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FEATURED TOPIC

This issue of *Diversity & Democracy* explores what colleges and universities are doing to create welcoming climates and expand civic discourse related to **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) students and issues**. It showcases pedagogies and programs that engage with issues of gender and sexuality and seek to make higher education more inclusive and engaging for all students.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- 02** | Teaching LGBTQ Issues in Higher Education: An Interdependent Framework
- 05** | Applying the Seven Learning Principles to Creating LGBT-Inclusive Classrooms
- 08** | Graphing Institutional Change toward More Inclusive Environments

Making Excellence Inclusive: Higher Education's LGBTQ Contexts

In the past forty years, higher education has made great strides in building campus and classroom spaces that are more fully welcoming of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) people, as well as of academic explorations related to gender and sexuality. The past few years alone have seen the founding of the advocacy and support group LGBTQ Presidents in Higher Education, the Expanding the Circle conference on Creating an Inclusive Environment for LGBTQ Students and Studies, and new programs and courses on gender and sexuality throughout college curricula. Combined with important policy changes, initiatives like these are not only creating warmer climates for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff, but also shaping healthier environments for robust discourse among students across diverse identity groups and shifting terminologies.

And yet, as Warren Blumenfeld details in this issue of *Diversity & Democracy*, barriers to the full inclusion of LGBTQ people still exist throughout higher education. Likewise, programs and pedagogies that engage directly with questions of gender and sexuality may be located at the edges of the curriculum, implicitly marginalizing the issues and people they address. Such marginalization not only dampens the civic and educational participation of people who identify as LGBTQ, but also deprives *all* students of important opportunities to explore critical aspects of human experience. If higher education is to be the vibrant educational and democratic forum that society needs, it must become a safer and more welcoming place both for LGBTQ individuals and for studies of gender and sexuality. Fortunately, colleges and universities are recognizing this and implementing new programs and policies that aspire to these ends.

This issue of *Diversity & Democracy* explores how higher education is creating classroom and campus forums that engage with LGBTQ issues. Our authors seek answers to the following questions: What pedagogies can improve perspective taking among students while contributing to more LGBTQ-friendly climates? What programs and courses can provide opportunities for students to explore topics related to gender and sexuality? How are disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies creating pathways for students to contemplate timely and controversial topics related to LGBTQ issues? What can faculty across disciplines do to support LGBTQ students in their classrooms? The articles showcase pedagogies and programs that aim to make excellence inclusive across the spectra of gender and sexuality, making higher education more inclusive and engaging for all students in the process.

Seeking social justice for LGBTQ people is not simply a matter of improving things for the immensely diverse group of individuals who identify with that label, as Heather Hackman points out in this issue. Rather, it's a matter of creating institutions that are more just for everyone—that eschew all types of discrimination, invite investment and engagement, and offer opportunities for everyone to succeed. This issue of *Diversity & Democracy* provides multiple points of reflection for institutions looking for ways to engage with LGBTQ issues in various contexts.

—Kathryn Peltier Campbell, editor of *Diversity & Democracy*

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[LGBTQ CONTEXTS]

Teaching LGBTQ Issues in Higher Education: An Interdependent Framework

■ **HEATHER W. HACKMAN**, associate professor of human relations and multicultural education at St. Cloud State University and founder, Hackman Consulting Group

While attending a plenary presentation at an education conference ten years ago, I heard a major figure in the field of multicultural education say that there was no place for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex) issues in multicultural education, and that “they” should have “their own” conference. It was a shocking disclosure: not only was the speaker being brazenly heterosexist and homophobic while sitting on a panel in front of a thousand conference attendees, but she was displaying a remarkable lack of understanding about the interdependent manner in which forms of oppression operate in the United States—and the corresponding need to address them in complex and overlapping ways. The incident was also a powerful reminder for me that those who claim to be social justice educators often need a stronger understanding of what social justice education (SJE) is.

Nine years later, at that same national conference, I was invited to present an afternoon keynote on the intersections of LGBTQ oppression and racism and how an end to racism cannot be achieved (nor a social justice framework claimed) without also addressing the core elements of heterosexism and homophobia. Certainly the conference organizers were making a positive statement in asking me to speak about this topic, but the angry (more specifically, homophobic) reaction from some audience members helped me see that there is still a great deal of work to be done in US colleges and universities around LGBTQ issues, social justice education, and the need to educate

students and faculty about the deep and complex ways that various forms of oppression act interdependently to buttress each other’s oppressive structures.

In the service of illustrating how the LGBTQ issues addressed in this issue of *Diversity & Democracy* relate to a broader social justice framework, this article will clarify what a social justice approach is, explain the benefits of an interdependent approach to teaching about these issues, examine some ways in which heterosexism and homophobia are intertwined with other forms of oppression, and suggest ways to educate about LGBTQ issues that best prepare students to critically participate in complex national and international social justice discourses.

Defining Social Justice Education

Social justice has become something of a buzz word in higher education over the last two decades, and the term has been watered down somewhat in the process. For this reason, while working on the second edition of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Adams et al. 2010), my editorial colleagues and I were careful to dedicate more space than in the first edition to identifying the core components of a social justice educational approach. Social justice education addresses the social construction of identity groups, the creation of dominant and subordinate categories with respect to these identity groups (depending on their relationships to power and resources), the systemic power structures within each form of oppression and how these structures overlap and reinforce each other, and the various pathways to lib-

eration. Drawing from this framework, my coauthors and I attempted to show how forms of oppression in the United States support each other both historically and currently, feeding off of each other for their maintenance and expansion. Attention to this interdependence is necessary to achieve the level of societal and systemic change that brings about real and substantive equity and justice. A social justice approach to LBGQTQI issues in higher education would move beyond creating “safe spaces” or “embracing diversity” to examine the construction of sexual orientation categories, the structures of heterosexism and homophobia in our society, and the interdependent nature of LBGQTQI oppression with other forms of oppression such as gender oppression and racism.

Having said this, I can also say that many institutions and divisions within higher education that do accurately address the oppressive and liberating components of SJE issues often use a *single-issue* approach (where educators focus on a particular “ism”). Based on my eighteen years of teaching at the college level, I know that this method of taking one issue at a time can be beneficial when working with groups that have little knowledge of a particular issue because it often helps those groups get a slightly clearer picture of that “ism.” Sometimes, in order to provide more of a “real-world” perspective, faculty may go a step further and use an *intersectionality* perspective to highlight the complexity, common roots, and overlapping nature of different forms of oppression. Institutions and divisions often adopt either or both of these approaches strategically. Indeed, in focusing on LBGQTQI issues in higher education, this issue of *Diversity & Democracy* has adopted elements of each strategy.

Nonetheless, different forms of oppression are not discreet entities that merely *intersect*, but are in fact deeply *interdependent* for their very survival.



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As such, each form of oppression works diligently to reinforce, legitimize, and support all other forms of oppression. Thus, I think the most effective way to teach about multiple forms of oppression is to use a framework that speaks to this true *interdependence*. This may seem like semantics, but it has a powerful impact on how we in

dominant group). They may discuss the common dynamics of power from which these “isms” stem (institutional power combined with hegemonic ideologies). They may even address how different forms of oppression are historically rooted in the social construction of identities. This analysis is indeed useful in helping students see the common-

Different forms of oppression are not discreet entities that merely *intersect*, but are in fact deeply *interdependent* for their very survival.

higher education approach issues such as heterosexism and homophobia and on how we prepare students to address these issues in their lives and society.

The Interdependent Approach

To illustrate the above point, I will focus my examples on the classroom with an understanding that many of these points are applicable to cocurricular education. In a typical classroom conversation about the intersectionality of heterosexism and homophobia with gender oppression and racism, faculty may identify common ways they manifest (for example, in reduced opportunities and outcomes related to employment, education, or physical health as compared to those experienced by members of the

alities between these oppressions in a general sense. But the connections between these forms of oppression are actually deeper and more insidious: they *need* each other in order to survive.

An interdependent approach suggests that there can be no LBGQTQI liberation without gender liberation and the fundamental dismantling of racism and whiteness (white privilege and white supremacy). Let’s consider gender specifically: the socially constructed gender binary of what it means to be a “real man” and a “real woman” as defined through rigid gender roles serves as the foundation of heterosexism and homophobia in the United States. Third graders in our public schools are not harassed and bullied because

of their sexual orientation, but rather because of their perceived nonconformity to gender roles. Therefore, creating a less homophobic and heterosexist campus is simply impossible without addressing gender oppression.

Similarly, but from the opposite direction of analysis, racism and whiteness deeply *need* both LBGTQI and gender oppression in order to feed and serve the structures of racial inequality in the United States. Just as LBGTQI and gender oppression hinge on the socially constructed “gender binary,” racism hinges on the socially constructed lie of race. This incredibly potent and deadly lie is only a few hundred years old, while the lie of the gender binary has been told and retold for millennia. Thus racism draws on the gender binary for deep and powerful support for its own fallacious constructions.

In the same fashion, racism and whiteness *need* heterodominance. Take the example of the institution of the heteronormative family, which has been used to justify “nation building.” The colonial movements of “manifest destiny” and “westward expansion” that ended the lives of millions of people of color would not have been so readily supported if they were openly described as a nationalistic grab for more resources. But when packaged as “the government meeting the needs of a growing population and an expanding America” as embodied in the stereotypical heteronormative family, genocide and the institution of slavery become more palatable.

Thus educators should keep in mind that challenges related to LBGTQI oppression are interdependent with challenges faced when addressing all other forms of oppression in the United States. Fundamentally, they all need each other to survive, and therefore eradicating one form of oppression, in this case heterosexism and homophobia, simply depends on eradicating them all.

Teaching Interdependently

To illustrate: In my upper-division class on heterosexism and homophobia in the United States, I begin by helping students explore how constructed gender roles serve as the foundation of heterosexism and homophobia, and then address how racism and classism use heterosexism and homophobia to maintain these forms of oppression. Framing the course in this manner adds complexity to the content right away, and speaks to the lived experience of many students by opening up avenues for identification and personal, as well as systemic, analysis.

Similarly, when addressing racism that targets American Indians in the United States, for example, in my teacher education course, I talk about the dynamics of genocide and the racialization of Native Americans across the continent. But I also make a point to discuss how European colonizers imposed Western Europe’s strict gender roles on American Indian nations, bands, and tribes, many of which had egalitarian gender structures and therefore were a threat to the patriarchal powers moving across the continent. In more violent moments, the colonizers used forced rape and sexual assault by native men toward native women as a tool of ideological colonization. In parallel fashion, two-spirit people (those not conforming to rigid European gender roles and thought to possess both masculine and feminine qualities), deeply revered in many American Indian communities in North America, were met with intense violence and all but exterminated at the hands of colonial heteronormativity and gender conformity.

Seeing the Big Picture

Given these interdependencies, when we educators address heterosexism and homophobia on our campuses, we need to address the ways other oppressions such as gender oppression and racism support and reinforce heterosexism and

homophobia and each other. This reinforcement occurs not by happenstance or because the forms of oppression are similar, but because each form of oppression desperately needs the others for its own survival. An interdependent approach to teaching about heterosexism and homophobia, as well as any other form of oppression such as classism, disability oppression, or religious oppression, offers a deep analytical frame and a broad array of tools for students to engage in democratic discourse and critical analysis. Using this approach beyond the classroom (for example, in residence life, student affairs, and student government) affords the campus community complex mechanisms for affecting positive engagement, multi-issue organizing, and substantial change that will make our higher education communities safer and more productive for all.

And so, in a time when higher education is expected to do more with less, it is ever more critical that we approach issues of oppression with an interdependent social justice framework, which can itself provide context for programs and aspirations focused on LBGTQI issues. More than ever before, this moment in history necessitates a citizenry that is well educated, comfortable with complexities, and able to simultaneously hold a macro-level understanding of interdependencies and a micro-level sense of what each person can do to work for the betterment of all. It is within such a context that issues of heterosexism and homophobia *and* gender oppression *and* racism and whiteness, as well as all other categories of oppression, can be addressed in more proactive and effective ways. ☐

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[LGBTQ CONTEXTS]

Applying the Seven Learning Principles to Creating LGBT-Inclusive Classrooms

■ **MICHELE DIPIETRO**, executive director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and associate professor of statistics, Kennesaw State University

Higher education has made great strides in LGBT inclusiveness, with many campuses instituting gender-neutral housing and bathrooms, LGBT history month and programming, and other initiatives that create learning environments that are more welcoming of LGBT students and studies. Nonetheless, as Rankin et al. (2010) found in their recent multicampus climate assessment, LGBT respondents experience significantly greater harassment and discrimination than their heterosexual counterparts, and are more likely to find their institutions' responses to incidents of bias inadequate. (*Editor's note: See Warren Blumenfeld's article in this issue for more information about the study.*) The high-profile suicide of Rutgers freshman Tyler Clementi in 2010 following cyber-bullying by his roommate exposed the world to one story behind the study's numbers. Faculty who may want to help address these negative contexts might wonder how to do so in the context of their teaching.

My approach to this challenge originates in a learning science perspective informed by a strong sense of social justice. In the book *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, my coauthors and I distill fifty years' worth of research on learning into seven interacting principles (Ambrose et al. 2010). These principles stem from research in cognitive, motivational, and developmental psychology, as well as diversity and inclusiveness studies. These principles apply to all learners, but in this article, I will examine the seven principles in relation

to LGBT contexts in higher education, highlighting areas of connection and identifying pedagogical guidelines to create classrooms that are more inclusive. It is worthwhile for faculty to be aware of LGBT contexts for their teaching, because these contexts influence the fundamental goals of student learning and performance. LGBT students do not learn differently from other students or have unique ways of knowing, and faculty do not even necessarily know who their LGBT students are (indeed, students themselves may be actively sorting out their own identities). But by being aware of the principles outlined below, faculty can create more inclusive climates for *all* students by supporting their various identities and interests.

1) Students' prior knowledge can help or hinder learning.

Students carry with them knowledge formed from their experiences, which shapes the way they see the world and ultimately process content. For LGBT students, this might mean bringing to the classroom a sense of isolation that stems from being highly visible as a sexual or gender minority, or conversely from being closeted and invisible; it might mean bringing a sense of injury at being subject to stereotypes, bullying, physical harassment, and neglect by authority figures. LGBT students may come to college with a sense of alienation stemming from having grown up in educational and social systems that devalue them: in Tennessee, for example, the state senate recently advanced a "Don't Say Gay"

bill that, if passed in the house, would prohibit teachers from discussing homosexuality prior to the ninth grade. As Henry Giroux said, "Can learning take place if in fact it silences the voices of the people it is supposed to teach? And the answer is: Yes. *People learn that they don't count*" (1992, 15). Students of all sexual and gender identities can also bring incorrect prior knowledge, in which case the learning process must start with unlearning misconceptions. Many LGBT students already have experience with unlearning ingrained notions related to sexuality, and replicating this process can facilitate learning in other areas.

2) How students organize knowledge influences how they learn and apply what they know.

Learners naturally connect information along pathways formed by their experiences. As educators, we want to reinforce rich and meaningful connections, the kind that experts possess. But we should be careful to not impose our "expert" filters in ways that predetermine what is meaningful. Consider the case of a student picking a project topic for a geography class who decides he wants to study factors that affect the development of gay neighborhoods. Whether this connection is encouraged or discouraged (implicitly or explicitly) will determine the formation of different semantic networks in the brain. In general, richer, more meaningful knowledge structures stimulate creativity and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to new contexts. Allowing students control over their own learning influences their motivation, which leads to the next principle.

3) Students' motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn.

Most theories of motivation explain it in terms of two broad factors: *what students value* and *how successful they expect to be* influences their motiva-

tion to learn. Like many students who receive negative messages related to their social identities, LGBT students may have low self-esteem, leading to lowered expectations of what they can achieve, and may exert less effort as a result. When instructors provide negative reinforcement related to students' identities, they can further lower students' expectations for themselves, creating a cycle of learned helplessness. On the other hand, LGBT students who value academic achievement may take refuge in it as their only socially sanctioned source of self-worth. These

us, influencing our assumptions and shaping our actions. For instance, if we are heterosexual and cisgender (that is, conforming to societal expectations of what is "normal" in relation to gender), we might be unaware of our privilege and unintentionally use noninclusive language and examples in our teaching, or we might have experienced being the "other" in different contexts, leading us to build empathy and question our own beliefs. If we hold LGBT identities, we may feel a sense of responsibility about being visible, active, and approachable on campus, or we may have rightful

and Pintel (2004) showed that activating the stereotype of gay males being pedophiles right before a babysitting task produced observable decrements in performance as observed by independent judges unaware that the stereotype had been evoked. This phenomenon, called "stereotype threat," occurs regardless of whether students believe the stereotypes because it generates emotions, like anger, that impede cognitive processes and performance. This has important implications for how faculty frame projects and assessments, particularly for traditionally stereotyped groups. Avoiding unintentionally activating stereotypes, while framing assessments as diagnosing learning or effort rather than innate ability, helps level the playing field for students belonging to groups stereotyped as deficient in certain areas.

Classroom approaches to sexual and gender identity impact learning and performance, both for LGBT students and for students across identities.

students are quite successful, but the knowledge they learn can be detached from their sense of self. This principle applies similarly among majority students who might be interested in LGBT topics. When instructors provide negative reinforcement about topics in which students show interest, they undermine potentially powerful sources of motivation for learning, regardless of a student's particular identity.

4) To develop mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned.

Faculty are responsible for fostering students' skills, but their attempts to do so can be constrained by their filters. Research has illustrated the importance of cognitive filters or expert blind spots, but social and emotional filters can also have an impact. Like students, all faculty members bring to the classroom a constellation of intersecting identities, and it is important to examine how those identities empower or limit

concerns about job security and quality of professional life. (Rankin et al. report that LGBT faculty, too, experience discrimination and harassment because of their identities [2010].) It is important for all faculty members to examine our emotions around these issues of identity: our anger at societal oppression, passion about righting wrongs, feelings of empowerment from gains achieved, fear of offending people, doubts about our competence in handling difficult conversations, etc. Our pedagogical challenge lies in focusing these emotions productively while sharing our disciplinary mastery with students.

5) Goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback enhances the quality of students' learning.

This principle highlights the impact of how educators frame tasks in advance and provide feedback afterward. If instructions and feedback betray bias and prejudice, they can actually depress rather than enhance students' performance. For example, Bosson, Haymovitz,

6) Students' current level of development interacts with the social, emotional, and intellectual climate of the course to impact learning.

Throughout college, students develop in many ways, including intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Students belonging to stigmatized groups (whether by sexuality, gender identity, race, religion, or other identity categories) face the additional challenge of developing positive self-images as members of those groups. Majority students also go through their own developmental processes, often facing the challenge of coming to terms with their privilege. Course climate can interact with these developmental processes to open or foreclose pathways for learning.

An example from my own experience illustrates this point. I once worked with a transgender student who did not identify within the gender binary, and who was taking a statistics class where the instructor collected student data broken down by gender (male or female) in order to illustrate a statistical concept. While the practice of using student-

generated data is generally desirable, in this case, the student remembers nothing from that class other than frustration at being asked to choose between two equally undesirable alternatives and disappointment at not having raised these concerns. The nature of statistics is to put people in boxes, count, measure, and compare them, but some students find this act of labeling oppressive.

As educators, we need to interrogate our disciplines to find and resolve such disconnects, paying particular attention to content. Even students' GPAs can be affected by whether they see themselves reflected in content, which carries messages about students' power and agency (Astin 1993). California's new law requiring gay history to be taught in public schools stems from an understanding of this dynamic. As a statistician, I initially struggled to incorporate diversity content when teaching abstract numbers and formulas, but I eventually developed my course on the statistics of sexual orientation, where I introduce formulas as tools to answer questions about the LGBT population (DiPietro 2009).

7) To become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning.

This principle highlights the importance of reflection, strategic self-awareness, and self-monitoring. The principle has critical implications particularly for closeted LGBT students, who can spend significant metacognitive energy that should be devoted to these tasks trying to mask their identities: monitoring their classroom speech; using gender-neutral pronouns; avoiding mention of revealing names, places, and websites; and otherwise censoring their speech and writing. This diverts cognitive energy away from the real focus of the classroom—delving deeper into content—and can translate into unrealized learning potential. With warmer classroom

climates, students can feel freer to focus their self-monitoring on their learning rather than on their presentation.

Conclusion

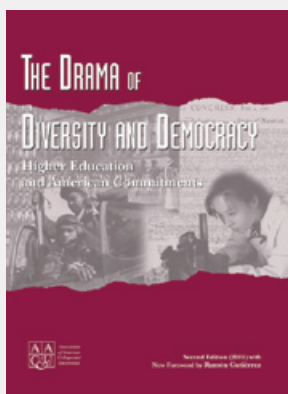
As these seven principles show, classroom approaches to sexual and gender identity impact learning and performance, both for LGBT students and for students across identities. In the classroom environment, the pedagogical challenge is to create a safe climate that allows all students to engage in exploration. A final point on this topic comes from DeSurra and Church (1994), who describe a continuum of classroom climates, from those that explicitly marginalize LGBT perspectives to those that explicitly centralize them, with variations of implicit marginalization and centralization falling in between. When they asked instructors to classify their course's climate, most located it somewhere between implicitly and explicitly centralizing, while their students rated the same climate as implicitly marginalizing. Thus in seeking to create more inclusive classrooms, instructors should be sure to seek feedback from students and make adjustments to

pedagogy and content when possible. By doing so, educators can create warmer climates for LGBT students and studies, maximizing learning opportunities for all students in the process. ☐

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New Publication from AAC&U



The Drama of Diversity and Democracy: Higher Education and American Commitments—Second Edition (2011)

In releasing this new edition of *The Drama of Diversity and Democracy*, the Association of American Colleges and Universities invites higher education to reengage with one of our most foundational questions: the role educators can and should play in building civic capacities—knowledge, skills, commitments, collaborations—for our diverse and globally connected democracy. This edition features a new foreword by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and a new preface by AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider. The original version of this publication was released in 1995 as part of AAC&U's national initiative, American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning.

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[LGBTQ CONTEXTS]

Graphing Institutional Change toward More Inclusive Environments

■ **DOROTHEA BRAUER**, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Advocate (LGBTQA) Center, the University of Vermont

For over forty years, students and faculty have worked to better include the perspectives and experiences of women, people of color, and people who identify as LGBTQ in the culture and curriculum of higher education. But progress has been slow and piecemeal, particularly in the case of LGBTQ identities. The Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education currently lists only 184 campuses that have at least one half-time staff person

change process that has transformed UVM from a school with almost no LGBTQ-specific resources in 1998 to among the most LGBTQ-affirming.

A Tipping Point?

How did UVM experience such a dramatic transformation? Last February I presented on this question at the California Institute of Integral Studies' Expanding the Circle Conference on Creating an Inclusive Environment in

The key to institutional change lies in more than just one individual or the strategic actions of one office.

whose job description includes “primary responsibility for providing LGBT services” (2011). Even fewer institutions provide LGBTQ-specific curricula: there is no national organization for LGBTQ studies, and a compilation of programs in the United States and Canada lists only fifty-seven undergraduate LGBTQ studies programs (forty-nine of which offer only a minor), nineteen master’s programs, and only one conferring a PhD (Younger 2011).

Given this reality, I am fortunate to serve as director of the LGBTQA Center at the University of Vermont (UVM), ranked by the national Campus Climate Index as among the best at adopting practices, policies, and structures that are inclusive of people identifying as LGBTQ (Windmeyer 2011). But the climate at UVM was not always so welcoming. The university’s current success is the result of a long institutional

Higher Education for LGBTQ Students and Studies. For my presentation, I graphed how the climate for LGBTQ people at UVM had changed over time. I taped two sheets of easel paper together, divided the top and bottom with a horizontal line, and created a series of vertical bands to represent time periods. Then I plotted events according to my subjective sense of how they had affected UVM’s LGBTQ climate, farther above or below the horizontal line according to whether they seemed more negative or more positive. The graphed points spread in a pattern similar to that described by Malcolm Gladwell in *The Tipping Point* (2000), with almost imperceptible shifts followed by a seemingly sudden, sustained burst of activity. Seeing this, I wondered: What was UVM’s “tipping point”?

It was tempting to single out the establishment of an LGBTQA Center

in 1999, but the graph showed many points that originated from other places. The mid 1990s included both the horrifying murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming and, on the opposite side of the line, the arrival on UVM’s campus of a new tenure-track faculty member who possessed critical interpersonal and intellectual skills and a clear vision for bringing LGBTQ concerns from the margins to the center. This faculty member acted as what Gladwell might characterize as a *maven* and a *salesman*: she envisioned new possibilities and convinced others of their value. She helped lead efforts to establish the LGBTQA Center and obtained approval for UVM’s first LGBTQ-focused course in 2002. When the LGBTQA Center and student activists began advocating for the inclusion of gender identity and expression in UVM’s nondiscrimination and harassment policies, she helped that effort succeed in 2005.

But the key to institutional change lies in more than just one individual or the strategic actions of one office. Another faculty member worked to establish UVM’s Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies minor in 2007. Many other LGBTQ people and their advocates have served on the President’s Commission on LGBT Equity and spoken up in other public forums over the years. UVM’s LGBTQ people and their advocates have been coming out since the first National Coming Out Week celebration in 1991. UVM’s experience suggests that Gladwell is right: change can be contagious, drawing in more people as it gains momentum.

On the Forefront of Change

UVM is a national leader in LGBTQ issues today due to efforts made by the LGBTQA Center in partnership with many LGBTQA students, staff, and faculty. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of transgender support. In 2002, the center assigned a

graduate intern to interview transgender students about their experiences on campus. The resulting report detailed transgender students' concerns about safe bathroom access and housing, their distress at being outed in classrooms by faculty using inappropriate pronouns, and their anguish at being confronted by campus staff when their identification cards seemed incongruent with their presenting gender.

The center shared the report with administrators, leading to a series of collaborative projects. UVM increased the number of gender-neutral bathrooms on its main campus to almost four dozen in 2003. It identified housing and gym facilities with private showers in 2004. In 2005, the dean of students enabled trans students to carry a student ID that displayed their chosen name, and in 2009, UVM added a preferred name option to its student information system (Tilsley 2010).

With support from the LGBTQA Center, UVM students launched the Translating Identity Conference (TIC) on transgender issues in higher education in 2003. Hundreds of UVM students, staff, faculty members, and administrators have attended over the years. TIC has educated advocates for transgender issues, inspired faculty to add trans-specific content to courses, and signaled to potential applicants that UVM is a welcoming place for transgender students. Although TIC's founders graduated in 2005, the conference remains faithful to its mission and is a singular source of pride and empowerment for many LGBTQ students and their advocates.

A Dynamic Interplay

Ultimately, every cluster of data points on my graph represents a dynamic interplay of personal histories and symbolic acts. I offer an example from my own life: In 1980, as an undergraduate at a conservative southern university, I was involved in a same-sex relation-



Burlington, Vermont (Photo: Saint Michael's College)

ship but lacked any form of LGBTQ identity or community. Only one of my teachers challenged traditional norms of patriarchy and heteronormativity, by using feminist perspectives to frame course content. Her course awakened me to a different way of seeing the world and myself in it.

I came out and moved to Vermont in 1986, and was surprised to discover my former professor living there as a member of the “women’s community.” She was out in her personal life but closeted among faculty. More than a decade had passed when, at a speakout I helped organize for UVM’s National Coming Out Day, this professor walked resolutely toward the microphone, her voice trembling as she came out publicly on campus for the first time.

Watching her on that rainy October day, I felt our personal histories circle and reconnect. This professor’s teaching had opened a door to a world of new ideas that prepared me to participate in activism that, in turn, opened a door to new social possibilities for her. She stepped through that door in a public manner sure to inspire another generation of students. Our paths crossed,

separated, and crossed again, spurring individual actions that helped move our community and our campus forward.

That is the nature of social and institutional change: they take time, gathering energy from symbolic acts; gaining momentum from every voice, connection, and action; churning toward transformation with the erratic power of an ocean wave. Every campus will build that energy and momentum differently, but when they do, their collective efforts will combine in a surge of greater LGBTQ inclusion across higher education. ☐

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[LGBTQ CONTEXTS]

Queer's Dual Meanings: Possibilities for Service Learning

■ DAVID M. DONAHUE, professor of education at Mills College

Queer is a word with two meanings. It can be an adjective used as an umbrella term to describe the LGBTQ community. It can also be a verb meaning “to trouble”: to question assumptions about dichotomous thinking and conceptions of what is natural or inherent. Both definitions have implications for service learning. Service learning can provide opportunities for students to engage with LGBTQ communities’ strengths and needs while deepening an understanding of academic disciplines and social justice. But service learning across organizations and communi-

ties can also be “queered” or troubled, raising new kinds of questions that lead to deeper critical reflection and more sophisticated understandings.

ties can also be “queered” or troubled, raising new kinds of questions that lead to deeper critical reflection and more sophisticated understandings. out of relationships of privilege and power—and thus subject to rethinking. Queer theorists also raise questions about binary or dichotomous thinking. Rather than focusing on fixed and unequal identities, queer theory encourages thinking in terms of reciprocal relationships characterized by shared and overlapping roles. In service learning, this means blurring the borders between providers and recipients as well as between learners and teachers (Hillman 1999). It can also mean blurring the boundaries between communities. Queer theorists

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Queering Service Learning

Queer theorists question or trouble what is considered “normal”—a construct often referred to as *normativity*. They consider how normativity is constructed and given meaning both culturally and historically (Butler 1990; Foucault 1979; Sedgwick 1990). “Queering” service learning therefore means questioning service learning’s normative categories: Who is the privileged “provider” of service, and who is the underprivileged “recipient”? It also means challenging whether these categories are natural or constructed

frame individual identity as multiple, intersecting, socially constructed, and fluid (Kumashiro 2001). Thus communities, especially those based in queer identities, are likewise complex and mutable, resistant to easily drawn boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Practicing Queered Service Learning

Drawing on the observations outlined above, faculty can take steps to queer any service learning project:

- Never make assumptions about the identities of students or community partners. When asking for students’ email addresses and phone numbers at the beginning of a course, also request their preferred names and what if any pronoun they use when referring to themselves—informa-

tion that may or may not match the registrar’s roster. Remind students not to make assumptions about each other’s identities or capacities for learning and change.

- Use reflection to question dichotomous thinking and to embrace contradiction. Prompt students to consider how community partners are serving and learning along with them. Help students embrace the idea that service is about engaging in *both* short-term projects and long-term change, not choosing between the two. Encourage students to engage in critical reflection on social problems from poverty to racism, which can challenge preconceived ideas about what is natural, what is constructed, and what can be reconstructed.

Practicing Service Learning for the Queer Community

The practices outlined above will benefit any service-learning project. But service-learning projects that promote social justice for LGBTQ persons require additional planning and critical reflection:

- In framing service learning for students, explain why the project is supporting the LGBTQ community, particularly in courses where the whole class is involved in one project. Connect project goals not only to course learning goals, but also to standards in the discipline and related professions.
- Provide options. While service learning for LGBTQ communities can help all students grow in empathy, do not impose students who are struggling with trans/homophobia on communities and organizations whose work could become sidetracked as a result.

Service learning on behalf of queer communities can take many forms (see box). In my education courses, both those with and without an explicitly queer

focus, I have implemented projects in partnership with LGBTQ organizations in the community and on campus. These projects have provided students with knowledge about current educational policy, skills in curriculum planning and field research, and dispositions towards creating inclusive schools and taking action against inequities—all valued outcomes for education scholars and practitioners. My students have worked with an LGBTQ film distributor to develop curriculum guides for films that bring LGBTQ issues into the secondary school curriculum. They have collaborated with a group supporting gay-straight alliances in middle and high schools to determine which public school districts were meeting their responsibilities to inform students of their rights under California law related to nondiscrimination based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. (We investigated over two hundred school districts and found only one in full compliance!) On-campus projects have included collecting oral histories of LGBTQ alumnae for a library archive and collaborating with a group working to create a queer student space at the college.

Affective Outcomes

Students bring their whole selves to service learning, and their responses to service learning with LGBTQ communities will be affective as well as cognitive. Some students who identify as LGBTQ may feel great pride in fighting homophobia, while others may be reminded of painful experiences. Students who do not identify as LGBTQ may develop powerful new identities as allies, while others may grapple with trans/homophobia or struggle to reconcile with religious teachings. And students questioning their sexuality or gender identity may have personally transformational experiences.

Likewise, queered service learning can also prompt affective change. This

is especially true when students see that they have thought and acted in oppressive ways. Their understanding can create a state of “crisis” where, according to Kevin Kumashiro (2002), they “are both unstuck (i.e., distanced from the ways they have always thought, no longer so complicit with oppression) and stuck (i.e., intellectually paralyzed and need to work through their emotions and thoughts before moving on with the more academic part of the lesson)” (63). Faculty might want to avoid creating classrooms that prompt crisis. But as Kumashiro points out, “education is not something that involves comfortably repeating what we already learned or affirming what we already know. Rather, education involves learning something that disrupts our commonsense view of the world” (63).

Engaging in disruption through service for queer communities and queered service learning takes time. It also requires a capacity to encounter difference, work through resistance, avoid dichotomous thinking, and embrace contradictions. But it can lead to profound changes in our and our students’ views of the world. ☐



Mills College (Photo by Philip Channing)

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Service-Learning Partnerships with the Queer Community

Faculty across departments and disciplines can partner with LGBTQ community institutions serving a variety of needs:

- LGBTQ arts groups and historical societies can become partners for service learning in the humanities.
- Health and social service organizations working in the LGBTQ community are potential partners for projects in medicine, the sciences, and the social sciences.
- LGBTQ advocacy groups can be sites for service with explicit connections to legal and political learning goals.

In smaller communities with few resources focused solely on LGBTQ needs, more broadly framed organizations can be sites for service learning that engages with queer issues and communities:

- Organizations serving homeless youth may work with a large number of LGBTQ young people.
- After-school recreation centers may partner in developing anti-bullying projects.
- Arts organizations may welcome opportunities to prompt community dialogue about LGBTQ issues.

—David M. Donahue

[LGBTQ CONTEXTS]

“In Dreams Begins Responsibility”: LGBTQ Work in Jesuit Higher Education

■ SIVAGAMI SUBBARAMAN, director of the LGBTQ Resource Center, Georgetown University

Editor’s note: This article originated in an address delivered at the Expanding the Circle conference on March 5, 2011, in San Francisco, California.

“In dreams begins responsibility,” a phrase from an old Irish Catholic play, is something of a touchstone for doing the work of LGBTQ inclusion on Jesuit campuses. Many LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff have long dreamed of having space, value, and belonging at Georgetown University and other Jesuit institutions. Yet no dreams are possible without an individual and collective

surables in creative tension is necessary to LGBTQ work in higher education *and* to the work of higher education itself.

The Contradictions of Identity-Based Centers

The history of Georgetown’s LGTBQ Center is complex and layered, but its creation was precipitated by a hate crime that went unreported on campus,

The more we as educators are able to instill in students a capacious imagination that can move them beyond binaries—from tension and contradiction to a deep appreciation of paradox and mystery—the better we are able to offer them transformative educational experiences.

sense of responsibility for creating a community that gives expression to the full range of each person’s humanity and dignity—a fundamental Jesuit principle.

Nationally, educators are increasingly called to address the importance of religious identity in students’ intellectual and emotional development. We are inattentive to students’ spirituality at our own risk. This lesson has particular salience at the delicate intersections of LGBTQ work in a Jesuit school. For some, the mere existence of an LGBTQ Center at a Catholic institution is a miracle; for others, it is a source of continued skepticism. Both perspectives are right and true. Holding such incommen-

spurring students to organize in 2007. Georgetown eventually recognized these students’ collective vision of their interconnected lives and journeys by creating the LGBTQ Center in 2008.

LGBTQ centers are the latest entrants in a long line of “identity-based” centers in US higher education. Many of these centers have drawn validation, authority, and credence from inter- and counter-disciplinary inquiries that challenge traditional disciplinary formations, and their work has proven deeply empowering. But their existence can also posit members of identity groups as “problems” (following W. E. B. DuBois’s famous formulation) (1969, 43). Once so

defined, it is easier to argue that we are to be fixed, diminished, or eradicated, and that our centers serve that purpose.

Indeed, the archetypal “coming out” story positions LGBTQ individuals as “wounded people.” The trope of “I was in the closet, and now I am out; I was in darkness, and now there is light” has the classic hallmarks of conversion narrative and carries as its palimpsest the subtext of colonial history. James Alison has characterized “coming out” as a “penitential moment,” and there is power in that truth (2001, xi): coming out is about bearing witness among those who “bore the cross” before us. The coming out process ossifies LGBTQ communities: it is our moment of origin. It is also our liminal space and our narrative end.

These formulations can be inimical to higher education’s purpose of working with the “whole student.” Using them, the LGBTQ Center’s work can become about crisis management, not knowledge production; about working with gay students rather than all students. This limits the scope of our programs, role, and advocacy.

(Re)Framing through the Ignatian Prism

How can we move beyond cross-cultural collaboration across discrete centers to educate what Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach calls “whole persons of solidarity” (2000)? What would happen if we reframed LGBTQ issues within the Ignatian paradigm of moving from woundedness to wholeness—a journey *all* people, not just some of us, share? The Ignatian concepts of *flourishing*, *discernment*, and *imagination* can offer an alternative narrative for educating students to their fullest range as sentient human beings.

Flourishing

Current discourses in higher education focus on *excellence* as tied to certain measurable outcomes: recruitment,

retention, learning, graduation rates. Excellence is about providing programs that address students' social, emotional, intellectual, and developmental needs. It is about collaborating across units to help students grow and find integration between their academic and personal lives, between on-campus and off-campus communities.

What if we took *excellence* a step farther and focused on *flourishing*: in the Ignatian paradigm, the fundamental purpose of God's creation? Flourishing is about nurturing life in its multidimensional splendor as a reflection of the Creator; as the Jesuit poet Hopkins states, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" (1986, 1581). It charges us as a community to create spaces that will foster the growth of inner life, both for individuals and for the community. It requires us to intentionally make time, space, and effort for students to reflect on their lived experiences, realize complexity, and recognize paradox.

Discernment

To understand the Jesuit concept of discernment, one must fully grasp the place of *desire* in our ethical lives. Members of LGBTQ communities are often held up as purveyors of disordered desire. But according to theologian Sebastian Moore, in the Ignatian tradition, "The blazing truth is that fear of desire [rather than desire itself] creates a 'moral' world, of good people (who keep the fear going) and bad people (who dangerously relax it). Jesus is free of the fear of desire...and seeks to awaken this freedom in people so that desire can be in them what it really is: love trying to happen" (2008, 143).

Correctly discerned, then, desire leads to the flourishing that God wants for us. As Father Mark Thibodeaux articulates it, "We fall into sin when we are ignorant of [God's] *desires beneath* [our] *desires* [...]. We sin, not because we are in touch with our desires but precisely because we are

not in touch with them" (n.d.). Thus *desire* is about the rights and obligations each human has to be deeply connected to the full range of our own humanity.

In the Jesuit tradition, discernment is knowing God's desires for us and locating God's presence in our lives and work. I am calling here not for the presence of a particular God or conceptualization of spirituality—and most certainly not of a particular religious organization—in our lives. Instead, I am asking that educators give ourselves and our students a chance for education that addresses our spirits, however we may experience them. Discernment helps us do that, and therefore permits us to make informed choices and shape ethical lives.

Imagination

According to Father Adolfo Nicolas, "Imagination grasps reality. Depth of thought and imagination involves a profound engagement with the real, a refusal to let go until one goes beneath the surface" (2010). Here, imagination is not an escape, but rather a continuous, consistent discernment that allows us to hold reality's paradoxes in place. With imagination, our ambivalences and binaries need not be resolved, but can exist in tension. Without imagination, we cannot build community, which is not an erasure of differences but rather a grappling with what is real.

The more we as educators are able to instill in students a capacious imagination that can move them beyond binaries—from tension and contradiction to a deep appreciation of paradox and mystery—the better we are able to offer them transformative educational experiences. Faith, like poetry, can give us frameworks for reimagining possibilities for our paradoxical lives.

Final Thoughts

Liberal education asks us to consider who we are and why we are here.



Georgetown University

It is incomplete if it does not also include a profound engagement with the question of spirituality's presence or absence in our intellectual and emotional lives. With such engagement, our campuses can become more whole communities not only for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff, but for *all* of us. ☐

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[PERSPECTIVE]

Queer Theory's Relevance to Student Learning

■ **NICK DAVIS**, assistant professor of English and Gender Studies at Northwestern University

The recent It Gets Better campaign prompted everyone from lesbian septuagenarians to young snap queens to the president of the United States to throw a reassuring virtual arm around the shoulders of LGBT youth. Compared to such outreach-based phenomena spurred by grievous tragedies, what is the role of queer theory? I've heard versions of this question in the media, from activists and fellow

Thus to assign or study queer theory, even at its most difficult, is not to abandon but to gratify a real-world community, encouraging its members to consider our lives as pivotal within major conceptualizations of human experience, local and global, past and present. Genders and sexualities of all stripes deserve to be valued as centerpieces, not sidebars, within histories of human thought. To address these

Queer theory is not to everyone's taste—but it is not, for that reason, unrelated to “real life,” as detractors have claimed.

academics, and in my classroom: Who has time for theory? What does it accomplish? Of what possible relevance are the alleged fictions of gender, the fissures of “the subject,” or the phenomenology of desire when queer kids—and adults—are feeling bruised, getting hurt, even losing their lives?

Ironically, the late queer theorist Eve Sedgwick cited these very factors as having prompted her intricate theoretical writings on sexuality. She begins her essay “Queer and Now” by opining, “I think everyone who does gay and lesbian studies is haunted by the suicides of adolescents.... How [can we] tell kids ... that, farther along, the road widens and the air brightens?” (1993, 1–2). She recalls convening her first seminar in lesbian and gay studies in her home in 1986. Expecting five or six students, she found herself hosting sixty-five. For them, the class's very existence entailed a sign of things getting better.

subjects as complex ideas in perpetual flux—as theories, not facts—challenges students to think critically and to engage across differences.

Debates surrounding queer theory and its notorious difficulty are not reasons to avoid teaching it. Rather, they are cues for teaching it in considered ways. Reading should operate like physical training, working muscles to levels just beyond present potential, furnishing slightly heavier bars than students think they can lift. When I assign difficult essays, I typically offer three reflection prompts to students: *Transcribe and then comment for three to four sentences on an idea in the reading you feel sure you understood. Do the same for a passage you did not initially understand, but now feel that you do. Do the same for an idea you know you did not understand.* My lessons are informed by all three prompts, but especially the second

one: when students confront puzzles they feel newly capable of solving, I find them at their most candid, diligent, and intellectually imaginative.

Queer theory is the bedrock of my undergraduate course *Introducing Queer Cinema*. Students who worry about the practical pertinence of their humanities-based classes often perk up when learning about direct collaborations among artists, activists, and academics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While analyzing films, we discuss how every image makes certain kinds of sense in its immediate context but also enlists our reflexive understandings of what a close-up, cross-cut, or dissolve typically connotes. By the same logic, individual desires encompass gestures, grammars, frictions, and intensities that amass shared meanings over time but are not *limited* to those meanings. The films that students credit as brave or eye-opening are often those that are trickiest to understand. They require us, as queer theory does, to work for their meanings rather than gobbling them like popcorn.

Queer theory is not to everyone's taste—but it is not, for that reason, unrelated to “real life,” as detractors have claimed. Its emergence answered curricular gaps and communal needs that could all too easily return. Teaching theory doesn't prohibit teaching sociology, science, history, politics, or public health. Fields like these inevitably entail their own concepts of gender and sexuality; surely testing concepts against observations is better than naturalizing or ignoring concepts altogether. For all these reasons, reading and getting comfortable with queer theory, without silencing questions or debates, is part of It Getting Better. ☐

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[PERSPECTIVE]

Breaking the Silence at Spelman College and Beyond

■ **BEVERLY GUY-SHEFTALL**, founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center, Spelman College

From 2006 to 2011, Spelman College's Women's Research and Resource Center conducted the Audre Lorde Project, named for one of the most influential black lesbian feminist/writer/activist/educators of the twentieth century and the first project of its kind at a historically black college or university (HBCU). The project's overall objectives were to increase public awareness and understanding about African American LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) experiences; to explore the marginalization of racial issues in the LGBTQ movement and in gay and lesbian studies; and to create climates that acknowledge, value, and respect difference, especially within HBCUs, where profound silences continue to exist around gender and sexuality. Project activities were conducted in two stages, each substantially funded by the Arcus Foundation.

Phase I of the project, titled *Breaking the Silence: The Audre Lorde Black Lesbian Feminist Project*, began in 2006 and focused on outreach at Spelman and within the Atlanta University Center (AUC), a consortium of local HBCUs. As part of this phase, Spelman instituted the Zami Salon, a series of student-driven activities designed to raise awareness, combat homophobia and heterosexism, and promote more inclusive environments. LGBTQ scholars and activists visited Spelman to share their experiences both inside and outside of black communities. Award-winning writer Thomas Glave discussed the necessity of interrogating heteronormativity in

African Diaspora cultural contexts. Cara Page, national director of the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment, presented a workshop on LGBTQ issues and genetic technologies. Layli Phillips, professor of women's studies at Georgia State University and a Spelman alumna, offered an elective course on Black Queer Studies (probably the first semester-long queer theory course at an HBCU) and also established an LGBTQ scholarship. Under the auspices of the Zami Salon, the Women's Center sponsored Spelman's first faculty Coming Out Day.

The project's first phase also supported the digital archiving and public unveiling of Audre Lorde's papers, now part of the Spelman Archives. During this phase, Rudolph P. Byrd, Johnnetta Betsch Cole, and I completed *I Am Your Sister: The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde* (2009). Drawing from our research, the center held a major symposium on Audre Lorde's life and work in fall 2008. At the symposium, academics, activists, and students explored a range of issues relative to black gay and lesbian experiences. Without a doubt, Phase I established Spelman's Women's Center as a major site for the exploration of black queer issues in the academy.

The Audre Lorde Project Phase II: *Facilitating HBCU Campus Climates of Pluralism, Inclusivity, and Progressive Change*, conducted from 2008 to 2011, expanded outreach to selected HBCUs outside of the AUC. This phase's broad range of activities culminated in the

historic Audre Lorde HBCU Summit on April 29, 2011, when participants from eleven partnering HBCUs and other colleges and universities gathered at Spelman to engage in dialogue about LGBTQ issues on our campuses. Leading experts presented research findings and offered recommendations about how HBCUs might establish more open and inclusive environments for their LGBTQ constituents. Two hundred participants attended the event, including representatives from entities like the United Negro College Fund, the Human Rights Campaign, and the National Black Justice Institute. Participants repeatedly expressed a desire to make sexual diversity a top priority at their institutions. The summit resulted in a three hundred page Summit Resource Book (available on request).

Reflecting on the project, Spelman President Beverly Daniel Tatum asserted, "Our mission calls us to develop the intellectual, ethical and leadership potential of our students, and we cannot effectively do that unless we ourselves model ethical leadership. For me, that means taking responsibility for creating an inclusive community where everyone feels welcome. Lives are depending on it" (2011). In the aftermath of the Audre Lorde Project, Spelman College has convened an LGBTQ working committee to explore how we might continue to build Spelman's community around issues of difference. It is our hope that other HBCUs will heed the call as well. ☐

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Delectable Diversity: Gender and Sexuality Studies in General Education

■ **SARA E. COOPER**, professor of foreign languages and literatures; **GAIL WALTON**, assistant professor of child development; and **CHRISTOPHER IVEY**, assistant professor of biology—all of California State University, Chico

Here at Chico State, a residential university campus located in the northern reaches of California's agriculturally rich Central Valley, we take food seriously—including food for thought. In Fall 2012, incoming students will be treated to the newest Chico State recipe, an extensively redesigned program for General Education (GE). What may be the tastiest tidbit for some (and more like bitter greens for others) is a Gender and Sexuality (G&S) Pathway that has a prominent place at the GE table.

Why Gender and Sexuality?

In June 2008, the California State University system chancellor directed campuses to shift their GE programs' focus "from curricular content to what students learn through the breadth of their general education experiences" (Reed 2008). In response, Chico State's new dean of undergraduate education and provost launched a review and revision of GE.

After a year of contemplation, faculty proposed a new program organized primarily around pathways: thematic groupings of courses that would give students the option of a more cohesive GE experience. Only courses approved as foundation or attached to a pathway would continue to hold GE status. With faculty and administration alike concerned about having a piece of the GE pie, many faculty members turned into aspiring GE chefs. A group of Chico State faculty who taught courses in two former GE themes, Women's Issues and Gender Perspectives, decided that

Gender and Sexuality simply had to be on the menu for future students.

Our Place in the GE Pantry

Informed by a vision of cohesive, coherent, and relevant general education, Chico State's newly refashioned program includes two levels of courses. *Foundation* courses will enhance first-year students' basic skills, such as writing and critical thinking. Remaining lower and upper division courses have been organized into ten *pathways*: International Studies; Global Development; Sustainability; Health and Wellness; Great Books and Ideas; Food Studies; Ethics, Justice, and Policy; Science, Technology, and Values; Diversity Studies; and Gender and Sexuality. Each of these reflects core values that Chico State holds dear and that are linked to the school's strategic priorities.

All pathways must be associated with at least one foundation course, and G&S Pathway faculty found two with complementary flavors. G&S faculty are now working with faculty in journalism to develop meaningful links with their Professional Writing for Public Audiences course, and with faculty in psychology on their Applications of Critical Thinking and Decision Making course. Through these partnerships, first-year students will get a taste of their possible main courses in GE.

Each pathway offers up to three courses within each of eight GE areas (five in the lower division and three in the upper division). Within the lower-division arts area, for instance, G&S's

three classes are Art Appreciation: Multicultural Perspectives; Art History Survey Western 1880 to Present; and Shakespeare in Film. Each of these pre-existing courses is being revised to meet GE requirements and to include significant G&S content. G&S faculty have accepted the maximum number of courses possible into our pathway, for a total of twenty-four (not including introductory or intermediate foreign language courses, which count toward any pathway's lower-division humanities requirement).

Each pathway also offers at least three writing-intensive courses and one capstone. The capstone course provides a venue for both weaving together principal ideas and delving deeply into a particular subject. All students are required to take their three upper-division GE classes, including a capstone, within a single pathway. Students who complete at least eighteen units in one pathway will earn an interdisciplinary minor.

New Course Designs

More than thirty G&S faculty members are working together this year to share resources, finish course revisions, and establish links within the curriculum. Of the courses being designed specifically for the G&S Pathway, two are in the upper division: Christopher Ivey's Biology of Sex and Gail Walton's Children's Gender and Sexuality Development.

Ivey's course will examine the biological foundations of sex, gender, and mating behavior from an evolutionary perspective. To understand sex, one must first address why it exists. Sex is an inefficient and even dangerous way to reproduce, and many species persist without it. Although people often have difficulty imagining life without the male-female dichotomy, many plants and animals have shifting or multiple genders, even within single

individuals. Much of the course will focus on nonhuman organisms to explore biological norms. The course will also examine human mating behavior and sex expression, primarily in comparison with that of other primates.

The writing-intensive capstone Children's Gender and Sexuality Development will encourage students to explore more inclusive and fluid views of gender and sexuality than expressed in default assumptions about the gender binary and heterosexuality. Main objectives include sensitizing students to differences in the ways children develop, and increasing students' awareness of stereotypes, inequalities, and discrimination related to gender and sexual identity. By discovering the biological, cognitive, social, and cultural elements that influence the early development of gender and sexuality, students can start to examine and perhaps challenge their preexisting ideas. A few topics covered in the course include biological influences, gender identity disorder, transgender variations, homosexuality, and LGBTQ parenting.

With these and other courses, G&S Pathway faculty members are working together to blend many flavors—theory, scholarship, civic engagement, and attention to cultural difference.

A Feast for the Heart, Mind, and Soul

G&S faculty designed our pathway according to the central tenet that general education should prepare students to be critical thinkers, engaged citizens, and ethical members of a global society. The catalog description of our pathway (soon to be available online at www.csuchico.edu/ge) reminds readers that participating students and faculty

...come to understand how sexuality and gender are related to practically every academic major, profession, and aspect of life. We learn about the significance of promoting gender



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and sexuality equity for all people, including those who don't fit neatly into the mainstream gender and sexuality identities of our culture, for example LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning). Finally, in this pathway we can become more comfortable and sensitive working with a broad spectrum of people, thereby becoming more successful in our diverse world.

The G&S Pathway is truly interdisciplinary, featuring course offerings from nineteen different departments and programs, from four of the university's seven colleges. Disciplines as diverse as religion, communication, literature, political science, Chicana/o studies, journalism, and nursing provide the breadth necessary for a liberal education, while one underlying set of intellectual questions ensures coherence.

In addition to providing compliance with CSU system mandates for GE, the G&S Pathway and others will contribute to the implementation of Chico State's new Diversity Action Plan—a strategy aligned with AAC&U's work to “make excellence inclusive” (Diversity Scorecard Committee 2010, 5). Incorporating

gender and sexuality studies into the core curriculum sends a strong message of welcome and support to students, faculty, and staff who want an inclusive place to develop their strengths. G&S faculty are excited to be in the vanguard of what hopefully will become a national movement toward improved campus climates and more relevant curricula and scholarship that responds to the needs of diverse communities rather than only to those of the assumed mainstream (Christensen and Eyring 2011).

That's our goal here at Chico State: to bring to the table all the best ingredients and find innovative ways to prepare and present them. Just as with the popular annual community event Taste of Chico, we trust the results will be delicious. ☺

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Safe Zone Dialogues at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

■ **MARILYN KURATA**, director of Core Curriculum Enhancement; **ROSIE O'BEIRNE**, instructor in the Department of History and Anthropology; and **ELIZABETH CASSWELL**, student—all of the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Since 2005, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) has made ethics and civic responsibility a student learning outcome to be targeted, along with writing and quantitative literacy, through instruction and practice across the undergraduate curriculum. UAB sees respecting and valuing diversity as one component of this learning outcome, and the university was one of twenty-six institutions to participate

method of integration was Safe Zone Dialogues, a learning module collaboratively designed by faculty, staff, students, and community members to facilitate discussion about sexual orientation.

Curricular Contexts

Safe Zone Dialogues emerged in response to reports by UAB's Gay/Straight Student Alliance (GSSA) of proselytizing by and passive-aggressive

Two years ago if you asked me whether one conversation could change or even open someone's mind about gay rights, I would have laughed. Serving as a panelist for the Difficult Dialogue sessions completely changed my perspective.

in the Ford Foundation's nationwide Difficult Dialogue Initiative (DDI) aimed at fostering pluralism and tolerance on university campuses.

An initial two-year DDI grant supported UAB's development of freshman learning communities with themes related to racial or ethical issues, as well as workshops that fostered faculty members' ability and comfort with facilitating respectful discussions on controversial topics in the classroom. A second two-year grant allowed us to integrate difficult dialogues into cocurricular activities and events with community partners and to pilot methods for incorporating these dialogues into existing courses. One

exchanges with members of another student organization. Rosie O'Beirne, an instructor in the Department of History and Anthropology and GSSA faculty advisor, took leadership in creating the program. O'Beirne had long been concerned that class discussions about difference, whether cultural or natural, often mirrored polarizing news shows. She observed that "the most heated discussions always centered on the topic of religion and sexual orientation."

During 2008–10, UAB piloted Safe Zone Dialogues in four undergraduate courses where sexual orientation is relevant to key course concepts: Introduction to Anthropology, Introduction to Sociology, Human Sexuality, and Sexual

Identity and Diversity. Students in the targeted courses were organized into discussion groups of fifteen to seventeen members, which met for two seventy-five-minute sessions spaced a week apart. Each session had a facilitator who established ground rules and guidelines for respectful dialogue, as well as two panelists from the LGBT community who shared their personal stories and responded to questions related to the challenges of being openly gay in the South. Facilitators ensured that the dialogues provided an opportunity for students to engage with different perspectives, not a forum for anyone to argue for a particular point of view.

Reflecting on the dialogues, Elizabeth Casswell, current president of GSSA, said, "Two years ago if you asked me whether one conversation could change or even open someone's mind about gay rights, I would have laughed. Serving as a panelist for the Difficult Dialogue sessions completely changed my perspective."

Pedagogical Approaches

Safe Zone Dialogues are effective because they meld multiple approaches and pedagogies that together promote active listening, honest dialogue, and civil engagement with difference.

Reinforcement of Course Concepts.

Integrating the module into a course makes it more likely that students will participate. It also helps ensure that students attend all dialogue sessions with the same cohort, fostering personal interaction and a sense of responsibility for one's words. Through the dialogue module, students gain experience with course concepts like cultural relativism, which requires students to suspend judgment and evaluate a perspective within context and on its own terms. As part of a multisite DDI assessment conducted by Yale University's Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, UAB demonstrated

a significant correlation between course content and students' ability to hear the perspectives of others.

Intergroup Dialogue Bantu Parliamentary Procedure. Safe Zone Dialogues combine two important elements: (1) a nonconfrontational format based on Bantu tradition that gives each participant the opportunity to express an opinion sequentially and to be heard by others without challenge, and (2) an approach adapted from the University of Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations that explicitly rejects changing people's minds as a prime objective and uses a dual-speaker model to facilitate discussion.

Personal Storytelling. Safe Zone Dialogues use a storytelling model associated with our Safe Zone Program, a preexisting diversity initiative that trains staff and faculty on the needs of LGBT students. Student and nonstudent members of the LGBT community shared personal narratives that complicated or dispelled stereotypes or assumptions and sometimes helped non-LGBT students identify with "the other."

After hearing Casswell speak, one student declared, "I would not let people like you around my children, because you don't think what you are doing is wrong." Casswell recalls, "Hearing [this] opened the hearts of the other students. Her disrespect demonstrated exactly what LGBT individuals face on a regular basis, and several of the students were visibly moved, with tears welling up in their eyes." Such responses were less indicative of changes in attitude than evidence of students really hearing a different perspective, often for the first time. Casswell still speaks with wonder about a male African American athlete who initially expressed personal disgust for what he saw as a sinful lifestyle: "I was shocked when, a few minutes after the second (and final) session he pulled me aside. I could see pain in his face and



The University of Alabama at Birmingham (Photo by Steve Wood)

tears in his eyes as he whispered with sudden understanding, 'You are fighting your own civil rights movement.'"

Engaging Difference Online Blog. Because classroom time for Safe Zone Dialogues was limited, we also created a blog where students could reflect, synthesize, and share what they learned in the dialogue module. As some sample journal entries indicate, these reflections provided the strongest indirect assessment of the module's potential long-term impact:

"One [of the] preconceived ideas that I had was that the people of [LGBT] communities would have nothing to do with religion because many religions really are against that lifestyle. This was dispelled because they are just like any other person and choose whether they want a certain religion [to be a part] of their lives."

"The most important piece of information that I gleaned from the dialogue was the diversity within the GLBT community. One of our panelists was an agnostic, while the other was a

devout Christian. One was a political conservative, while the other was quite liberal. The two panelists couldn't even agree whether homosexuality was a genetic trait or a personal decision! As an outsider, I was expecting the GLBT community to be relatively homogenous."

Promising First Steps

Although developed in response to a particular timely and polarizing topic, Safe Zone Dialogues can be adapted to a range of social or political topics. Integrating this module into relevant existing courses is one constructive approach to tackling—although not necessarily overcoming—challenges to campus diversity and pluralism. Essential to the success of Safe Zone Dialogues is the explicit premise that the program is not agenda driven or aimed at changing people's minds. Listening to other people's perspectives on a particular topic rarely causes one to forgo one's own opinion or values, but listening and hearing can plant the seeds for possible future growth. ☐

[RESEARCH REPORT]

LGBTQ Campus Climate: The Good and the Still Very Bad

■ WARREN J. BLUMENFELD, associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Iowa State University

Throughout the United States—in elementary and secondary schools and on college and university campuses, in communities, in homes, and in the media—issues of homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism are increasingly “coming out of the closet.” Some young people are developing positive identities at earlier ages than ever before. Activists are gaining selective electoral and legislative victories. In academic circles, greater emphasis is being given to queer theory as writers, educators, and students analyze and challenge current constructions and

The Educational Impacts of Climate

Students who are the targets of harassment and attack by their peers can experience increased school absenteeism and academic difficulties, including slipping grades. They are more likely to drop out of school. They also have increased risk of alcohol and drug use and abuse and associated physical symptoms. These students often experience serious mental health problems including depression, anxiety disorders, increased fear, withdrawal from family and peers, post-traumatic stress disorder

entire community is affected—for in the final analysis, we are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

2010 State of Higher Education

My coresearchers Sue Rankin, Genevieve N. Weber, and Somjen Frazer and I recently conducted the comprehensive study *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People*, sponsored by the Q Research Institute in Higher Education of the national organization Campus Pride. Our results indicated that LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrators remain at significantly higher risk, compared with our study’s control group of their heterosexual and gender normative counterparts, for harassment at US colleges and universities.

The online study comprised 5,149 participants who identified along what we referred to as a “queer spectrum” (“lesbian,” “gay,” “same-sex loving,” “bisexual,” “pansexual,” “asexual,” “questioning” and other terms indicating sexual identity) and a “trans spectrum” (“trans-masculine,” “transfeminine,” “gender nonconforming,” “cross-dresser,” “tranny boi,” “gender queer,” “pre-op,” along with other terms indicating gender identity and expression). Participants included students, staff, faculty, and administrators representing all fifty states and all institutions included in the Carnegie Basic Classification of higher education.

Results

Seventy-one percent of respondents expressed relative comfort with their institutions’ overall campus climate, 77 percent with their department or work unit climate, and 65 percent with

Ultimately, when the campus climate is unsafe and unwelcoming for any segment of the community, the entire community is affected—for in the final analysis, we are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

categorizations of sexuality and gender.

In the midst of these progressive advancements, however, conditions related to campus climate often remain difficult at best for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. Over the past few decades, comprehensive research reports (see, for example, GLSEN 2009) have shown that sexual and gender minoritized students in our nation’s primary and secondary schools remain at significantly increased risk of harassment and bullying not only by their peers, but often by school faculty and staff. Many school districts have been leading the way in addressing these issues. But much work remains to be done, from primary through higher education, if educational institutions are to avoid reproducing and reinforcing inequities.

(PTSD), low self-esteem, poor body image, and suicidal ideation, attempts, and completion. (For more on these topics, see Anderson et al. 2001; Craig 1998; Hershberger and D’Augelli 1995; Rigby 2002; Ybarra and Mitchell 2004.)

Research suggests that these findings are particularly relevant in the realm of higher education. In the early 1990s, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force discovered that fully one-fifth of all reported incidents of harassment and violence directed against LGBTQ people in the United States occurred on college and university campuses (NGLTF 1992). These findings should be of concern to all members of the campus community. Ultimately, when the campus climate is unsafe and unwelcoming for any segment of the community, the

the classroom climate. But 31 percent experienced a difficult or hostile campus climate and 21 percent experienced some form of harassment related to their sexual identity or gender expression. Along the queer spectrum and the trans spectrum, 13 percent and 43 percent respectively feared for their physical safety, and 43 percent of queer spectrum and 63 percent of trans spectrum participants concealed their identities (stayed “in the closet”) in an attempt to avoid intimidation. These rates were significantly higher for queer and trans spectrum respondents of color.

These findings had significant consequences for participants’ educational experiences and even their ability to participate in higher education. Thirty-three percent of participants along the queer spectrum and 38 percent along the trans spectrum seriously considered leaving their campuses. Study participants attending unwelcoming and “hostile” campuses reported lowered interest in remaining at their current campuses and discouraged future students, staff, faculty, and administrators from attending. They also experienced lower educational outcomes and more negative identity development issues, including low self-esteem and compromised emotional, mental, and physical health.

Recommendations for Best Practices

In the report, my coauthors and I suggest a number of possible best practices to improve campus climate for LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrators. These include, but are not limited to, campus climate and needs assessments, inclusive policies, training and development options, services including counseling and healthcare, housing options, appropriate and timely responses to anti-LGBTQ incidents, and inclusive curricular and cocurricular education (see box for selected examples).

LGBTQ students remain integral and vital members of our campus com-

munities. Our research has conclusively exposed inequities, and possible best practices can provide options for improvement. We encourage all schools to expand their efforts and to appreciatively raise the level of discourse in working to secure the safety and the equity of all people, including LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrators. In this way, schools may more fully reach their mandate of providing the best quality education for all students. ☑

For a copy of the 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People, visit <http://www.campuspride.org/research>.

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Selected Recommendations: Curriculum and Academic Affairs

The following is a small selection of recommendations for improving campus climate via the curriculum and academic affairs. These practices should be implemented in concert with inclusive policies, training, services, and other measures.

- Issues relating to LGBTQ people should be formally and permanently integrated into existing courses across the curriculum.
- Speakers on LGBTQ topics, and particularly those who present scholarly research on LGBTQ topics, should be brought to campus regularly.
- Courses dealing specifically with LGBTQ issues in the humanities, natural sciences, education, social sciences, and other disciplines should be established.
- All multicultural education should be inclusive of the issues, history, culture, and experiences of LGBTQ

people in the United States and worldwide. Multicultural awareness (social diversity) courses should be mandatory for all students at some point during the undergraduate years.

- Institutions should develop, support, and sustain LGBTQ Studies, Queer Studies, or Sexuality and Gender Studies programs (preferably departments) with degree-granting (Certification, AA, BA, Masters, Doctorate) capabilities.

For a complete list of recommendations, contact Warren J. Blumenfeld at wblumen@iastate.edu.

In Print

***The Lives of Transgender People* by Genny Beemyn and Susan Rankin (Columbia University Press 2011, \$27.50 paperback)**

This important new study fills a significant gap in the research examining the diverse identities and experiences of transgender people living in the United States. Combining survey and interview data to paint a compelling picture of transgender lives, Beemyn and Rankin break new ground particularly in understanding transgender identity formation and the influence of the internet on transgender experience. The book includes key analysis of the higher education climate for transgender people, as well as commentary on the implications for higher education. This is a critical resource for anyone responsible for creating warmer campus climates for all students.

***Spectacular Rhetorics: Human Rights Visions, Recognitions, Feminisms* by Wendy S. Hesford (Duke University Press 2011, \$23.95 paperback)**

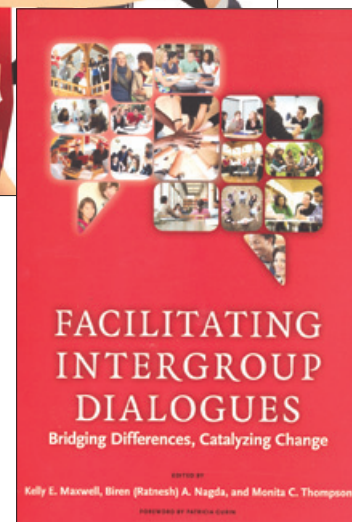
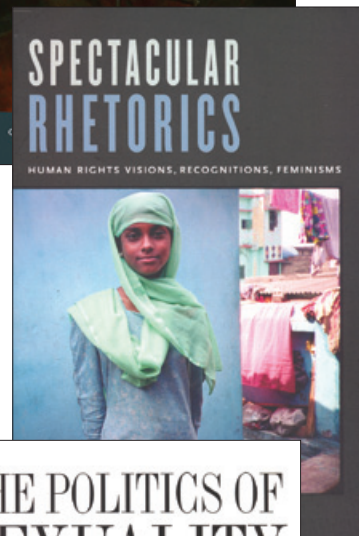
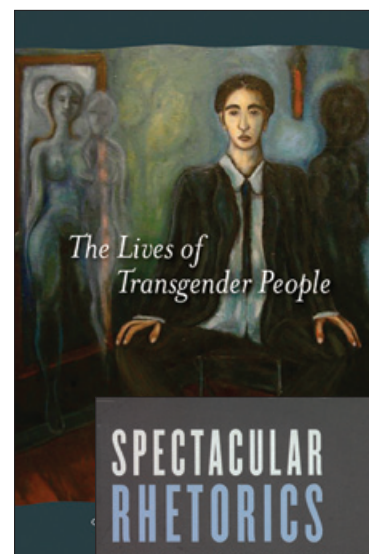
With deep engagement in a range of fields including philosophy and feminist theory, Wendy S. Hesford explores the complicated implications of visual rhetorics connected to global human rights. Her analysis of cultural narratives formed particularly around imagery constructed for American viewers expands the human rights framework beyond its traditional grounding in international law. She encourages readers to “work with [human rights’] complexities and paradoxes as we move toward a future justice” (203). Her book is an excellent meditation on how cultural narratives can simultaneously confront and reinscribe ethical challenges.

***The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America: A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights*, edited by Javier Corrales and Mario Pecheny (University of Pittsburgh Press 2010, \$29.95 paperback)**

Framed by a sharp and illuminating introduction, this volume calls readers to address what Lisa Baldez calls “the next human-rights challenge for Latin America in the twenty-first century” (ix). With the goal of addressing what they identify as a void in the field of political science, the editors have collected a range of articles that point to the importance of LGBT issues in conversations about democracy in this region. The resulting volume gathers in one place a range of important references for anyone interested in political change and human rights related to sexuality.

***Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change*, edited by Kelly E. Maxwell, Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda, and Monita C. Thompson (Stylus LLC 2011, \$29.95 paperback)**

This valuable volume focuses on an aspect of intergroup dialogue that is rarely discussed in depth: the experiences of facilitators, who are often undergraduate students. The book incorporates guidelines for facilitator training with rich examples of facilitation challenges and consequences, including long-term outcomes for the facilitators themselves. Drawing on an array of models for dialogue on campus and in the community, contributing authors offer important resources particularly for those doing facilitator training on campuses, but also for anyone interested in this important pedagogical strategy.



Resources

The Gender Diversity Project

The Gender Diversity Project at the City College of San Francisco has created critical resources for educators hoping to include issues affecting transgender and gender variant people in their curricula. The project's Resources for Education include an extensive Facilitator's Guide and several videos to prompt conversation in the classroom. To access these resources, visit www.ccsf.edu/hiv/gdp.

LGBTQ Presidents in Higher Education

Formed in 2010, LGBTQ Presidents in Higher Education provides support for the growing number of college and university presidents who publically identify as LGBTQ, as well as advocacy for LGBTQ issues in higher education. To learn more about the group's activities and mission, visit www.lgbtqpresidents.org.

Consortium of LGBT Higher Education Resource Professionals

This consortium of faculty, staff, and graduate students advocates for policies and practices that improve the campus climate for LGBT individuals. The consortium is a cosponsor of LGBTQ Architect (<http://architect.lgbtcampus.org/>), a compendium of free online resources for higher education professionals. To learn more about the consortium, visit www.lgbtcampus.org.

Campus Pride

Campus Pride is a national nonprofit organization connecting "student leaders and campus groups working to create a safer college environment for LGBT students" (from the website). The organization's resources include leadership camps, webinars, and the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index. For more information, visit www.campuspride.org.

Opportunities

Diversity, Learning, and Making Excellence Inclusive

AAC&U will host its biennial conference on diversity and learning on October 18–20, 2012, in Baltimore, Maryland. The call for proposals is currently open and can be accessed at www.aacu.org/meetings/index.cfm.

Expanding the Circle Summer Institute

The California Institute of Integral Studies will present its first summer institute on Expanding the Circle: Creating an Inclusive Environment for LGBTQ Students and Studies on June 18–21, 2012, in San Francisco, California. The institute invites faculty, administrators, staff, and others to engage in more fully integrating LGBTQ issues into the academy. Registration opens in January 2012. For more information, visit www.ExpandingTheCircle.com.

Translating Identity

The University of Vermont hosts an annual conference on gender and transgender identity. This one-day student-organized event is open to the University of Vermont, Burlington, and national communities. For more information, visit www.uvm.edu/~tic.

National Queer People of Color Conference 2012

California State University, Northridge will host the annual National Queer People of Color conference on March 30–April 1, 2012. This year's conference will focus on the theme Fourway: Intersection of Race, Gender, Class, and Sex[uality]. To learn more, visit www.qpocc2012.org.

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MEETING	LOCATION	DATES
2012 Annual Meeting: Shared Futures/Difficult Choices: Reclaiming a Democratic Vision for College Learning, Global Engagement, and Success	<i>Washington, DC</i>	JANUARY 25–28, 2012
General Education and Assessment: New Contexts, New Cultures	<i>New Orleans, Louisiana</i>	FEBRUARY 23–25, 2012
Student Success: Pushing Boundaries, Raising Bars	<i>Seattle, Washington</i>	MARCH 22–24, 2012
Diversity, Learning, and Making Excellence Inclusive	<i>Baltimore, Maryland</i>	OCTOBER 18–20, 2012

AAC&U Associates

Enrollment in the Associates program provides an opportunity for individuals on AAC&U member campuses to advance core purposes and best practices in undergraduate education and to strengthen their collaboration with AAC&U's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Global Initiatives. Associates pay \$60 per calendar year and receive the same benefits as AAC&U Campus Representatives, including subscriptions to our print publications, *Liberal Education*, *Peer Review*, and *Diversity & Democracy*, electronic copies of *On Campus with Women*, invitations to apply for grant-funded projects, and advance notice of calls for proposals for institutes and meetings. For more information, please visit www.aacu.org or call Renee Gamache at 202-884-0809.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,200 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at www.aacu.org.

From AAC&U Board Statement on Liberal Learning

AAC&U believes that by its nature... liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.