Galvin, Sibulele Mjali, and Jenine Rogers, "Listening to student voices: student researchers exploring undergraduate experiences of university transition," Higher Education 66, no. 2 (2013).

Concern Seventeen: Many students express concern or worry that orientation activities are heteronormative or exclusionary.

There exists a pre-conception of orientation periods as having primarily heteronormative social climates. Some respondents to OUSA's survey echoed these concerns, describing the perceptions of orientation weeks as largely entrenched in heterosexual "hookup culture." In some cases, it may be a lack of explicitly LGBTQ+ friendly programming that reinforces these perceptions. Regardless, this impression and belief can deter the participation of many students, especially those who are LGBTQ+. It can discourage them from participating in events that introduce new students to their campus and peers, effectively excluding them at a particularly delicate time, and introducing stressors that negatively impact the way in which students decide to engage with their campuses.

Studies show that overall engagement decreases after individuals have had a stressful or negative attempt; in some instances, this also impacts potential academic success.⁴⁹ It is therefore concerning to think that many LGBTQ+ students are made to feel isolated and excluded during orientation week, at the very beginning of their university careers, with possible implications for their future comfort and level of campus engagement.

Recommendation Seventeen: Universities should facilitate the inclusion of LGBTQ+ awareness, ally, and anti-oppression training for orientation leaders and student leaders.

Orientation leaders, as well as student leaders more generally, should have access to ally and anti-oppression training for orientation. This helps to ensure that these student leaders are well equipped to create welcoming inclusive environments, and to recognize and intervene where issues of homophobia or discrimination may be occurring.

As in recommendation twelve, the training prescribed herein should be effective and proven, and administered by those who are qualified to do so.

Recommendation Eighteen: Orientation should include a mixture of LGBTQ+ programming and information sessions, which can take a number of forms, and that will recognize diverse identities, foster inclusion, and raise levels of awareness and understanding.

In addition to training those students who will be in positions of leadership during orientation weeks, training and information sessions should also be made available to the first-year student participants in orientation. Many of these students will be coming to university direct from high school, and may not be educated or aware of the diverse identities and orientations that exist. Consequently, training and information may raise their levels of awareness and improve their understanding of what constitutes unacceptable, discriminatory speech or behaviour.

Information sessions such as these can come in the form of events and programming, which – in addition to their educational purpose – can be part of a more inclusive culture. Some orientation activities in Ontario serve as examples of this. Western's *One Love* is an event, often centered around a speaker or speakers, that exposes students to (among other things) the negative impacts of discrimination and strategies for engaging

⁴⁹ Oswalt and Wyatt, "Sexual Orientation and Differences in Mental Health" 2011.

with potentially difficult aspects of sexuality and gender identity. *One Love* has had a particular focus on gender and sexuality, but has at times focused on issues of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions or intersections. The University of Waterloo's *Single and Sexy* is a long running play/variety act that engages with sexuality, gender, safe sex, drugs, stress, and life skills. Students and community partners point to the program as engaging, helpful and impactful.

LGBTQ+ friendly activities should be included during orientations to not only make more students feel more included, but also to familiarize students with LGBTQ+ community, and to strengthen it while making it more visible. The particular steps that should be taken will depend on the needs of each campus and the groups who manage orientation programming.

POLICY STATEMENT

Whereas All students, regardless of sex, sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression are entitled to safety, inclusion, and respect both inside the classroom and in the broader campus environment.

Whereas Though protective measures and accommodations for marginalized communities are important, government, universities, and members of campus communities including faculty, administration, and other students have a duty to strive to end the oppression that makes these measures necessary.

Whereas Services, supports, and spaces for LGBTQ+ students should be well funded by the province and by institutions to ensure their capacity and continuity.

Whereas It is important that universities recognize and celebrate the diverse orientations and genders that are present on their campuses.

Whereas An inclusive campus environment should feature events, activities, groups, and other programming that acknowledges and supports LGBTQ+ students.

Whereas Universities should support, collaborate with, and maintain relationships with LGBTQ+ groups and students on campus.

Whereas Infrastructure should meet the standards set out by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Whereas Students should be addressed in a manner that they feel is appropriate and respectful.

Whereas An inclusive campus environment is dependent on the recognition of the intersecting identities of those within LGBTQ+ communities.

Whereas Students should have comfortable and dignified access to athletic services and activities, irrespective of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Whereas Student services should acknowledge, and be fully capable of supporting, the health needs of LGBTQ+ students.

Whereas Universities must recognize the increased risk and mental health concerns faced by students who are LGBTQ+, and must be committed to addressing these issues.

Whereas Students should not be made to feel excluded or invisible in their classes.

Whereas Gender inclusive language is an important tool to create safe and inclusive environments

Whereas Orientation programming lays the foundation and first impression of a student's post-secondary institution and should be inclusive.

Be it resolved that The government should offer universities an LGBTQ+ campus life grant to fund, develop, or enhance LGBTQ+ supports and services as determined through consultation with students.

Be it further resolved that Universities should allocate funds to support and promote LGBTQ+ activities and services on their campus, in partnership and consultation with students.

BIFRT Universities should host and promote observances such as days of remembrance and awareness weeks or months.

Universities should expand or create full-time staff positions to support or liaise with LGBTQ+ centres and services, to ensure a certain level of continuity, reliability, and institutional memory without compromising the autonomy and student leadership of these groups.

BIFRT Anti-harassment offices should include equity programming and equity training, in order to expand beyond a purely reactive approach.

BIFRT Campuses should make an effort to create room for designated LGBTQ+ social spaces and resource centres, while ensuring that students retain the sense of ownership of such spaces.

Universities should create policy that allows students to change their preferred names in the school's system and on their diploma.

BIFRT Universities should have clear and explicit policy statements that express an institutional commitment to respect diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

BIFRT Gender inclusive campus recreation activities and intramural should be offered with inclusive programming and facilities.

BIFRT Universities should provide training and professional development for all campus health care providers - including physicians, counselors, and other medical staff – in order to increase their understanding of medical, mental, and sexual health needs of LGBTQ+ students, and of how to refer them appropriately to additional assistance.

BIFRT Instructors and teaching assistants should be required to participate in training programs to broaden their understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and issues.

BIFRT Faculty should be encouraged to incorporate perspectives from LGBTQ+ figures and on LGBTQ+ issues into their lesson plans where such additions would be relevant and would enrich the course.

BIFRT All faculties and departments must set the standard that instructors employ gender-inclusive language in their lectures and slides.

BIFRT The Quality Assurance Framework should mandate a review of the gender inclusivity of a program

BIFRT Universities should facilitate the inclusion of LGBTQ+ awareness, ally, and anti-oppression training for orientation leaders and student leaders.

BIFRT Orientation should include a mixture of LGBTQ+ programming and information sessions, which can take a number of forms, and that will recognize diverse identities, foster inclusion, and raise levels of awareness and understanding.

GLOSSARY⁵⁰

Asexual

“A person who may not experience sexual attraction or who has little or no interest in sexual activity.”

Binary

“The notion that there are only two possible sexes (male/female) and genders (man/woman), that they are opposite, discrete and uniform categories, and that gender is determined by sex.”

Bisexual

“A person who is attracted emotionally and sexually to both male-identified and female-identified people.”

Cisgender

“Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex.”

Cisnormativity

“A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender variance.”

Gay

“A person who is attracted to someone of the same sex and/or gender. Gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals, or refer to male-identified individuals only.”

Gender Expression

The demonstration or presentation of gender through different modes of dress, speech, behaviour, body language, etc. A person’s preferred name and preferred pronoun are expressions of gender.

Gender Identity

A person’s internal sense of experiencing gender. A sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.

Genderqueer

“Refers to a person whose gender identity may not correspond with social and societal gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may identify with both male and female gender, move between genders, or may reject the gender binary or gender altogether. Those who identify as genderqueer may or may not also identify as trans.”

⁵⁰ Note: Direct quotations are taken from the first source below. All other definitions taken from the second unless otherwise indicated.

Egale. *LGBTQ Resource Guide, Residence Life*. Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (2013). Available: <http://campus.mygsa.ca/portfolio/residence-life-lgbtq-resource-guide/>

Ontario Human Rights Commission. *Human Rights in Ontario: Gender Identity and Gender Expression*.

Heteronormativity

“A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships.”

Heterosexual

“A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to someone of the opposite sex and/or gender. Also referred to as ‘straight.’”

Lesbian

“A female-identified person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to female-identified people.”

Pride Centres⁵¹

An on-campus community and resource centre often devoted to creating a safer space that is designated for LGBTQ+ communities, and which may engage in advocacy, education, and social or community activities. Many Pride Centres house literature on topics of gender and sexuality. In Ontario universities, they are often managed by students.

Queer

“Historically, a derogatory term for homosexuality, used to insult LGBT people. Although still used as a slur by some, the term has been reclaimed by some members of LGBT communities, particularly youth.”

Sex

“A biological classification of a person as male, female or intersex. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external anatomy.”

Sexual Orientation

“A person’s capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender [Gay and Bisexual are examples of sexual orientations].”

Transgender or Trans

A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people (just like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc.” Also used as an umbrella term, it includes, among others, people who identify as transgender, trans woman (male-to-female), trans man (female-to-male), genderqueer and gender non-conforming.

Two-Spirit

“Some Aboriginal people choose to identify as Two-Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer. Prior to European colonization, Two-Spirit people were respected members of their communities and were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.”

⁵¹ Definition formulated based on scan of Pride Centres conducted by OUSA, February 2015.