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Revised Report- Assignment H

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Developing an Awareness of LGBT Students in the Classroom: How Faculty and Staff help in the dismantlement of Homophobia

In today’s society a person holds multiple identities. These identities as a whole make up a person. Some identities can be hidden and invisible to the world; such as religious affiliations, class, and sexual orientation, while other identities are more visible within society. Throughout history one’s skin color and biological sex, commonly referred to as race and gender, have been the token sources of hatred and oppression against a group of people. As an educator, I see it as my purpose to examine and expose those kinds of biases of oppression. Currently, the used- to- be invisible identity of sexual orientation is under fire and is once again a source of hatred. The negative effects of homophobia is found in the oppressive tactics of state and national public policies on marriage, bullying in schools and colleges, and exclusive teaching surrounding what is normal and appropriate in a family. In this paper, I’ll explore what from the history of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) movement can inform current practices on colleges and universities in regards to resource and professional development trainings for faculty for the purposes of better advising students and dismantling oppressive comments in and out of the classroom. My goal is to suggest ways that faculty and staff can begin to reflect on their own biases and values in regards to LGBT issues and build a foundation of knowledge that can help in boosting confidence with the ultimate goal of faculty and staff eliminating oppressive comments that might or might not occur in and out of classroom and to ensure their own teaching pedagogies and curriculum are inclusive of all sexual orientations.

There is a need within academic institutions, 4- year colleges and universities and 2- year community colleges for professional development within the area of LGBT issues. In September 2010 six young men chose to end their lives due to the harassment they experienced at their perspective schools. Billy Lucas (15), Cody J. Barker (17), Seth Walsh (13), Tyler Clementi (18), Asher Brown (13) and Raymond Chase (19) were all open with their gay identities making them victims to anti-gay bullies on their school campuses. It is reported that some of the men spoke with school officials; however the schools did not act on the anti-gay harassment. Five deaths in one month should raise a flag to question why these young men decided to take their lives. One cause for reason could be the common misuse of the words homophobia and heterosexism; seen more with the recent attention given to LGBT youth and young adults. Brain Watkins in his essay called “Bending Towards Justice” describes heterosexism as being a “reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation and denotes prejudice in favor of heterosexual people and denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community” (Handbook 269). The meaning of heterosexism is an extension of racism, sexism, and the many other forms of oppression. It is the prejudice, attitudes, and actions of those against homosexuality that show the difference between heterosexists and homophobes. Watkins takes Kathy Obear’s definition of homophobia as being “the irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who are gay, lesbian and bisexual” (Handbook 268). These two terms are used interchangeably by many within the queer studies field, yet it appears that the actions, the acts against homosexuals is based off of heterosexism prejudice, whereas homophobia is focused more on the fear of homosexuals, regardless of any acts of verbal or physical violence and harassment taking place. Could these deaths have been prevented if K-12 schools, colleges and universities had done their part to normalize homosexuality in a dominated heterosexist society?

Sadly, these kinds of occurrences are not uncommon within history. LGBT discrimination is not new and has a rich history of episodes of harsh harassment coupled with successful projects and campaigns to raise awareness within US culture of the lives and needs of Gay and Lesbians.[[1]](#footnote-1)\* My own history connects personally with the LGBT movement and sadly mirrors the recent suicides. When I was in middle school, a close friend of mine committed suicide. Growing up in the conservative dairy lands of California, most kids were growing up to believe that relations were only to be held between men and women. My friend did not fit nicely into the framework of what one is supposed to be like as a male teenager, and thus was picked on by peers and unfortunately lacked support from home. We became friends through being teammates in Odyssey of the Mind. We spent the afternoons together with our other teammates working on our project. He was a great friend to me in junior high. I remember being really sad when I found out of his death. I also remember that I hide my sadness. I did not want others to know how much his death impacted me; out of fear of not wanting to be picked on (I was already the principal’s daughter!). The same year, my mom told me that my aunt Nancy was a lesbian and has HIV. When telling me Nancy’s story, I remember my mom’s tone was that of compassion and inclusion. She never once said that Nancy was choosing to live a life in sin, or that her life was inappropriate, or that she has HIV because of being a lesbian. She said that Nancy and Sandy (her partner at the time) are in mutually loving relationship and that it is okay for women to love women and men to love men. My parents’ inclusive messaging contradicted what I was being told in school, in the media, and through my friends. Now as an adult, I look back and see how my parents informed most of my values of inclusion and thus, lead me to this project.

The following year, Matthew Shepherd, a college student at the University of Wyoming, was violently killed by two men who were uncomfortable with Shepherd’s sexual orientation. They rob, whipped, and tied him to fence, leaving him to die in the Wyoming countryside. At the time of the trail, hate crime laws in Wyoming did not include acts against sexual orientation, and thus the two men, Aaron McKinny and Russell Henderson, were given lesser sentences, life in prison over the death penalty. Out of Shepard’s death new hate crime legislation has been introduced and passed in 2009 by President Obama.[[2]](#footnote-2)\* In a Washington Post article announcing the Senate’s approval of the hate crime bill, Ben Perishing says, “The measure would extend the current definition of federal hate crimes -- which covers attacks motivated by race, color, religion or national origin -- to include those based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability” (hate crime). The passage of the hate crime bill was a significant turning point in protecting the rights of the LGBT community. Fifty year priors, gay and lesbians were just beginning the fight of inclusion.

 For the LGBT community, the 1950’s can be characterized by bringing together isolated individuals into closeted communities. Also known as the Homophile movement, the 50’s was the beginning of many first efforts in organizing together as an LGBT community. Not with the purpose of coming out in society, but in gaining numbers as group in the hopes of assimilating within society. The Mattachine Society was founded in 1950 by Harry Hal in Los Angeles (Miller). Following a communist-like approach organizationally, Neil Miller’s book *Out of the Past* cites John D’Emilio saying “the Mattachine Society had a secret, cell-like hierarchical structure…the structure may have been set to disguise the fact that Communists and ex-Communists were among the founders” (Out 334). Mattachines came together for discussion groups held privately in members’ homes, much like a support group. One of the main goals for the Mattachines was to build a gay community. Miller says, “It’s aim included unifying isolated homosexuals and creating an ethical homosexual culture” (334). In coming together the Mattachines began a monthly publication called *One*, which produced scientific articles from doctors and psychologists as well as private writings by individual members. They also advocated to local congress members as well as town officials. Sadly the group found division in the mid-50’s due to members differing points of view in how the group should fight for inclusion, and membership decreased. Miller goes on to explain that in 1961, two Mattachine members, Franklin Kameny and Jack Nichols founded a Mattachine chapter in DC. Taking a very different approach from other chapters, Kameny and Nichols believed that groups should “embrace a direct-action strategy similar to that of the black civil rights movements” says Miller (334). In 1964, Kameny brought 10 homosexuals together to picket outside of the Whitehouse. Miller cites their signs as saying “Sexual Preference is irrelevant to federal employment” (344). A few months later another picketing occurred with 45 people at four new venues, finally the movement for gay rights was beginning to get off the ground.

 The 1960’s is a decade of protests and demonstrations by multiple groups. From Black civil rights to the Feminists movement, the Gay Rights Movements was the last to get on the ‘freedom and equality’ train. The boiling point came in June of 1969 at Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. Stonewall Inn was known as a place for drag queens and teenage hustlers to hang out on the weekends. Miller says, “The Stonewall was a less-than respectable establishment, even by the standards of gay bars at the time and was owned by the Mafia” (365). For several nights in June, police would raid the bar for selling alcohol without a license and would take patrons outside, telling them to leave the scene. Miller references June 17th as the night when the Stonewall patrons decided not to go home, but rather decided to entice excitement from the police with “striking poses and campy comments.” One thing lead to the next, more people came to the bar throwing bricks and bottles, more police came in, fire broke out, and 13 singing drag queens were arrested by the end of the night. The next night more people were back at Stonewall with signs and expressive chants. Today, the Stonewall Riots is referred to as the defining moment within the gay rights movement. Miller confirms the sentiment by explaining how after the riots, a month later, the first meeting of the Gay Liberation Front took place. “Three-four hundred gays and lesbians gathered at Washington Square and marched to the site of the riots chanting, ‘gay power!’ and singing ‘We Shall Overcome,’ finally the gay revolution arrived” (368).

 Moving away from the Homophile movement, the Gay Liberation Front outwardly fought for gay rights. This time the group advocated for a complete transformation of society. Dennis Altman a writer of the early gay liberation movement describes the change of messaging between the Homophile movement and the new Gay Liberation Front saying in Miller’s *Out of Past*, “No longer is the claim made that gay people can fit into American society, that they are decent, as patriotic, as clean-living, as anyone else. Rather, it is argued, it is American society itself that needs to change” (369). No longer did the group see a point in remaining invisible to society. Quickly, multiple gay rights organizations sprung up all over the US, mostly in cities, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. The first Gay Pride Parade occurred a year after in June of 1970. With some slight backlash in the 1980’s with the emergence of the AIDS/HIV virus, gay rights have seen moderate advancement in society. Sadly, even with a history of overcoming oppression, sub-cultures in the US continue to stigmatize the LGBT community.

 In addition to studying the history, scholars within the field of Queer Studies have spent countless time discussing the stereotypes and myths of LGBT people in society. P.B. Jung continues to break down some of the arguments homophobes use in her book, co-authored by R.F. Smith, *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge*. Jung and Smith focus on the myth that homosexuality is a threat to society. They rebuke the claims that homosexuality undermines traditional family structures and that it threatens gender roles, victimizes children, and causes youth to be confused over their sexual orientations. Jung and Smith discuss the invalid nature of each these arguments. The argument indicating that homosexuals can confuse or sway youth into becoming gay or lesbian is especially degrading. Jung says, “Some assume that because homosexual people cannot have children they will recruit children to become homosexual. In addition, children will be confused about whether they are or ought to be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual if they are aware of these options through positive role model” (97). Gay and Lesbians do not make youth question their sexual identity, rather the dominant heterosexual culture that promotes heterosexual relationship as normal and homosexual relations as other, causes doubt and anxiety in youth and young adults. Because of this heterosexist bias, youth are not exposed to positive gay and lesbian role models, because heterosexual adults are fearful that the homosexuals will turn their youth into gays and lesbians (oh my!). The confusion and anxiety youth face regarding their sexuality can be avoided, if society acknowledges homosexuality as a legitimate, safe, and okay sexual preference. One place in society where this cultural shift can begin to occur is in schools, colleges and universities.

In my experience as a community college educator, gaining a historical perspective of the issue is the first step in building a firm foundation of knowledge. Professional development should start here. The stories just described only give small glimpses behind the LGBT movement. Luckily, today there is a collection of the individual stories of people that have lived and fought through harassment. The more these stories find their way within the public discourse, the more chances for discussion to be had in classrooms and in homes. Staying on top, being fresh and current within one’s field is vital for remaining confident of a field’s content. The goal of professional development is just this. It is a chance for educators to come together, reflect, and discussion current trends. Educators have millions of pieces to consider when contemplating professional development. There is the subject and domain that is being taught, as well as the teaching and instruction, and student development. All of these things need to be considered within professional development trainings. Today, educators must realize that they are not only teaching students a certain subject, but modeling behaviors that students will then replicate. Additionally, the old notion of advising no longer holds true. Advising students comes inside the class and, outside the classroom, both through informal and formal actions. Colleges and universities should look to provide specific trainings on the diversity of its students. This would be the first step, recognizing the diversity of the student body. But at the same time, there could be negative impacts when diversity trainings become too big and ultimately vague. Rather, spending time on specific identities such as sexual orientation, race, class and religious beliefs prove better as a separate endeavor. Later in the paper, I will provide specific models and programs that college and universities can implement to decrease homophobia on campus.

Within the past decade several gay and lesbian advocate groups have begun collecting data from LGBT students and straight students, in the hopes of using the information as vehicle for highlighting the effect of heterosexism. These reports illustrate grave news; young adults feeling unsafe on campus, experiencing verbal and physical harassment, and sadly the impact is seen through their academic achievement. In 2003, Susan Rankin Professor of Higher Education at Pennsylvania State University ran a study on the campus climate for LGBT people (students, faculty and staff). Rankin defines campus climate as a comprehensive perspective on the college or university in the framework of inclusion. Rankin’s findings drew from 1,669 LGBT people. Unfortunately, the data shows the quality of life for LGBT students does not get much better in college compared with high school. The Rankin data finds, “20% feared for the physical safety because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, 51% concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation, 41% believe their college does not thoroughly address issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and lastly 43% felt that the curriculum does not represent the contributions of LGBT people” (Rankin 19). From all of this, a call to action is made to college and universities.

 In her conclusion, Rankin makes a call for action against silence taken by many professors, administrators and students on college campuses. In her article entitled “Campus Climates for Sexual Minorities*.”* she says, “Heterosexism and homophobia, for example, operate to reinforce the heterosexual norm. Differences disturb the norm; a culture of silence reinforces the norms for those who are different. When LGBT people on campus increase their visibility and, therefore their voice on campus, they change heterosexual norms” (21). The heterosexual norms where sexual and intimate relationships are between women and men, gender roles are connected to a biological sex and/or school policies that do not recognize civil union partnerships in terms of benefits threaten the development of inclusion. It continues to stigmatize homosexuality as the unnatural other in society. In his essay called “Establishing a Visible Presence on Campus” Doug Bauder from Indiana University’s Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Office states, “It is about communicating that GLBT people are wonderful individuals to those who have a variety of strange ideas about homosexuality and bisexuality. We’re talking about debunking the myths that have held us hostage for far too long” (Handbook 98). Educators are uniquely positioned to increase or decrease heterosexist prejudice in their classrooms, on their campuses and in the larger society.

 In studying the history of the LGBT movement and reviewing current research, it is clear that more needs to be done. Sadly, what needs to be done involves widening worldviews and values. Homosexuality is no longer closeted. Gay and Lesbians hold public offices, are on TV, are teachers, police officers, nurses, social workers, and are veterans. Looming in the closest for young LGBT adults, is the fear of not being accepted and in being harassed. Even with the huge strides the movement has made, the values and beliefs held by a many in the US, still see homosexuality as unnatural and an evil against society. Schools and Universities thus can become the space for people to learn, reflect, and examine their values against homosexuality.

 During the past few months, I conducted an interview project assessing the experiences of community college LGBT students, as well as discovered the challenges involved in gathering qualitative and quantitative data from community college students. Community Colleges have commonly been left out of LGBT research studies for a variety of reasons. From being the black sheep/place for outcasts within higher education, to having a system of tenure where research is not required for advancement, LGBT research studies have not included community colleges. In their essay “A Primer on LGBTQ Students at Community Colleges: Considerations for Research and Practice”, Eboni M. Samani-Gallaher and Dibya Devika Choudhuri say, “what is known about LGBTQ students at community colleges is virtually nonexistent” (Primer 36). The authors go on to explain in the essay that the 2010 Campus Pride LGBT- Friendly Campus Climate Index Report of Colleges only collected information from 12 community colleges out of the 237 surveyed. Out of those 12 community colleges the average ‘LGBT Friendliness’ was two out of 5 stars. Community colleges are drastically different learning environments from traditional 4-year campuses. The make-up of the student body, the practices taken by faculty and support staff, and sadly the social stigmas placed on community colleges; do not help in creating inclusive environment—sadly we are just behind in inclusive LGBT practices. Most of the time, we at community colleges try to distant ourselves from 4-year schools, but in the area of LGBT, we need to heed the lessons and practices at 4-year schools, but delicately in recognizing the differences in our student populations.

 The interviews I conducted start to show a small window into the life of LGBT experiences at the community college level. Two students were interviewed at a local Boston community college. Both students were male, one in his 50’s, the other in his mid-twenties. Both students had experienced hearing negative LGBT comments, but also felt supported and affirmed by their professors. Both students rarely participate in student life activities, but expressed interest in wanting to participate if there was an LGBT group. In asking about their knowledge of the LGBT history, the older student (not surprisingly) knew much more than the younger student. The older student expressed how he lost of friends due to AIDS in the 80’s and remember watching Harvey Milk and Anita Bryant on TV. The younger student, when I asked can you name any historical turning points in the LGBT movement gave me a blank stare; providing me the opportunity to give a quick history lesson. He then later mentioned that it would be great to have “my history included when I learn about American history and culture.” Both students felt the school could be doing to more to support young LGBT students, since the school caters to other identities of students, such as Veterans and International students.

Sadly, coming from a community college background the research available on LGBT student experiences is very slim. Brian T. Ivory’s 2005 essay called “LGBT students in Community Colleges: Characteristics, Challenges, and Recommendations” begins to shed light on the issues at hand in collecting quantitative and qualitative data on LGBT experiences. Ivory explains that lessons from commuter campus (non-residential) research provides the basis of current practices at community colleges. Ivory cites Franklin’s community college student survey in 1998, which illustrated the difficulties in obtaining student experiences, due to the fear of identifying as LGBT and the transitory nature of students. Franklin’s survey shows that antigay violence is prevalent on two-year campuses, but due to the lack of empirical data from LGBT community college students, it is hard to quantitatively illustrate exact needs on campus. Ivory quotes Steve Leider 2000 essay “Sexual Minorities on Community Colleges” in saying, “While we know little about these students, we do know that they are being subjected to harassment and hate crimes by their peers…It is clear that LGBT community college students have a set of needs that are clamoring for attention” (Community College, 64). Therefore, research needs to be done and at the same time community college educators need to fight for more inclusion in national surveys.

So what can be done on college and universities at both 2- year and 4- year schools? How can professional development trainings and resource development be focused to concentrate on LGBT issues? For some college professors and staff they the lack the confidence or strategies in knowing how to create more inclusive environments. Focus is heavily placed on the content of the course and the mastery of content from students. Sensitivity to instruction and curriculum development is overlooked. Additionally, most professors do not realize the heterosexual norms within the class. The blind assumptions made by some professors regarding students’ personal lives and the use of hetero-normative language that perpetuates a ‘this or that’ model. Mark Connolly in his essay “Issues for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students in Traditional College Classrooms” states, “For lesbian and gay students, the classroom is yet another social setting in which they must constantly assess the level of risk they face and negotiate the extent to which they may self-disclose” (Towards Acceptance 113). Professors arguing against the use of anti-homophobic strategies in college classrooms lose the chance to provide a safe space for students to feel comfortable disclosing personal information. Connolly suggests several recommendations for those professors who lack the strategies for knowing how to create inclusive spaces in his article. Particularly he suggests that professors be confident in addressing homophobic comments. He says, “When a person makes a provocative comment in class, students will scrutinize the instructor’s response—or lack of one—for clues of what is or is not accepted in a classroom setting” (122). The argument for not knowing how to provide safe settings can easily be transformed once professors reflect on their own biases and participate in professional development trainings focused on LGBT experience.

Yet, there are always professors who could care less about the environment of their classrooms. Sadly, these faculty members arguments for not adapting anti-homophobia are the same for not adapting any kinds of inclusiveness, including race and gender. These professors feel their autonomy to teach how they wish is being taken away from them. Connolly describes that in this case the professor’s academic freedom is being threaten (123). However, some have been able to incorporate race and gender, but have forgotten about heterosexism. Watkins in “Bending Towards Justices” explains how college campuses and faculty members have over emphasized the need for fighting racism and sexism, making it more difficult to include another ‘isms’ into the fold. He states, “Many college and university faculty members are working to combat racism and sexism by rearranging course curricula, while failing to eliminate heterosexist materials and validate the contributions of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals” (Handbook 271). Praise for widening the curriculum to include race and gender is due for those college campuses, however these campuses must not feel that their work is done.

Endless examples and recommendations exist for colleges and universities for promoting inclusive anti-homophobia campuses. Campuses can start institutionally, focusing on their student recruitment strategies, hiring and benefit practices, and ensuring their harassment disciplinary cases included harassment due to sexual orientation. Ensuring that all members at the administrative level support the equal treatment of all members of the college campus community regardless of race, sex, socioeconomic class, religion, age, physical ability, and sexual orientation must be met first. From this committed support, the campus climate can develop as being an open and safe space for LGBT students, leading the way for other students to feel comfortable with their orientation. In the article, “Lesbian and Gay Male Undergraduates’ Experience of Harassment and Fear on Campus” Anthony R. D’Augelli finds without this administrative institutional support LGBT students live their college lives clouded with fear of harassment, physical and verbal. He states, “If university and college officials work to enhance campus climate for openly lesbian women and gay men, they will inevitable help many more students who are quietly and fearfully struggling to integrate their affectional identity into their lives” (393). Setting an inclusive atmosphere is pivotal for further actions to take place.

Once the administration declares their support for the LGBT community, the institution must establish a place on campus for the LGBT community. The established office or center must be a resource place for faculty members seeking to educate themselves regarding LGBT issues, a place for LGBT students to receive counsel and advice on health and social related issues, and a place for the LGBT community, including allies to gather. Bauder states, “the new office needed someone who was a bridge builder, a networker, someone who communicated well, but also someone who had facilitative listening skills” (Handbook 97). Edited by Ronni L. Sanlo, *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students Handbook* compiles LGBT resource articles for faculty and administrators. Countless citations indicate the unique role student affairs professionals play in the creation of LGBT offices. Positioned to effect change on the student level, they recognize the multiple players in developing controversial offices. Programs to raise awareness of LGBT issues can thus be created and supported by an LGBT office.

One particular current LGBT program trend on college campuses is a ‘Safe Space (or zone or harbor…fill in with noun).’ Kerry Poynter from the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education explains the trend on the resource website [www.LGBTcampus.org](http://www.LGBTcampus.org). She writes, “A number of college and universities have implemented educational interventions with names such as Safe Zone, Safe Space, Safe Harbor, and Safe On Campus. Although it is unclear who first conceived of the "Safe" idea, the earliest found is the Ball State University program called SAFE On Campus (1992) or Staff, Administration, and Faculty for Equality On Campus which was implemented during the 1992-1993 academic year by the Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Student Association.” Ultimately the goal of safe spaces is to provide the adequate training and resources to faculty and college staff related to the issues LGBT students face. Most programs design a series of workshops or training modules that members go through. Once they have completed the series, most college programs provide a sticker or a sign of recognition, indicating to students that they have gone through the training. Hopefully, students will feel comfortable talking with the faculty or staff about some of obstacles they are dealing with. Unfortunately, there is not a ‘one size fits all’ kind of curriculum for creating safe zones trainings. Since each college campus lives with its own strengths and weaknesses, an assessment of what would work best, would be recommend prior to creating a safe zone training series. Kathleen Burns Hothem and Christopher D. Keene write in their article, “Creating a Safe Zone Project at a Small Private College” that “the safe zone concept is simple; the college community identifies, educates, and supports campus members who are concerned about the well-being of LGBT students. When a person volunteers to be a safe zone contact, he or she is pronouncing nothing about personal sexuality but is instead underscoring an interest in the college’s LGBT population” (Handbook 364). Faculty and staff have a lot to offer in terms of support and role modeling for LGBT students, training them first allows a culture of anti-homophobia to be able to permeate among the students.

The next and maybe final step for what a college and university can do to raise the level of inclusiveness is to raise the awareness level of the student body. Not to be taken lightly, college students come with their own prior experiences, beliefs and values. Yet providing programs, such as guest lecture series, community forums, informal discussions in resident halls and/or other student hang out spots, and workshops. These activities could be specific for LGBT students, which can focus on the direct issues in being LGBT; or they could also be for heterosexual students where the focus is on the myths displayed by the media regarding the LGBT community. In the article, “From the Trenches: Strategies for Facilitating LGB Awareness Programs for College Students” Vernon Wall and his colleagues explain the goal of raising awareness among heterosexual students on campus. The article states, “The awareness component of any workshop is designed to help individuals begin the process of understanding the information and misinformation with which they grown up. Most students do not realize that they have been ‘taught’ many things about lesbian, gay, and bisexual people” (Towards Acceptance 162). The removal of prejudices against homosexuality held by heterosexuals will be a slow process. College campuses are uniquely positioned to help with the transforming of beliefs and stereotypes.

In closing as a call for action to faculty and staff, please consider reflecting on the questions in the appendix. These questions are reflective in nature and are meant to bring awareness to our own hidden biases. Undressing our own filters is the first step in being confident and capable in dismantling homophobia. Next, my hope is that a group of faculty and staff would come together to begin discussing how their dispositions in the classroom effect students. Through the discussion, I hope for more reflection to occur, ultimately leading to a series of trainings. On my own campus, conversations have begun among faculty and staff about developing a space on campus for the LGBT community. These small steps have huge effects on dismantling homophobic behaviors.

Appendix

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| Reflective Questions: Discovering our own LGBT Biases |
| What’s your earliest memory of marriage? How has it changed over time? | What’s your philosophy in advising students? | How many LGBTQ people do you know? Are friends with? |
| How do you identify your sexual orientation? | What knowledge do you have of the spectrum within sexual orientations? | How do your values provide a basis for what you believe is right and wrong in sexual orientations?  |
| What do you do when a student in your class or that you come across says something inappropriate? | What were your initial thoughts when you discovered that men have relationships with men and vice verses for women and transgender, bisexuals.  | Why do same-sex couples want to get married? What benefits do heterosexual couples receive in marriage? |
| What do you need to feel confident in breaking up comments from students that are inappropriate? | How might homosexuality conflict with other values connected with other identities people hold? (Race, Religion, Class) |  |

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1. \* At this point the history and readings I’ve explored for the most have grouped transgender issues within gay and lesbian, but it should be recognized that transgender people focus more on gender realignment, versus sexual orientation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* “The House passed the act, designated [H.R. 1913](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.uscongress/legislation.111hr1913), by a vote of 249 to 175.The bill was introduced in the Senate on April 28 by [Ted Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Kennedy), [Patrick Leahy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Leahy), and a bipartisan coalition; it had 43 cosponsors as of June 17, 2009. The Matthew Shepard Act was adopted as an amendment to S.1390 by a vote of 63-28 on July 15, 2009. On October 22, 2009, the act was passed by the Senate by a vote of 68-29. President Obama signed the measure into law on October 28, 2009” (Wikipedia article “Matthew Shepard”). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)