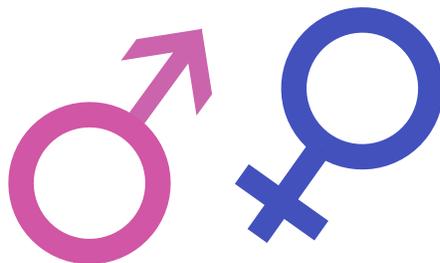


Creating a trans-inclusive

Environment
through
Policies
and
Practice



A MINI PANEL WITH INSIGHTS FROM:

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INTRODUCTION

While college and university campuses tend to be among the most inclusive, diversity-appreciative environments in our society, transgender individuals often find many campus doors closed to them on the basis of their gender identity. Very often those are physical doors — such as to restrooms, locker and shower facilities, and residence halls. Perhaps because they are visual barriers, these are the easiest to tackle. Gender-neutral facilities are indeed cropping up with increasing frequency on campuses.

However, transgender individuals must also deal with less physical yet equally limiting obstacles that can make otherwise inclusive campuses feel unwelcoming. These include language in institutional materials that does not recognize anything beyond the traditional gender binary, lack of trans-inclusive policies, little to no educational and awareness efforts for campus constituents, and exclusion from broader diversity efforts. In these areas too, progress seems to be happening slowly, spurred on by trans students and allies demanding that their institutions live up to their claims of being welcoming to diversity. However, as movement in the right direction unfolds, countless students still find themselves unsupported and discriminated against on our college and university campuses.

In an effort to help institutions speed along progress, we've convened a panel of experts in a variety of intersecting fields to discuss the current landscape with regard to transgender inclusion, as well as to identify key areas where improvement is needed and highlight the role of policies in eliminating barriers to inclusion, and to offer key advice based on their own perceptions and experiences. Our experts come from the Title IX world, counseling, advocacy, diversity work, health sciences, and the student body, providing diverse perspectives to help you create well-informed, well-rounded policies and practices that support full inclusion. All participants were presented with the same list of questions to create a virtual, roundtable-style discussion.

THE ISSUES

This paper addresses the seven specific questions below, with responses organized and presented thematically:

1. Where do you feel higher education in the U.S. as a whole is right now, in terms of transgender inclusiveness?
2. What progress has been made in this area, and where is improvement still most needed?
3. What role should campus policies play in increasing inclusiveness for transgender individuals?
4. What does a good policy on transgender inclusion look like, and where should such a policy live?
5. How can trans-inclusive policies be turned into practice?
6. How can higher education push back against legislative efforts that discriminate against transgender individuals,

community concerns about what trans inclusion means, and individual acts of violence and/or discrimination against transgender individuals?

7. What's your best piece of advice for making college and university campuses more trans-inclusive?

THE PANEL



Lorelei Erisis serves as President of the Board of Directors of Transcending Boundaries Inc., a nonprofit providing education, activism, and support for individuals with nonconforming sexuality, gender, or sex. She also co-chaired the 2015 Transcending Boundaries Conference, which focuses on gender, sexual, and romantic minorities; the intersectionality between them; and community-building. She has frequently worked with the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, Freedom Massachusetts, and other organizations to help improve the lives of trans and gender-variant people through advocacy, outreach, and legislative protections. Additionally, Erisis was a Founding Board Member of the first fully 501(c)(3) certified iteration of Noho Pride, an LGBT diversity and inclusion organization in Massachusetts. As the first Miss Trans New England, she regularly speaks, teaches, and writes about transgender issues and sexuality. Her column, "Ask A Trans Woman," is published by *The Rainbow Times*, and she maintains a blog titled "Transproviser."



William (Bill) A. Howe, Ed.D. provides training and consultation on multicultural and culturally responsive education, diversity awareness, and gender equity. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Education at the University of Connecticut, Albertus Magnus College, and Quinnipiac University. He has served as the Program Manager for culturally responsive education, bullying and harassment, gender equity, and civil rights at the Connecticut State Department of Education, and as Past President of the National Association for Multicultural Education. He also founded the New England Conference on Multicultural Education. He sits on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Campus Title IX Compliance and Best Practices (Campus IX)*, published by ATIXA. He has additionally co-authored several books, including the *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity through Education, 2nd Edition*, and has led hundreds of workshops, lectures, and keynote addresses, training thousands of educators.



Bette Anne King is a Social Sciences and Psychology double major with a concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies at Clarkson University. King has been involved with the school's GSA (formerly Gay Straight Alliance, now Gender Sexuality Alliance) since freshman year, and served on the Executive Board this past year as the Events Coordinator. King is also involved with Clarkson's Model United Nations club as Vice President, the Association of Creative Thought (ACT) as Secretary, and Value-U, a student group that promotes positive behavior and addresses social issues. Additionally, King is currently the head of Unity House, Clarkson's gender-neutral housing option, and the Title IX intern for the Spring 2016 semester. King hopes to help promote positive change at Clarkson, in graduate school, and beyond. King expects to graduate in 2017.



Vanessa Pomarico-Denino, APRN, is employed by Northeast Medical Group as a Nurse Practitioner, where she specializes in internal medicine, with a special interest in women's health and transgender healthcare. She is also the Interim Director of the Family Nurse Practitioner track at Southern Connecticut State University's Department of Nursing; and a courtesy Faculty and Guest Lecturer for the Yale University and Fairfield University Schools of Nursing, as well as for the Quinnipiac University and University of Bridgeport Physician Assistant Programs. The recipient of the 2014 American Association of Nurse Practitioners Excellence Award and 2015 recipient of the Nightingale Award for nursing excellence, she is also the co-author of two textbooks,

and a contributing author of *Focus on Adult Health Nursing*. She co-owns NP Business Consultants, LLC., and is the Co-chair of Health and Policy and immediate Past President of the Connecticut Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Society.



Sandra K. Schuster, J.D. is a Partner with The NCHERM Group, LLC. She was formerly the General Counsel for Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, and Senior Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio in the Higher Education Section. She is a recognized expert in preventive law for education, notably in the fields of sexual misconduct, the First Amendment, disability law, risk management, student discipline, campus conduct, intellectual property, and employment issues. Prior to practicing law, she served as the Associate Dean of Students at The Ohio State University. She was the 2010–2012 President of NaBITA, and is a Past President of ASCA. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for NaBITA. She is also a Co-founder of ATIXA and a member of its Advisory Board. She is a frequent presenter on legal, employment, and student affairs issues for higher education, and has authored books, articles, and journals. She holds masters' degrees in counseling and higher education administration from Miami University, completed her coursework for her doctoral degree at The Ohio State University, and was awarded her juris doctorate degree from the Moritz College of Law at OSU. She currently serves as Executive Director of SACCA, the Student Affairs Community College Association.



Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D. is the Senior Executive Vice President for Professional Program Development with The NCHERM Group, LLC. He is a Past President of the American College Counseling Association (ACCA), the 2014–2015, President of NaBITA, and currently its Executive Director. He also serves as Managing Editor of *The Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention (J-BIT)*, *The Journal of Campus Title IX Compliance and Best Practices (Campus IX)*, and *Student Affairs eNews (SAeN)*. He has a doctoral degree in counseling supervision and education from the University of Sarasota/Argosy and a master's degree in counseling and psychological services from Salem State University. He has served as the Director of Counseling at New England College and Western Kentucky University. He is the author of several books, including *Harm to Others: The Assessment and Treatment of Dangerousness*, *Ending Campus Violence: New Approaches in Prevention*, and *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior in the Classroom*. He recently developed the Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35), a starting place for law enforcement, clinical staff, and administrators to conduct a more standardized, research-based violence risk assessment with individuals determined to be at an increased risk.

A LANDSCAPE READY FOR CHANGE

WAH: This has been a hot topic of interest in the PK–12 world for several years now, spurred on by advocates and investigations by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Several high-profile lawsuits have placed schools on notice. This movement has yet to make a similar impact in higher education. I see very little progress, evidenced by the lack of policies and procedures on issues such as how to make a legal name change and whether a legal name change is even required. How are name changes reflected in school admissions, changes in school records, and financial aid forms? What pronouns should be used? Which sports should a transgender person play in? And of course, which bathroom/locker room do people use?

SKS: Higher education is in the very early stages of acknowledgment of trans inclusiveness. There are many questions and concerns about what to do, how to do it, what language to

apply, and what laws or regulations impact our actions. On a positive note, I'm increasingly seeing schools asking those hard questions with the clear intent to work to "get it right" — to make the college environment more inclusive for all. This growing awareness has been triggered primarily by brave students seeking support and access rather than by employees, yet our employees face many of the same challenges and will be the beneficiaries of increased awareness, acceptance, and inclusiveness. This movement will grow, and with it our ability to frame and support an environment of inclusivity.

One big concern I have is that we seem to be approaching trans inclusiveness as a binary issue; that is, the shift in language from "transgender" to "trans-male" or "trans-female." This language shift creates more boundaries that will keep individuals out unless we recognize that gender identity is fluid and should be viewed as a spectrum, rather than a binary. If we continue with "his" and "hers" in the way in which we provide housing and access to other facilities, we will soon be faced with more challenges as individuals who choose not to be gender identified or who choose not to identify with the same gender all the time, push back against that limited framework. Instead of establishing new boxes for people to check off, our thinking and the way in which we address and view gender must be broader.

'Instead of establishing new boxes for people to check off, our thinking and the way in which we address and view gender must be broader.'

— Schuster

BVB: Having worked in higher education as a counseling director for more than 15 years, I'd say I'm impressed to see how far we have come on the issue of trans inclusiveness. One of my first experiences in higher education with a trans-woman was in graduate school in 1997. A student in another cohort wore a dress to class, had women's earrings, and wore make-up. Back then, I didn't have a framework to understand his actions. It seemed odd to me, and I couldn't decide if he was dressing that way for shock value, if he may have had a mental health concern, or if he was just strange. Even the "he" pronoun I used here in this re-telling illustrates my total lack of understanding back then, which stifled any willingness to get to know her. Because of my conservative Christian upbringing, words like "sinner" and "deviant" got tossed around when I think back on how I saw her and her behaviors. Over the years, through my graduate program and development as a counselor, I became more aware of trans issues, and eventually, I became an ally. I still carry shame for the how I used to think about trans issues when I was in my early 20s, and while I was never outwardly disrespectful or teased her, I never felt able to reach beyond my limited comfort zone to get to know her. At the time, the college I attended offered little awareness education about trans or GLBTQI differences.

This is one of the biggest things that has changed in higher education and our society as a whole. It would be more difficult today for a student to claim ignorance of these issues given the messaging we disseminate in higher education. While there is still much work to do, I am glad the obliviousness I had during that time in my life would be challenged much more directly today by popular media and culture. It makes me happy that discussion about GLBTQI issues are part of my conversations with my children.

BAK: Here at Clarkson University, we are moving in the right direction. I believe major issues still exist regarding the inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms, trans-friendly housing options, and general awareness among employees, but I also have seen and been a part of the efforts made to address these issues.

I have also seen progress in short, intermittent spurts around the country, including implementation of gender-neutral housing, increased designation and availability of gender-neutral and

all-gender bathrooms, and the work many of us have done to increase general understanding of trans issues on campuses.

These are all great things, but it also is a slow process, and often one that forgets intersectionality. Sure, Clarkson University has a gender-neutral housing option, but it is not wheelchair accessible. Sure, there are a couple single stall, gender-neutral restrooms on campus, but they are few and far between. I believe people are working to fix these things, both here and at other institutions, but I urge more consideration of the diverse needs of the trans community. Some folks are not comfortable changing in front of others, which is easy enough to address in rooming, but consider the set-up of locker rooms. Remember as well that not every trans individual is able bodied.

‘Can you imagine, for instance, if at the age of 19, and for the first time in your life, you were told there was a bathroom that it was OK for you to use? Considering the requirements of human physiology and modern hygiene, this should be a given hardly worthy of a press release.’
— Erisis

VPD: I feel there is a pressing need for greater education of faculty on this topic, not just for transgender and gender-variant students, but also for those in healthcare disciplines whose graduates will be caring for this population. Content needs to be taught to faculty members for inclusion in their curricula where appropriate, and to all university personnel to make students and faculty more educated about and welcoming to this population. The American College Health Association’s “Guidelines for Trans-Inclusive College Health Programs” (www.acha.org/documents/Resources/Guidelines/Trans-Inclusive_College_Health_Programs.pdf) is a great resource for college health centers.

LE: First, I should address the fact that I am not directly involved in higher education, either as an employee, student, or policy-maker. My primary activities are as a public figure, writer, newspaper columnist, performer, activist, and outreach specialist, focusing on matters of gender and sexuality. I am also an out and very visible transgender woman. That said, my work and status as a figure of the community often bring me into direct and indirect contact with folks involved in higher education as students, faculty, and administrators. I regularly speak and teach workshops at colleges and universities. My impression is that a lot of groundbreaking and foundation-laying work has been done in terms of trans-inclusiveness in U.S. higher education over the last several years. However, it is work that we have barely started in terms of what still needs to be done. There are very few protections for trans people generally in the United States today.

The progress I have seen has been mainly in terms of simply coming up with policies that everyone can agree on as best practices. I still hear celebrations of such simple things as the presence of gender-neutral bathrooms in a facility, the creation of trans-inclusive student groups, and occasional educational outreach programs. I hear of research being done to learn more about the community and our needs. All of these things are certainly good. But they are things we should be able to take for granted. Can you imagine, for instance, if at the age of 19, and for the first time in your life, you were told there was a bathroom that it was OK for you to use? Considering the requirements of human physiology and modern hygiene, this should be a given hardly worthy of a press release.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

SKS: Just like the movement in campus sexual misconduct prevention efforts, the recognition of the need for trans-inclusive action represents a culture shift from reaction to pro-action. That evolution, however, requires a comprehensive strategy to continue to move us forward toward a broader inclusive culture on our campuses.

BVB: We are at an unprecedented time in this country. My iPhone news feed this morning pulled up a story about Jaden Smith’s stance on wearing a dress and questioning traditionally

defined gender roles. At the last ATIXA conference, I had the privilege of engaging, exploring, and learning more about these issues with a group of faculty, prevention staff, advocates, Title IX Coordinators, and Investigators. Conversations are happening and people are learning more about the trans community, and how to work with trans-men and women in counseling or Title IX investigations, and within health and education in general.

‘As more persons identify as transgender, future nursing and/or medical staff are ill equipped to effectively and appropriately care for transgender patients. If faculty members are not knowledgeable in this content area, then how can they possibly teach it to their students or interact with transgender students in a supportive and affirming way?’ — Pomarico-Denino

From my perspective, language is one of the key areas in which we must continue to evolve. Allow me to tell you a story. During a recent training, I used the term “trans-gendered” to describe someone in the trans community. After the presentation, a participant emailed me and we began a dialogue about how that term has become offensive to those in the trans community. The participant explained that “transgendered” was akin to using the term “homosexual.” It was an unintended microaggression on my part, and I had the opportunity with the group to correct it. Our discussion continued to explore the use of gender specifiers such as he/him/his and she/her/hers on email signatures or name tags. While some see this evolving language as something difficult that we have to address, I see this more as a gift — something that we get to learn about so that those around us feel more included and welcomed.

VPD: A study of 150 medical school deans in the U.S. and Canada in 2011 (www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/09/110906184551.htm) revealed that medical students received only about five hours of education on transgender individuals. As more persons identify as transgender, future nursing and/or medical staff are ill equipped to effectively and appropriately care for transgender patients. If faculty members are not knowledgeable in this area, then how can they possibly teach it to students or interact with transgender students in a supportive and affirming way?

POLICIES CAN SERVE AS A STARTING POINT

WAH: Each institution should first decide whether it will include gender identity and expression among the classes of those it will protect from discrimination. If so, policies should define this protected class and legal avenues for recourse in cases of claims of bias. Key issues that need to be addressed in policies include avenues for name changes, the use of pronouns, changing of school records, locker room and restroom designations, and athletics participation determinations based upon gender. A good reference can be found at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/equity/title_ix/guidelines_for_schools_on_gender_identity_and_expression2012oct4.pdf.

After establishing that gender identity and expression are protected by Title IX, the category must be listed in all nondiscrimination statements. The nondiscrimination statements must list the name and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator. As required by Title IX, this statement should appear in all official publications of the institution. My personal recommendation would be that the school’s nondiscrimination statement be included in all syllabi.

Policies on trans inclusion must follow the guidelines provided by Title IX, which include clear steps to file a grievance, accessible websites with links to relevant policies, and search functions that easily find content related to trans-inclusive topics. The school’s website must include clear linkages or meta-tags towards relevant policies. Information on gender identity and expression or “trans intrusiveness” and “filing complaints” should be easily searchable on the school website.

BAK: Title IX addresses sex and gender discrimination, and gender identity and gender expression are protected as forms of gender discrimination, requiring that institutions investigate and

remedy instances of severe, pervasive harassment or retaliation. In addition, a good policy looks gender neutral. It uses “they” and “them” or other inclusive pronouns, rather than “he or she” and “his or her.” The strongest policies have input from those whom they affect.

SKS: Campus policies are an important start. Most policies begin with a mission/values statement. These introductory statements must be scrutinized to incorporate language that is specifically inclusive to gender identity. Then the specific policies should flow from that introductory statement to articulate prohibited conduct. (Note: Policies, by their nature, are intended to establish the “floor” for conduct and behavior. They are not intended to be aspirational; that happens in the introductory statement).

The policies should live in an institution’s Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct Policy, or a more inclusive 1P1P (<https://atixa.org/resources/model-policies/#onepolicy>). The policy should state that any discriminatory conduct directed toward an individual based on that person’s gender identity or gender expression represents a violation. Discriminatory conduct is targeted conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit or deny an individual equal access to work or education, or to activities or benefits of the institution.

‘Campus policies play an incredibly vital role in increasing inclusiveness for trans individuals.

These policies are where the realities and guidelines for campus life are spelled out.’

—Erisis

BVB: First, policies and procedures set out expectations to treat individuals with equality and fairness so they have the same rights and protections as other students on campus. Second, policies provide a framework and starting place for our educational efforts. This must go beyond simply handing students, faculty, and staff written manuals on how they are to behave, but rather should serve as an opportunity to develop innovative and creative ways to share information with the campus community.

VPD: I feel that a faculty development opportunity devoted to the transgender population should be offered, as well as some type of education for incoming and current students. As with other anti-discrimination policies, any discriminatory act against a transgender individual should have specific consequences, and those should include required participation in education designed to promote awareness and appropriate support of transgender individuals. Such individuals have higher suicide and substance abuse rates than other populations, so efforts to recognize and remedy these issues are imperative. Providing trans-inclusive training will enhance academic success for transgender students and comply with Title IX guidelines requiring that educational institutions not discriminate on the basis of gender identity in the provision of services.

Further, a policy for trans-inclusion should reside within Human Resources, with a trickle-down effect to all department deans, chairs, and directors who can oversee and enforce implementation. This policy should promote an understanding of gender diversity by explaining appropriate terminology and common vocabulary, and the differences between gender identity and sexual orientation. It should aim to reshape thinking beyond the gender binary.

LE: Campus policies play an incredibly vital role in increasing inclusiveness for trans individuals. These policies are where the realities and guidelines for campus life are spelled out. If higher education is the breeding ground for ideas and innovation in advanced societies, then these policies are vital for laying the groundwork for positive social change. The micro can become the macro as students who have lived with these policies during their educational experience filter out into the world and become contributing and influential members of society.

A good policy on trans inclusion relies on a multi-pronged and holistic approach. It is not enough simply to add “gender-identity and expression” to non-discrimination policies. Policies need to be in place for trans-aware education, hiring practices for trans staff and faculty, physical and mental healthcare for trans individuals, etc. Every area of the community and culture of higher education needs to be addressed and considered. In addition to policies regarding inclusiveness in housing, healthcare, facilities, and administrative practices, the realities of individual trans lives must be taken into account. There must be policies that make it easy for trans and gender-nonconforming individuals to be called by and use their preferred first names and pronouns.

It is important to be prepared to work with trans and gender nonconforming students who, all too often, have been ostracized or rejected by their families. I often hear from younger trans folks who have come out as trans and either been kicked out of their homes and denied all support, or who are just biding their time to come out until they can be away from direct contact with their families, out of the house, and often out of the area. The first chance to do this very often coincides with their entry into higher education.

I cannot stress enough that the need for good policies on trans inclusion is not just to make trans and gender nonconforming individuals feel more comfortable or welcome. We need these policies to protect our physical safety as well as our mental well-being. For all the positive change, trans people still live in an actively hostile world. And how can trans or gender nonconforming students expect to even begin to focus on academics — never mind thrive — if they do not feel as if their basic needs are being met?

FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

SKS: Policies are only one piece of a well-developed strategy to alter the campus culture. Policies mandate conduct, but cannot change perceptions. Change in perceptions will result from intentional programming, discussion, openness, and sensitivity to language in everything from the way in which we refer to individuals to the titles of offices. In addition, we must hold people accountable for their conduct. Policies are only a part of the whole picture.

LE: In addition to sound policies, there needs to be implementation of educational outreach about trans issues and needs. There should be trans-focused ally training available for all areas of higher education, from students to faculty to support staff. Also, it would be incredibly helpful to create curricula that include and reflect trans experiences, history, and perspectives. People need to see that we are real people, not simply an idea, and that we have real needs and concerns, just as anyone else. In my experience, showing that high-minded ideals are backed by a reality is the best way to turn policies into practice.

BVB: I think turning policy into practice must start with understanding and empathy. Empathy involves being open to the perspectives of others and engaging in shared experiences. We are often afraid or unsure of things that are unfamiliar. One way to help a campus community become more inclusive starts with an idea borrowed from diversity and microaggression workshops. This involves adopting a sense of cultural humility, or in this case, a sense of gender/sexual humility. We must put our own experiences aside and, instead of arguing or trying to have others see our perspectives, listen to theirs and try to understand what others have experienced in their lives.

*‘Policies mandate conduct, but cannot change perceptions. Change in perceptions will result from intentional programming, discussion, openness, and sensitivity to language in everything from the way in which we refer to individuals, to the titles of offices.’
— Schuster*

In our trainings, one way we accomplish this is to show some of Kate Davis's documentary, "Southern Comfort." This movie is a fascinating and emotional way to help those who have had little or no contact with those in the trans community to better understand their experiences.

VPD: Resources like the Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse (www.campuspride.org/tpc) and GLADD's Transgender Resources (www.glaad.org/transgender/resources) are starting points. Turning policies into practice in academia can be difficult because so many issues tend to be on the front burner. It takes a team of individuals (students, faculty, and administrators) to keep the issue on campus leaders' priority list.

A ROLE BOTH WITHIN & BEYOND CAMPUS

LE: Historically, higher education has been full of highly motivated individuals, capable of expressing intelligent ideas in an effective manner, and who are prepared to mobilize and speak out against discrimination. From the student protests of the 1960s through to today's highly connected and media-savvy social justice movements, there has been no cultural institution more perfectly placed for pushing back against discrimination than higher education. We need voices and bodies in this fight. I can talk to legislators all day about the finer points of law and process, and what is "right" or "wrong," but nothing makes a bigger impact on legislators than personal stories. And the higher education community has eloquent and motivated individuals who can tell those stories.

SKS: Just like with sexual assault prevention awareness, a trans-inclusive mentality will be evolutionary and will only occur through concerted efforts and a comprehensive approach. By using our voices and leveraging the power of our institutions, we can create change in our communities as well.

BVB: Violence manifested through bullying, teasing, hateful speech, intimidation, shaming, physical assaults, and non-compliance (e.g., to a simple request like using a preferred name or pronoun), pulls us away from a community and a society that is just, safe, and has the potential to grow. When we tolerate intolerance, we work against our potential to explore, develop, and progress.

WAH: There are numerous influential, nationally recognized advocacy groups that could be sought as partners. These groups include the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, the Anti-Defamation League, Human Rights Campaign, and the National Women's Law Center. Other professional educational associations such as the National Association for Multicultural Education, the American Educational Research Association, and others could be engaged as partners as well. Many of these organizations already list gender identity and expression as a class that deserves protection.

VPD: Our society as a whole is still trying to accept this community of individuals. It is not just about accepting people for who they are, but also about recognizing that these individuals have unique needs that must be addressed. Higher education is about inclusivity, and that needs to apply to all populations.

BAK: Affirm the trans individuals in your campus communities. Speak out against the trans-discriminatory legislation, and call your representatives. Support student-led efforts to educate and speak about these issues.

'Affirm the trans individuals in your campus communities. Speak out against the trans-discriminatory legislation, and call your representatives. Support student-led efforts to educate and speak about these issues.'
— King

BEST PRACTICES

SKS: This is a complex issue that is not addressed by a single action. It will require strategy, the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and a willingness to be challenged. Trans individuals should not be viewed as being all the same with the same issues and requiring the same responses. Recognition of the complex nature of our institutional response will be an important step in the right direction. For me, the movement to recognition that trans should not be viewed as binary, but rather as a fluid or a spectrum-based status, is critical.

BVB: Recently, a friend of mine shared a cartoon with me. It was a picture of snow-covered stairs and a wheelchair ramp leading to the door of a college. A group of folks were working together to clear the ramp from the snow. The caption stated, “Clearing a path for people with special needs clears a path for everyone.” This is a powerful concept. By being inclusive to students, faculty, and staff who differ from the majority — whether it is because of race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, or physical or mental disability — we all benefit.

BAK: Listen carefully to the thoughts and concerns of trans students and employees, and include them in the process. Ask questions. And remember that trans individuals have different needs depending on their other circumstances, and cannot always be supported by broad, blanket statements.

WAH: Foremost, education is critical. Whenever I hear someone say, “Muslims are terrorists,” my response is, “How many Muslim people do you know?” In my classes on multicultural education, I bring in a transgender individual to talk about trans inclusiveness. For the great majority of my students, this is the first time knowingly meeting someone who is transgender and hearing first-hand about transgender experiences. It can be a very transformative experience. Making college and university campuses more inclusive of transgender individuals must start from the top, with leadership setting the right tone and then following through with education and then faithful adherence to compliance efforts.

LE: Listen to trans- and gender-nonconforming people. We can and will tell you our needs and concerns, if you are prepared to listen. We are not new and we are not going away. We are a reality you are going to have to figure out how to live with. We are your friends, family, coworkers, peers, and students. If you are concerned about financial bottom lines, you should also know that we are increasingly an influential demographic. We buy things like computers, cars and, yes, college educations.

I would be entirely remiss if I did not include some of the resources I have drawn on personally and that I recommend as worth exploring and sharing for more information on this subject:

- » Genny Beemyn writes and speaks extensively on the experiences and needs of transgender people, particularly students. www.campuspride.org/speakers/genny-beemyn/
- » The consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals offers policy and practice recommendations. www.lgbtcampus.org/policy-practice-recommendations
- » Higher Ed Live offers an educational video on gender pronouns and trans inclusion on campus. <http://higheredlive.com/trans-inclusion-on-campus/>
- » Pauline Park, who chairs the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy, wrote, “Transgendering the Academy: Ensuring Transgender Inclusion in Higher Education.” www.paulinepark.com/2013/10/transgendering-the-academy-ensuring-transgender-inclusion-in-higher-education-symposium-article/

*‘If you are concerned about financial bottom lines, you should also know that we are increasingly an influential demographic. We buy things like computers, cars and, yes, college educations.’
— Erisis*

- » The National Center for Transgender Equality offers resources, education, and ways to take action. www.transequality.org/
- » Also, here is a link to my column, “Ask A Trans Woman” in *The Rainbow Times*: www.therainbowtimesmass.com/?s=lorelei+erisis&x=0&y=0

VPD: New faculty and student orientations should include information on trans- and gender-nonconfirming people. Services available to transgender persons, as well as resources for faculty and personnel, should be readily available on the university’s website and prominently displayed on informational materials throughout the campus as well.

*‘Services available to transgender persons, as well as resources for faculty and personnel, should be readily available on the university’s website and prominently displayed on informational materials throughout the campus as well.’
— Pomarico-Denino*

Health center personnel and counseling center clinicians, including support staff, should be educated and trained on appropriate language, the use of correct pronouns, and services available on campus for referrals to areas that are considered part of the “Safe Zone” for transgender students. Additionally, all students should be made aware of any student groups on campus that offer support and social opportunities to transgender individuals.

CONCLUSION

Higher education is in a good position to advance gender equality and eliminate institutional discrimination against transgender individuals through inclusive and exemplary policies and practices. But doing this requires first and foremost a recognition of the importance of ensuring trans-inclusion and an awareness of the issues facing trans, transitioning, and gender-nonconforming individuals on our campuses. To date, this recognition and awareness has largely come from the work of individual students and student-groups who identify as transgender or as allies. However, it will take more than students to create true change. Reaching out to trans individuals and allies on campus to find out all the ways in which trans individuals feel excluded, unsupported, and discriminated against is a good start, such as within climate surveys. Then take the lead in working to revamp campus policies and procedures as needed to make them more inclusive based on the information gathered.

Additionally, faculty, staff, and students must all have an understanding of how existing campus and societal constructs exclude and discriminate against trans individuals, and what they can do to take down existing barriers to true gender equity. Simply explaining how the careless use of gender pronouns can be offensive to some can help improve interactions involving transgender individuals. Work to create empathy for, and understanding of, the issues faced by transgender people through collaborative, strategic educational efforts.

Finally, it is essential to realize that as with any other type of diversity, enforcement is essential. The institution must send the message loud and clear that trans individuals are welcome and valued on campus, and that discrimination against them will not be tolerated. This is not just about ensuring compliance with Title IX, but also about truly making our campuses the kind of diversity-welcoming environments we like to say they are.

ABOUT THE NCHERM GROUP, LLC

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