It's not to be discussed: Safety, Acceptance, and Professional Development for LGBTQ Faculty at a Large Southeastern University

Jessie Barnett
University of Georgia

Jessica Legge Muilenburg
University of Georgia

Corey W. Johnson
University of Georgia

Jennifer Miracle
University of Georgia

"It's not to be discussed": Safety, Acceptance, and Professional Development for LGBTQ Faculty at a Large Southeastern University

By

Jessie A. Barnett, Jessica L. Muilenburg, Corey W. Johnson and Jennifer Miracle

Abstract

Studies show that a discriminatory, unsafe university environment negatively impacts educators identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of safety, acceptance, and professional development from LGBTQ faculty at a Southeastern university. LGBTQ faculty (n=21) completed an online survey with open-ended questions. Analysis of detailed responses using the constant comparative method resulted in six themes, including: Identity management in the work place, repercussions of identity disclosure on career trajectory, and lack of support from university administration. These themes are illustrated using participant data and then used to provide recommendations for change.

Underserved Groups in the Workplace

Research continues to highlight the issues that underserved groups face in the workplace. Renn (2010) indicates that attention has been paid to LGBTQ presence in the general workplace and to racial/ethnic and gender minority faculty presence in higher education, but little research exists to pointedly address perceptions of campus climate for LGBTQ faculty in the Southeastern United States. Extensive research exists about organizational and workplace diversity related to race, ethnicity, and gender (Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska, & George, 2004; Valenti & Rockett, 2008). However, the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals deserve increased focus. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees comprise one of the most sizeable minority groups in the workforce yet are researched the least (Ragins, 2004). Burns and Krehley (2011) report that 15% to 43% of LGBT workers have experienced some form discrimination at work. Of that number, 7% to 41% suffered from verbal or physical abuse on the job, and up to 28% were passed over for a promotion because of their sexual orientation or identity.

An unfriendly or "chilly" climate is also shown to negatively affect the performance and morale of lesbian and gay employees (Badgett, Lee, Sears, & Ho, 2007; Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Renn, 2010). Employees working for organizations that encourage inclusive, diverse workplace settings are more productive and creative (Lantz, 2009). Perception of an employment organization as supportive toward various sexual orientations is related to increased job satisfaction and decreased anxiety for lesbian and gay employees (Griffeth & Hebl, 2002). The aims of this manuscript are to: 1) qualitatively analyze detailed open-ended responses for pervasive themes about professional and social issues faced by a sample of LGBTQ faculty at a large Southeastern university and 2) briefly report general descriptive trends of LGBTQ faculty's perceptions of safety and acceptance at the university through a basic quantitative analysis.

Literature Review

Institutions of higher learning are not exempt from issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in the workplace. LGBTQ faculty have consistently described the campus workplace environments as hostile, uncomfortable, and promoting invisibility and encouraging concealment of sexual identities (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009). Prejudices experienced in the campus setting due to sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity hinder LGBTQ faculty's ability to achieve career goals, construct productive mentoring relationships, and maintain supportive relationships with others (Rankin, 2005). According to Levine (1991), "Diversity is one of the largest, most urgent challenges facing higher education today. It is also one of the most difficult challenges colleges have ever faced" (p.4). Scisney-Matlock and Matlock (2001) posited that higher education settings are microcosms of society. Hill (1991) and Rosser (1990) add that it is the duty of higher education to lead the way for the rest of society with diversity initiatives. However, the meaning of "diversity" in higher education is in need of broader understanding.

During a recent poll, Freedman (2010), asked students and higher education professionals about the meaning of the term "diversity." Respondents most commonly selected the terms *racial, ethnic* and/or *gender* as pertaining to diversity's meaning. Reports like this illustrate that there is a lack of knowledge on lesbian and gay sexual identity as a form of diversity in higher education, even though gay and lesbian employees constitute a large and important minority group in the workplace (Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & King, 2008; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). The LGBTQ faculty group in higher education is so overlooked that studies about their careers, experiences, and identities remain "nearly absent" (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Renn, 2010, p. 136). Those studies that do exist maintain that, despite some progressive changes, "many campuses remain challenging environments for LGBT community members" (Embrick, Walther, & Wickins, 2007; Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). Individuals identifying as transgender, gay, and lesbian are often neglected by anti-discrimination laws in the workplace and continue to face discrimination daily (Pope, 2012). Therefore, it is particularly important to study workplace climate for LGBTQ faculty because "they may be especially vulnerable to bias, discrimination, and retaliation in the academic workplace" (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009, p. 88). The current study investigates these topics at a large university in the Southeastern United States.

Research Methods

This university was chosen because it is similar in size, location and regional population characteristics to other universities in the Southeastern United States (Southern Colleges, 2011). The university is also similar in size and setting to 102 other large, four-year institutions that consist of a primarily residential undergraduate student body with at least 10,000 degree-seeking students (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2010). The Institutional Review Board at the university granted permission to conduct this study. The research design for a larger study, from which this faculty data originated, was to collect both descriptive statistics and qualitative data about the campus climate for all people. Here we focus in on the faculty only. Informational electronic letters containing a link to the online survey were sent to university personnel through 17 diversity-focused campus listservs. Recipients were encouraged to pass the information on to other interested LGBTQ individuals, a non-probability recruiting technique called snowball sampling often used in harder to find populations (Castillo, 2009; Goodman, 1961). If a faculty member did not wish to participate, the individual simply did not

fill out the survey and likely deleted the email. Due to the snowball dissemination methods, the number of LGBTQ faculty members who were aware of the survey but chose not to participate cannot be determined. The sample consisted of 21 LGBTQ faculty members from 15 different academic departments. It is a slightly low but fair response rate given the 1732 total faculty members on the campus, of which an unknown number could identify as LGBTQ. The 25-30 minute survey was available online from February 2010 to April 2010. The survey was anonymous and participants' computer IP addresses were automatically stripped from all records.

Data Collection Methods

Our survey used a mixed methods approach to data collection; we included open-ended and free-response questions to obtain more explicit information on challenges and opportunities experienced by LGBTQ faculty at the university. Three open-ended questions asked faculty to provide detailed responses about safety on campus, challenges as a LGBTQ person at the university, and positive aspects of being a LGBTQ person at the university. Eight open-ended questions addressed faculty's awareness, use, and perceived impact of LGBTQ groups, resources, and diversity programs at the university.

The quantitative portion of this study included closed-ended items from an instrument used to assess the university campus climate for LGBTQ students in 2002 (Hill et al., 2002). This instrument included 38 items covering demographic information and perceptions safety and acceptance of LGBTQ identity on campus, in the university area, and in the workplace. Descriptive statistics were employed for this study because they simply describe the quantitative data and because the small sample size did not allow for inferential statistics (Weiss, 2012).

Data Analysis Procedures

STATA 10.0 and the SurveyGizmo reports tool were used to analyze the quantitative data for very basic descriptive trends such as percentages ("SurveyGizmo", 2011; StataCorp, 2007). The open-ended responses were analyzed using the constant comparative method often found in grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). One of the researchers read each participant's responses to the open-ended questions, assigned codes to the content, and compared each response set to the others until all content was coded. This researcher then worked to place the content into appropriate categories and discern major themes from the qualitative data, after which the other researchers confirmed the analysis. Demographic information about LGBTQ faculty participants precedes the thematic findings.

Participant Demographics

Sexual orientations of the 21 faculty respondents were as follows: gay (33.3%, n=7), lesbian (28.6%, n=6), bisexual (28.6%, n=6), queer (23.81%, n=5), and other (4.76%, n=1). Four of the faculty respondents self-identified using multiple descriptors for their sexual orientation. Participants also identified as a woman (57.14%, n=12), man (38.10%, n=8) and genderqueer (4.76%, n=1). The term genderqueer is used to express gender identity that may fall between male and female, may be neither male nor female, or both male and female (Beemyn, 2008). Respondents were White (80.9%), Black (4.76%), Native American (4.76), Hispanic (4.76) and

one chose not to select racial and/or ethnic identities (4.76%). The ages ranged from 29 to 59 years with an average age of 45.1 years.

Descriptive statistics derived from multiple-choice survey questions indicate that, due to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, the 21 faculty respondents described having experienced prejudice in social settings (35%), the work place (28%), when dealing with administrators (33%), and from other faculty (28%). Almost half (47.6%) reported being avoided or ignored on campus and 19.1% reported being verbally harassed due to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Findings: A Picture of LGBTQ Faculty Experiences

The qualitative data offer us detailed insight into the experiences of LGBTQ faculty respondents. Six themes were identified as important to faculty's professional lives from analyzing their detailed open-ended responses. These themes included: (1) anxiety about LGBTQ identity management in the workplace, (2) repercussions of disclosure/identity on career longevity and development, (3) lack of support from university administration. Other themes were: (4) positive awareness of LGBTQ students, (5) appreciation for a supportive gay community, and (6) defining diversity on campus.

LGBTQ Identity Management in the Workplace

Several closeted faculty members were unsure about coming out in the workplace due to their inability to control the trajectory of disclosed information. Faculty noted the challenges of "not knowing whether it's okay to come out." They were also unsure of "knowing to whom it is safe to disclose, when, and how." Some teaching faculty members noted the distinct challenge of managing their LGBTQ identities with two different groups: coworkers and students. One faculty member stated, "*It is a challenge* allowing others to view my true identity and teaching as an instructor without having my students find out."

Nearly one-half of faculty respondents reported not feeling comfortable or safe in their employment positions as well. They also observed that discomfort was not specifically related to expressions of outright hostility, but to a generally unsupportive undercurrent in the workplace environment. One respondent expressed the following perception of sexual orientation at the university: "It's not to be discussed and certainly not to be celebrated." According to LGBTQ faculty, LGBTQ identity has the potential to negatively impact one's work experience.

Repercussions of Identity on Career Longevity and Development

Over one-third of the faculty respondents feared that the act of disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity, or their identity itself, would negatively impact their current career or future professional endeavors at the university. One respondent's fears were recently realized when another employee disclosed the faculty member's sexual orientation to a university dean in an attempt to prevent the respondent from receiving a promotion. Another respondent feared the impact of her disclosure on her evaluations. Some respondents relayed the fact that they did not know who to trust with their LGBTQ identity, and were particularly worried about tenure and promotion. This was displayed in the following passage: "as a gay untenured faculty member, there's always the fear that this will affect my promotion and tenure case."

While the work environment was seen as a challenging place for many respondents, two faculty members reported that they have not experienced anything unsafe or felt threatened in any way due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. One woman stated, "as a lesbian, I enjoy the same positive aspects of life at the university that I imagine I would enjoy if I were straight." Another faculty member considered himself "lucky to avoid discrimination [and] harassment, etc." on campus.

Still, other faculty members noted that certain colleagues were open and welcoming even when others were not, and that sometimes acceptance takes time. One faculty member described how his co-workers' spouses' apprehension about socializing with him and his husband decreased over time:

> I'm out with all my coworkers and have never encountered any problems. We invite [the coworkers] to an annual social event at our home. Early on the husbands didn't come due to uneasy feelings about coming to a drinking event hosted by two gay men. Once the first one came and wasn't molested, raped, or recruited, the rest came and we've had no problems.

This experience speaks to the idea of what a "problem" is in terms of LGBTQ discrimination. Here, the participant represents a "problem" as outright discrimination and not the backhanded avoidance of socializing with a gay person. With time, however, even the husbands of this respondent's coworkers were able to change their behavior and attend work-related social events at this LGBTQ faculty member's home. Despite some faculty members finding support within select departmental communities, this is not typically the case with the university's administration.

Lack of Support from University Administration

Comments from faculty focused heavily on a lack of support from the university's administration. One-fifth of the faculty respondents indicated that the administration, trustees, and state legislature, "does not feel supportive of the needs or challenges of the LGBTQ community." Faculty highlighted general uncertainty about "how our university administrators and even college administrators would handle" issues of gender identity.

Six respondents received official responses from the university because of problems encountered due to sexual orientation or gender identity. Of those six, four reported the official university response to be "inadequate." One individual reported in detail that administrators were uncomfortable talking about issues related to sexual orientation, and the process of dealing with those administrators was one of the most difficult challenges she faced as a LGBTQ faculty member at the university.

Faculty members were particularly concerned with the lack of partner benefits at the university as well. In some cases the lack of equal benefits was equated with direct discrimination. This inequality even resulted in a respondent re-evaluating staying at the university. This is shown in the following excerpt:

As a faculty member, the biggest challenge here is that [the university] doesn't yet provide domestic partner benefits. This issue is the single-most important issue for my partner and I in considering whether we want to stay here or move elsewhere where same-sex partner benefits are available.

One faculty member viewed the administration from a more positive perspective. He reported that the presence of the LGBTQ office has "given me a sense that my identity matters to the administration- that they care enough about LGBTQ students and staff to fund such a place, particularly in the face of political resistance to it." Positivity is a shining light in the face of many negative experiences, and faculty take care to highlight other positive components of university life.

Positive Awareness of LGBTQ Students

Faculty members acknowledged the presence of LGBTQ students at the university in general, and conveyed a sense of enjoyment with "getting to work with students in a supportive role." Several faculty members observed that there appeared to be good support system for students, but faculty who taught students who identified as members of the LGBTQ community are aware of the challenges they face. Moreover, 25% of respondents mentioned referring students to the LGBTQ center for help and support dealing with difficult sexuality or gender issues. Of that number, one respondent appreciated the center "helping me support students."

Most faculty commended the university's LGBTQ center for supporting LGBTQ students. Several of the respondents mentioned incorporating the center's resources into teaching and relying on the center as a way to manage their own identity in the classroom...

> *Because of the LGBTQ office, I* feel empowered to discuss the topic with my students without revealing my own sexuality. I primarily use the center for resources to draw on when teaching- by resources, I mean both the library and the people.

The LGBTQ center offered not only support for the faculty member's students, but indirectly for the faculty members themselves. It acted as a concrete symbol of support for the LGBTQ community on campus. Having a resource available on the institutional level allows faculty to talk about LGBTQ-related topics more freely and feel supported, a sentiment that carries through to the surrounding local LGBTQ community at large.

Appreciation for Supportive Local LGBTQ Community

The importance of a supportive LGBTQ community at the university and in the surrounding town was one of the most prominent positive comments from faculty, with the majority of respondents mentioning their appreciation…

> I love the LGBTQ community on campus--in the [approximately] 10 years I've been here, I've seen it grow, become more inclusive, more thoughtful and sensitive about issues such as race and gender, and become a vibrant part of campus life.

Many faculty members indicated that the LGBTQ community's visibility on campus and within the town area is one of its most important features, but several faculty members noted difficulty locating the community when they first set out to get involved. Many faculty highlighted the fellowship they found "among other LGBTQ individuals" as the most important positive aspects of being LGBTQ at the university. Faculty also noted that, "increasingly, there is a substantial ally community."

Furthermore, 95% of the faculty respondents reported knowing that the university has an organization to support LGBTQ faculty and staff. Over 70% reported attending a program or event with the organization. Respondents saw the LGBTQ group as a resource for prospective hires, as a "force for change on campus," and a mechanism to "help create a feeling that the campus is for everyone." Faculty also noted the value of the group's leadership and socialization opportunities.

> [The LGBTQ faculty and staff group] has been a major force in my experience of [the university], starting from the time I first moved to [the area]. It has provided me with rich opportunities, venues for activism (and success), and good friends.

While many faculty respondents positively commented about the group's resources and programs, several individuals explained why they were not personally involved with the group. The reasons included finding support from other people, frustration about the relatively small number of LGBTQ faculty who are active with the group, and a basic lack of time to spend socializing. One respondent mentioned that the group should be more sensitive to different levels of being "out" when advertising events. "I would never attend 'Queer' Happy Hour for example," but the individual would attend the event with a more subtle name. Creating and maintaining an inclusive LGBTQ community is extremely valuable to these faculty members, particularly when the in the definition of "diversity" on campus may not always include LGBTQ identity.

Defining "Diversity" on Campus

One hundred percent of respondents reported being aware of the presence of the university's institutional diversity office. Faculty respondents provided detailed comments about how they perceive "diversity" is defined on campus. While one respondent noted that the presence of an institutional diversity office "communicated that [the university] is open to addressing issues of diversity," the majority of respondents who brought up diversity expressed that the university "needs to get away from the idea that diversity means race or ethnicity." Faculty stated that the "queer community is not part of the 'diversity' in the [institutional diversity center]." Another faculty member perceived that the institutional diversity center does not intentionally neglect the LGBTQ community, but also does not make the LGBTQ community's needs a priority. Another respondent reported she found the institutional diversity center to be "extremely prejudiced against gays and lesbians." Faculty were frustrated with LGBTQ identity being overlooked as a component of institutional diversity. Additionally, some LGBTQ faculty members experienced discrimination when interacting with an office whose goal includes creating unity on campus through celebrating a variety of differences.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this paper is to examine and expose the experiences of LGBTQ faculty in the higher education environment. This study contributes to the growing the literature about workplace inclusiveness by engaging with LGBTQ faculty in the Southeastern United States, an area with traditionally conservative political and social values (Katel, 2008). Themes generated during qualitative data analysis show that study participants express feelings of anxiety and uncertainty in their careers that reflect findings from studies of non-academic workplace environments (Badgett et al., 2007; Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Renn, 2010). The fear for job security was pervasive, and faculty respondents were particularly concerned with others' reactions to their sexuality disrupting the standard academic career advancement procedure.

Faculty's career longevity fears were bolstered by their perceptions of the university's administration as unsupportive and non-affirming of LGBTQ individuals. Lack of support from the university itself prevents some LGBTQ faculty members from maximizing their potential in the workplace. This not only stifles personal and professional growth, but it is detrimental to the university's overall capabilities and talent retention.

Ottenritter (2012) asserts that a supportive and encouraging environment is necessary for student retention in higher education. Many faculty members in the current study enjoy a supportive role toward LGBTQ students and work to make their college experience as positive as possible. Faculty is aware of the needs of LGBTQ students and works to address them, but the university refuses to extend the same hand to faculty. Universities who do not meet the needs of their faculty risk losing them to competing institutions that do offer what faculty are looking for. The majority of *Fortune 500* companies offer partner benefits to help retain talent within the company (Cadrain, 2008). The lack of partner benefits is one of the most major organizational support shortcomings noted by LGBTQ faculty participants in this study. Partner benefits are important for a "LGB supportive workplace" (Huffman, et al., 2008, p. 247). While support and understanding on the individual level of the workplace for LGBTQ employees is necessary, broader institutional support is also vital (Huffman, et al., 2008). LGBTQ faculty in this study lack not just the financial plus of partner benefits, they lack the clear message of institutional support and equality sent by a university that provides partner benefits.

A LGBTQ faculty member who does not feel comfortable in the workplace may seek fellowship with other LGBTQ and allied individuals. These relations are important because, "…interpersonal relations within a group have a spillover effect that affects individual relations outside the group" (Valenti & Rockett, 2008). Faculty members also appreciated their close-knit LGBTQ community. Social connectedness with like others is an important factor in the psychological wellbeing of LGB individuals (Detrie & Lease, 2007). Engaging with others who share the same stigmatized identity can help increase self-esteem, overall positivity, and creation and sharing of coping techniques (LeBeau & Jellison, 2009). While the LGBTQ community is perceived by most faculty to be welcoming, the notion that the university's main diversity office does not see sexuality as a major component of "diversity" troubled some faculty respondents. Faculty members noted that, although there is difficulty with simultaneously celebrating one group's commonalities and accepting differences between groups, diversity should be more than race. This is a particularly interesting and noteworthy finding, because this study was conducted in the South. Broader recognition of the meaning of the term "diversity" is key to improving the awareness of sexual minorities at the university. Celebration and exploration of differences are methods of creating a "'people-friendly' workplace" (Huffman, 2008, p. 249).

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the small sample size (n= 21), but 21 participants is deemed appropriate for the qualitative approach used in this inquiry. This small sample size may be indicative of the rear of responding to a survey about sexuality, but is more likely due to the small number of LGBTQ identified faculty on a campus. Additionally, the sample was accessed using electronic listserv announcements as well as snowball sampling, and therefore the participants may not necessarily reflect the larger lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer faculty community at the university. As is the case with self-reported data, the data is subject to response bias from memory issues or other issues that may result from social acceptability of identifying as LGBTQ. The data was collected via computers and participants were explicitly ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality, which may increase the validity and trustworthiness of the data gathered.

It is also important to note that each sub-group of the LGBTQ population has unique needs and experiences that are valuable in and of themselves inside and outside of the academy. For the purposes of this study, and the small sample size, the data were reported for the LGBTQ sample population as a whole instead of separating respondents identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. It may be beneficial for subsequent researchers to recruit a larger participant group and investigate possible differences between groups.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Over the years, countless organizations have learned about the effectiveness of participation and input from multiple organizational levels in creating and sustaining positive organizational change. This study offers insight into ways to help equalize the power differential that exists in the faculty work environment. The theoretical perspective of critical theory focuses on current social theory's insufficient response to social oppression and its inability to improve humanity (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). LeCompte and Preissle's description of critical theory maintains that oppression results from concealed power as well as imbalance of power and information between groups. The primary goals of research employing critical theory are to reveal the origins of oppression, encourage understanding of reasons and repercussions of oppression, and support contribution in liberation (1993). This study works toward those goals by pulling back the curtain on oppression experienced by LGBTQ faculty, paving the way for further investigation, and providing recommendations for change.

Innovations emerge when "formal structures are made more flexible and responsive" (Olson, Eoyang, Beckhard, & Vaill, 2001, p. p. xxiv). In the highly bureaucratic world of large organizations such as universities, flexibility and responsiveness are often hard to come by and policy change is difficult to find (Brunner, 2005). While some say that top-down change reinforces the disconnected, bureaucratic nature of such an institution, the data from this study indicate that LGBTQ faculty would benefit personally and professionally from top-level support of their LGBTQ identities.

LGBTQ faculty participants in this study demonstrate phenomenal self-organizational abilities and drive for creating an inclusive, affirming community. The future of organizational change is in interactions between agents, not strictly top-down change (Olson, et al., 2001). The LGBTQ faculty community is an agent reaching out toward the university's influential policymakers in an attempt to connect new change with current operations, and top-down change

is necessary for formal LGBTQ equality. Working with the LGBTQ faculty community is an important component of change, because who better knows the community's needs than the community? There are many successful approaches to operating LGBT employee groups to improve organizational effectiveness (Githens & Aragon, 2009). Resources such as expert personnel, educational tools, and advocacy experience, can be used in collaboration with the university to implement policies that respond better to discrimination and promote equality for LGBT faculty in the workplace.

Faculty's pervasive fear for career longevity, particularly in terms of tenure and promotion tracks, should be addressed by the institution directly. This respondent group indicates that the LGBTQ faculty community is very active and supportive, yet LGBTQ faculty continue to fear for their academic futures. This signals that messages from the highest university administrators both affirming LGBTQ faculty as well as enacting equitable benefits and policies are necessary components for positive change at the university level. The fact that faculty do not feel supported by the university's administration, (in terms of equal partner benefits, inadequate "official" responses to LGBTQ-related incidents, and in one instance, the administration's inability to even converse appropriately about LGBTQ issues) is indicative of a systemic issue. Universities "have set rules and abide by them; it is often difficult and time consuming to make a change to policy" (Brunner, 2005, p. 11). However, the university has a duty to affirm the existence of LGBTQ faculty and collaborate with faculty to create a safe working environment. Institutional changes that positively impact all points of the minority faculty trajectory, from recruitment to tenuring, actively create an inclusive institution (Rosser, 1990). Extending full domestic partner benefits to LGBTQ faculty is essential. It is also vital that LGBTQ faculty have a clear method of not only reporting discrimination, but also receiving an effective response from the university. The difficulty of change is no excuse for a university continuing to underserve an underserved population, particularly when the LGBTQ faculty population is actively working as an agent of change.

Higher education and research studies are instruments of societal change, and administrative support for and collaboration with LGBTQ faculty in the workplace is vital to improving professional development, personal wellbeing, and the overall inclusivity of universities. The participants in this study clearly present issues that are imperative to address, but are ignored by universities every day. Researchers must continue studying the LGBTQ faculty experience on larger and more generalizable scales and using findings to build the case for necessary change. Universities must send a message to their employees that inequality is intolerable. This message involves acknowledging unequal treatment in workplace, implementing mechanisms of reporting maltreatment and reacting to it seriously, using inclusive language in all official literature and functions, granting equal benefits to LGBTQ faculty and their partners, and partnering with LGBTQ organizations on campus and nationwide to publicly support LGBTQ faculty.

References

Badgett, M. V., Lee, H. L., Sears, B., & Ho, D. (2007). *Bias in the workplace: Consistent evidence of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute of UCLA School of Law.

Beemyn, B. G. (2008). Genderqueer, glbtq: An encyclopedia of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer culture. Available from http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/genderqueer.html

Bilimoria, D., & Stewart, A. J. (2009). "Don't ask, don't tell": The academic climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty in science and engineering. *NWSA Journal (Project Muse), 21*(2), 85-103.

Brunner, B. R. (2005). Linking diversity and public relations in higher education. *PRism, 2011*(June 9). Retrieved from http://www.prismjournal.org/fileadmin/Praxis/Files/Journal_Files/Issue3/Brunner.pdf

Cadrain, D. (2008). Sexual equity in the workplace: Building gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender diversity into your workforce can be a challenging - yet reachable- goal. *HR Magazine, 53*, 44-51.

Castillo, J. J. (2009). Snowball sampling. Retrieved Nov 21, 2013, from http://explorable.com/snowball-sampling

Chattopadhyay, P., Tluchowska, M., & George, E. (2004). Identifying the ingroup: A closer look at the influence of demographic dissimilarity on employee social identity. *Academy of Management Review, 29*(2), 180-202.

Detrie, P. M., & Lease, S. H. (2007). The relation of social support, connectedness, and collective self-esteem to the psychological well-being of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Homosexuality, 53*(4), 173-199.

Embrick, D. G., Walther, C. S., & Wickins, C. M. (2007). Working class masculinity: Keeping gay men and lesbians out of the workplace. *Sex Roles, 56*(11/12), 757-766.

Githens, R. P., & Aragon, S. R. (2009). LGBT employee groups: Goals and organizational structures. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 11*(1), 121-135.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Goodman, L. A. (1961). Snowball sampling. *Annals of Mathematical Statistics, 32*(1), 148-170.

Griffeth, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: 'Coming out' at work. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(6), 1191-1199.

Huffman, A. H., Watrous-Rodriguez, K. M., & King, E. B. (2008). Supporting a diverse workforce: What type of support is most meaningful for lesbian and gay employees? *Human Resource Management, 47*(2), 237-253.

Katel, P. (2008). Race & politics. *CQ Researcher, 18*(25), 589-591.

Lantz, G. D. (2009). How do members of the gay and lesbian community view diversity training in the workplace? *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 69*(10-A), 38-57.

LeBeau, R. T., & Jellison, W. A. (2009). Why get involved? Exploring gay and bisexual men's experience of the gay community. *Journal of Homosexuality, 56*, 56-76.

LeCompte, M. D., & Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research* (2nd ed.). New York: Academic Press.

Olson, E. E., Eoyang, G. H., Beckhard, R., & Vaill, P. (2001). *Facilitating organization change: Lessons from complexity science* (1 ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Ottenritter, N. (2012). Crafting a caring and inclusive environment for LGBTQ community college students, faculty, and staff. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36*, 531-538.

Pope, M. (2012). Embracing and harnessing diversity in the US workforce: What have we learned? . *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 12*(1), 17-30.

Ragins, B. R. (2004). Sexual orientation in the workplace: The unique work and career experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual workers. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, 23*, 35-120.

Ragins, B. R., & Cornwell, J. M. (2001). Pink triangles: Antecedents and consequences of perceived workplace discrimination against gay and lesbian employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(6), 1244-1261.

Rankin, S. R. (2005). Campus climates for sexual minorities. *New Directions for Student Services, 2005*(111), 17-23.

Renn, K. A. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher, 39*(2), 132-141.

Rosser, J. M. (1990). The role of the university president in realizing the multicultural university. *American Behavioral Scientist, 34*(2), 223-231.

StataCorp. (2007). *Stata Statistical Software: Release 10*. College Station, TX: StataCorp LP.

"SurveyGizmo". (2011). Retrieved January 1, 2010, from www.surveygizmo.com

Valenti, M. A., & Rockett, T. (2008). The effects of demographic differences on forming intragroup relationships. *Small Group Research, 39*(2), 179-202.

Weiss, N. A. (2012). *Introductory statistics* (9 ed.). Boston: Pearson Addison-Wesley.

Zemsky, B., & Sanlo, R. L. (2005). Do policies matter? *New Directions for Student Services*(111), 7-15.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■

Jessie Barnett received her PhD in Health Promotion and Behavior from the University of Georgia with specializations in qualitative research methods and LGBTQ health and wellness. She is interested in research with the LGBTQ community, specifically looking at health disparities and successful health behavior change.

Dr. Jessica Legge Muilenburg is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Promotion and Behavior in the College of Public Health at the University of Georgia. Her research interests include substance use and abuse, sexual health, and adolescent risky behaviors.

Dr. Corey W. Johnson is a Professor in the Department of Leadership, Education Administration and Policy's Qualitative Research program. He is also an affiliate faculty member for the Institute for Women's Studies. He teaches courses on social justice, gender and sexuality, qualitative data collection, ethnography and philosophy of science.

Jennifer Miracle was the Director of the University of Georgia's LGBT Resource Center from 2008 to 2013. She was also an active member of GLOBES, UGA's LGBTQ faculty and staff organization, and continues to represent and advocate for the LGBTQ community.