TBR's Biennial Diversity Conference

SPECIAL LGBTQ TRACK

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NORTHEAST STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | MAXINE SMITH FELLOWS PROGRAM

Project Summary

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), through the Office of Organizational

Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives (OIE), provides leadership to "model and promote

diversity at all levels and in all sectors and as a result of that diversity will foster environments

of equity and inclusive excellence" (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2009) for all institutions in

system; this includes six universities, thirteen community colleges and 27 centers of advanced

technology, or TCATs. TBR's policy for diversity is broad and far-reaching, including categories

of "socio-economic status, sexual orientation, first generation college status, urban or rural

upbringing – and other personal characteristics that shape an individual's identity and life

experience" (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2009).

Under the mentorship of Vice-Chancellor Wendy Thompson and Bobbie Porter, Program

Specialist in the Office of Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives, I was given the task to research

resources in the field of higher education, academic affairs, student affairs, campus climate,

inclusiveness, and diversity that would address the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,

Transgender, and Queer or Questioning students for the various institutions in the system. The

goal of this research was to create a special track for the last day of TBR's Biennial Diversity

Conference which will take place the month of April, 2016.

First Draft

After analyzing the researched material, four distinct tracks surfaced; counseling and

safety, policies, guidelines and practices, campus services, and student outcomes. Assembling

the data, an agenda for conferenced was drafted. With the agenda, background information

and research on each track was presented.

Conference Agenda

Track 1	Counseling, safety
Track 2	Policies, guidelines and practices
Track3	Campus services
Track 4	Outcomes

Friday, April xx, 2016

		Registration			
x:00 am - x:00 am					
x:00 am - x:00 am	Exhibits Open	Opening Ceremonies Welcome and Remarks (Room xx)			
Morning Sessions		1. Counseling on college and university campuses for LGBTQ youth	4. Policy assessment	7. STDs and HIV in the LGBTQ college and university communities. Overcoming barriers to care and treatment.	10. Understanding gender non-conforming students
		2. LGBTQ students' needs; Homelessness and addiction	5. Office of Civil Rights, DOE/DOJ/DHHS	8. LGBTQ youth engagement Ally Programs	11. Bringing LGBTQ curriculum to the classroom
12:15 pm - 1:45 pm		Luncheon and Keynote Address			
Afternoon Sessions		3.Violence against LGBTQ	6. Privilege, power, and intersectionality Knapsack Institute	9. LGBTQ Scholarships LEAGUE Foundation	12. Standards and Strategies to improve LGBTQ student outcomes

Track 1: Counseling and Safety

1. **Counseling on college and university campuses for LGBTQ youth**

    Providing counseling support to LGBTQ students is important, but it also needs to be done in a way that does not continue to stigmatize the LGBTQ community. College and university campuses can create safe spaces for their students, but students may not want to reach out to counseling services fearing that their identity will be revealed or simply because they are still questioning their own sexuality or identity.

    The University of California Los Angeles, launched in January of 2014 Rainbow Connection, "an anonymous online counseling service housed in the UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Campus Resource Center" **(Mitchell, 2014)**. The service is provided by third-year psychology students that serve as peer advisors. Both the advisors and the advisees remain anonymous throughout the counseling process.

    A study performed by Paul J. Wright and Christopher J. McKinley at the University of Arizona, Tucson in which 203 college counseling center webpages (CCW) were analyzed, found that less than 30% of colleges feature information for counseling LGBTQ students. **(Wright & McKinley, 2011)**

2. **LGBTQ students' needs; Homelessness and addiction**

    Youth evicted of home by their parents are known as "throwaways." Homelessness among young people, including both runaways and throwaways, is a significant. LGBTQ youth are at particular risk for homelessness. Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter (2011) interviewed 156 LGB youth of which 48% reported a history of homelessness. "Although LGB youths compose only 1.4%–5.0% of the general youth population, LGB youths compose

15%–36% of homeless youths" **(Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter , 2011)**. In this study, Rosario, et.al., also found that LGB youth that reported a history of homelessness had a higher prevalence of substance abuse, and the age at what this abuse started was at least a year before the non-homeless youth **(p. 191)**.

If students with a history of homelessness attend colleges or universities, a percentage will arrive to campus with a history or sexual abuse, substance abuse, and psychological and physiological effects of homelessness. Colleges and universities have the opportunity to better serve these students by providing counseling on and off campus, information, and resources for food pantries, substance abuse treatment, suicide prevention, etc.

3. **Violence against LGBTQ**

Violence against LGBTQ youth reveals itself many ways; dating violence, partner violence, domestic violence, peer violence, psychological violence, and others. A study performed by Judy Porter and LaVerne McQuiller Williams (2011) on violence against underrepresented minorities found that "seventeen respondents or 1.7% of our sample said they had experienced rape" and that "female students were more than seven times as likely, [LGBTQ] students were more than four times as likely, and [racial and ethnic minorities] were students were nearly three times at risk to be victimized" **(Porter & Williams, 2011, p. 5)**. The same study yielded data stating that LGBTQ students were "more than five times as likely to experience sexual abuse, more than twice as likely to report psychological abuse, and three times as likely to have suffered physical abuse by a partner as heterosexual students" **(p. 9)**.

The results of Porter and Williams 'study demonstrates that a "one size fits all" approach to campus health and campus safety may not be efficient. Schools must strive for inclusiveness when developing safety policies, programs, and services, as well as reaching out to populations at greater risk on their campuses.

Track 2: Policies, guidelines and practices

4. **Policy assessment**

Colleges and universities in the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system have, for the most part, updated their policies to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Among the institutions that have not updated their policies are:

- East Tennessee State University

- Tennessee Tech University

- Chattanooga State Community College

- Jackson State Community College

- Southwest Tennessee Community College

Several other institutions have updated their policies but have not updated their webpages.

- Tennessee State University (has updated the published policies but not their webpage)

- Cleveland State Community College (has updated the published policies but not their webpage)

- Dyersburg State Community College (has updated the published policies but not their webpage)

- Nashville State Community College (has updated the published policies but not their webpage)

- Pellissippi State Community College (has updated the published policies but not their webpage)

Having and updated webpage is important for colleges and universities since it is the first impression they provide to their prospects, whether it be students or employees.

A study conducted by Susan Rankin for the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force surveyed 14 colleges and universities across the country. The 14 institutions consisted of private and public colleges and universities. The survey found and reported that 36% of undergraduate students that self-identify as LGBTQ gave accounts of having experienced harassment on their campuses (Rankin, 2005, p. 4). A staggering 51% of surveyed students reported having to conceal their sexual identity or orientation to avoid intimidation or harassment, about 20% expressed fear for their physical safety because of their sexual identity or orientation. Within the colleges and universities surveyed, 73% of staff and faculty members, 74% of students, and 81% of administrators expressed that their campus showed homophobic tendencies (Rankin, 2005, pp. 4, 31). The same study showed that 41% of self-identified LGBTQ respondents commented feeling left out by their institution, indicating that issues such as harassment, intimidation, and homophobia were not addressed by campus administrators (p. 32). Not having policies in place creates a void for students when students feel victimized. If a school does not have a policy in place that addresses the

specific needs of a minority, like LGBTQ individuals, then those individuals will not look for a recourse on campus.

Addressing the importance of inclusiveness policies and practices is also important. This past year, at one of TBR's schools, when the office that handles diversity was asked why were resources not used to have policies in place for LGBTQ students the answer was "that is not the diversity we are targeting." A closer look to their diversity plan showed that LGBTQ individuals were not targeted.

Definition of Diversity

Diversity is the recognition and understanding of similarities and differences between ourselves and other people based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity/or nationality and the following subpopulations:

a. economically and geographically disadvantaged individuals
b. non-traditional students (age 25 and older)
c. first generation students (neither parent attended college)
d. individuals with disabilities
e. veterans

*Definition of diversity, 2011-2015, XXXX Community College Diversity Plan.

5. **Office of Civil Rights for the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services. A session for Equity and Compliance, Human Resources, Diversity Officers, Health Providers, and Student Affairs Officers.**

> The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) plays the dominant role in evaluating complaints alleging discrimination based on race, national origin, sex, and disability in schools. The Department of Education has, in 2011 joined the Departments of Health and Human Services, Justice, Defense, Agriculture, and Interior, as well as the National Council on Disability and the Federal Trade Commission, as members of the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee.

While Title IX does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, its prohibitions against sex discrimination and sexual harassment protect all students, including those who are LGBTQ or perceived to be LGBTQ. Title IX also protects against sex discrimination and harassment of students who do not conform to gender stereotypes. Both the Department of Education and the Department of Justice enforce Title IX in this regard. **(U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2011)**

Since the Supreme Court ruled on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in the U.S. vs. Windsor case, and on the Obergefell vs. Hodges ruling that marriage between consenting individuals of the same sex is constitutional, many challenges have arisen for States with no guarantees or protections for LGBTQ individuals. "Anti-LGBTQ bills have been filed by state legislators across the country. More than 85 bills have been filed in 26 state legislatures" **(HRC, 2015)**. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Tennessee is one of the States that has introduced legislation against LGBTQ individuals; specifically religious refusals under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Tennessee does not support or does not provide protection for LGBTQ individuals under the following laws:

– Employment Law

– Housing Laws

– Marriage Equality

– Hate Crime Laws

– Public Accommodations Laws

– Anti-bullying Laws

- School Laws

  - Transgender Healthcare

  - Gender Marker Change

Even through the State of Tennessee does not support these laws, federal law supersedes the States, and the Department of Education and the Department of Justice work to uphold them.

6. **Privilege, power, and intersectionality/ Knapsack Institute**

In making decisions that will affect institutions of higher education, administrators and staff, as well as faculty, need to be aware and understand intersectionality. Without intending to, administrators', staff's, and faculty's own power and privilege can result in policies or practices that negatively impact students. Faculty and staff that self-identify outside heteronormativity could also be affected.

According to research performed at the University of Oregon "perceptions of institutional justice differed from one student to the next in an intersectional manner and involved students' ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity" **(Trost, 2008)**. According to Trost's study, students at the University of Oregon perceived that LGBTQ clubs, racial and ethnic minority were assigned spaces outside the view of other students, like the basement, and that rules were applied more harshly to sexual, ethnic, and racial minorities. Trost's study suggested that schools more thoroughly implement diversity and sensibility training at all levels of the institution.

The Knapsack Institute from at the University of Colorado provides training on intersectional conceptual framework for understanding concepts of oppression and

privilege. The institute has workshops that can be tailored to the needs of other campuses or groups. The workshops provided by the Knapsack Institute are focused on classroom instruction, thus the information provided by them would serve faculty members. On the other hand, even though these resources may be use for classroom management, they could be adapted for work environments.

http://www.uccs.edu/knapsack/bring-the-ki-to-your-organization.html

Track 3: Campus Services

7. **STDs and HIV in LGBTQ college and university communities. Overcoming barriers to care and treatment.**

   According to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) survey of school climate performed in 2011, students claimed that the victimization they suffered at their schools included physical intimidation, physical violence, bullying, harassment, social isolation, verbal assault, and sexual assault (GLSEN, 2012, p. 53). LGBTQ students suffered from negative outcomes because of this victimization: truancy, drug use, depression, anxiety, suicidality, unsafe sex practices, and homelessness, among others (Galliher, Rostosky, & Hughes, 2004; GLSEN, 2012, p. 44).

   In addition to GLSEN's report, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published a study that found that:

   > In November 2002, the North Carolina Department of Health (NCDOH) identified two cases of acute HIV infection among non-Hispanic black male college students. A retrospective review of all men aged 18-30 years with HIV diagnosed during January 2000–May 2003 indicated an increase in HIV case

reports in male college students, from two cases in 2000 to 56 during January 2001–May 2003.5 Of these 56, a total of 49 (88%) were black, and nearly all were MSM, including some men who had sex with both men and women.

(Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004)

Statistics like those show that education and testing on college campuses is not reaching all populations. In the same study, the results were that:

Because a substantial proportion of the college students either did not identify as gay or were not open about their sexual identity, prevention messages that focus on sexual risk reduction rather than gay identity should be developed for young black MSM. In addition, because nearly 20% of study participants also reported having recent female sex partners, HIV risk–reduction messages should be developed and communicated to young women as well. **(Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004)**

These cases highlight the need for colleges and universities to create programs that reach far and wide their campuses. Non-commuter colleges and universities have the opportunity to reach students and educate them about safe sex practices on site. Many of these institutions also provide clinical services for students, STD and HIV testing could be done on site by the schools' clinics.

8. **Using student organizations, clubs, Pride centers, on-campus community centers, and other groups as a tool for LGBTQ youth engagement.**

At the University of California San Diego, the Cross-Cultural Center, LGBT Center, and Women Center emerged to effectively impact marginalized groups on campus **(Welch,**

2009). Organizations like UCSD Centers have proved to be important to the success of individual students. According to Welch's study students "were able to find places of personal validation and at the same time connect across historical group boundaries **(p. xiii)**," and data from her study "confirmed that engagement with Campus Community Centers promoted a sense of personal validation and belonging for underrepresented and marginalized students." **(p. 123)**

Ally Programs

In order to combat heterosexism, homophobia, and other negative behaviors against LGBTQ students, studies support institutions of higher education implementing place ally programs, sometimes called Safe Zones. Safe Zones and other ally programs consist of workspaces, offices, and other gathering places around campuses where a supportive environment for LGBTQ individuals is provided, as well as for straight, cisgender, and other allies who care about their school's diversity, equality, and inclusiveness. Safe Zones are usually identified by stickers, posters, or other forms of advertising in the spaces' doors. In a 2008 study by Ballard, Bartle, and Masequesmay, the authors found that 78% of the LGBTQ students surveyed about Safe Zone programs on their campus "felt more comfortable in class with faculty who had taken the training;" 77% "expected to be treated more fairly by faculty" who displayed a Safe Zone or ally sticker or poster; 91% "believed the training reduces anti-LGBTQ bias" on their campus; 81% "would be more likely to come out to faculty who display a sticker"; and 90% "expected better awareness of LGBTQ issues from those who have taken the training" (Ballard, Bartle, & Masequesmay, 2008, p. 14).

In the same fashion, the authors of the article "Creating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and

Transgender Allies: Testing a Model of Privilege Investment" selected participants from a pool of behavioral health professionals and designated them to 1 out of 4 LGBTQ ally-development conditions; then participants were asked to complete a survey to measure prejudice and propensity for social justice behavior. Throughout the study, the authors found compelling evidence to suggest that "interpersonal contact with LGBTQ individuals, an LGBTQ-supportive environment, and educational workshops and courses," like ally training programs and Safe Zone training, were effective in combating heterosexism and prejudice (Perrin, Bhattacharyya, Snipes, Calton, & Heesacker, 2014).

9. **LGBTQ Scholarships**

The following organizations provide scholarships, grants, and mentoring programs targeted specifically to LGBTQ students.

- [Point Foundation](#)

- [LEAGUE Foundation](#)

- [PFLAG National Scholarship Program](#)

- [National Women's Studies Association Scholarships](#)

- [Gamma Mu Foundation](#)

Track 4: Student Outcomes

10. Understanding gender non-conforming students

The 1970s were marked in the United States, by new studies and research of identity development. Since then, authors like Vivian Cass, Anthony D'Augellis, and Ruth Fassinger have focused on sexual orientation and gender identity development, and brought studies regarding LGBTQ individuals into a new era.

Cass asserted that gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals move through stages of identity development. This movement between stages usually happens during the individual's teenage years or early twenties, when these individuals start to understand their sexual orientation identity. (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005) Cass' Gay and Lesbian Identity Development Model focused on the coming-out process. Coming-out is the act of sharing with one's family, friends, acquaintances, coworkers, etc., that one is gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The process of coming-out is about "recognizing, accepting, expressing and sharing ones' sexual orientation with oneself and others" (Cass, 2002). Cass' identity development model consisted of six stages; confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride, and synthesis.

D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Identity Development identified six interactive processes, not stages like Cass' model. These processes are exiting heterosexual identity, developing a personal LGB identity, developing a LGB social identity, becoming a LGB offspring, developing an LGB intimacy status and entering a LGB community (D'Augellis, 1994). Fassinger also developed an LGB identity development model which depended more on demographic and cultural influences than the disclosure of one's identity. The Fassinger model consists of two separate but reciprocal processes: one internal that requires awareness and exploration of sexual identity, and one that involves a deepening commitment and internalization. (Fassinger, 1998)

An aspect to take into account when dealing with students' sexual identity development is to understand its role in colleges' student support services. Many, if not most of the services provided to sexual minority students on campus, have been drawn from sexual identity formation theory and have focused on the coming out process as proposed by

Cass's model of sexual identity formation. In this model, Cass identifies six stages of perception and behavior that move from a pre-stage to a gay identity while working through confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride, and synthesis. (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010) This model assumes that identity is acquired through a developmental process, and that the interaction of the students and its environment was the focus of such process (Zamani-Gallaher & Choudhuri, 2011). If a student goes through these formative years in an unwelcoming and intolerant environment, their learning success is trumped by those experiences. In the 1994 study conducted by Sherrill and Hardesty for their book The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools, it is mentioned that from the respondents "31% left school for one semester or longer and 33% dropped out or transferred due to coming out issues" (Sherrill & Hardesty, 1994, p. 269). If an institution is to provide help and support to students, retention could be greater.

11. Bringing LGBTQ curriculum to the classroom

Astudy by Nancy Evans' "Creating a Positive Learning Environment for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students," compared and contrasted studies by Tiberius and Billson (1991), De Surra and Church (1994), and Connolly (2000) to support the claim that classroom climate and a professor's behavior and attitudes toward LGBTQ students can have influence in the learning ability of LGBTQ students. Evans argued that "for learning to occur unimpeded, students must feel that they are safe, valued, and supported. Faculty can create such a climate by creating centralized classrooms in which gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues are routinely addressed" (Evans N. J., 2000).

DeSurra and Church's "Unlocking the Classroom Closet: Privileging the Marginalized Voices of Gay/Lesbian College Students" paper and presentation have been cited countless times as a source for

topics ranging from education, social studies, LGBT issues, and even parenting. It addressed the invisibility of LGBT individuals and how public education has helped foster a heterosexist society. DeSurra and Church explained how the academic field has helped heterosexism and other forms of prejudice remain as part of the social norm by ignoring it. The authors declared that by not legitimizing the LGBT community, it has stayed as probably the last minority group to be questioned, and it has jeopardized the wellbeing of the LGBTQ community at large. Prejudice has been made visible because of the fact that college years are where most individuals find their sexual identity, and it is the lack of support in the classroom that creates isolated and lonely students. Tiberius and Billson claimed that trust and security were fundamental to "mutually reinforcing social bonds in the classroom" (Tiberius & Billson, 1991), and that those behaviours are fundamental for engaged student learning. Even though Tiberious and Billson's article is dated, their studies on the social context of teaching and learning, along with the effective social arrangements for teaching and learning, are still relevant in today's classrooms.

12. Standards and Strategies to improve LGBTQ student outcomes

It needs to be taken into account that campus environment has great influence on how students receive and retain said knowledge. Institutional climate can affect the campus community at large; it can either create a welcoming, affirmative, and inclusive environment for learning, or it can choose to ignore LGBTQ youth and other non-majority populations maintaining a climate of harassment and exclusion.

Institutions of higher education insist that retention and graduation rates are important for funding purposes. Establishing a LGBTQ inclusive and affirmative climate would have far reaching implications beyond student development and classroom learning because it could potentially increase retention and graduation rates of LGBTQ students by creating a more welcoming campus that celebrates diversity in its community.

Basic support services can make a great difference in the development of LGBTQ students on college and university campuses. Some of the resources mentioned in research literature that have been successful in order to create a more welcoming and inclusive campus climate have been:

- Inclusive Leaders and Allies

- Information about/to/from Transgender and Intersex Students

- Privacy

- Training

- Inclusive Class Curriculums

- Gay-Straight Alliance Clubs (GSAs)

- Safe Zones

- Targeted Tutoring

Second Draft

After analyzing the research, the OESI decided for one of the four tracks; the fourth track on student outcomes. A shorter version of the agenda was presented; this second draft would shorten the LGBTQ track to one morning with several concurrent sessions with panels, presentations, and the possibility of a keynote speaker.

2016 Diversity Conference
Agenda

Friday, April xx, 2016

Morning Sessions	Registration
	1. Understanding gender non-conforming students
	2. Knapsack Institute
	3. Standards and Strategies to improve LGBTQ student outcomes

1. Understanding gender non-conforming students

Understanding students' identity development using tools by authors like Vivian Cass, Anthony D'Augellis, and Ruth Fassinger that have focused on sexual orientation and gender identity development, and brought studies regarding LGBTQ individuals into a new era. One of the more important aspect to take into account when dealing with students' sexual identity development is to understand its role in colleges' student support services. Many, if not most of the services provided to sexual minority students on campus, have been drawn from sexual identity formation theory and have focused on the coming out process. More work needs to be done by colleges to provide students with resources and support throughout the stages of confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride, and synthesis (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). If a student goes through these formative years in an unwelcoming and intolerant environment, their learning success is trumped by those experiences. In the 1994 study conducted by Sherrill and Hardesty for their book The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual

Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools, it is mentioned that from the respondents "31% left school for one semester or longer and 33% dropped out or transferred due to coming out issues" (Sherrill & Hardesty, 1994, p. 269). If an institution is to provide help and support to students, retention could be greater.

2. Knapsack Institute

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http://www.uccs.edu/knapsack/bring-the-ki-to-your-organization.html

3. Standards and Strategies to improve LGBTQ student outcomes

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Conclusion

To say that this project is still a work in progress would be an understatement. Much research needs to be completed, information needs to be gathered from TBR institutions to understand the needs of each campus, and many changes may occur until the agenda for this event is finished. One things is certain, that addressing the needs of LGBTQ students through student support tools to create more welcoming environments is being recognized necessary in order to increase students' retention and persistence to graduation. School climate and a sense of belonging on the part of students is linked to required conditions for learning; if students do not feel safe or welcome on campus, their academic outcomes and well-being will be negatively affected. This project, when assigned to me, reassured my interest in addressing concerns about social justice and the realization that students deserve to feel included, safe, and welcome in their institutions. Taking these concerns to heart, this project looks to make contributions to the 2016 Biennial Diversity Conference to educate and inform about LGBTQ individuals and their needs.