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Serving LGBTQIA Students on College Campuses

Clint Pinion, Jr., Dr.PH, RS

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Introduction

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, Transgender, Intersex, and Allies (LGBTQIA):
 - ❖ One to ten percent of student populations
 - ❖ Face unique challenge
 - ❖ Withdraw from college





Provision of needed campus-based services for LGBTQIA students is hindered by student not self-disclosing sexual orientation.

Learning Objectives

- Recall issues faced by LGBTQIA students on college campuses.
- Cite two resources for LGBTQIA students on college campuses.

LGBTQIA Campus Issues

Microaggressions

- Marginalized in part by heterosexism on college campuses.
 - ❖ Impacts psychosocial wellness and academic development.

Types of Microaggressions

- **Microinsults**
- **Microinvalidations**
- **Microassaults**

Microaggressions

- LGBTQIA students face:
 - ❖ Verbal harassment
 - ❖ Anti-LGBTQIA language from peers
 - ❖ Threats
 - ❖ Physical Violence

Identity Development

- Impacted by homophobic and heterosexist environment.
- College students report more positive attitudes toward heterosexual peers than LGBTQIA peers.

Identity Development

- Negative living environments increase the likelihood of LGBTQIA students participating in at-risk behaviors



SUICIDE

Identity Development

- More likely to experience suicidal risk factors and abuse substances than heterosexual students.
 - ❖ Unwelcoming campus environments
 - ✓ Increased substance abuse
- Coming out stress
 - ❖ **Suicide risk factor**
 - ❖ Alienation from peers
 - ❖ Lack of understanding from family.

Identity Development

- Impacted by biological and environmental factors.
- Experience time periods of fixed and fluid sexual orientation.
- Time spent in each identity process or developmental time period will differ.

Campus Environments

- Shape student's experiences, especially student success.
- Examine and understand the environments
 - ❖ maximize a student's experience while on campus;
 - ❖ Adapt to meet the needs of current and prospective students.

Elements of Campus Environments



Physical



Organizational



Human



Constructed



Four Elements of Campus Environments

- Physical – Buildings
 - ❖ Where are the diversity offices located on campus?
- Organizational – Campus processes, policies and procedures
 - ❖ Disciplinary procedures
 - ✓ Clearly define punishment for aggressors (verbal or physical attacks)
 - ✓ Anti-harassment or anti-bullying policy

Four Elements of Campus Environments

- Human – Individual and group interactions and behaviors
 - ❖ Individuals will either assimilate to the behaviors around them or seek alternative spaces on campus.
- Constructed – Created through social interactions and pressures.
 - ❖ Marginalized student populations often have opposing views to the majority of their peers.

Four Environmental Lenses of Context

- Microsystems
- Mesosystems
- Exosystems
 - ❖ Pressures external to systems to which the student belongs.
- Macrosystems
 - ❖ Synergy of all.

Campus Climate

- Climate measures perceptions of their environment.
- Campus climate impacted by:
 - ❖ Student access to needed programs
 - ❖ Retention
 - ❖ Curriculum
 - ❖ Relations between groups of people
 - ❖ External factors
 - ❖ Policies and procedures

Campus Climate

- Faculty, staff, and students participating in a study of **fourteen colleges** report a homophobic campus climate.
- Participants **did not believe their campus administration addressed gender identity or sexual orientation issues.**

Campus Climate

- LGBTQIA students:
 - ❖ Report feeling isolated on campus;
 - ❖ Receiving less support than heterosexual students;
 - ❖ Frequently hide their sexual identity.
 - ✓ Microaggressions


LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- College students identifying as LGBTQIA
 - ❖ often **report negative campus climate perceptions** compared to their heterosexual counterparts; and
 - ❖ are **less likely to self-report feeling safe** on campus.

LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- Undergraduate students' experience in a variety of microclimates
 - ❖ Microinsults
 - ❖ Microinvalidations
 - ❖ Microassaults.
- Discussed the impact of negative behavior and attitudes from peers

LGBTQIA Campus Climate Perceptions

- Not meeting heterosexist stereotype 
homophobic targeting/microassaults.
- **‘Looks or stares’ of disapproval** for
LGBTQIA students in shared common spaces on
campus.

Rankin (2003) Study

33%

Experience harassment in past year

89%

Harassment was derogatory remarks

38%

Pressured to conceal sexual orientation or gender identity

Rankin (2003) Study

79%

Harassed by other students

n=11

Experienced physical assaults

39%

Experienced anti-LGBT graffiti

Rankin (2003) Study: Homophobic Campus

73%

Faculty

74%

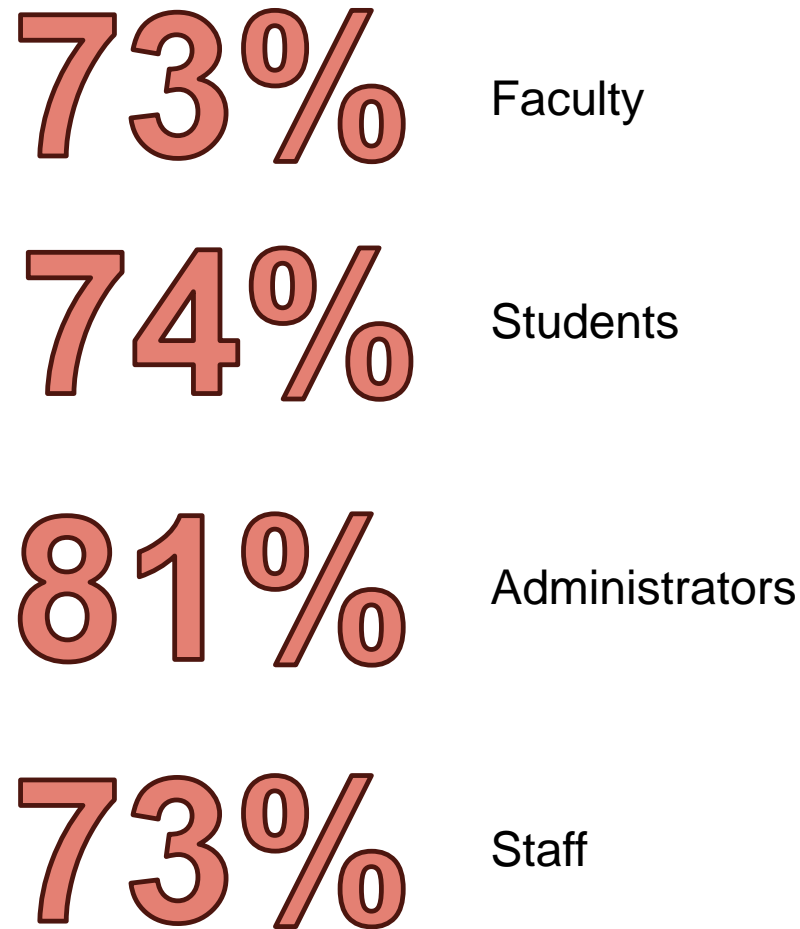
Students

81%

Administrators

73%

Staff



Rankin (2003) Study

20%

Respondents feared for their safety

51%

Concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity

Table 1. Demographics of Ranking (2003) study.

Campus Category	n=
Undergraduates Students	713
Graduate/Professional Students	279
Staff	371
Faculty	150
Administrators	95

University Resources for LGBTQIA Students

- **Resource Centers**
- Student Groups
- Well-enforced Anti-discrimination Policies
- **Education for Faculty, Staff, and Students**

Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- NEEDED:
 - ❖ Supportive and safe environment for prospering.
 - ❖ Spaces with like-minded individuals.



Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- Requires universities to:
 - ❖ support and commit to a LGBTQIA friendly campus;
 - ❖ enhance LGBTQIA student life experiences; and
 - ❖ recruit and retain LGBTQIA students, staff, and faculty



Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- LGBTQIA resource centers:
 - ❖ offer a variety of activities targeting development
 - ❖ Promote visibility and understanding
 - ❖ Are symbolic/physical signs of support/inclusion

Safe Spaces as Microclimates

- LGBTQIA resource center activities can include:
 - ❖ Mentoring or advising
 - ❖ Education and training
 - ❖ Leadership development
 - ❖ LGBTQIA student advocacy.

Mentoring improves the student's experience on campus and ultimately their student success.

Pitcher et al. (2016) Study

42%

Identify campus LGBTQIA resource centers as a source of support

65%

Received peer or professional support

Piece of personal Success

Sought in conflict = Empowers

Presence of center = Comfort

LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Inclusion of LGBTQIA diversity courses in college curriculum
 - ❖ Explore discrimination and prejudice issues.
 - ❖ Highlights homophobia and LGBTQIA issues
- Opens dialogue between hetero and homosexual students.



LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Enables heterosexual students to:
 - ❖ identify issues facing their LGBTQIA peers; and
 - ❖ Conduct self-work on becoming more open and accepting.
- Integrated curriculum exploring LGBTQIA issues:
 - ❖ Normalizes LGBTQIA concerns and
 - ❖ Increases students' comfort in having open dialogue.

LGBTQIA Curriculum

- Four concept categories:
 - ❖ Understanding LGBTQIA concepts and creating self-awareness of personal biases toward LGBTQIA individuals;
 - ❖ Recognizing heterosexual privilege and LGBTQ-centered discrimination and understanding contemporary LGBTQIA issues;
 - ❖ Serving as a person of support for LGBTQIA individuals; and
 - ❖ Becoming a LGBTQIA advocate

Conclusion

- LGBTQIA students face unique challenges;
- Lead to increased substance abuse and higher incidence of suicide;
- Negative campus climate perceptions;

Conclusion

- Safe spaces promote personal and academic success;
- Additionally, university curriculum should be revised to discuss LGBTQIA issues; and
- To conclude, LGBTQIA students can succeed on college campuses when appropriate resources are provided.

Office of Multicultural Student Affairs

- <http://lgbt.eku.edu/>

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