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Examining Experience, Role, and LGBTQ Identity in Department Chairs

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Examining Experience, Role, and LGBTQ Identity in Department Chairs

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Abstract

LGBTQ rights have progressed tremendously in recent times, not long ago LGBTQ individuals could be arrested simply for being themselves. Though many rights have been won, the fight for equity continues. This is especially true in the field of education, many think of higher education as a pathway to equity, but in reality it can serve to solidify societal inequities. Campus climate studies of LGBTQ faculty members in higher education show that climate is most impactful at the departmental level (Nichols & Scott, 2005), others highlight the importance of department chairs in fostering climate within their departments (Bystydzienski et al., 2017). Literature reveals a gap in examining the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs. Understanding these experiences and how LGBTQ identity impacts their various roles could provide insight to department chairs on how to improve their departmental climate for all faculty members, especially those within the LGTBQ community. This study utilizes Educational Criticism to gain a better understanding of how LGBTQ department chairs experience and work within their roles as faculty and departmental leaders. Two LGBTQ department chairs, Dani and Alex, highlight their experiences, how roles intersect with their queer identity, and examine how they challenge the norms of what it means to be a departmental leader. Their experiences are framed by not only their queer identity, but also in this case their gender presentation. Dani and Alex's queer identity is present in many roles, but it is negotiated differently in each. Participants bring an outsider perspective to the

department chair position, this perspective is influenced by their experiences and fuels their fight for equity in their departments and at their institutions.

Keywords: LGBTQ, department chairs, identity, Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship

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Chapter One: Introduction

Progress takes time. This is true in most aspects of life, however, there are a few issues where things seem to progress radically overnight. One could argue that the relative speed at which issues within the LGBTQ community have progressed is one of those areas. In 2009, President Barak Obama signed the Matthew Shepard Act, which expanded the federal definition of a hate-crime to include sexual orientation as well as gender identity. In 2011, the United States military officially ended their "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which opened the door for LGBTQ individuals to serve openly in the military. Two years later, in 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act that prohibited same-sex couples from receiving marriage benefits at the federal level (GLSEN, 2019). This decision paved the way for the landmark 2015 ruling in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case. On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples were entitled to the same rights as heterosexual couples, which includes the right to marry and have that marriage recognized at both the state and federal level (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). Despite all this progress, the Supreme Court continues to hear cases that challenge the progress that has been made up to this point. In June 2020, in a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that employers cannot discriminate against LGBTQ individuals because they were protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (*Bostock v. Clayton County,* 2019).

All of the legal progress mentioned above, does not guarantee that LGBTQ individuals will be treated equally in other areas of their life. As evidenced by the case, *Bostock v. Clayton County* 2019, recently ruled on by the Supreme Court, environments such as work or school may not be as open and welcoming to LGBTQ individuals. LGBTQ individuals have had a long and often turbulent history within the field of education. It is difficult to identify another field that has at multiple times in its history, actively searched for and purged LGBTQ individuals within its ranks (Blount, 2018). As a result of this, research on LGBTQ issues has lagged compared to the research of other marginalized communities in education.

The first of these systematic purges took place in Florida in 1958 as a result of the work of the Johns Committee (Graves, 2009). This committee was tasked with removing communists and homosexuals from universities in the state. As a result of this committee, many LGBTQ educators working at higher education institutions throughout the state lost their jobs (Graves, 2009). Those that remained were left to hide quietly in the closet for fear of being outed and meeting the same fate as their fellow LGBTQ colleagues.

The second quest to purge LGBTQ educators, which also began in Florida, came in 1977 as a result of the passage of a Dade County ordinance that gave LGBTQ individuals protections against discrimination in employment, housing, and public service (Blount, 2018). Shortly after its passage, Anita Bryant began a crusade where she pushed her Christian beliefs and values as a reason to strip the newly gained rights of LGBTQ individuals in the city. Her work resulted in the repeal of the ordinance and provided

others across the country a blueprint of how to keep LGBTQ individuals from gaining ground in the fight for rights (Blount, 2018).

Definitions

LGBTQ research falls into three different categories, but before discussing the categories of LGBTQ research, it is important to establish definitions and explain the various acronyms that will be utilized throughout this study. The acronym used to identify the queer community is ever changing and growing to include the various sexual orientations and gender identifications. When I proposed this study and placed the call for participants, LGBTQQIAAP was the most inclusive acronym used for the queer community. Since then, a new acronym, LGBTBEQIAP is now in use. This acronym removed duplicate letters for example, instead of having two Q's for queer and questioning individuals, the new acronym has one to represent both groups. Additionally, the previous acronym did not hold space for individuals that fell outside of the binary spectrum. The new acronym provides space for non-binary individuals by adding GE. The acronym is broken down as follows: L=Lesbian; G=Gay; B=Bisexual; T=Tran*,Transgender, & Two-Spirit (2S; Native Identity); GE=Gender Expansive; Q=Queer, & Questioning; I=Intersex; A=Agender, Asexual & Aromantic; P=Pansexual, Pan/Polygender (Saige, 2021).

One finds the acronym that represents the queer community in many forms. Above, we discussed the complete acronym, but it is rare to find the complete acronym used in the literature. Historically, the acronym LGB was used, but more contemporary research expands to include T and sometimes Q. One can also find LGBTQIA or

LGBTQ+ used in some of the more recent literature. There are a few issues here that should be discussed, the first is the combining of individuals of different sexual orientations and gender identities into the same group. It is important to understand that these are two distinct concepts and should not be used interchangeably. Sexual orientation refers to who one is attracted to, while gender identity relates to how one identifies in their gender (Savitsky, 2020). The second issue comes in shortening the acronym or using the "+" symbol to represent the latter half of the acronym. For historically marginalized, or worse, invisible members of society, it can be hurtful to cut them out of the group representation by shortening or lumping their group together with others in the representation of a symbol. In an attempt to be inclusive and avoid minimizing any groups, in this study I will utilize an acronym that includes all groups represented in my study (LGBTQ), participant demographics will be covered in detail in future chapters. In the discussion of other studies, I will utilize the acronym used by the authors of that study.

LGBTQ Research Categories

LGBTQ research in education generally falls into one of three categories (Renn, 2018). The first category looks at visibility, these are often descriptive studies that highlight the existence of LGBTQ individuals. The second category is campus climate which examines how LGBTQ individuals perceive their campus climate. The third category looks at LGBTQ identities and how they are developed. To date, most LGBTQ studies in education look at the experiences of LGBTQ students (Renn, 2018). Research that examines LGBTQ identity in K-12 teachers and faculty within higher education

often focus on the campus climate. Many of the climate studies to date have determined that an LGBTQ individual's perception of campus climate largely hinges on the climate and culture within their specific department (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Nichols & Scott, 2005).

This study will examine a combination of all three categories. Since there have been no studies solely focused on LGBTQ department chairs, it will be a sort of visibility study. Participants of the study will be asked to discuss their campus climate and their experiences as department chairs at their respective institutions which will fall into the campus climate category. Finally, by examining how their roles as faculty and departmental leaders impact their LGBTQ identity this study will also touch on the subject of identity.

Higher Education Structure

Although specific organizational structures can differ from one institution of higher education to another, they all generally operate within similar reporting and hierarchical frameworks. At the top is the president or chancellor which is largely a figurehead, fundraiser, and tone setter for the school (Kezar, 2008). Below the president, one generally finds administrative positions such as provosts who oversee specific divisions of the institution and deans who are largely responsible for the operations within their respective colleges. Underneath the deans are department chairs who run the day-to-day operations within their specific department and work with the faculty that teach within the department (Gmelch & Burns, 1993). Finally, the faculty in the department are responsible for teaching courses, advising students, all while conducting

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research within their content area(s) (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). In this study of department chairs, it is important to consider the relationship department chairs have with those directly above them (deans) in the higher education hierarchy and well as those directly below them (faculty). The relationship between department chairs and deans is similar to the relationship between department chairs and faculty, deans can help support department chairs much like how department chairs can help support faculty in their department (Berdrow, 2010).

Diving into the literature on department chairs, one does not have to look far to find the description of the two-faced Janus god from Roman mythology, this description of the roles of department chair was first put forth by Gmelch and Burns in the early 1990's. It seeks to demonstrate how department chair's dual roles have them looking at the world as both a faculty member and an administrator. Many have written about the struggles of department chairs in navigating their role conflict and strain (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Miller & Seagren, 1997; Seagren et al., 1994). These challenges come as little surprise once you begin to examine the training incoming department chairs receive before or as they come into their new position (Aziz et al., 2005; Filan, 1999; Pettit, 1999).

Problem

Research around LGBTQ identity and related issues have been done on many of the groups described above, there are studies that look at experiences of LGBTQ presidents (Abdul-Alim, 2017; Bullard, 2013), LGBTQ faculty (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Wright, 1993), and LGBTQ administrators, this includes academic advisors and

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student affairs professionals (Broadhurst et al., 2018; Rankin, 2003; Vaccaro, 2012). LGBTQ department chairs have been included in some studies (Nichols & Scott, 2005), but to this point there have been no studies that focus solely on the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs. This lack of research is surprising considering the role department chairs play in their institutions and departments, in the next chapter we will review the impacts that department chairs can have on culture, which is most impactful for faculty at the departmental level.

Purpose

Currently, a gap exists in the literature around LGBTQ department chairs and their experiences as LGBTQ individuals working within their dual roles as faculty and administrators. Literature demonstrates that LGBTQ faculty experience is largely impacted at the department level (Bystydzienski et al., 2017) and that department chairs play a big role in cultivating culture at the departmental level (Ambrose et al., 2005). This is especially true for women, LGBTQ, and other minority faculty. Culture and climate often influence faculty motivation, satisfaction, and tenure. Studies have shown that effective department chairs can go a long way in creating an inclusive culture within their departments (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998). Understanding the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs and how their various roles as faculty and department leader impacts their LGBTQ identity could provide insight to current and future department chairs on how to improve their departmental climate for all faculty members, but especially those within the LGBTQ community. The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of

LGBTQ department chairs, understand how their various roles impact their LGBTQ identity, and see if/how they are challenging the norms of departmental leadership.

Interpretive Frameworks

Several interpretive frameworks will be helpful in understanding this study. First, one must understand the distinction between position and role, department chair is the position and within that position, one finds the roles of faculty and administrator. Queer theory will be used to explore how sexual orientation impacts department chairs roles as faculty and department leaders and if/how LGBTQ department chairs challenge the norm of what it means to be departmental leaders. Parker Palmer's ideas on teacher identity will be used to examine participants' sense of identity as it relates to their roles as faculty members. I combined these two frameworks because I found that queer theory, while providing the foundation for the importance of gender/sexuality did not provide a way to connect between those concepts and their significant impact on individuals as they relate to roles they hold in their lives. Palmer's ideas around self-knowledge, identity, and integrity highlight the impact and importance of honoring all of one's identities and not leaving them at the classroom door. *Figure 1* models how the various concepts of LGBTQ, faculty, and leadership identities intersect with each other, while queer theory is the outer circle encompassing each of the three areas.

Figure 1

Interpretive Frameworks Diagram
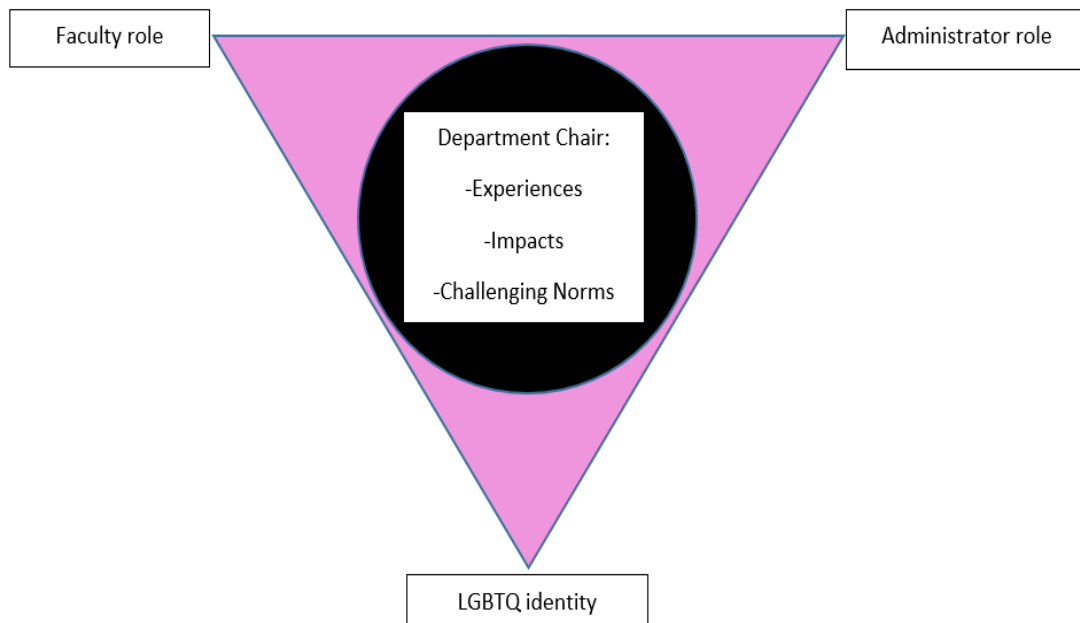
Position and Role

A discussion of the difference between position and role is necessary at this point. Biddle and Thomas (1966) state that positions can be differentiated by their common attributes, behaviors, or reactions of others toward them. In 1984, Allen and van de Vliert added that "a position carries with it expectations concerning what the person who occupies that place in the social system ought to do or to be" (p. 4). Biddle and Thomas (1966) explain that a role "is the set of prescriptions defining what the behavior of a position member should be" (p. 29). So in this study, department chair is the position and faculty/administrator are roles within that position. Initially, this study aimed to examine the roles of faculty and administrator and how they intersect with LGBTQ identity.

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However, during interviews, participants discussed the role of scholar as well, therefore, that role will also be examined as it intersects with LGBTQ identity.

Queer Theory

This study is grounded in the interpretive framework of queer theory. Queer theory, much like the LGBTQ community is a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Queer theory is not one single interpretive framework, and in the past has been used in seemingly contradictory ways. Halperin (2003) explains how the term queer theory came to be, initially as a joke. An individual organizing a conference jumped on the idea when they heard the word "queer" beginning to be reclaimed by activists. They used the term "queer theory" as the title for the conference, causing an uproar in the academic community. The individual was trying to make a point that the common term at the time, "lesbian and gay studies" seemed to imply those were the only represented individuals, among other critiques. Halperin (2003) writes,

> The moment that the scandalous formula 'queer theory' was uttered, however, it became the name of an already established school of theory, as if it constituted a set of specific doctrines, a singular, substantive perspective on the world, a particular theorization of human experience, equivalent in that respect to psychoanalytic or Marxist theory. The only problem was that no one knew what the theory was. And for the very good reason that no such theory existed. (p. 340)

Queer theory then, had to be established after-the-fact to fill the void that was exposed.

Tierney (1997) explains that queer theory builds on lesbian and gay studies by combining those ideas with the feminists' idea that gender is an important part of self-identity. Generally, queer theory challenges the idea of identity categories and gender roles. Watson (2005) writes,

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> Queer theory potentially allows for a deeper engagement with the complexities of subjectivity; how people resist, transform and enact their positions, (regardless of the constraints of identity categories)…Queer theory can be an important lens through which to analyze how the very constitution and enactment of sexual identities…impacts in terms of how power relations circulate in groups and how identities may be sought and confirmed in the light of those relations. (p. 78-79)

Applying these concepts from queer theory to this study will help frame the heterosexists systems and structures that still exist in higher education today and will help us understand if/how LGBTQ department chairs challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader.

Teacher Identity

In *The Courage to Teach,* Parker Palmer (1998) discusses the importance of self-knowledge in the practice of teaching. He writes,

> As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge – and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subjects. (p. 2)

Self-knowledge is important in the formation of a teacher's identity. Without self-knowledge and understanding, a teacher cannot bring their full self to their classroom. Bringing one's full self and being their authentic selves is important for both teachers and students (Clarke, 1996; Gregory, 2004). By bringing their full selves to the classroom and being authentic with students, teachers can model behaviors and help make their classroom more open, accepting, and inclusive for students to being to bring their full, authentic selves to the classroom also. Palmer (1998) writes, "Good teachers possess a

capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves" (p. 11). In order to build connectedness, it is important to have knowledge of one's self and be your authentic and whole self.

Additional concepts from Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* will be helpful in framing teacher identity and self-knowledge. The first of these is what Palmer (1998) terms "the teacher within," he writes, "The teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be but of what is real for us, of what is true" (p.30). This is one's calling to teach, one's desire to help others grow, develop, and become better versions of themselves. Identity and integrity are key components here, Palmer (1998) explains, "Identity and integrity are not the granite from which fictional heroes are hewn. They are subtle dimensions of the complex, demanding, and lifelong process of self-discovery" (p. 14). Identity is all of the things that comprise one's self and integrity is allowing yourself to live in wholeness with all your identities. This study will examine the extent to which participants LGBTQ identities intersects with their role as faculty members.

Research Questions

There are three research questions guiding this study: 1) what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs? 2) What is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity? 3) How are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all?

The first research question, what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chair, aims to fill a gap in the literature around campus climate for LGBTQ individuals. Research has been conducted examining experiences for LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrative positions such as university presidents, but no study has looked solely at the experience of LGBTQ department chairs. By examining the impact of the dual roles (faculty and administrator) held by department chairs on their LGBTQ identity, I am hoping to better understand if/how some roles have more or less of an impact on certain aspects of one's LGBTQ identity. The final research question, how are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all, will bring in queer theory by examining what it means to "queer" the department chair position.

Summary

LGBTQ individuals have seen tremendous growth in their rights in the past ten years and it is hard to find an issue that is seen this much growth and rapid acceptance. However, this does not mean that LGBTQ individuals do not face challenges in the world today, this is especially true in the workplace. It is difficult to identify another field that has at multiple times in its history, actively searched for and purged LGBTQ individuals within its ranks (Blount, 2018). As a result of this, research on LGBTQ issues has lagged compared to the research of other marginalized communities in education. Renn (2018) states that LGBTQ research in education usually falls within three categories, visibility, campus climate, and identity. This study will touch on all three categories by allowing department chairs to share their stories and experiences, seeking to understand the

campus climate for LGBTQ department chairs, and asking them to reflect on their various roles and their impact on LGBTQ identity. This study will utilize the LGBTQ acronym to describe the community because that is the acronym that is most representative of the identities of participants in this study.

This study seeks to fill the gap in literature around LGBTQ department chairs, though there have been studies that include LGBTQ department chairs (Nichols & Scott, 2005), no studies have solely focused on LGBTQ department chairs. Literature shows that faculty experience is largely impacted at the department level (Bystydzienski et al., 2017), that department chairs play a big role in cultivating culture at the departmental level (Ambrose et al., 2005), and effective department chairs can go a long way in creating an inclusive culture within their departments (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998). By understanding the impact their various roles as faculty member and administrator has on their LGBTQ identity we can better understand the changes they seek to make in their department. Finally, by examining how LGBTQ department chairs challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader, if they do, we can begin to "queer" the department chair position and understand how all department chairs can work to dismantle the heterosexist systems in place in higher education.

Several concepts are important to highlight for this study, first is the distinction between position and role. Department chair is a position and within that position, one finds many roles including teacher, administrator, and scholar. The next idea that will be important revolves around teacher identity and self-knowledge as discussed by Parker Palmer. This will be the focus of the second research question that examines the impact

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of various roles on LGBTQ identity. Finally, queer theory provides the framework to consider system structure and consider if/how LGBTQ department chairs are "queering" what it means to be a leader in their institutions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to gain a better understanding of the topic and the current research that exists, one must first examine the literature. This study requires the examination of literature on LGBTQ experiences in higher education as well as department chairs in higher education. An examination of the literature around department chairs reveals that often individuals are placed in this position with little to no training or experience and must learn while doing the job (Aziz et al., 2005; Wilson, 2001). As a result of this, it is not surprising to find that department chairs often report feeling overwhelmed and lack a desire to continue to or return to the position again (Carroll, 1991; Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Research addressing LGBTQ individuals in education paints a complex picture. The landscape may be welcoming for some, but can be hostile and sometimes dangerous, for others. A 2010 campus climate study found that LGBTQ respondents were significantly less likely to feel comfortable or very comfortable with their overall campus climate, department/work unit climate, and classroom climates than their heterosexual colleagues (Rankin et al., 2010). Studies have also demonstrated that strong leadership can help improve the environment for LGBTQ individuals (D'Augelli, 1989).

Literature Search Procedures

This section describes the search process followed to identify literature pertaining to LGBTQ department chairs. I began by searching various databases including Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), PsycINFO, SAGE Premier, and Education Collection (Proquest), in addition to Google Scholar and cross referencing the reference sections of articles collected. I utilized Boolean search combining the following keywords into various groupings: LGBTQ, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, department chair, faculty, educational leadership, higher education. I excluded studies that examined only K-12 teacher experience and articles looking at only LGBTQ student experience. In the subsections below, I will outline the literature around the department chair position, its roles and responsibilities, as well as LGBTQ campus climate and experiences in higher education.

Campus Climate & LGBTQ Experiences

Reviewing the literature discussing campus climate and LGBTQ experiences in higher education, six articles highlight the impact of climate at the departmental level (Chandler, 2016; Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Kezar et al., 2007; Messinger, 2009; Nichols & Scott, 2005; Skelton, 1999). In 2005, the University of Maryland published the findings of their examination of the climate for LGBTQ individuals on campus. Early in the report, the authors explain, "Thus the climate question has to be viewed department by department, and for LGBT-identified faculty and staff, it boils down to 'location, location, location…'" (Nichols & Scott, 2005, p. 7-8). This means that LGBTQ individuals in a biology department at a school may have a very different experience

from someone in the engineering or sociology department at that same school. Various studies highlight examples of both positive and negative departmental climates for LGBTQ individuals.

Positive campus climates for LGBTQ individuals include some characteristics such as: inclusive policies related to same-sex partner benefits, LGBTQ resource center on campus, acceptance from colleagues in their department (Vaccaro, 2012), and support from their department chair (Kezar et al., 2007). A national sample of 104 gay, lesbian, and bisexual faculty members at higher education institutions were surveyed to determine the campus climate they encountered, and findings suggest that the largest correlation for supportive campus environments were associated with personal support from colleagues and their willingness to respond affirmatively when working with LGBTQ individuals (Sears, 2002). This finding was also discussed in Vaccaro's (2012) work: LGBTQ friendly policies such as same-sex benefits did not matter as much to participants as having support and acceptance from colleagues in their office or department. In a dissertation, that examined factors that contributed to LG faculty decision to stay or leave a specific higher education institution in the Midwestern United States, the author writes

> Faculty who felt they worked in a supportive campus and department climate, worked on campuses with an LGBTQ Resource Center, saw representative leadership, had an opportunity to mentor (students and/or peers), were involved in decision-making, and had perceived or achieved advancement opportunities had a higher level of job satisfaction contributing to their long-term retention. (Chandler, 2016, p. vi)

Conversely, negative campus climates can include: bullying, name calling, unfair teaching loads, and real or perceived lack of support from colleagues or supervisors (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Nichols & Scott, 2005; Skelton, 1999). In addition to these

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factors, possibly as a result of them, this at times can lead to a perception especially among LGBTQ individuals that leadership positions in higher education are unobtainable (Nichols & Scott, 2005). When looking at changes in policies in higher education institutions, research indicates that the individuals who were most impacted by discrimination were usually the ones who led the fight for policy changes (Messinger, 2009).

Although there have been no studies that solely focus on LGBTQ department chair experience, research yielded three articles (Chandler, 2016; Nichols & Scott, 2005; Rankin, 2003) that include department chairs as participants. Department chairs are similar to faculty members in many ways, they generally are faculty members both pre- and post- their time as a department chair, but they also face some unique challenges to holding a dual role within the department.

Similar to LGBTQ faculty members, department chairs can also face hurdles in obtaining equal benefits at their institution as highlighted, "As one department chair newly hired after a national search commented, 'I almost didn't come to the university because of the lack of benefits. If we get an offer from an institution that provides them, we would take it'" (Nichols & Scott, 2005, p. 8). Rankin's (2003) study found that, "Twenty respondents replied affirmatively when asked whether they had 'been denied University/College employment or promotion due to [their] sexual orientation/gender identity' within the past year" (p.26).

The one article identified in this literature review that did focus on department chairs was a dissertation, previously mentioned. This study did not explicitly seek out

department chairs, but surprisingly, all of the participants in their study, held at one time

or another dual roles as faculty and administrators. The study did not state the exact

number of department chairs included in the study, but concluded,

> As many of the participants serve in dual faculty and administrator roles, the
> conflict of roles creates a more challenging situation, as they, in their
> administrator roles, are expected to be more neutral in regard to policy and subject
> matter. For those in department chair positions have to balance the offerings of
> the department with personal feelings regarding incorporating LGBTQ topics into
> the coursework. (Chandler, 2016, p.88)

Roles & Responsibilities of Department Chairs

Now that we have examined campus climate and LGBTQ experiences, we will

examine the literature regarding roles and responsibilities of department chairs.

Department chair's dual roles require that they look at the world as both a faculty

member and an administrator. Diving into the literature on department chairs, one does

not have to look far to find a description that personifies this experience. In the early

1990's, Gmelch and Burns provided their description of the two-faced Janus god from

Roman mythology, this comparison helped those outside the role understand some of the

challenges that are associated as a result of occupying dual roles. Many have written

about the struggles of department chairs in navigating their role conflict and strain

(Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Miller & Seagren, 1997; Seagren et al., 1994). These

challenges come as no surprise once you begin to examine the training incoming

department chairs receive before or as they come into their new position (Aziz et al.,

2005; Filan, 1999; Pettit, 1999). To get a better understanding of the department chair

position, it is important to know how the position came to be, how it has transformed

over the years to its current form, and how individuals generally come into this position.

Hecht et al. (1999) outline how the need for department chair positions grew as institutions of higher education expanded, following the Civil War many duties were handled by the President of the school. The first deans were appointed in the 1890's which moved the discipline and curricular authority from the President to the academic deans. As enrollment and academic departments grew, so too did the need for additional organizational management, thus the creation of the department chair. According to Tucker (1993), there are two types of departments, pure departments are those (usually at larger institutions) that have faculty with similar backgrounds teaching in the same area. Mixed departments consist of faculty with differing backgrounds teachings in different areas, these are usually found at smaller institutions. There are three size classifications for departments depending on the number of people, small (4-9), medium (10-19), and large (20+) (Tucker, 1993).

In a national study looking at department chairs, Carroll (1991) found that most chairs follow a general path to their position as department chair usually starting in their disciplines as graduate students. From there, they often assume faculty positions in their discipline and begin to work up the ranks of faculty before eventually becoming chair. The path to the department chair position can look different depending on the institution and discipline, chairs in hard sciences tend to serve longer terms and remain in administration compared to their colleagues in soft science disciplines (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Though most chairs follow a similar path to get there, they often have vastly different reasons for assuming the position of department chair. Booth (1982) discusses several reasons that faculty may accept the department chair position including:

boredom in current faculty position, lack of other qualified candidates, and/or a desire to lead change within their department. These motivations can be grouped into two categories, extrinsic which include sense of duty to school/department, lack of qualified candidates, or urging from colleagues. Intrinsic motivations include desire for change or more control, relocation opportunity, financial, or desire for personal growth/development (Seedorf, 1990).

Institutions have different methods for determining who will serve in the department chair position. Carroll (1991) examined how chairs were hired and found that there were five methods of chair selection: (1) election by faculty, (2) election by faculty w/ dean approval, (3) dean appointment, (4) rotational appointment within department, (5) other method. He also found that the length of the appointment varied depending on the appointment type, institution, and department.

Department chairs can be viewed as the bridge between students, faculty, and the upper administration of the university. Seagren et al. (1993) outline some of the responsibilities of department chairs which include: curriculum/program development, budgeting, planning, faculty workload, student appeals, and faculty development. Department chairs are also responsible for other matters such as: data management, facilities management, scheduling, communication with internal and external stakeholders, department governance, and office management, all of which is on top of their research and teaching load.

In exploring department chair's responsibilities, Gmelch and Miskin (1995) highlighted four major roles: manager, leader, scholar, and faculty developer. As

managers, department chairs duties include: scheduling and leading meetings; managing budgets; managing faculty, staff, students; meeting deadlines; public relations and social functions (Wolverton et al., 1999). As leaders of their departments, department chairs need to have a clear vision and understanding of their goals and be able to clearly articulate this to internal stakeholders including deans, faculty, staff, and students as well as external stakeholders such as community organizations, accrediting agencies, etc. Tucker (1993) explains that department chairs often have the responsibility and power to recommend faculty for appointments; control budgets; set class/teaching schedules; influence institutional policies and procedures; and create/maintain departmental culture. They are also often asked to represent their department/school at organizational meetings and are leaders in establishing their departmental goals/objectives (Wolverton et al., 2005).

Department chairs do not have the luxury of putting their scholarly duties on hold while tending to the more administrative aspects of the position, they are often still expected to continue their research of publishing timelines and teaching, which makes the ability to delegate critical in the department chair position. This leads to the final, and some would argue most important role as faculty developer. Gmelch and Miskin (1995) argue that faculty is a department's most important asset while highlighting responsibilities around recruitment and hiring, motivating and nurturing, encouraging research, and goal creation/evaluation for department chairs.

Research on campus climate for LGBTQ individuals hone in on the development of departmental culture (included in the leader role, described above) and faculty

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development as areas of critical importance. Next, we will review the literature highlighting the role of the department chair in establishing climate within their departments. Four articles highlight the importance of this role (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Chandler, 2016; LaSala et al.,2008; Skelton, 1999). Department chairs set the tone and lay out expectations for how their department will function. Bystydzienski et al. (2017) explain that department chairs "can become agents of culture change because they occupy administrative positions closest to where most significant activity research, teaching and service occurs in academia" (p. 2301). The authors go on to state, "they can influence the manner in which faculty are expected to interact. Department chairs, in particular, are well positioned to provide leadership in creating an inclusive and supportive culture for faculty, staff, and students" (p. 2301). Here, it is important to highlight that the departmental climate is crucial for several reasons, including that this is the level at which evaluations occur and which promotion and tenure decisions begin (Lucas & Associates, 2000; Wergin, 2003).

There are both positive and negative examples highlighting the role department chairs play. Positive examples include stepping in to stop the spread of rumors (Skelton, 1999) and incorporating inclusive languages in policies (Kahn & Gorski, 2016). Chandler (2016) points out, "If the department deems diversity and inclusion important enough to hold its staff accountable for it, it is far more likely that those gay and lesbian faculty will see supportive actions and discussions" (p.129).

However, even those with positive seeming intentions can demonstrate discriminatory thinking in regard to LGBTQ individuals. From examples of department

chairs encouraging LGBTQ faculty to stay in the closet for the benefit of their career (Chandler, 2016), to stating it is okay as long as it will not interfere with one's ability to do the job (Skelton, 1999). These highlight the examples of seeming support and care without regard to the experience and identity of LGBTQ individuals. Finally, there are also examples of careers being side-tracked, if not outright ruined as the result of disclosure of one's LGBTQ identity. LaSala et al. (2008) explain how one of the authors lost professional relationships as a result of coming out prior to receiving tenure. Before coming out, he played tennis regularly with his department chair, dean, and chancellor, however, after he came out his weekly invitations stopped.

Many articles identified (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Callaghan & Mizzi, 2015; Chandler, 2016; Kezar et al., 2007; Messinger, 2009; Scharron-Del Rio, 2018; Skelton, 1999; Wright, 1993) include recommendations for how department chairs can improve their departmental climate. These articles will help provide the lens for the criticism aspect of the research methodology, a concept which will be discussed further in the following chapter. Before getting into specific qualities, actions, and practices that department chairs can adopt, it is important to remember that climate is ultimately fostered at the department level and that department chairs are important in setting the tone for the climate of their department. In examining studies of educational administrators and queer educators, Callaghan and Mizzi (2015) state

> Educational administrators—such as principals, lead teachers, or department heads in the K–12 environment; department chairs, deans, and senior leaders in higher learning settings; and executive directors and educational program leaders of adult and community education centers—ensure that the educational policies are followed, and that decisions are made in accordance with various levels of policy documentation. Educational leaders are responsible for the educational

policy and the administrative decisions that directly affect the work conditions and work culture of teachers. (p.1-2)

Instead of coaching LGBTQ faculty to remain in the closet, department chairs should "be aware of the dangers and opportunities which open to an out faculty member in the university" (Wright, 1993, p. 31), and help guide them through the process. Scharron-Del Rio (2018) echoes similar advice when they explain, "Having colleagues, chairs, and deans who understand the vulnerability of junior faculty with multiple marginalized identities and the increased demand on service they face can help them stay in academia and achieve tenure and promotion" (p.7). One might ask, why the faculty member cannot just say "no?" What these individuals do not understand is that for tenure-track faculty, saying "no" can have tremendous negative implications for the future of one's career. Scharron-Del Rio (2018) reasons,

> Senior faculty, department chairs, and deans need to actively mentor junior faculty and protect them from tokenization and too many service requests. A chair saying no to a service request for a faculty member (in consultation with them) protects the scholar from future negative repercussions in promotion and tenure that can arise when turning down senior faculty and administrators. (p.8)

Additional methods of support include finding ways to allow LGBTQ faculty to both support their community and their careers and providing funding for LGBTQ courses or programs in the department (Kezar et al., 2007). However, department chairs cannot do it alone, they need support from the next level in the university, their dean. Bystydzienski et al. (2017) explain,

> chairs must create and sustain a shared, inclusive vision for the department for meaningful change to occur. Department chairs have an important role in leading culture change and they are more likely to do so with the encouragement and support of their immediate supervisors, college deans. In order to be effective change agents, department chairs need to have access to programs and training

resources that will allow them to build inclusive and productive departmental cultures. (p. 2304)

Deans often oversee multiple departments within their academic unit and can have a major impact on the manner in which faculty within their units interact (Bystydzienski et al., 2017). To help their department chairs be as effective as possible, deans should help make sure their department chairs are educated on the latest university policies and assist with the allocation of resources (Messinger, 2009). Deans can also help reinforce the climate and inclusive practices of their department chairs by creating a welcoming and inclusive climate within their unit. Deans can serve as role models for department chairs and can help mentor and guide them, especially considering the fact that deans often experience the same role conflict and role ambiguity coming into the position of dean that is experienced by department chairs as they come into their positions (Sarrors et al., 1998).

Summary

This literature review provides a foundation for understanding the information regarding LGBTQ department chairs. Previous research indicates that climate is largely felt at the department level (Bystydzienski et al., 2017) and that department chairs are driving forces in the cultivation and fostering of inclusive cultures (Ambrose et al., 2005). Department chairs have many responsibilities and roles, one could argue that one of the most important of these is supporting faculty members in their department.

Research provides examples of how department chairs can aid their LGBTQ faculty members in navigating the policies and procedures of higher education. In

addition to examples, many articles also provide recommendations for how department chairs can further help faculty members thrive. Department chairs can help shield LGBTQ faculty members, who often as a result of their identity are asked to serve on committees or support marginalized student groups at significantly higher rates than their heterosexual and gender conforming colleagues (Scharron-Del Rio, 2018). They can also support LGBTQ faculty when their identity becomes an issues with colleagues or students (Kezar et al., 2007). Finally, the experience of LGBTQ department chairs has not been directly addressed in any previous research. Knowing the vital role that department chairs play in establishing culture and climate in a department, assigning teaching loads, evaluation, promotion, and policy/procedure change and implementation it is hard to understand why more research does not exist. This study hopes to fill a gap in the literature around LGBTQ department chair experiences, specifically related to LGBTQ, faculty, and leadership identity intersectionality.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature and utilizes the Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship methodology. This method was conceptualized by Elliot Eisner and is sometimes referred to as Educational Criticism. In this method of research, researchers seek to describe, interpret, evaluate, and create themes around their findings.

To understand Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship one must examine the two aspects of the method, the first being connoisseurship. Uhrmacher et al. (2017) describe connoisseurship as "a private act, in which to some degree we all engage. It entails the skills of using one's senses to apprehend a present experience an of making fine-grained distinctions" (p. 1). They go on to explain that connoisseurship has three sources. The first source is discernment, which they explain "is the ability to discriminate subtle and nuanced qualities" (p. 18). The second "involves knowing the conventions and traditions that characterize particular genres or types of qualitative experience" (p. 18), what they term appreciation. The third and final source, valuing, "is represented by the knowledge of what constitutes goodness within a particular domain" (p.18). One might ask, how can one be a connoisseur of department chairs? To answer this question, it is helpful to think about connoisseurship in terms of interest, "one can be a connoisseur on any subject or topic about which people car deeply and for which they develop an abiding interest" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 9).

Criticism is the second aspect of Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship. One often thinks of criticism as a negative act, however, here criticism takes on a slightly different tone. Where connoisseurship is a private act, criticism is simply the revelation of what one learns in their connoisseurship. In this method of research, criticism includes four elements: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics. Criticism can serve a couple of different functions, in this study, criticism seeks to make the familiar strange by providing a behind-the-curtain perspective of LGBTQ department chairs, a perspective that has largely been left out of the conversation up to this point.

Description is the first element of criticism, the main goal of description is to assist readers in seeing, hearing, and feeling the experience. Description aids in two functions, providing information that will be used during interpretation and helping to provide context for the results of the study. In this method of research, it is important for the researcher to provide thick, vivid descriptions in order to paint a picture that the readers can not only see, but also feel. The second element of criticism is interpretation. Interpretation is closely related to description and the two overlap slightly in that if description goes beyond explanation of events and ventures into supporting themes or major concepts, it begins to be interpretation. Uhrmacher et al. (2017) define interpretation as

> the application of concepts, often through the use of analysis and metaphor, in ways that foreground the relationships, patterns, or reasons for events and situations at hand (one's data). Interpretation is a search for meaning and a way of seeing. (p. 41)

Evaluation is the third element in criticism. Evaluation is the process by which the researcher examines the significance of experience in relationship to context. The goal in

this process "is to improve the educational process through judgement of the situation based upon educational criteria" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 51). Through thematics, the fourth element, the researcher

> articulates the patterns, big ideas, and anticipatory frameworks for other educational situations. The themes distill the major ideas that run through general educational matters and provide guidance, not a guarantee or prediction, for understanding broader educational contexts. (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 54)

Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship was selected as the research method for this study because it allows the researcher to not only highlight and describe events or experiences, in this case experiences of LGBTQ department chairs, but it also allows the researcher to apply criticism with the goal of improving the experiences for LGBTQ individuals in institutions of higher education. The study utilizes interviews of LGBTQ department chairs in order to answer the research question, how do department chairs experience and work within the intersectionality of their LGBTQ, faculty, and leadership identities?

Study Design

It is important to note that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this, the study design had to be modified slightly for participant safety. This study utilizes interviews as a primary mode of data collection. The original study design included both interviews and observations as primary method for data collection. As a result of the pandemic, observations (outside of the interview) were not possible. Participants were interviewed virtually (via Zoom). The original study design included in-person interviews as the first option, with virtual and phone interviews being alternatives, if in-person interview were not possible. When proposing this study, I

anticipated that the instances that would call for virtual or phone interview would be determined by location. As a result of this, I expected that virtual interviews would take place in the participant's office. Due to the pandemic, both participants were working from home at the time interviews were conducted so observation of their office space was not possible. Interviews followed an interview protocol, which allowed the researcher to maintain consistency between interviews. Though the interviews followed the protocol, there was room for emergent questions to be added along the way, as needed. There was one or two follow-up questions in each participant interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher immediately after each interview. Participants were offered the opportunity to review the interview transcript before analysis in order to provide any clarification or follow-up, only one participant accepted this opportunity. They provided only positive and affirmative feedback. The other participant stated they would like to review the transcript, but would not have the time to do so.

Participants

Uhrmacher et al. (2017) recommend four participants for an Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship study, but acknowledge that this number can vary. This study required a specific demographic of participants that proved difficult to find, I was seeking three to four participants for this study. Recruitment took place on a few levels, first I utilized my existing network of educational professionals to place a call for participants. The language in the call for participants was be inclusive to include all groups of individuals in the LGBTQ community so as not to intentionally exclude any members of the community. The second level of recruitment occurred within professional

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organizations such as American Educational Research Association (AERA) and National

Women's Studies Association (NWSA). AERA includes special interest groups (SIG), as

a member of the Queer SIG, I placed a call for participants in the Queer SIG newsletter.

The call for participants was also place in an announcement to the Lesbian+ Caucus of

the NWSA. The last level of recruitment involved snowball sampling and asking

participants to recommend potential participants.

The call for participants asked for LGBTQQIAAP and gender nonconforming

department chairs to volunteer to participate in a study that explores the intersectionality

of queer, faculty, and leadership identities. Potential participants were asked to complete

a short questionnaire asking their preferred name, if they are a member of the

LGBTQQIAAP community or if they identify as gender non-conforming and if they are

currently a department chair along with a few other questions. Four individuals accessed

the potential participant questionnaire, three of those individuals completed all questions,

one individual only completed the first question (consent) which did not provide enough

information for follow-up. The three individuals who completed the questionnaire were

contacted via email to determine their willingness to sit for an interview. Two of the three

responded expressing their interest in completing interviews, the third potential

participant never responded to outreach. Participants received the informed consent form

and a reminder email a week before their scheduled interview. Before beginning the

interview, we reviewed the consent form and participants sent their signed consent forms

via email. Participants were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonyms that

would be used throughout the study and each took advantage of this opportunity. These pseudonyms are what is used to identify the participants throughout this study.

Dani identifies as queer, uses they/them/theirs/she/her/hers pronouns, and did not complete the race/ethnicity question in the questionnaire. They are a department chair for a gender and women's studies department at a public four-year institution in the western United States. They have been serving as the chair for their department for two years.

Alex identities as queer or lesbian, uses she/her/hers pronouns, and identifies as white. She is also chair of a gender and women's studies department at a public four-year institution in the western United States. She has been serving as department chair for twelve years.

Data Collection

Data was collected through two methods, questionnaire and virtual interview with participants. Potential participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire which contained questions about LGBTQQIAAP identity, department chair experience, and additional demographic information. The hope was to use these questions to get a diverse pool of participants for the study. However, due to low numbers of potential participants completing the questionnaire, there was no need to narrow down the participant pool. Therefore, questionnaire information was only used to provide descriptors of participants. The primary method of data collection involved virtual participant interviews.

Participants were asked to describe their professional background and experience. They were also asked to reflect on their LGBTQ identity and how it interacts with their

roles as faculty and department chair. Finally, participants were asked to explain their

goals and desires for their department while considering if they challenged what it means

to be a department leader. Interviews lasted between sixty to eighty minutes and were

conducted virtually, via Zoom. Interviews were recorded and transcribed immediately

after each interview. One participant accepted the offer to review the interview transcript

before analysis. The other participant stated they would like to, but would not have the

time and therefore declined. The participant that did review the transcript only provided

positive and affirmative feedback. In order to provide participants time to consider their

responses, they received the interview questions (with the exception of any follow-up

questions) a week before the scheduled interview.

Data Validity

Annotation is utilized in the Educational Criticism methodology to analyze data

and develop themes. Annotation is similar to the common method of coding which is

used in many other qualitative research methods. Uhrmacher et al., (2017) explains,

"educational criticism, rooted in the arts, may offer an alternative to coding that, rather

than isolating phrases, focuses on the relationship among them in a complete picture" (p.

57). During annotation the researcher considers, the speaker, their voice, diction, tone,

and imagery, not just the actual words that were said. These annotations are utilized in

the development of themes, which will be discussed further in future chapters.

In Educational Criticism, validity is demonstrated utilizing structural

corroboration and referential adequacy. Structural corroboration can be described as

providing a persuasive and coherent whole picture. Uhmacher et at., (2017) explain, "the

structurally sound criticism is characterized by consistency and coherence and deftly

portrays the situation supported by evidence for the critic's impressions. Direct

quotations, dialogue, rich description, and specific details paint the picture" (p. 59).

Referential adequacy includes helping the audience see the topic in a new or different

way. This is done through member checking, connecting to educational trends, and

highlighting the significance of the topic. Ultimately, it is important to remember that,

> The educational criticism is not a "truth" in the sense that it is the only way to account for or to interpret a situation. Rather, the criticism provides one way to look at and understand the educational situation. It may be that another critic would appraise the situation quite differently. (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 53)

The quotation above, touches on the concept of generalization. Eisner (2002) explains

two types of generalization that are part of criticism. The first is a clearer, more refined

perception gained by the critic and the second is "new forms of anticipation" (Eisner,

2002, p. 242). These are represented in the themes developed by the critic. These themes

allow the critic and the readers to appreciate both the uniqueness as well as the

significance of situations presented (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). It is important to remember

that, "critics' and educators' future perceptions should not be narrowed by recognition of

such themes, but rather the themes serve as entry points for further deepened seeing and

elaboration upon the ideas" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 56). It is up to each reader to

determine how the themes resonate with them and their experiences. The next section

will provide some background information regarding the researcher along with relevant

identities and experiences that will aid in framing this study.

About the Researcher

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Identities are an important factor in this study, as such, it is important to discuss researcher positionality as it relates to the topics discussed. I am a cisgender, lesbian, middle-class, able-bodied, white, female. Each of these identities intersect in various ways and not only impact the way I interact with the world, but also the way in which the world responds to me. This study explores the impact roles have on identity, specifically LGBTQ identities.

The seed for this study was planted several years ago when I was working at a community college. I was working as an academic advisor and was also working as adjunct faculty, usually teaching one course per semester. One day in my class, we were discussing identities and I asked students to list the identities they held, providing an example, I began to list my identities. When it came time to name my lesbian identity, I paused ever so slightly before writing it down. That pause was the seed for this study. In my role as advisor to 1,300 students, I openly spoke of my identity. I had pictures of my wife and wedding day in my office and proudly displayed a rainbow "Safe Zone" sticker on my door. Why was I more hesitant to come out or discuss that part of my life in the classroom? I began to pursue these questions myself personally and professionally, examining how my various roles in life impacted my identity and vice versa.

It is important to note that as with all communities, the LGBTQ community is vastly diverse and represents not only sexual identities, but also gender identities. As a femme (feminine presenting) lesbian, my experiences are likely different from a lesbian who has a more masculine presentation. So too, our experiences as lesbians are going to differ from experiences of individuals who identify as bisexual, trans*, or queer.

Summary

This qualitative study utilizes the Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship methodology which was conceptualized by Elliot Eisner and is sometimes referred to as Educational Criticism. Through this method of research, I will seek to describe, interpret, evaluate, and create themes around LGBTQ department chairs and their experiences. The study utilizes interviews of LGBTQ department chairs in order to answer the research questions, 1) what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs? 2) What is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity? and 3) How are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all?

This study occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, the study design had to be modified slightly to ensure participant safety. Instead of in-person interviews which were the preferred method of data collection, all participant interviews occurred virtually, via Zoom. Also, since both participants were working from home the semester that interviews occurred, I was not able to observe their office space which would have been helpful in the description phase of data analysis in this method. Participant recruitment occurred on several different levels. First, information was sent to professionals working in higher education that were part of my various professional networks. Next, study information was included in a couple of professional organization newsletters/affinity groups. Finally, snowball sampling was utilized by asking participants if they could recommend any others for the study.

Potential participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire asking if they were a member of the LGBTQQIAAP/gender non-conforming community, if they were currently a department chair or had been one in the past, along with a few demographic questions. Four individuals accessed the survey, with three completing the survey. These three individuals were contacted to inquire if they would be willing to participant in an interview, two of the three individuals replied to outreach and stated they would be interested in participating. These two individuals completed an interview lasting between sixty and eighty minutes, the results of which will be discussed in the proceeding chapters.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter will highlight the interviews with LGBTQ department chairs regarding their experiences, how their roles as faculty/administrator impact their LGBTQ identity, and if/how they challenge the norm of what it means to be a leader. In Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship, the goal during description is to help the reader get a feel of what was experienced. This is often done by conducting observations either before or after interviews. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, observations outside of what occurred during the interview were not possible. Additionally, the hope was that interviews could be conducted in participants' offices to get a sense of their work environment and pick up on any LGBTQ identity markers (pride flags, safe zone sign, pictures of partner, etc.) present. However, both participants were working from home at the time interviews were conducted so it was not possible to observe any of their campus environments. As a result of lacking many visual descriptions that can be provided to help readers get a sense of the campus environment, the focus will be on participants descriptions of their firsthand events and experiences this includes our dialogue during interviews, as well as their body language and facial expressions throughout the interview.

The second aspect of Educational Criticism is interpretation, while description seeks to provide an account of what happened, interpretation explores meanings behind these descriptions. Interpretation includes a search for patterns and brings interpretive frameworks into the mix, Palmer's ideas of teacher identity and queer theory will be examined. The sections below will present the data from participant interviews with Dani and Alex.

Each section begins with a description of the participants, this data was taken from the questionnaire that potential participants were asked to complete. This information is followed by information about the institutions and departments in which participants currently work. Institution and departmental information were gleaned through the interviews with participants and research on their institutions after the interviews were conducted. Data will be presented in the form of vignettes which will be constructed using direct quotations from interviews with participants, Dani and Alex. Participant names used in the study are pseudonyms selected by the participants. These vignettes will highlight themes (discussed in chapter five) and will be presented based on their connection to the research questions guiding the study. The research questions guiding this study are: 1) what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs? 2) What is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity? 3) How are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all?

The first vignette in each participant section, Dani's "A Story of Kismet" and Alex's "A Way to Be in College Forever" will highlight participant's

educational/professional background, how they got into higher education, and their path to the position of department chair. "Assumptions" and "Queerly Counting" explain Dani and Alex's connection to the LGBTQ community, while "A Brief Glimpse of Community" and "Campus Climate vs. Community Climate" provide a glimpse into feelings of community and their campus climate. Together, these vignettes provide information on participants' experience.

Next, we examine role and identity by looking at a role comparison between teacher and administrator roles and discussing how participants see these roles and identity intersecting. We see Dani's comparison in "Exciting, Challenging, Empowering" and "It's a Sausage Factory." Alex's comparisons are included in "Exploited" and "It's Shitty, but You Can Also Matter." In "Can You Use That Word?!" and "Outsider-ness" Dani discusses how their roles within the department chair position and their LGBTQ identity interest. Alex explores these intersections in "When Research and Identity Collide," "The Queer Beacon," and "Judging A Book by Its Cover."

In "From Growing Plants to Growing Students, Self, and a Department" and "Equity...and Keeping the Wheels on the Cart" we see Dani and Alex's motivations in their roles as teacher and administrators respectively. We explore success, challenges, goals, and desires Dani and Alex have for their departments in "Making Changes While Fighting to Matter" and "From Building to Sustaining." Dani and Alex describe their challenging of norms in "What Can We Do Together?" and "Challenging Notions." These vignettes speak to the third research question guiding this study, which seeks to determine if/how LGBTQ department chairs challenge the norm of what it means to be a

departmental leader. The final vignettes in each section, "COVID-19 Challenges" and "Balancing Interests," show how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted participants as department chairs. Each vignette is followed by an interpretation utilizing queer theory, Parker Palmer's ideas of self-knowledge and teach identity, among others.

Dani

Dani identifies as queer, uses they/them/theirs/she/her/hers pronouns, and did not complete the race/ethnicity question in the questionnaire. They are a department chair for a gender and women's studies department at a public four-year institution in the western United States. The institution enrolls between 15,000-20,000 students and is located in a metropolitan area. Dani's department consists of five faculty and three staff members, Dani has been serving as the chair for their department for two years.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted the interview with Dani via Zoom. Dani was in their home at the time of the interview. It appeared they were at their workstation which was set up to one side of their kitchen. A dark accent wall behind Dani was brightened by a small painting of woman that hung over Dani's right shoulder. The grey background of the portrait made the subject's dark hair and pink hat pop. Over Dani's left shoulder, I could see part of the kitchen and what appeared to be a living room area. A colorful map of the world hung on a dark blue wall above a crisp white sofa.

A Story of Kismet

"Can you tell me a bit about your professional background and how you got into higher education?" I asked Dani as we both settled into our chairs and adjusted our

computer monitors. They title their head to the left, smile, and nod, their silver S shaped earrings dangle back and forth

> Yes, so my Ph.D is in sociology and my first focus was criminology, but early on I realized that wasn't for me, so I went back and focused my research on sexuality and body image, with that kind of research topic you're not really going to find a lot of jobs out there.

they say laughing. "As a graduate student, I was a graduate part time instructor, and I did not really enjoy that position because you're essentially doing the work that maybe the instructors don't like doing" Dani says with a laugh, "I really thought early on as a graduate part time instructor that I didn't want to teach." They go on to recall their reasoning for attending college and their experience figuring out next steps after graduate school,

> I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I'm a first-generation college student so I was sort of just in college because I didn't know what else I was going to do, it was something I was good at. As a GPTI (graduate part-time instructor), I knew I didn't want to get into teaching.

That was Dani's feeling until unfortunate circumstances thrust them into the role of lead instructor,

> the instructor I was working with and really looked up to became really ill, maybe the third or fourth week of the semester. They called me on a Wednesday and were like 'Dani, I'm not coming back to teach at all. You're going to have to pick

up, you're going to have to teach on Thursday,' and we were teaching a Tuesday/Thursday class. So that really terrified me and forced me to become more engaged since I ended up teaching a large portion of that course. I really, really enjoyed the experience as an actual instructor, not just a graduate part time instructor and that really sort of pulled me into academia so it was just sort of kismet.

After graduation, Dani spent time working three different jobs in various industries, including a greenhouse, before teaching at a local college for a couple of semesters. They then moved to another nearby college to teach for a couple of semesters before becoming affiliate faculty in the gender and women's studies department at their current institution. They worked as affiliate faculty for a year before applying to a full-time faculty position in 2014. In 2018, the chair of the department moved into an interim dean position and Dani assumed the position of interim department chair. They have served in the interim position for two years and they were just elected (by preference poll) to serve as chair again.

Dani's story of how they got into teaching brings to mind a quotation from Palmer (1998),

> Encounters with mentors and subjects can awaken a sense of self and yield clues to who we are. But to teach does not come from external encounters alone – no outward teacher or teaching will have much effect until my soul assents. Any authentic call ultimately comes from the voice of the *teacher within*, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self. (p.30)

Until Dani had the opportunity to teach on their own, their teacher within was stifled. Palmer goes on to explain that, "The teacher within is not the voice of conscious but of

identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be but of what is real for us, of what is true" (p. 32). When Dani had the freedom to teach the class as they wished, their teacher within was also free to speak their truth. Dani's path to the chair position followed a similar trajectory as other chairs, Carroll (1991) states, "chairs uniformly start their careers within disciplines as graduate students, become faculty in those disciplines, move through the ranks in a similar manner, and eventually become department chairs" (p. 671).

After discussing their background, how they got into higher education, and their path to department chair, I asked Dani to discuss their connection to the LGBTQ community.

Assumptions

I identify as queer, but I don't know that I really fit within a community. I have a very small group of friends, most of them are LGBTQ, some of them aren't, but in terms of like *a community* (their emphasis), I don't really have *a community* (their emphasis). My colleagues in the department know my identities and know a little bit more about me than other folks. I think that people sort of just make assumptions about me, you know, based on my presentation of self, but I don't really talk to many people outside of my department about my identities.

Dani's dark hair is cut short on the sides and back, with a bit more length at the top which was pushed to the front and slightly to the right during our interview. They

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were wearing a black shirt under a purple zip-up hoodie which had a blue and white

stripped patch on the left side.

Although Dani does not identify as transgender, many of the experiences they

have had and the assumptions they encounter are similar to those experienced by

transgender individuals. Jaekel and Nicolazzo (2017) explain the importance of self-

disclosure,

> Our self-disclosure also ensures that we can define our identity on our own terms.
> For us, not only is it a learning tool to disclose who we are, but also a means of
> self-preservation. We discuss our identities in the hopes that students will not just
> learn about gender complexity, but also about our humanity. (p. 170)

By making assumptions about Dani based on their gender presentation, students and

colleagues are robbing them of the opportunity to identify on their own terms. We will

see more examples of gender presentation and identity assumption in later vignettes.

From here, our discussion moved to the campus climate at Dani's current institution.

A Brief Glimpse of Community

> A few years ago, the LGBT Resource Center hired an Associate Director who was
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> just really awesome and was really inspiring for a lot of us who identify as
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> QTPOC (Queer and Trans* People of Color) and we built community. Prior to
>
> that there wasn't community and then after the Associate Director left there hasn't
>
> really been any community. I know a couple LGBTQ folks, a majority of them
>
> are in our department, but as far as QTPOC there isn't community beyond the
>
> people I know in my department,

Dani finishes in a disappointed tone as they look down.

Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) discuss the importance of a sense of community in faculty satisfaction, however, for those who do not fit into necessary boxes or categories, community may be hard to find. The vignette above, demonstrates how isolating it can be for individuals who do not necessary feel a sense of community on campus. Dani's story also illustrates the power one person can have in creating community and a positive climate on campus. Garvey and Rankin (2018) found in their study of queer and trans-spectrum faculty, that for this group there was a strong link between campus climate, community, support, and a desire to leave their institution. Individuals in the study were more likely to consider leaving their institution if they perceived a negative campus climate, lack of community, or little/no support from the institution.

The vignettes above highlight experiences Dani had in their professional and educational background before coming into the department chair position. We are also given a glimpse into their LGBTQ identity and the campus climate at their current institutions. The vignettes below will focus on roles within the department chair position and how roles are impacted by LGBTQ identity.

Exciting, Challenging, Empowering

"Ah, I miss being a faculty member so much" Dani says as they laugh. They lean back in their chair and place their right hand on their chest as they continue, "As a faculty member I think that it's exciting, it's challenging, it is (pause) I think empowering to be faculty." Dani goes on to describe some of the positive experiences as a faculty member,

I've developed some really strong connections with students who've graduated and continue to check-in and let me know what they're doing now and it is really exciting to see their growth. I have some who have asked me to write them letters as they move through their academic and non-academic careers. There is also the exciting part of learning new things, having the opportunity to read new books and articles and continue to learn. I've also had the opportunity as faculty to travel on Fulbright projects which have allowed me to bring back content to improve my classes. Building new curriculum is really exciting for me, I absolutely love it. I have a love-hate relationship with writing research papers. I hate to see that I have to revise and submit, but I also love it because it allows me an opportunity to grow and improve.

Dani then discusses some challenges they've experienced in the faculty role,

The challenging parts of the role also involve student interactions, I've had some really, really challenging student interactions in the classroom particularly from young men who take a gender and women's studies course and have been really aggressive in class about their beliefs. That always triggers a fear in me, I think of classroom violence, thankfully it has never come down to that, but I have had some concerns about that. That is really the only negative thing.

They take a drink from their clear plastic lemon La Croix® bottle, before moving to discuss their roles outside of teaching.

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Dani's description of their role as faculty highlights the importance relationships and connections are in role satisfaction. Olsen et al. (1995) explain,

> because of their commitment to the values of community and to the intellectual and social development of their students, female and minority faculty are reported to invest more time and energy in their teaching and to derive more satisfaction from it. (p. 268)

In explaining their challenges as faculty, Dani also discusses relationships and interactions. Here we see the challenges Dani faces with students in their class challenging them both professionally and personally. Keashly and Neuman (2010) highlight faculty experiences with bullying in higher education, although they found that bullying most often comes from colleagues at the school, students too can be a source of bullying for faculty members. This bullying can take the form of classroom challenges as we see above with Dani, but it can also take more subtle forms such as negative evaluations. Fear for one's safety is a common theme in research around campus climates for LGBTQ individuals (DeLeon & Brunner, 2013; Rankin, 2003).

It's a Sausage Factory

"The chair feels like middle management, it feels disempowering really. It is also challenging, but in a different way (compared to faculty)." They tilt their head to the side as they rub their chin during a long pause before finishing with "somewhat disappointing, that's how I would describe it" with a short laugh. Dani quickly moves to discuss the positive aspects of the administrator role within the department chair position,

> The positive experiences are related to the work that we're able to do as a team.
> So we run the department (pause) I know I'm serving, I know that it's a hierarchy,

I know that, but we try to be really equitable in our work. So I work with three

other staff members and we meet every week, we make decisions as a team, and

we *collaborate* (their emphasis). We do the same with faculty, that is the good

part about serving as chair, being able to work as a team in that way,

Dani says nodding. They continue, "Whereas when you are faculty, you're off doing your

own thing teaching and researching, you don't have that same feeling of community, or at

least I didn't." Dani pauses and leans in toward the camera before continuing "I describe

being a chair like learning the inner workings of the sausage factory," they say with a

laugh.

That is a very ugly endeavor, you learn about policies that you're like 'oh, that is

gross. Why does that exist?' You learn about the various different ways in which

other folks are running their departments and you start to see where institutional

racism and classism and all the other 'isms' live, and how some policies are really

meant to prevent certain people from succeeding. You also learn about the reality

of departments being assessed based on the number of students they bring in

versus how they're helping students. It's just...it's a sausage factory. It's like 'ah,

I didn't know that as faculty and I wish I could go back now and forget it all,'

they say as they make a disgusted face and stick out their tongue.

In the vignette above, Dani hits on a couple of important points. First, is the

different skill sets and characteristic needed to be an effective faculty member compared

to an effective department chair. Wolverton et al. (2005) explain,

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The skill sets needed to be a good researcher require slow, deliberate, measured acts...Research is carried out, for the most part, in isolation or within small groups of extremely liked-minded colleagues by individuals who thrive on independence and resent interference. In contrast, managing and leading academic departments is a communal affair...Interpersonal skills, the ability to communicate, the willingness to respond rapidly to situations, among other skills, which are not requisite to being a good faculty member, are essential to being an effective department chair. (p. 229)

The other point Dani makes above concerns their increased awareness of institutional policies and their seemingly lack of ability to influence decisions or bring about policy change, which we will see in future vignettes. Denton and Zeytinoglu (1993) reviewed women and minority faculty responses to a 1988 survey and found that "gender...had a significant impact on perceived participation in decision-making. Female faculty were less likely than male faculty to perceive their work environment as providing them with an opportunity to influence important decisions..." (p. 328).

In the next few vignettes below, Dani discusses their roles within the department chair position and how their LGBTQ identity intersects with these roles.

Can You Use That Word?

As faculty, I think when you're doing research in the areas that I research, people make assumptions about you even if they don't know you, that includes students, staff, and other faculty members. I was hired as the sexualities person in the department. Prior to my arrival there was one other trans* man who was teaching some sexualities stuff, but mostly gender stuff. So I don't know that I've ever had to say anything about my identity without people already making assumptions based on what I teach. In a lot of my meetings, when we have to provide more in-

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depth introductions, I'll say that I'm queer, and it's interesting, sometimes I'll

have people in other departments say like 'what does that mean?,' or 'can you use

that word?!'

Dani says with a laugh.

Almost everything I teach is rooted within a queer theoretical framework so it

(queer identity) appears everywhere. In curriculum development, even if I'm not

building my own course, if I'm helping someone else build their course, I'll bring

up making sure to consider LGBTQ folks and since my research is in alternate

sexualities, I'll bring up those aspects also. So I think it (my queer identity) shows

up everywhere in my curriculum.

This vignette highlights more of Dani's experiences with assumptions, however,

instead of people making assumptions based on their gender presentation, we see Dani's

experiences with assumptions linking research areas with identities. In Dani's case,

people assume they are a member of the LGBTQ community based on the fact that they

research sexualities. We also see reactions to those outside of the LGBTQ community to

the reclamation of the word queer. In the past, the word queer was often hurled as an

insult to members of the LGBTQ community, but with increasing rights and visibility in

recent years, there has been a movement within the LGBTQ community to reclaim the

term queer. Finally, we also return to Parker Palmer's ideas of self-identity and the

teacher within. Dani explains how their queer identity shows up everywhere in their

curriculum development, this brings to mind what Palmer (1998) writes about identity

and integrity, "*Identity* lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life,

and *integrity* lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (p. 14).

Outsider-ness

> When I taught queer theory, I really tried to grapple with students and the idea that you can change the system from within. Like, do you become part of the system, and in what ways, can you also disrupt the system from within, so for me it's about that queer praxis. I don't really know many of the other chairs, we don't get to sit and have coffee together, especially now during COVID. It is always just business, business, business and I think my identity presents as the weird one who is bringing up ideas that for the rest of us don't make a lot of sense. I've been pushing for a pronouns policy since I've been serving as chair,

they say in a slightly exhausted tone as they sigh, "maybe even before that...and people are like 'that isn't important right now,' well," Dani says as they laugh sarcastically, "actually, it is important to those of us who want the correct pronoun used. So my identity shows up in the issues I bring to the table." Dani continues to discuss their leadership role and identity,

> In terms of the leadership role, the perspective that I bring to the table does focus on intersectionality and queer identities and a lot of these ideas position me really outside the norm. That can be both really exciting, because it is great to bring new perspectives to the table, but it can also feel like I'm so outside the norm that people are like 'what,' 'why,' 'why would we do that differently?,' 'why would

we change the way we've been doing things for forever?,' and those sorts of things. So it has its benefits and definitely challenges...but I've always experienced outsider-ness, so it isn't really different feeling that way as chair.

Dani pauses to take a drink before continuing,

I'm pretty private about my private life, even my staff with whom I work, I don't talk about my personal life much. That is just a personal preference. As chair, there are more opportunities to engage with staff than maybe I would have as faculty. As a faculty member, my personal life never really came up that much, as chair I've become more open but still that is mostly within my department. My department is gender and women's studies so most people within my department shrug and are like 'no big deal,' but outside you definitely feel discomfort from other chairs. When we go to meetings and I start to bring things up, they are like 'why are we even talking about this,' and I think they attribute it to us being the gender people.

In the vignette above, we see Dani's experience of being the only one among their department chair colleagues to push for and seemingly care about developing and implementing a pronouns policy. Messinger (2009) reflects similar findings, "at most of the sampled institutions, those who sought new policies were lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty, staff, and students: those most affected by discrimination" (p. 2). While Messinger (2009) also found that straight allies can and often do help facilitate change, that was not something Dani experienced. Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) use

Gloria Anzaldúa's borderland theory to explain the experiences of faculty whose identities place them 'betwixt-and-between' identity categories, they explain,

> Dominant populations create and use borders to strengthen their supremacy, all the while subjugating and (re)creating a third world that is positioned in opposition to, and not easily allowed to enter into, the first world culture. Within the academy, white cisgender heterosexual men, who often hold other privileged identities, e.g. upper class, able-bodied, construct the dominant culture and its borders. The boundaries drawn by these individuals are meant to oppress those deemed not worthy to legitimately enter and occupy the academy. (p. 230-231)

Dani seems to be stuck in a borderland where those who construct the culture may see them, but they refuse to acknowledge their importance, contributions, and concerns.

Next, our discussion moved on to Dani's motivations in their roles as faculty and administrator.

From Growing Plants to Growing Students, Self, and a Department

To begin this conversation, I asked Dani how they explained their job to people. "That depends on who it is, if it is my family, again, as first-generation, they don't really understand academia...maybe they think I don't really do anything," Dani says with a laugh. "If it's people from my small hometown, you know, I've had people stop me in the grocery store and ask 'what do you do now?' and when I've tried to explain they are like 'oh, what does that mean?!'" Dani makes a contorted, slightly disgusted face as they impersonate the individuals from these conversations.

> So usually if they don't know anything about academia, I'll try to explain it by saying I teach about issues of gender equity and what that means. For people who understand academia, I'll say that I serve as director and chair, which means I

manage several budgets and supervise multiple staff and student staff, as well as

working with faculty on building curriculum, those sorts of things.

Our conversation then moves to explore Dani's motivations as faculty, chair, and

generally in their work.

At the department, I'm heavily motivated by the mission, vision, and values of the

department. I've worked in places before that I've really enjoyed for various

reasons. I've worked in a greenhouse and that was really fun to be around plants,

to nurture and watch them grow, but this kind of work that is focused on social

justice and every aspect of it, is the most motivating force. I'm deeply, deeply

connected to the work, so that is my motivation generally. When talking about my

motivations as faculty, it is student interactions. Students at this school are really,

really amazing. That is what has kept me here so long. I'm motivated by seeing

those 'aha' moments and also having students challenge me to grow that is really

important. I've had several students in classes who have challenged me with

regard to both my curriculum as well as feminist praxis and for me, it was that

challenging part of how do I address this concern they've brought up in class and

then sitting down with them and learning how to address it and their ideas, that is

a growth opportunity for me, so I'm motivated by the opportunity to continue to

learn in that respect.

Dani pauses to readjust in their seat before leaning forward toward the computer

to discuss their motivations as chair.

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The motivating factor is seeing a department from what feels like an outsider perspective. I know I'm very much still inside, but having the opportunity to *grow* (their emphasis) the department has motivated me. We've made some really significant and what I believe to be important changes since I've served as chair. With regard to workplace culture, we are trying to focus more on self-care, queer praxis in the workplace, intersectionality, and all of these different things. So we've really been working hard in the last couple of years to improve the workplace for students, staff, and ourselves. We just developed a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) resolution for the university and it's those sorts of things where maybe I could have done that as faculty, but as chair I have a different audience and I'm better able to assess how we can make changes on our campus than I could as faculty.

When explaining their job to others, Dani sticks to the basics and keeps it simple. They focus on helping break down the critical aspect of their job as it related to gender/sexual diversity. The role of department chair is complex and multifaceted so when explaining this aspect Dani chooses to focus on things people can easily understand like supervising staff, managing budgets, and developing curriculum. Dani again references their relationship with students in highlighting their motivation as faculty, while the mission and values of the department are a big motivator in their work as chair. Finally, Dani discusses how being chair provides them with a different audience and helps them see the bigger pictures. Palm (2006) writes,

Academic administration provides an opportunity to gain greater knowledge about the operation of the college or university, which contributes to a sense of control one has over the environment...the administrators know where the institution is trying to go, what resources can be put to the task, and how quickly steps can and should be taken, while faculty frequently are asked to keep the faith and leave the leadership to the administration. (p. 61)

After gaining some insight into Dani's motivations in their roles as faculty and administrator, we moved to discuss what they see as their biggest success and challenge in the department chair position, I then asked Dani about their goals and desires for their department moving forward.

Making Changes While Fighting to Matter

"My biggest success has been changing the workplace culture, really focusing on self-care and social and self-empowerment for faculty, staff, and students," Dani says as they lean in toward the camera.

We have a growing department whereas a lot of other programs are shrinking in terms of enrollments. We've got two new faculty members. Our department is like 90% LGBTQ, people of color, we've got a pretty diverse program. I'm super excited about that and the work that it means our faculty and staff are doing in the university community. As for challenges, even before COVID, there was this discussion about realignment and reorganization of departments, and you know a gender, women's, and sexuality program is the type of program that when things get tight budget wise, those are the programs that get squished,

Dani says as they squish the air between their index finger and thumb, simulating what they feel happens to those departments. Dani continues,

They may even get tossed to the side, so there are those challenges related to how

we promote a program that is really exciting to us, but for university officials who

are worried about job placement, they aren't going to think about us, they are

going to think about other programs job placement rates, even though we do

really phenomenal work with *other essential skills* (their emphasis). Another

challenge is the micro-aggressions, those are pretty common. I can't figure out, is

it because of my gender identity, my gender presentation, is it my queer identity,

is it...what is it?

Dani asks in an exasperated tone.

Those micro-aggressions are pretty challenging. One goal we are working on is a

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) resolution, we're working to try

and address the inequalities at the institution for students, staff, and faculty. We're

working in collaboration with two other departments and my dream for our

department would be to serve as a model department at the university in terms of

how we work with students, how we work amongst ourselves, and how we really

prepare students for life beyond academia.

Bystydzienski et al. (2017) write, "Department chairs, in particular, are well

positioned to provide leadership in creating an inclusive and supportive culture for

faculty, staff, and students" (p. 2301). In the vignette above, we see that Dani sees this as

their biggest success as department chair, along with growing the program. Dani also

discusses the challenges of fighting for resources and proving their program's value.

Gmelch and Burns (1993), found that obtaining financial support and program approval

was the second highest ranked source of stress for department chairs. Finally, in the vignette above, we again see some of the challenges Dani faces due to their gender presentation. Dani explains that the micro aggressions (misgendering/using incorrect pronouns) are one of the most challenging aspects in their role as administrator. Keashly and Neuman (2010) explain that bullying in higher education can take many forms from physical threats to blocking access to resources or increasing workload. Ambrose et al. (2005) found when examining faculty decisions to leave their institution, that lack of collegiality among colleagues was a key determinant. Micro aggressions can quickly erode collegiality and make it almost impossible for a strong community to develop.

What Can We Do Together?

"I definitely think my LGBTQ identity impacts the way I lead the department," Dani pauses and looks up before continuing,

> I think that those who identify as queer maybe have always been outside the box. I think it is easier for people who have always been outside the box to think outside of the box and to consider alternatives, like why do we have to think about things on a binary, why can't we have multiple different ways of addressing something? So I think that hugely affects, in a positive way, the ways in which I show up to work. I'm not sure if I challenge the norms of what it means to be a department chair...potentially, but I don't know for sure because I don't really get to see the other chairs lead beyond what I see in our meetings. I think that maybe my leadership is more collaborative, but again, that is just based on what I would guess. I have seen other folks in the office space and my understanding is that

sometimes it can be very hierarchical, like 'I'm chair and I said this and therefore that is what we're doing.' A lot of how we manage our work in our office is very collaborative. Maybe that is because we are a smaller department and maybe that gives us the freedom to be more collaborative,

Dani says as they shrug and lean in towards the camera. After pausing and looking up for a few seconds, Dani continues

Although I would hope that even bigger departments could be more collaborative. I think that leadership for me is less about what I can do for you or you for me, but what can we do together? So I think that is maybe where I differ from most folks.

The vignette above highlights how being queer impacts Dani's leadership. Dani explains that they feel like being an outsider from the perspective of being queer has helped them navigate the outsider feeling that comes with being department chair, this echoes the Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) article on navigating the academic borderlands. This article discusses how individuals who find themselves on the outside experience feelings of both hypervisibility and invisibility concomitantly. Dani also explains they may be more collaborative than some other department chairs at their institution. It could be that this may also have something to do with the outsider/borderlands perspective, those who lack community and power may look to build bridges with others in order to begin to form their own sense of community. Once in a position of power, they may be more likely to reach out to others to avoid perpetuating outsider-ness.

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Due to the fact that we were experiencing a global pandemic during the time interviews for this study were conducted, I wanted to include a question asking the participants how COVID-19 had impacted their position as department chairs. The vignette below describes Dani's view of the impact COVID-19 has had on them in their role as department chair at their institution.

COVID-19 Challenges

Dani sighs deeply and takes a long pause,

COVID has drastically changed my role as chair. Pre-COVID I had a lot of meetings, but now I have even more meetings and they are all online so there is less and less time for me to build community (pause) and it is really sort of soul killing. I'm finding myself becoming more and more disappointed with the work as chair, not necessarily the work I'm doing, but serving as chair. It is really disappointing because I don't have opportunities to interact with students in the same way. There is no coffee pot to sit around and talk about what is happening on campus. There's no community building, I can't go to events and share a meal with people. So it has actually made the work more daunting, more challenging, and less exciting than when I was on campus. You're actually probably catching me at a time where I'm most disappointed,

Dani says with a faint laugh.

I am also learning so much more. I'm serving on different committees and I'm learning more and more about the chair position and the lack of power chairs have

to really make any major changes in systemic inequalities, so there is that as

well,"

Dani says with a sigh. I asked Dani if they plan to continue to serve as chair, "As soon as

my term is up, I'd really like for someone else to serve. I think it is important that we get

new ideas and it's not the most exciting position to take," Dani says with a laugh,

> so it is great to have other people experience it as well. Prior to me serving as
>
> chair, the previous chair was in that position for a long time, so it really depends
>
> on who wants to serve I guess.

In the vignette above, Dani expresses how COVID-19 has exacerbated challenges

they face as department chair. First, COVID-19 impacted a challenge that previous

studies have indicated is a key stressor for department chairs, lack of time. Gmelch and

Burns (1993), found that a heavy workload was a key stressor for department chairs,

which included meetings taking up a lot of time. Dani highlights that they had a lot of

meetings pre-COVID, but that COVID has only increased those meetings, in addition to

the extra challenge of navigating virtual meetings. Secondly, Dani explains how COVID-

19 has made it even more difficult to build community which was already discussed as a

challenge in the vignette, "A Brief Glimpse of Community." This is likely only

amplifying Dani's dissatisfaction with the position. Finally, COVID-19 has made the

already ambiguous and complex position of department chair even more ambiguous and

complex. Foster (2006) writes,

> the range of information a chair or director needs in order to be effective is
> impressive. There are university business procedures that most faculty have little

reason to know in any detail (for example, staff hiring, financial management, space assignment, budget process, personnel evaluations). In addition, most units have compliance issues, including equal opportunity issues, and there are many federal laws, such as, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act...(p.51)

Add to this CDC, state, local, school, and possibly even departmental guidelines for COVID-19 policy and procedures and it is easy to understand Dani's disappointment with their current role as administrator.

Alex

Alex identities as queer or lesbian, uses she/her/hers pronouns, and identifies as white. She is also chair of a gender and women's studies department at a public four-year institution in the western United States. This institution enrolls between 10,000-15,000 students and is located in a more rural and conservative part of the state. Alex's department consists of two other faculty members and she has been serving as department chair for twelve years.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted the interview with Alex via Zoom. Alex was in her home at the time of the interview. It appeared she was at a desk which was set up in its own dedicated work area. Two large windows directly behind Alex provided natural light to the entire room. Over Alex's left shoulder there was a brown wooden desk, on top of this desk there was a large three-ringed binder, a stack of papers, and a book. Two filing cabinets stood in the corner, a brown box stood on top of the shorter tan filing cabinet while paper and files burst out of the black plastic paper organizer that stood on top of the taller black filing cabinet.

A Way to Be in College Forever

"Could you start by telling me a little about your professional background and how you got into higher education?" I ask Alex, she adjusts in her chair and takes a drink from her stainless-steel coffee tumbler, the bright green silicone ring around the lid makes the sunlight reflecting off the silver shine even brighter.

> As an undergraduate, my initial idea was to be a high school history teacher. I took an education class that had a gender component and completely fell in love with it, so I have a bachelor's in history and in women's studies. I then went to a different school as a graduate student in history and the program was structured in a way that I could also earn a graduate certificate (basically a master's) in women's studies. My Ph.D is in history with an emphasis in U.S. women's and gender history,

Alex explains. She goes on to explain how she ended up teaching at the college level, instead of high school like she had originally planned,

> I knew I wanted to do gender stuff, but I wasn't sure how it was going to play out. I think I would be happy to do high school, but there isn't really a place to teach high school in a way that analyzes gender in a complex way. There are a few high schools who are offering women's studies programs, but the way in which you can do it in a high school is very constrained. So I was like all right, if I'm going to do this I kind of have to get a (pause), I *love* (their emphasis) teaching, I totally love it, so if I'm going to do this the only way to do it is to get a Ph.D and go into academia.

Alex goes on to explain "I loved college, so this is a sort of way to get to be in college forever!" as she laughs.

While Dani followed a fairly typical path to the department chair position, Alex's experience was vastly different. Alex leans in toward the camera and laughs as she begins to tell me the story of how she came into the department chair position, "before I got here, the person who was chair was a full-time lecturer and she rage quit in the middle of the year, I believe it was November or December, for reasons that seem completely reasonable to me" laughing, she goes on "it was pretty clear in the interview what I was signing up for, even though I knew some elements were going to be tough, I took the job."

Where Dani was unsure of their future in teaching, Alex was certain from the start that she wanted to teach. Alex's enjoyment of her college experience along with her love of teaching made the decision to teach at the post-secondary level pretty clear. While Dani worked their way up through the ranks of professor at their current institution, Alex was hired on to fill the position of department chair. Carroll and Wolverton (2004) write,

> Leadership at the department level then is handled by people who were not necessarily leaders in a previous role; without for the most part, any previous managerial experience...They come, for the most part, unprepared for what lies ahead, yet they are expected to exercise oversight over the majority of decisions made in universities today. (p. 8)

We will hear more about Alex's struggles related to her hiring as department chair in future vignettes. After discussing her background, how she got into higher education, and her path to department chair, Alex and I moved on to discuss her connection to LGBTQ community.

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Linguistically, I'm most comfortable with the term queer, but I am also

comfortable with lesbian and gay. I'm always a bit ambivalent about this

question, because it sort of assumes that there is a clear community. When I teach

queer studies, I always tell my students that queer is a category with a strong

center and fuzzy boundaries, like, who counts? I don't know who counts. There

are some people who queerly (laughs), clearly count and I think I probably clearly

count, but then there are all these fuzzy boundaries. That is what makes me

ambivalent about the assumption that there is this clear community that can be

defined in a coherent way in the first place. Having said that, I do sort of feel like

I'm in it in some way and people treat me as though I'm in it and ask me to do

things as though I'm a member of it and I do feel kind of a responsibility to the

community in some ways.

Alex pauses to take a drink before continuing, "I'm pretty out" she says with a laugh as

she leans forward toward the camera. "I don't really ever come out, only because I just

sort of assume everybody knows," she says shrugging.

It's not a secret, I talk about my partner fairly freely. I do have this sort of weird

policy that I never come out in class, unless it serves a pedagogical function. I

have this policy, because I feel like in this weird way that once you have an

identity position, particularly a marginalized identity position then you become

the voice of the queer perspective. Particularly in my upper division classes, I just

assume most people can figure it out. I have a pretty masculine gender

presentation and I think people associate that in a way that makes sense in my context with queerness, it may not make sense in other contexts, but in mine it does make sense. So yeah, I'm pretty out, I hardly ever come out because I guess I'm so out I don't need to,

she says with a laugh.

Alex's short hair slightly covered the front of her ears, the darker base still shining through the light grey covering its surface, like the dark grass below a dusting of light fluffy snow. A silver chain around Alex's neck would peep out from behind her reddish-pink tee-shirt as she got animated when recounting her experiences. Alex wore a dark ring on her left ring finger and a black digital watch that went off a few minutes into our interview.

In the vignette above, Alex hits on a couple of different concepts that need further discussion. The first is group membership and who gets to determine one's membership. As I highlighted in a previous chapter, the LGBTQ community is vastly diverse and includes not only sexual orientation, but also gender identity. These identities also intersect with many other personal identities such as race, ethnicity, and religion to name a few. The second point Alex made in the vignette above regards decisions to come out. Coming out is a life-time process for members of the LGBTQ community. Alex explains she does not come out unless it serves a pedagogical function, out of fear of becoming the sole voice of the queer perspective on her campus. LaSala et al. (2008) explain that LGBTQ faculty may employ other methods of coming out, which include letting their research out them. It is important to note here, that obviously not all individuals who

conduct research on queer and LGBTQ topics are themselves members of the community. Finally, Alex explains that she assumes her masculine gender presentation signals her membership in the LGBTQ community. This is different than Dani's experience with assumptions based on their presentation of self and their area of research. Next, Alex and I discuss the campus climate at her school.

Campus Climate vs. Community Climate

Alex scratches her head as she tilts it slightly to the left side,

Our climate is really, really mixed. We have the highest per capita LGBTQ population in the state in this area. In the past five or six years, we've developed a really strong LGBTQ Resource Center. It used to be like a ten-by-ten office space, a closet really, that was staffed part-time by a graduate student, it was fairly clear to most people, myself included, that the person who was previously running the university did not see that group of students, people, as a priority. A change of leadership and student activism got someone hired full-time to run and develop the center, so I think people feel like they have more support from the leadership now.

Alex pauses to take a drink from her tumbler before continuing,

So it has gotten a lot better over the past five or six years, but it's a little tricky because the campus is inside the community and the community climate is (long pause), it can be very difficult. So that can be tough for a lot of folks because you have this hub where you feel safe, but then there's this community element of

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wondering if I'm going to get beaten up on the bus or walking down the street. So that part is difficult for people, living in a pretty conservative, pretty unfriendly town, but the campus climate has definitely improved.

This vignette highlights the importance of leadership in setting campus climate as well as the tensions that can exist between a campus climate and that of the surrounding community. Messinger (2009) examined efforts to make schools more LGBTQ friendly and found that leadership changes at the top level most often made instructions successful in implementing changes. This seemed to be true in Alex's case also, leadership change along with student activism helped improve funding for the LGBTQ resource center on Alex's campus. Whitlock (2009) paints a picture of a lonely and isolating environment for members of the LGBTQ community who live in rural areas. Alex helps explain the feeling for LGBTQ individuals when a more liberal campus climate bumps up against a more rural and conservative community climate. Here too, we see another example of fear of violence that is present for members of the LGBTQ community.

The vignettes above highlight Alex's professional and educational background before coming into the department chair position. We are also given a glimpse into her LGBTQ identity and the campus climate at her current institutions. The vignettes below will focus on roles within the department chair position and how roles are impacted by LGBTQ identity.

Exploited

Where Dani had different words or phrases to describe their roles as faculty and the more administrative or leadership role, Alex's explanation focused on a specific challenge she and her department have been facing in recent years. Alex laughs as she begins,

> Exploited, that is one of the big fights that all, well most faculty at our school experience, is that our pay is extremely low. Most of us make between seventy and eighty percent of what people in comparable positions make and we teach *a lot* (her emphasis). Data shows that our college is doing more with less and it just feels like levels of exploitation piled on top of each other. On the other hand, the teaching part is fun,

Alex says with a laugh.

When asked to describe some positive and negative experiences as faculty, Alex provided an example that she said satisfied both aspects. "Negative is a tough word because it was positive because I grew from it, but it was the hardest experience of my entire career," she begins.

> I taught a history class where the main objective was to examine the intersections of race and gender. There was a student in the class who was from another country and did not necessarily understand the racial climate dynamics and tended to be very sarcastic in her remarks. One day in class, we were talking about lynching and Klan violence in the south and the student made a comment and it just sort of exploded. So I called the Dean of Student's Office to discuss the issue

and talked to the student, but obviously I couldn't address everything in class due

to FERPA. It was psychologically and emotionally distressing for a long time.

Alex then moves to discuss the positive experiences as a faculty member,

> Some of the most positive experiences I've had are watching our students go on to
>
> do awesome things. We have a bunch of students in various law schools and
>
> graduate programs. We have students working in higher education as well as
>
> others in creative fields, I heard from one graduate recently who was doing a
>
> scary movie podcast. So that is really cool, to see them go off into the world and
>
> do their thing.

Above, Alex highlights challenges she has faced in feeling exploited based on
compensation and workload as well as the positive and negative aspects related to her
student interactions. Salary inequity along with harassment and discrimination are the
main factor behind faculty attrition, especially among women and minority faculty
(Cropsey et al., 2008). We will see this issue arise again in a future vignette from Alex.
Similar to Dani, student interactions were both a positive and negative for Alex. Alex's
negative experience was regarding balancing FERPA regulations with making sure
student's in her class felt supported as well as heard. It is no surprise that Alex
highlighted teaching as a positive since that was identified as a main driver behind her
career decisions.

It's Shitty, but You Can Also Matter

The most negative part is how completely exploited my unit and colleagues are and having to fight that just sometimes becomes unbearable. Some faculty in other departments have very small classes and meanwhile, my faculty is teaching 180 students a semester. Transparency is also a problem, but it has gotten better with the change in leadership. Another issue was with the lack of data to show how bad it was, but now there is real data that I can use in my arguments. I also have someone in the Provost's Office who is an ally and is very faculty centered so that has been really nice. I would say that is probably both a positive and a negative, it is bad to see, but it is affirming to actually matter. To be able to go to the Provost's Office and say 'look at this data' and have it matter, I've seen things that I've said matter, I've seen meetings come out of complaints I've made. So, it's shitty, but you can also matter,

Alex says with a laugh as she shakes her head.

As we saw with campus climate, leadership is vital when it comes to challenges faced by department chairs. In the literature review, the important role that deans play in department chair success was highlighted (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Messinger, 2009). However, Alex demonstrates above that support may come from other places within the institution, in her case the Provost's Office. Unlike Dani, Alex does feel that some of her complaints have been heard and that she may be impacting some aspects of the university. This could be due to the fact that Alex has been in the position longer, or it could possibly be related to leadership at their respective institutions.

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In the vignettes below, Alex discusses her roles within the department chair position and how her LGBTQ identity intersects with these roles.

When Research and Identity Collide

I grew up religious and all my research is on a specific religious group, I do think, particularly in that research community that I have to play that a little bit (pause), having to negotiate my identity. I think that is the place in my career where I have to negotiate that the most, because I'm in the department that does queerness and I'm in a college that is most welcoming to queer subject matter. So it doesn't really seem to play in there as much as it does in my research community. I go to a conference every year and I'm one of like three queer people there,

Alex says with a laugh. She continues, "I'm always navigating in a sense my outness there because for some folks in that research community that (being gay) is like a disqualifying factor for your ability to know things."

Alex's navigation of her LGBTQ identity in relation to her area of research here is interesting. Above we discussed how LGBTQ faculty can use their area of research as a way to sometimes indirectly out themselves, here we see the opposite being the case in that being outed in her research community could lead to others within the community questioning Alex's creditably on the topic. Climates for LGBTQ individuals are difficult to navigate in general, when an extra layer of religion is added to the mix, things can get even more hostile to navigate. Hughes (2020) examined how LGBTQ faculty, staff, and students at a Catholic, Jesuit university addressed issues and found that though there were

tactics that could help improve some of the issues, they were often met with resistance from those wanting to preserve the religious (in this case Catholic) characteristic of the institution. In Alex's case, since there are only a couple of LGBTQ individuals within her research community, it is likely easier to downplay her queer identity than it is to force the issue.

The Queer Beacon

> I think that being queer and being visibly queer, whatever that means, does draw queer students to our program. So in that sense, it is nice for me to be able to provide a kind of academic safety, and in some ways an emotional safety for those students in a space where they can explore things that are relevant for them. In some ways, my identity also directs where my service energy goes, not always, but most of the time. It is partially my interest and partially because I'm the one that is asked, for example if there is a film showing on campus and they need a queer panelist, it's me,

she says with a laugh and shrug.

> I think it is partly because I'm queer, but also because I'm the campus expert on queer studies...those things are not necessarily coincidental. If I was queer and an expert in physics, I don't know if I'd be that spokesperson,

she says as she laughs.

> One of the things that is tough about that though is I get a lot of people asking me to do things I don't really have time to do or that I don't get paid to do, or even

evaluated on. So having to tell people no, that I can't do a lot of things is hard,

part of it is also tough because I also want to do a lot of the things, like they seem

really fun and cool and I'd love to do it, but I can't, I really can't. I've got to get

my book written, I've got to grade my student's papers, and I've got other

departmental duties on top of that.

In the vignette above, Alex explains how her queer identity intersects with her

roles as teacher and administrator. Alex explains that she feels her identity can be a draw

for students in the LGBTQ community who are looking for safe spaces to learn and grow.

In a previous vignette (Queerly Counting), we learned that Alex does not come out unless

it serves a pedagogical function in order to avoid being the voice of the entire community

or for being known as the gay professor. Tokenism is something that individuals in

marginalized communities are acutely aware of, but unfortunately something they

encounter quite often. LaSala et al. (2008) explain,

> Out LGBT tokens, like women tokens and tokens of color, are usually highly
> visible in their departments and schools...In addition, such tokens often have
> additional role demands since LGBT students and community members will
> likely have unmet needs and will seek out their ongoing support and assistance.
> (p. 258)

This is exactly what we see in Alex's vignette above. It is possible that this tokenism for

Alex is a bit more heightened due to the fact that they are not only LGBTQ faculty, but

that they also hold a leadership role within the college. Kortegast and van der Toorn

(2018), examined the experiences of LGBTQ student affairs professionals and found that,

> participants discussed assuming many informal responsibilities regarding the
> support, education, and advocacy of LGBTQ students and organizations. These
> other duties were not part of formal job descriptions but rather assumed out of

personal interest, commitment to LGBTQ issues, and in response to a vacuum of support for LGBTQ students and issues. (p.276)

Alex also explains the struggle of balancing departmental duties with her role as faculty and her scholarly responsibilities of publication.

Judging a Book by Its Cover

I think a lot of my experiences are a result of my fairly masculine gender performance. I've talked to colleagues a lot about this, especially the ones who are more feminine presenting, people, men particularly interrupt them more, men don't listen to them as much, they don't accept them as authoritative figures, there is this whole list of things that seem to happen to women that seem to happen less to me. Of course, we haven't done a study or anything, but it does seem like this weird stuff happens less for me, even in the classroom. I don't have students that treat me like I'm an idiot or who try to undermine my classroom, I just don't and I think that might be related to my masculine way of being in the classroom and in meetings and stuff like that. I do, in some ways, feel the weight of representing the queer community in college and university decisions. And like we discussed before, I often get asked to speak but I really don't mind that, I know it is partly because I'm queer and partly because I'm the campus expert on all things queer so it is hard to disentangle those two things,

she says with a shrug. "There is also this weird thing in like I'm treated like one of the guys. I think it is very strange and it makes me a bit uncomfortable at times, but I'm happy to exploit it," she says with a laugh.

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I also would say I'm probably a bit more equity minded and push for inclusion more than others, there are a few things that I've pushed back on such as our course load size compared to other departments and how other chairs treat the dean. I don't know if that is as much about my identity so much as it is the experience of being marginalized in some way and knowing what it is like to be outside of something, or screwed by something, and all those things. I think all of this is in the mix.

Where Dani's gender presentation seemed to place them in a borderland of sorts, we see above that Alex's gender presentation experience has been different. Alex explains that it seems she is often accepted as one of the guys so to speak. Ballenger (2010) examined structural and cultural conditions that create barriers to leadership for women in higher education and found that the "good old boy network" was a major contributing factor. Higher education, as with most systems we encounter, was created by white, cisgender, heterosexual, men who tend to favor and promote individuals they perceive as similar to themselves, thus creating a "good old boy network" where only those who fit in certain boxes succeed.

Next, our discussion moved on to Alex's motivations in her roles as faculty and administrator.

Equity...and Keeping the Wheels on the Cart

Alex smiles and nods her head back and forth as I ask her how she explains her job to people,

That depends on who it is, if I assume the person has no context whatsoever, I usually say I teach college, because I feel a pretentious thing saying I'm a college professor...it just sort of feels like this weird pretentious thing to me,

she says as she laughs.

So usually, I'll say I teach gender studies, and when people ask me what that is, I say it is the study of how gender matters and how gender produces various inequalities in relationship with other categories like race, class, sexuality, ability, those kinds of things. That is kind of the base level where I start and go from there depending on their response. I don't usually talk much about research, if that seems interesting to the person I'm talking to then I'll go there, but for me it is the least interesting part of my job. It is also the part of my job that is least intelligible to people outside of academia, like what do you mean you sit in your office and write books, what kind of job is that?!

Alex says with a laugh and a shrug.

We then move our conversation to explore Alex's motivations as faculty, chair, and generally in their work.

The students are what motivates me in my work generally. I had a blast in college, I loved it intellectually, I wasn't really a partier, I just loved the process of undergraduate learning...and I love that piece of people's lives when they begin to grow into adulthood and sort of figure out who they're going to be and make decisions about how they are going to be in the world. I love that process writ

large and the way my teaching plays, can play a role in that process is really

interesting and really fun for me. I mean, research is nice,

she says with a short laugh as she shakes her head,

but it is really interacting with the students, being present, and witnessing how

they move through what seems to be a pretty formative moment in their lives, it is

just really interesting and really fun and I feel really lucky to be a part of it.

Alex pauses to take a drink before continuing, "As I mentioned earlier, becoming a

teacher at the college level was really just a way for me to be in college forever," she says

with a laugh,

it is a way for me to continue to learn and grow so that is kind of selfishly fun for

me and we've already discussed student interactions being a motivator in my

work generally. I would add that this is a very strange workplace in some ways,

and a difficult workplace in some ways, but I also enjoy the independence piece

as a faculty member. For example, if I want to grade papers at 4AM in my

pajamas I can, I can largely dress how I like, and I can set many elements of my

own schedule, sure there are moments where I wish I could come home at 5PM

and just be done, but I like the lifestyle element of it also.

Alex then begins to discuss her motivations as chair, "It is between equity and equity,"

Alex says with a laugh as I ask what the main motivator in her work as chair was.

95% of what I do, besides keeping the wheels on the cart, is about equity. We are the cheapest program in the university, which means we teach the most students for the least money in the entire university, and that is some bullshit,

she says with a laugh as she leans in toward the computer and points her index figure toward the camera. Alex continues,

I've been pushing back at that for years now and I've been successful in changing some of those things, but it is on multiple levels. It's at the level of the dean's office, it is at the level of the provost's office, it's at the level of the whole university structure and I've been pushing on all three of those levels. It's slowing moving, before we had the change in leadership, it wasn't moving at all, we also didn't have the necessary data available at the time either. One of the first things I noticed (in the data) was that units that were chaired by women were the cheapest, which meant we were doing the most work for the least money. So I marched into my dean's office, who is a woman incidentally, though not a very gender conscious one...and I said 'listen, sister. This is bullshit,' so it has gotten better after that. We figured out what happened, the dean asked to raise all the course caps, it seems like all the women chairs of departments thought this was policy while the departments headed by men just ignored it and didn't do it. So that is another issue, that all the men chairs walk all over her (the dean), it has gotten better, but it hasn't stopped. So making sure we, my department is treated with equity is a lot of my motivation as chair.

When explaining her job to others, Alex focuses mostly on her role as faculty. She explained that she generally does not bring up research in most conversations and she made no mention of her administrative roles in her job description. This was a bit surprising since Alex has served as chair much longer than Dani. In the vignette above, Alex also highlights the challenges that department chairs can face when they have a less-than effective dean. We saw in a previous vignette (It's Shitty, but You Can Also Matter) that Alex has found an ally in the Provost's office which has helped her in changing some things. However, the structures within higher education were designed in ways that inhibit quick and wide-ranging changes, especially those that involve money. Finally, equity around workload arises again in this vignette as we also saw in Exploited. Aguirre (2000) explains that women faculty often teach classes that have larger enrollments, in Alex's case this was due to the dean's ineffectiveness in making sure the course cap increase was implemented across the board and not just by certain department chairs who happened to be women.

After gaining some insight into Alex's motivations in her roles as faculty and administrator, we moved to discuss what she sees as her biggest success and challenge in the department chair position, I then asked Alex about her goals and desires for their department moving forward.

From Building to Sustaining

> Building a program has been my biggest success, my program was in the dumps when I got here. I had two difficult faculty, one who couldn't teach to save their life, the other one was a good teacher but a difficult colleague. I knew I wanted to

build a program that had real rigor to it that had relevance. We changed the name of the program from women's studies to gender studies, we changed the emphasis of the program. Now we teach classes that students love and our classes always fill. When I started this position and began building the program it was during the first recession, then the election happened, then all the changes in leadership and lack of transparency, all the school's financial troubles which no one knew how deep and wide that was because of lack of transparency in leadership, and now COVID happened, so I think building a program in these really adverse conditions has been my greatest success as chair. In terms of challenges, a couple come to mind. I was hired on as an assistant professor and I was term faculty, meaning every year I had to renew my contract and I was not on the tenure track at that time. After five or six years of teaching as term faculty, I was converted to tenure track and finally got tenure, but for five or six years I ran the show with one course release a year as my compensation. So the beginning was really tough because my faculty members were senior faculty and I was a lowly lecturer who just got out of grad school, like how am I supposed to manage this person? She is pretty difficult and there was a chance she could end up on my tenure committee,

Alex throws up her arms while shaking her head,

she ended up retiring, but it was difficult for those first few years. The other professor ended up leaving so I basically got to hire my own department after that, there haven't really been those kinds of issues since then, just some glitchy things here and there. The other major challenge has been the inequalities in

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workload that we discussed earlier, you know, making sure my department isn't being taken advantage of in that regard.

Alex pauses to take a drink before discussing her goals for the department moving forward,

> Right now, honestly, my goal is to survive, our financial woes are pretty profound right now and COVID is pretty profound right now, so all these things are stacked against us and my goal is just to survive. If all of those things were not a thing, then I'd be trying to build a major. Right now, we just have a minor, but it wouldn't be that hard to build a major, we'd maybe need another half a faculty member, but right now that just isn't a possibility at all. So I'm just trying to survive, trying to be an efficient program that makes money for the university, that participates and shows up, I'm sorry I don't have a better answer for you at this time, but this is where we are,

Alex says with a faint laugh and shrug.

> Carroll (1991) found that women were more likely than men to come into the department chair position before becoming a full professor. Carroll explains,

> being department chair without being full professor causes problems that full professors might not have. Authority is limited with those of higher rank and the energies placed into obtaining full professor reduce time available for administering the department. (p. 676)

Alex encountered this problem, which was compounded by the fact that her faculty members in the department were difficult and challenging to work with, not to mention the fact that it was her first job out of graduate school. However, Alex was rewarded

when the two faculty members left and she was able to hire her own faculty members. The vignette above also highlights some COVID related challenges which we will return to in a future vignette. Similar to Dani, Alex is concerned about the financial impacts of COVID for the continuation of her department.

Challenging Notions

I think in some ways I challenge the notion of what a female chair is and can be like, I think the masculine presenting part probably helps with that because I do feel like people listen to me more and people understand me to be a person of authority in some ways more because I've got short hair and dress like a man,

Alex says as she shrugs and laughs, she then continues on,

I do think that is a real thing. I'm also really mouthy, I don't put up with people's crap and I don't let things slide, which I think a lot of chairs do. I think often chairs, women chairs in particular, want to be liked, want to be nice, and make people happy. I don't really care about a lot of that. I don't know if that is so much the queer talking there as much as the masculinity part. I am one of the three or four most mouthy people on campus though, I think a lot of that comes from marginalized experiences and wanting to stand up for my department,

Alex concludes.

In the vignette above, we again see how Alex's gender presentation seems to shield her from some of the experiences her fellow colleague's experience. She also brings up an interesting point around being nice and making people happy. Keashly and

Neuman (2010) discuss how both student and faculty evaluations, particularly for women and minority faculty members, use subjective and ambiguous means for judgement. These metrics for evaluation are often based on white, cisgender, heteronormative practices and beliefs and often put women and minority faculty at a disadvantage. While Alex's presentation seems to give her a bit of an advantage, we saw previously that was not the case with Dani.

Due to the fact that we were experiencing a global pandemic during the time interviews for this study were conducted, I wanted to ask the participants how COVID-19 had impacted their position as department chairs. The vignette below describes Alex's view of the impact COVID-19 has had on her as department chair at her institution.

Balancing Interests

Well it was tricky because I was on sabbatical in the spring when everything shut down. In some ways it hasn't really changed that much. You know, it is crappy for everyone, everyone has to figure out how to teach online. We have had a decent amount of choice in our course modality, people weren't forced to teach face-to-face if they didn't want to. Part of my compensation for serving as chair is a course release and one of those got cut because we don't have the money. So now I'm doing more with less, shocker!

Alex says with a laugh and a shrug.

So I'm much more deliberate about taking on additional things. I'm also more cautious about the balance between the interest of my department and the interest

of the college or university as a whole as a result. For example, we got sent an email saying we needed more face-to-face classes so more students will stay on campus in the dorms. Which is true, we need the money. So it was the greater good for the university to offer more face-to-face classes, but I was like no. They asked us to please compel our faculty and I was like no, nope, no way,

Alex says as she shakes her head side to side. "So I think the balance has shifted between my department's good and the university's good." I ask Alex if she plans on continuing to serve as chair of the department,

I've been very protective of my faculty, because they were both junior until last year. One of them just got tenure and the other got it last year, so I was trying to protect them from having to do what I did, because it sucks. One of them would be a great chair, but the other would be a train-wreck,

Alex says with a laugh, "they have other strengths though," she is quick to add. "The one who would be a good chair is going on sabbatical soon and is joint appointed in another department so figuring out the chair piece is a bit tricky. We'll have to see."

Above, we see that as a result of COVID Alex's focus has switched from the university's greater good to the greater good for her department. Much like Dani, Alex's main focus is making sure her department is sustained through this trying time. The vignette above also highlights how Alex leads her department. Scharron-Del Rio (2018) explains the important role department chairs can play in protecting their junior faculty, "Department chairs and deans need to actively mentor junior faculty and protect them

from tokenization and too many service requests. A chair saying no to a service request...protects the scholar from future negative repercussions in promotion and tenure" (p. 8). It is likely that Alex's experience having to serve as chair before becoming full professor and receiving tenure has influenced her protective nature over her faculty.

Summary

This chapter provides highlights to interviews with Dani and Alex, two LGBTQ department chairs. Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship begins with providing readers a description of events. For this study, vignettes were constructed utilizing participant quotations to provide descriptions of participants' experiences, views of how role impacts LGBTQ identity, and how participants challenge the norm of what it means to be a leader. This chapter also includes vignette interpretations utilizing Palmer's ideas of teacher identity, queer theory, research on LGBTQ issues in higher education, and department chair research.

Dani identifies as queer, uses they/them/theirs/she/her/hers pronouns, and did not complete the race/ethnicity question in the questionnaire, but during the interview discussed being a member of QTPOC groups. They work at a public four-year institution in a metropolitan area located in the western United States, which enrolls between 15,000-20,000 students. Dani has been serving as department chair for two years in a gender and women's studies department consisting of five faculty and three staff members.

As a first-generation college student, Dani was not sure what their career path was going to hold, that was until fate or as Dani said "kismet" intervened and they found their voice in teaching. In their roles as faculty member and administrator, Dani encounters many assumptions from those based on their gender presentation to others based on their area of research. Dani has seen brief glimpses of community, when a colleague created a QTPOC community, but this was short lived and now Dani experiences loneliness and isolation while navigating the borderlands created not only by their identities, but also by the department chair position itself.

Dani describes their role as faculty as "exciting, challenging, empowering." They explain that students are both positives as well as challenges in their role as faculty. Dani enjoys their relationships with students while watching them grow and develop. Dani also enjoys being challenged in a positive way by their students and that this often challenges Dani to question and improve their pedagogy. However, Dani also highlights a different type of challenge from students that are particularly challenging and at times cause them to worry about safety. Dani likens their role as administrator to a sausage factory, reflecting on how it is often eye-opening to see the behind-the-scenes action in both higher education policy and sausage making. We also see again, how Dani's queerness and gender presentation are perplexing to their fellow chairs causing them to be questioned or ignored completely when raising concerns around certain topics or issues that those using a white, cisgender, heterosexual, masculine lens may not deem important.

Dani references their relationship with students in highlighting their motivation as faculty, while the mission and values of the department are a big motivator in their work as chair. Dani discusses how being chair provides them with a different audience and helps them see the bigger pictures and says their biggest success is creating a culture focused on care and collaboration. Dani's biggest challenges are making sure their program survives any COVID-19 related financial cuts and dealing with micro aggressions, the cause of which Dani is unsure. Dani challenges the norm of what it means to be a leader with their outsider perspective and collaborative approach. COVID-19 has only exacerbated the challenges Dani faces as department chair. An increase in online meetings has resulted in decreased time and opportunities to build an already lacking community, while additional rules and regulations at multiple levels have added even more ambiguity and complexity to an already difficult position.

Alex identities as queer or lesbian, uses she/her/hers pronouns, and identifies as white. She works at a public four-year institution in the western United States that enrolls between 10,000-15,000 students. Alex's school is located in a rural and conservative part of the state. Alex has been serving as department chair for twelve years in a gender and women's studies department that consists of two other faculty members.

Alex loved her experience in college as an undergraduate and found that pursuing a Ph.D and faculty position was sort of a way to be in college forever. Alex's path to the department chair position was an interesting one and did not follow the path of typical department chairs. Alex was hired as department chair in a non-tenure track position which likely contributed to many of the early struggles she faced. Similar to Dani, Alex's

gender presentation is prominent in framing many of her experiences. Alex's experiences with climate are interesting in that she experiences a more open and liberal campus environment that is located within a more hostile and conservative community environment.

Alex used the word exploited to describe their experience as both faculty and department chair. This feeling results from a large discrepancy in pay and workload for Alex's department and college in general. Alex describes the administrator role as "shitty, but you can also matter," this highlights the complex and difficult nature of the position, but also shows Alex's ability to enact change in her role as administrator. Alex explains that her LGBTQ identity is more difficult to navigate in her role as scholar due to her focus on researching a specific religious group. Alex also discusses how her LGBTQ identity serves, both positively and negatively, as a beacon to other LGBTQ students in the university who seek out her and the program as a safe space to question and explore.

Alex highlights the challenges that department chairs can face when they have a less-than effective dean, despite this fact, Alex is able to make changes happen due to persistence and an ally in the Provost's Office. Alex states that building a program has been her biggest success as department chair and that her biggest challenge right now is sustaining her program during COVID-19. Alex challenges the norms of what it means to be a leader by fighting for her department to be treated with equity. Alex's gender presentation also challenges norms of how women faculty and leaders are viewed and treated. In addition to the financial and pedagogical struggles caused by COVID-19, Alex is also focusing more on her departments good over that of the school as a whole.

Dani and Alex share some common similarities, but those similarities do not promise for similar experiences. In this chapter, we have seen how both Dani and Alex experience the position of department chair, we see how their roles as faculty and administrator impact their LGBTQ identity, and we have seen how they challenge the norm of what it means to be a leader. In the next chapter, we will evaluate the information provided and discuss related themes. We will also examine the information presented here to answer the three research questions guiding this study.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter will consist of a discussion of evaluation and themes from participant interviews with Dani and Alex. These themes will be discussed as they relate to the research questions guiding the study. Evaluations of participant data based on queer theory and department chair research will provide an understanding of the significance of participant experiences. Following evaluation and themes, study limitations will be discussed which will then lead to a discussion on future research.

In the previous chapter, descriptions of Dani and Alex's experiences as LGBTQ department chairs were provided in vignettes utilizing direct quotations from participant interviews. Dani and Alex also discussed how their dual roles as faculty and administrator impacted their LGBTQ identity and examined if/how they challenged the norm of what it means to be a leader. Interpretations of Dani and Alex's experiences following each vignette help frame significance and were utilized to develop the themes that are discussed in this chapter. As we saw in the previous chapter, Dani and Alex share some common similarities, but those similarities do not promise for similar experiences. Within the evaluation in this chapter, we will discuss how Dani and Alex's experiences are similar or different.

Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship seeks to describe, interpret, evaluate, and create themes around one's research topic, in this case LGBTQ department chairs. Dani and Alex have provided descriptions of their experience as queer department chairs. These descriptions were followed by interpretations in which the meaning and consequences of Dani and Alex's experiences were explored. The two final aspects of Educational Criticism are evaluation and thematics. Uhrmacher et al., (2017) explain that during evaluation, "the educational critic asks what is of value here, both for those involved and for the educational enterprise generally speaking?" (p. 50). In the evaluation, we will examine Dani and Alex's experience using queer theory, Palmer's ideas on teacher identity, and department chair research to determine the significance for not only the participants, but higher education as a whole. The final aspect of Educational Criticism is thematics which

> articulates the patterns, big ideas, and anticipatory frameworks for other educational situations. The themes distill the major ideas that run through general educational matters and provide guidance, not a guarantee or prediction, for understanding broader educational context. (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 54)

It is important to remember that these themes were developed by the critic using the experiences described by participants. Uhmacher et al. (2017) state, "critics' and educators' future perceptions should not be narrowed by recognition of such themes, but rather the themes serve as entry points for further deepened seeing and elaboration upon the ideas" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 56). It is up to each reader to determine how the themes resonate with them and their experiences.

Figure 1

Interpretive Frameworks Diagram
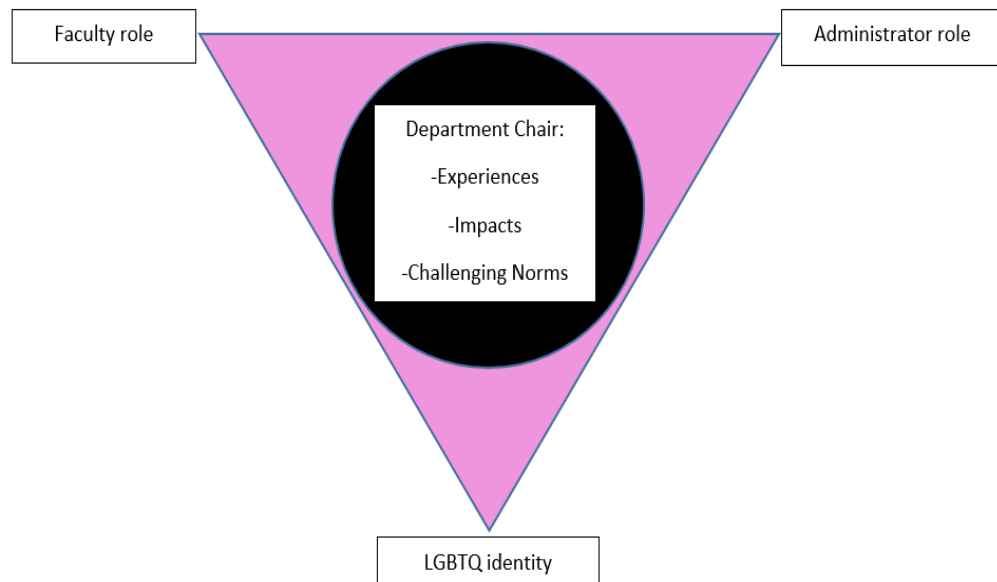
LGBTQ Department Chairs

When designing this study, several interpretive frameworks were considered. Queer theory and Palmer's ideas on teacher identity were most prominent in our discussion with Dani and Alex. *Figure 1* above, shows the two main roles (faculty and administrator) that make up the department chair position at the top of the triangle with LGBTQ identity at the bottom. Queer theory was represented in the middle circle and framed participants' experiences, intersections of roles and identities, and perception of how they challenged the norm of leadership at their institution.

For participants in this study, Dani and Alex, their experiences brought to light the fact that their LGBTQ identity intersects with their roles as scholars differently from their role as teachers. When proposing this study, I lumped the roles of teacher and

scholar into the faculty role thinking that there would not be a large difference in scholar/teacher. *Figure 2* below, teases out the roles of scholar and teacher from the general faculty role and highlights the intersections of the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar with Dani and Alex's queer identity. In this diagram, we see LGBTQ identity at the center of the triangle with each of the three roles discussed by participants. The boxes associated with the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar outline the aspects highlighted by Dani and Alex. The solid lines indicate themes identified within each of the three roles, the dotted line leading from the role of scholar to the box at the top of the diagram indicates Alex's experiences related to their research focus and queer identity. When Dani and Alex's queer identity intersects with their role as teacher, we see identity and integrity, their calling to teach, and empowering students for change as central features. Where their queer identity and administrator roles intersect, we see an outsider perspective, the building of culture and programs, and fighting for equity as key features. Where queer and scholar intersect we see research leading/feeding into assumptions, tensions between identities and research community, and for Alex specifically, an outsider perspective.

Figure 2
Role & Queer Identity Intersection
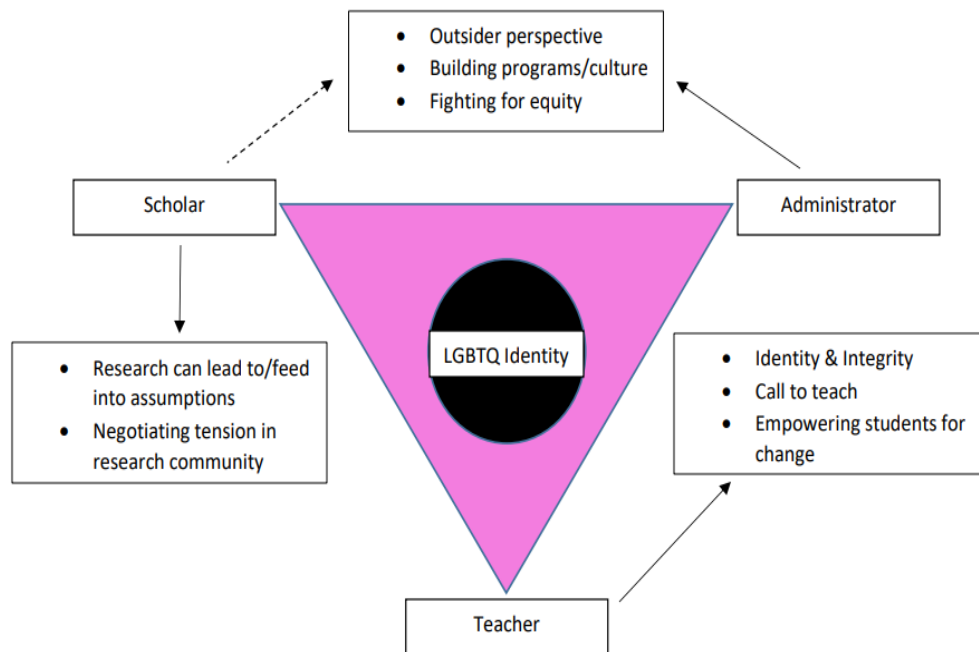
The table below provides a side-by-side comparison of department chair qualities and characteristics pulled from the literature with experiences discussed by Dani and Alex. This allows us to see where Dani and Alex share similar experiences with their fellow department chair colleagues as well as highlighting their unique and individual experiences. Both participants worked to influence policies and procedures around equity issues, with differing levels of success. Additionally, both participants were able to build supportive and collaborative departmental cultures, but did not necessarily experience the same culture when working with their department chair colleagues. While both participants spoke of growing their departments as great successes, they worried about the impacts of budget cuts and potential re-organizations. Many of these comparisons will be discussed further in the evaluation and themes sections.

Table 1

Department Chair Comparison Chart

Department Chair from Literature	Dani	Alex
• Generally more experienced/senior members of faculty (Berdrow, 2010; Carroll, 1991)	• Became chair after serving as full-time faculty for several years	• Was hired into chair position as term faculty, directly out of grad school
• Many department chairs maintain closer ties to teacher than administrator (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Gmelch, 1991)	• A lot of focus/excitement around role as teacher compared to administrator; also discussed role of scholar and challenges related to identity/assumptions	• Seemed to enjoy role of teacher more than administrator; also discussed role of scholar and challenges related to identity/assumptions
• Influence institutional policies and procedures (Tucker, 1993)	• Has experienced challenges in implementing desired changes related to equity (pronouns policy, BIPOC resolution)	• Has had some success in improving policies and procedures related to equity (workload)
• Create/maintain departmental culture (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Tucker, 1993)	• Has developed a collaborative, supportive, and inclusive departmental culture	• Was hired into a difficult culture, but was able to hire faculty and create supportive departmental culture

Department Chair from Literature	Dani	Alex
• Establish departmental goals/objectives & grow faculty/department (Berdrow, 2010; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Wolverton et al., 2005)	• Has been able to successfully grow department, faculty, and students; concerned about re-organization and budget cuts	• Has been able to successfully grow department, faculty, and students; would like to add major but is concerned about budget cuts, having to do more with less
• Represent their department/school (Wolverton et al., 2005)	• Attempts to raise concerns, but largely feels like concerns go unheard; operates as outsider	• At times feels like not only has to represent department but also LGBTQ community

Themes Overview

Themes will be discussed as they related to the research questions guiding this study. The first research question, what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs, aims to fill a gap in the literature around campus climate for LGBTQ individuals. The second research question, what is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity, examines the impact of the dual roles (faculty and administrator) on LGBTQ identity. The final research question, how are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all, examines what it means to "queer" the department chair position.

Three major themes emerged from participant interviews with Dani and Alex. The first theme regards the role of gender presentation and assumptions. Both Dani and Alex had experiences, positive and negative, that were largely framed by their gender presentation. The second theme relates to queering the roles that are at the core of the department chair position, the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar. Dani and Alex highlight how their queer identity is infused in their various roles that fall within the department chair position. The final theme that both Dani and Alex explain, Dani explicitly, relates to an outsider perspective impacting how they approach their department chair position. Each of these three themes will be discussed in further detail following the evaluation section below.

Evaluation

This section will evaluate Dani and Alex's experiences as LGBTQ department chairs and discuss the significance of the vignettes provided in the previous chapter. Queer theory, teacher identity, department chair, and LGBTQ research will help frame the evaluations. The subsections below will evaluate Dani and Alex's experiences, their role and identity impact, and how they challenge the norm of what it means to be department chair.

Experiences

Dani and Alex followed different paths into academia, but their call to teaching and strong connections with students are common aspects of their experience. Both Dani and Alex spoke of their enjoyment and success as undergraduate students which led them to graduate school. Dani explains, "I was in college because I didn't know what else I was going to do, it was something I was good at" (Chapter Four, Dani, A Story of Kismet), while Alex reflects "I loved college, so this is a sort of way to get to be in college forever!" (Chapter Four, Alex, A Way to Be in College Forever). In graduate school, Dani discovered their interest in sexuality studies while Alex discovered hers in gender studies. These research interests left Dani and Alex with few career choices after completing their degrees. In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998) writes,

> Many of us were called to teach by encountering not only a mentor but also a particular field of study. We were drawn to a body of knowledge because it shed light on our identity as well as on the world. (p. 26)

This seems to be true for both Dani and Alex, their research interests had a great impact on their career pathway. Alex loved teaching and knew it was something she wanted to do, while it took unfortunate circumstances for Dani to find their teacher within. Palmer

(1998) states, "The teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be but to what is real for us, of what is true" (p. 32). Both Dani and Alex brought up the joy they found in nurturing students and helping them explore and challenge the systems they encounter as they transition into adulthood. When asked how they explain their job to others, both Dani and Alex focused on teaching and what they taught more than their administrative role, this reflects findings from Gmelch (1991) who found, 60% of department chairs surveyed about their orientation identified themselves as faculty and Carroll and Wolverton (2004) who found over 40% of department chairs "continue to draw their identity exclusively from their faculty persona" (p. 4). This was not necessarily surprising for Dani since they had been in the department chair position for a relatively short period of time compared to Alex, but since Alex had been in the department chair position for so long and began her career in that position, the expectation was she might identify more with the administrative role than she did in our discussion.

Dani and Alex both experience climate and community challenges, but the challenges they face related to climate and community are quite different. Dani had a brief glimpse of community a few years ago when an Associate Director was hired and began developing QTPOC (Queer & Trans* People of Color) community. However, this community faded after the Associate Director left the position. Now Dani is working to build community within their department but struggling to find support from others in leadership positions at their institution, "as far as QTPOC there isn't community beyond the people I know in my department," Dani explains. Research highlights the impact

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leadership has in developing climate and community on campus (Ambrose et al., 2005; Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Messinger, 2009). Lack of community and culture, especially for minority faculty, is one of the leading causes for faculty attrition (Garvey & Rankin, 2018; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002) and Dani highlights the isolation that can be felt when community does not extend beyond the one they have created, or in this case, are working to create in their department. Alex's challenges around climate and community revolve around the tension that is felt between the more welcoming climate that has been fostered on campus and the conservative and rural community in which the campus is located. Alex explains that the climate was not always this way, "A change of leadership and student activism got someone hired full-time to run and develop the (LGBTQ) center, so I think people feel like they have more support from the leadership now" (Chapter Four, Alex, Campus Climate vs. Community Climate). Again, we see the importance leadership plays in developing climate. Alex's description also reflects research that has shown rural communities can be challenging for LGBTQ individuals (Whitlock, 2009). Dani makes no mention of the community outside the institution, though this does not mean there is no tension, it is likely that it is not as large as a factor considering Dani's institution is in a metropolitan area.

The final area to evaluate regarding Dani and Alex's experiences relate to their experiences dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their position of department chair. Both Dani and Alex spoke of additional challenges they now face, as in other areas we have seen, they experienced some similarities and differences in their challenges. Dani highlighted an increase in meetings, less time and opportunity to build

community, and the feeling that some of their concerns (pronoun policy) will be drowned out even more now as new challenges added by COVID-19 need to be addressed. Alex also highlighted an increase in workload, but hers was related to losing course releases as compared to more meetings which Dani was encountering. For Alex, this only compounds an issue that she has been dealing with for some time regarding her departments teaching load compared to other departments and colleges within her institution. COVID-19 has only exacerbated challenges faced by department chairs. Gmelch and Burns (1993), found that a heavy workload was a key stressor for department chairs, both Dani and Alex spoke of an increase in an already heavy workload as a result of COVID-19. Alex also explains that, "the balance has shifted between my department's good and the university's good" (Chapter Four, Alex, Balancing Interests). Dani too shared concerns about the potential future impacts of COVID-19 related financial challenges, they squish the air between their index finger and thumb, simulating what they feel happens to those departments as they explain, "you know a gender, women's, and sexuality program is the type of program that when things get tight budget wise, those are the programs that get squished" (Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter). Alex sums it up by sayings, "Right now, honestly, my goal is to survive. Our financial woes are pretty profound right now and COVID is pretty profound right now, so all of these things are stacked against us and my goal is just to survive" (Chapter Four, Alex, From Building to Sustaining). The department chair positions was already ambiguous and complex in nature (Gmelch & Burns, 1993; Wilson, 2001), COVID-19 has only added to this dynamic. Department chairs must contend with

the added challenges faced by faculty like how to adapt pedagogy to an online

environment, as well as the challenges faced by administrators which now include being

aware of and making sure people are following new CDC, state, local, school, and

sometimes departmental policies related to COVID-19.

Role & Identity

This subsection will evaluate the impact the various roles in the department chair

position have on LGBTQ identity. Specifically, the roles of teacher, administrator, and

scholar will be examined. Dani and Alex both used the word queer when discussing their

identification in the LGBTQ community. Alex said she was comfortable identifying as

gay or lesbian as well, but was most comfortable with queer. The evaluation in this

section will focus largely on queer theory, Halperin (2003) writes of queer theory, which

originally started as a joke,

> Queer theory has effectively re-opened the question of the relations between
> sexuality and gender, both as analytic categories and as lived experiences; it has
> created greater opportunities for transgender studies; it has pursued the task
> (begun long before within the sphere of lesbian/gay studies) of detaching the
> critique of gender and sexuality from narrowly conceived notions of lesbian and
> gay identity; it has supported non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality,
> encouraging both theoretical and political resistance to normalization; it has
> underwritten a number of crucial theoretical critiques of homophobia and
> heterosexism; it has redefined the practice of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and
> transgender history; and it has dramatized the far-reaching theoretical promise of
> work in lesbian and gay studies. (p. 341)

As we discussed in the previous subsection, both Dani and Alex were drawn to

teaching and identified more with their teaching role in discussing their position. Going

into this study, I combined the roles of teacher and scholar into the role of faculty.

However, Dani and Alex, explain that their LGBTQ identity intersects with their roles as

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scholars differently from their role as teachers. When discussing their roles as teachers, Dani and Alex both focused on their connections with students and helping them explore and challenge systems as motivators. Dani explains, "I really try to grapple with students with this idea that you could change the system from within, do you become part of the system, in what ways, can you disrupt the system from within?" (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness). This challenging or critique of systems is a cornerstone of queer theory. Alex explains how she questions, "how gender matters and how gender produces various kinds of inequality in relationship with other categories like race, class, sexuality, ability, those kinds of things" (Chapter Four, Alex, Equity...and Keeping the Wheels on the Cart). Here we see how Dani and Alex bring what Palmer (1998) calls identity and integrity to their role as teacher. Palmer explains, "Identity lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life, and integrity lies in relating to those forces in way that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (p. 14). Most LGBTQ individuals have lived a fragmented life at one point or another and can identify with the feeling of wholeness that comes with being able to live your truth. As queer educators, Dani and Alex bring their identity and integrity to their role as teachers, this helps their students frame and hopefully eventually challenge the systems of inequity that exist today.

When evaluating how the role as administrator and queer identity intersect, several things stand out from Dani and Alex's experiences. First, both Dani and Alex described the role of administrator in more negative terms than their role as teacher. This fact alone, is not surprising after reviewing literature around department chair

experiences as many scholars have written of the challenges of the department chair position (Foster, 2006; Gmelch, 1991; Palm, 2006; Wilson, 2001). Dani likened it to a sausage factory, while for Alex it meant battling exploitation on a different level. Both Dani and Alex find themselves fighting for equity, Dani for a pronoun policy and a BIPOC resolution while Alex fights for workload and departmental equity at her institution. Dani and Alex have had different experiences in their fight for equity. Dani explains, "I've been pushing for a pronouns policy since I've been serving as chair...and people are like, that is not important right now" (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness). While Dani has experienced challenges and criticism, Alex has been met with a slightly more receptive environment, "it is affirming to actually matter...I've seen things that I've said matter, I've seen meetings come out of complaints I've made" (Chapter Four, Alex, It's Shitty, but You Can Also Matter).

Finally, both Dani and Alex serve as ambassadors for the LGBTQ community in their role as administrator. By fighting for a pronouns policy, Dani is attempting to challenge the dualistic thinking that is embedded in higher education around gender identification, they bring the voice of those who do not strictly fit into the male or female categories established by gender-normative society. This challenging of dualistic thinking around gender (male/female), sexuality (gay/straight), class (rich/poor), among others is another founding principle in queer theory (Watson, 2005). Dani also brings this in their curriculum development stating that they challenge their colleagues in curriculum development to consider LGBTQ folk and alternative sexualities/gender identification in their courses. Alex too serves as an ambassador for the LGBTQ community, but in a

slightly different manner. Alex explains how she is often asked to speak at events highlighting queer topics, she is not quite able to disentangle if this is because she is queer or because if she is the campus expert on queer matters. She also explains that she feels she draws queer students to the program and helps provide them with a safe space to question and explore their identities. These experiences share similarities with other LGBTQ faculty and staff members in higher education who often find themselves the token individuals being asked to serve on search committees and expert panels (Scharron-Del Rio, 2018).

In their roles as administrators, Dani and Alex bring their LGBTQ voice to the table by fighting for equity and challenging current systems and practices. This is both a blessing and a curse in that they have some power to enact change, but often run into resistance because their concerns are often minimized, we see this with Dani's fight for a pronoun policy. LGBTQ administrators and administrators belonging to other marginalized groups are often burdened with additional duties that their male, white, cisgender, heterosexual colleagues are not such as speaking at special community events, sitting on committees, and serving as advisor to special groups of students or clubs on campus (Kortegast & van der Toorn, 2018; LaSala et al., 2008).

The final role of scholar is examined as it intersects with Dani and Alex's queer identity. For Dani, their queerness and research area seem to coincide in a way that others often assume based on their research that they are a member of the LGBTQ community. Alex, however, has a different experience in how her queerness intersects with her role as scholar. Part of Alex's research focus looks at a specific religious group. Alex explains,

"I'm always navigating in a sense my outness there (annual research conference) because for some folks in that research community that (being gay) is like a disqualifying factor for your ability to know things" (Chapter Four, Alex, When Research and Identity Collide). With Alex, we see almost an opposite effect compared to Dani. Dani's colleagues and peers often assume their queer identity based on their research focus, while for Alex, her queer identity can be seen as a discrediting factor. LGBTQ and minority scholars often face challenges to the credit of their work, especially if it focuses on LGBTQ topics. This has long been seen as a way to keep these individuals in the closet and out of academia (LaSala et al., 2008; Renn, 2010). Dani and Alex bring their queer identity and queer theory to the forefront in their roles as scholars by focusing on sexualities and gender as main aspects of their research.

Challenging Norms

As we saw in the previous subsection, both Dani and Alex are fighting for equity in their role as administrators. Dani is fighting for a pronouns policy and for the institution to adopt a BIPOC resolution while Alex fights for workload equity for her department. Equity was a common thread throughout my interviews with both Dani and Alex. As teachers they are teaching students to challenge systems of inequity they encounter, as administrators they are fighting for equity for their students, faculty, and staff, and as scholars they are questioning common assumptions around gender and sexuality. Messinger (2009) examined institutions that implemented LGBTQ friendly policies and found, "at most of the sampled institutions, those who sought new policies were lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty, staff, and students: those most

affected by discrimination" (p. 2). This holds true for both Dani and Alex, in that their quest for equity in these areas have largely stemmed from challenges they have experienced.

Dani and Alex highlight building their programs as major successes as department chairs. Dani reflects,

> My biggest success has been changing the workplace culture, really focusing on self-care and social and self-empowerment for faculty, staff, and students. We have a growing department whereas a lot of other programs are shrinking in terms of enrollments...Our department is like 90% LGBTQ, people of color, we've got a pretty diverse program. I'm super excited about that and the work that it means our faculty and staff are doing in the university community (Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter).

Alex too said, "Building a program has been my biggest success, my program was in the dumps when I got here" (Chapter Four, Alex, From Building to Sustaining). Dani and Alex both work in gender, women's, and sexuality studies departments at their institutions and both expressed concerns regarding their department's futures in the face of COVID-19 budget cuts. Alex laments, "Right now, honestly, my goal is to survive, our financial woes are pretty profound right now and COVID is pretty profound right now, so all these things are stacked against us and my goal is just to survive" (Chapter Four, Alex, From Building to Sustaining). Similarly, Dani worries about discussions of reorganization and realignment, "a gender, women's, and sexuality program is the type of program that when things get tight budget wise, those are the programs that get squished"

(Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter). This challenge of building programs and then having to fight to keep them is probably not unique to LGBTQ department chairs, but it does reflect higher education's priorities. Palm (2006) wrote, "Academic administration provides an opportunity to gain greater knowledge about the operation of the college or university, which contributes to a sense of control one has over the environment" (p.61). However, Dani said that being department chair was like working in a sausage factory, highlighting that knowing the inner workings of institutions may not always be a pleasant experience. Continuing the sausage factory metaphor, for both Dani and Alex, seeing the inner workings of their institutions, knowing what goes into making a budget, and how departments are evaluated is a great cause of concern.

Department chairs play a large role in cultivating culture within their department (Ambrose et al., 2005), and effective department chairs can go a long way in creating an inclusive culture within their departments (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998). When discussing how they lead their departments, three things stood out. Dani and Alex can be described as collaborative, supportive, and protective in their leadership. Dani explains, "my leadership is more collaborative...leadership for me is less about what I can do for you, but what can we do together?" (Chapter Four, Dani, What Can We Do Together?). Dani continues,

> I know I'm serving, I know that it's a hierarchy, I know that, but we try to be
> really equitable in our work. So I work with three other staff members and we
> meet every week, we make decisions as a team, and we *collaborate* (their

emphasis). We do the same with faculty that is the good part about serving as chair being able to work as a team in that way (Chapter Four, Dani, It's a Sausage Factory).

For Dani, the position of department chair provides more opportunities to collaborate and bring other voices to the table. We also see that Dani and Alex are supportive of their students, faculty, and staff. Alex supports students by providing a safe academic space for them to explore and question, while helping grow the two faculty members in her department. Finally, Dani and Alex are protective of their departments, students, faculty, and staff. We see this in the causes they have chosen to pursue. By fighting for a BIPOC resolution and pronouns policy, Dani is trying to protect students, staff, and faculty who identify as BIPOC or gender non-conforming. Alex's quest for equity in workload is her attempt to protect not only her department, but other departments that also suffer this inequity. Alex also has been protecting her faculty members in a different way, she explains,

> I've been very protective of my faculty, because they were both junior until last year. One of them just got tenure and the other got it last year, so I was trying to protect them from having to do what I did, because it sucks (Chapter Four, Alex, Balancing Interests).

Alex's experience of being chair before becoming a full professor and receiving tenure likely has influenced the protective nature she has around her faculty.

This section has evaluated experiences, role and identity, and challenging norms as it is perceived by Dani and Alex, two LGBTQ department chairs. We have seen how Dani and Alex bring their queer identity to their roles as teacher, administrator, and scholar. They do this by providing safe spaces for students and encouraging students to challenges and critique systems they encounter, while doing so themselves in their roles as administrators. Queer identity, queer theory, and queer praxis are woven into all the various roles that Dani and Alex hold in the department chair position.

Themes

Three themes emerged from interviews with LGBTQ department chairs, Dani and Alex. Although these were identified as themes because they were present in almost all aspects of participant interviews, the themes will be presented as they answer the research questions guiding the study. The first theme that will be discussed looks at the role of gender presentation and associated assumptions and helps frame the first research question (what are the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs?). The second research question, what is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity, will be explored in the second theme. This theme looks at Dani and Alex's queer identity in the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar. The final theme relates to the outsider perspective that Dani and Alex highlight in discussing the final research question, how are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all? These themes were developed by reviewing interview transcripts and highlighting annotations that emerged as both common and unique

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experiences for Dani and Alex. It is up to the reader to determine how these themes resonate with their personal experiences (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

LGBTQ Department Chair Experiences: Gender & Queer Assumptions

The first research question in this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature around LGBTQ department chair experiences, by asking what is the experience of LGBTQ department chairs? Research has examined experiences for LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrative positions such as university presidents, but no study has looked solely at the experience of LGBTQ department chairs. This subsection highlights the experiences of Dani and Alex, two LGBTQ department chairs. Interviews with Dani and Alex reveal a common theme related to gender presentation in their experiences. Although Dani and Alex took different paths to the position of department chair, they share many more similarities including leading departments that focus on gender, women, and sexuality studies. Dani and Alex also both identify as queer and have what would be considered a slightly more masculine gender presentation. Dani's preferred pronouns are they/them/theirs/she/her/hers, while Alex prefers, she/her/hers. The first theme identified in this study is the impact of gender presentation and assumptions.

For Dani, their gender presentation seems to serve as a border placing them in a borderland of sorts. Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) use this theory to explain experiences of faculty whose identities place them between categories often drawn by white, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, upper class males. Dani explains, "I think that people sort of just make assumptions about me, you know, based on my presentation of

self" (Chapter Four, Dani, Assumptions). Dani not only experiences assumptions and borders based on their gender presentation, but also their area of research,

> As faculty, I think when you're doing research in the areas that I research, people make assumptions about you even if they don't know you that includes students, staff, and other faculty members. I was hired as the sexualities person in the department...So I don't know that I've ever had to say anything about my identity without people already making assumptions based on what I teach (Chapter Four, Dani, Can You Use That Word?).

Dani explains that they feel these assumptions especially as they raise concerns they have around issues of equity, "When we go to meetings and I start to bring things up, they are like 'why are we even talking about this,' and I think they attribute it to us being the gender people" (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness). The final challenge Dani experiences related to the theme of gender and queer assumptions involves micro aggressions. Dani explains in an exasperated tone, "Another challenge is the micro-aggressions, those are pretty common. I can't figure out, is it because of my gender identity, my gender presentation, is it my queer identity, is it...what is it?" (Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter). Dani explains that the micro aggressions (misgendering/using incorrect pronouns) are one of the most challenging aspects in their role as administrator. Ambrose et al. (2005) found when examining faculty decisions to leave their institution, that lack of collegiality among colleagues was a key determinant. Micro aggressions can quickly erode collegiality and make it almost impossible for a strong community to develop.

Alex too experiences assumptions based on her gender presentation. When discussing her role as faculty, Alex reflects "I have a pretty masculine gender presentation and I think people associate that in a way that makes sense in my context with queerness, it may not make sense in other contexts, but in mine it does make sense" (Chapter Four, Alex, Queerly Counting). Where individuals make assumptions about Dani's queerness based on their research area, Alex must navigate her queer identity as she explains, "I'm always navigating in a sense my outness there because for some folks in that research community that (being gay) is like a disqualifying factor for your ability to know things" (Chapter Four, Alex, When Research and Identity Collide). Where Dani experiences their gender presentation as a border, Alex's gender presentation has given her a leg up in the good old boys network (Ballenger, 2010). Alex discusses how she does not seem to be interrupted or have her authority questioned as much as colleagues who have a more feminine presentation,

> I think the masculine presenting part probably helps with that because I do feel like people listen to me more and people understand me to be a person of authority in some ways more because I've got short hair and dress like a man (Chapter Four, Alex, Challenging Notions).

She goes on to explain, "There is also this weird thing in like I'm treated like one of the guys. I think it is very strange and it makes me a bit uncomfortable at times, but I'm happy to exploit it" (Chapter Four, Alex, Judging a Book by Its Cover).

Although gender and queer assumptions are experienced by both Dani and Alex, their experiences are vastly different. Dani discussed being challenged in class,

particularly by male students, but seemed to attribute this more to the content of what they were teaching than who they identified as, although that does not mean their identities did not play a factor. Alex discussed feeling like she has to deal with less of that than her more feminine presenting colleagues and attributed it to her masculine gender presentation. Aguirre (2000) highlights that women and minority faculty often deal with challenges related not only to workload and perceived role in decision making, but also with lack of respect from their students and colleagues.

In regard to experiences in their research area, Dani's research is often used as a way to out them while Alex must navigate her queerness more gently in her area of research. LaSala et al. (2008) writes, "Self-identified LGBT faculty, whether or not they conduct LGBT scholarship, along with heterosexuals with substantive interests in these populations, may encounter misunderstandings, heterocentrism, heterosexism, homophobia, and hostility" (p. 255). It is important to note that not everyone who conducts research on LGBTQ topics or individuals is a member of the community, however, this does not stop individuals from making assumptions based on an individual's research expertise or interests. For Alex, whose research is focused on a specific religious group, her queerness presents a different challenge. Most religions do not have a positive view on the LGBTQ community and view those within that community as morally and spiritually inferior. In Alex's case, her membership to the LGBTQ community, "is like a disqualifying factor for your ability to know things" (Chapter Four, Alex, When Research and Identity Collide), for some people in her research community. Where Dani's gender presentation presented borders that put them

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in a borderland with colleagues, Alex's queerness does the same thing, placing her in a sort of borderland where she is not accepted by others in her research community.

The same cisgender, heterosexual, white, upper class, able-bodied, men who established many of the other systems we encounter today also established many of the policies and procedures in higher education. We have seen how both Dani and Alex, who do not belong to many of the categories listed above, experience assumptions based on their gender presentation as well as their queer identity. Dani seems to experience a borderland more so with their department chair colleagues while Alex experiences a borderland in her research community. Alex discusses being treated like one of the guys at times, where Dani seems to be misunderstood by their department chair colleagues. Ballenger (2010) looked at conditions that create barriers to leadership for women in higher education and found that the "good old boy network" was a major contributing factor in hindering women's rise to leadership. Alex's acceptance into this club could be why she feels like she is heard and concerns she brings up get addressed, where Dani who has not been accepted in the same way by colleagues feels like many of their concerns are pushed to the side or minimized. This could also be related to other factors such as race, time in the position, as well as institutional culture at each institution all of which were not examined in this study.

Role & Identity: Queer Permeance

The second research question guiding this study is, what is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity? This subsection will examine three roles within the department chair position (teacher, administrator, scholar) and how

they intersect with Dani and Alex's LGBTQ identities. At the outset of the study, I knew I wanted to ask participants to examine their roles as faculty and administrator, specifically. However, during interviews both Dani and Alex discussed their queer identity as it related to their roles as scholars as well, separating the roles of teacher and scholar that I had combined into the faculty role. Therefore, a discussion on the role of scholar was also included. Educational Criticism offers prefigured and emergent foci as two ways to frame research questions (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). For this study, the faculty and administrative roles were prefigured, meaning they were something I was focused on going into the study, while the role of scholar was emergent and not necessarily something I expected the participants to discuss. The second theme identified is the permeance of queerness. Permeance can be defined as spreading throughout (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Although Dani and Alex's queer identity comes to the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar in different ways, it permeates and is nonetheless present in each.

In the evaluation section, we see that as queer teachers, Dani and Alex bring their identity and integrity to the role which helps their students become aware of, challenge, and possibly change the systems of inequity that exist today, particularly around gender and sexuality. As administrators, Dani and Alex's queer identity help focus their energy on the changes they want to make, Dani fights for a BIPOC resolution and pronouns policy while Alex explains, "I think a lot of that comes from marginalized experiences and wanting to stand up for my department" (Chapter Four, Alex, Challenging Notions).

As scholars, Dani and Alex focus on sexualities and gender which combine their queer identity, gender identity, and queer theory.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer (1998) writes, "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves" (p.11). I would argue, this is also true of a good department chair. To be successful, they need to be able to connect disparate roles that serve students, faculty, and staff at their institution. It seems that Dani and Alex connect these roles through their previous and current experiences with marginalization to push for equity in their roles as teacher, administrator, and scholar.

The role of teacher seemed to be where Dani and Alex's queer identity was easiest to navigate. This is not necessarily surprising due to the nature of the teacher role. Gmelch and Parkay (1999) explain that the independent nature of the faculty role can make it difficult to transition to department chair. Dani highlights this when they say, "when you are faculty, you're off doing your own thing teaching and researching, you don't have that same feeling of community" (Chapter Four, Dani, It's a Sausage Factory). The role of teacher also allows Dani and Alex to explore important conversations and questions on queerness with their students, Alex explains,

> When I teach queer studies, I always tell my students that queer is a category with a strong center and fuzzy boundaries, like, who counts? I don't know who counts. There are some people who queerly (laughs), clearly count and I think I probably clearly count, but then there are all these fuzzy boundaries. That is what makes

me ambivalent about the assumption that there is this clear community that can be defined in a coherent way in the first place (Chapter Four, Alex, Queerly Counting).

Dani too brings queer theory to their teaching, explaining, "Almost everything I teach is rooted within a queer theoretical framework" (Chapter Four, Dani, Can You Use That Word?).

In their roles as administrators, Dani and Alex's queerness is still at the forefront, but in this role it seems to be slightly more difficult to negotiate. Dani explains that they often have to provide further explanations or defend their use of the word queer when the topic comes up in meetings. Additionally, Dani also experiences challenges related to the concerns they bring and the changes they fight to implement. In an exhausted tone, Dani explains, "I've been pushing for a pronouns policy since I've been serving as chair, maybe even before that...and people are like 'that isn't important right now,'" (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness). While Dani often feels like their voice is diminished, Alex is careful to make sure hers is not the only one amplified, "I feel like in this weird way that once you have an identity position, particularly a marginalized identity position then you become the voice of the queer perspective" (Chapter Four, Alex, Queerly Counting). Despite the wish not to become the voice of the queer perspective on her campus, it seems Alex may have done just that. Alex discusses feeling like her queer identity does at times draw LGBTQ students to the program, and though that is where she prefers her service energy to be directed, she often gets requests based on her queer identity to sit on panels and attend events that she is unable to balance, due to the time constraints of the

position. Additional requests such as advising, sitting on committees, attending events are common for faculty and staff who find themselves in a specific minority community in higher education (Aguirre, 2000; Kortegast & van der Toorn, 2018; LaSala et al., 2008). Alex also discusses feeling the responsibility to represent the community in the decision making process, "I do, in some ways, feel the weight of representing the queer community in college and university decisions" (Chapter Four, Alex, Judging a Book by Its Cover). This feeling of tokenism is common for LGBTQ and other minority individuals in higher education (Kortegast & van der Toorn, 2018; LaSala et al., 2008; Scharron-Del Rio, 2018).

Finally, Dani and Alex's queer identity intersects with their role as scholar in slightly different ways. Dani's queer identity is often assumed once individuals discover their area of research while for Alex, her queer identity must be tempered to avoid losing creditability in her research community. It is important to note for Alex though, that this is just within her research community and not her department or institution. Another important note here is that Alex's research focuses on a specific religious group so tension between religion and queer identity is not a surprise. Both Dani and Alex are department chairs for women, gender, and sexuality studies departments. Alex explains, "I'm in the department that does queerness and I'm in a college that is most welcoming to queer subject matter" (Chapter Four, Alex, When Research and Identity Collide).

Palmer (1998) writes, "Identity and integrity have as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials" (p. 13). With Dani and Alex, we see that identity and integrity is not only something they bring to

their role of teacher, but also to their roles as administrator and scholar. We have seen Dani and Alex's wounds, fear, strengths, and potentials that frame their queer identity in the roles of teacher, staff, and administrator.

Challenging Norms: Outsiders

The final research question asks, how are LGBTQ department chairs challenging (the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all? The last theme explores Dani and Alex's outsider perspective and how that impacts how they approach the department chair position. Dani explicitly mentioned an outsider perspective multiple times during our interview, while Alex alluded to, but did not explicitly name it. Dani and Alex challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader by bringing a unique outsider perspective that is grounded in their experiences and that drives the changes they seek to make in their departments and at their institutions.

For Dani, their outsider-ness is most felt in their role as administrator compared to their teacher or scholar roles. Dani reflects,

> I think that those who identify as queer maybe have always been outside the box. I think it is easier for people who have always been outside the box to think outside of the box and to consider alternatives, like why do we have to think about things on a binary, why can't we have multiple different ways of addressing something? So I think that hugely affects, in a positive way, the ways in which I show up to work (Chapter Four, Dani, What Can We Do Together?).

Dani spoke of how they challenge their faculty colleagues to consider these alternatives when building their curriculum, "if I'm helping someone else build their course, I'll bring up making sure to consider LGBTQ folks and since my research is in alternate sexualities, I'll bring up those aspects also" (Chapter Four, Dani, Can You Use That Word?). In their role as a departmental leader, Dani explains,

> the perspective that I bring to the table does focus on intersectionality and queer identities and a lot of these ideas position me really outside the norm. That can be both really exciting, because it is great to bring new perspectives to the table, but it can also feel like I'm so outside the norm that people are like 'what, why?'...so it has its benefits and definitely challenges...but I've always experienced outsider-ness, so it isn't really different feeling that way as chair (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness).

Dani explains how this outsider perspective serves as a motivator as chair, "The motivating factor is seeing a department from what feels like an outsider perspective. I know I'm very much still inside but having the opportunity to *grow* (their emphasis) the department has motivated me" (Chapter Four, Dani, From Growing Plants to Growing Students, Self, and a Department). Dani uses their outsider perspective to push for changes in both their department and their institution. In their department, Dani highlights,

> We've made some really significant and what I believe to be important changes since I've served as chair. With regard to workplace culture, we are trying to focus more on self-care, queer praxis in the workplace, intersectionality, and all of

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these different things (Chapter Four, Dani, From Growing Plants to Growing Students, Self, and a Department).

Dani's creation of and push for adoption of a BIPOC resolution and a pronouns policy are examples of the institutional changes that are guided by Dani's outsider perspective. Dani's outsider perspective is amplified by the fact that they have very little community outside of what they have nurtured within their department. As we saw in Dani's vignettes, they often experience micro aggressions and feel that their voice and concerns are often minimized outside of their department.

In Alex's case, though she may experience some feelings of outsiderness in her role as administrator, it seems that her experience with her research community may present a greater feeling as an outsider. Similar to Dani, Alex's experiences as an outsider fuels her fight for equity, explaining, "the experience of being marginalized in some way and knowing what it is like to be outside of something, or screwed by something, and all those things" (Chapter Four, Alex, Judging a Book by Its Cover). Both Dani and Alex focus on not only departmental changes, but also institutional changes. Alex concludes, "I think a lot of that comes from marginalized experiences and wanting to stand up for my department" (Chapter Four, Alex, Challenging Notions).

Dani and Alex's outsider perspective is influenced by their experiences with marginalization. It also fuels their energy in their respective fights for equity, Dani with a BIPOC resolution and pronouns policy and Alex for a more equitable workload for her and other departments in her college. Messinger (2009) found that individuals who fought for changes were often those most impacted by the discrimination and that allies

can go a long way in helping bring about change. The first of these is very much true for both Dani and Alex, however, Alex is the only participant to discuss an ally. Alex explains that having someone in the Provost's Office who is receptive to their concerns has gone a long way in helping her fight for workload equity.

Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) use Gloria Anzaldúa's borderland theory to explain the experiences of multiracial and trans* faculty whose identities place them 'betwixt-and-between' identity categories, explaining, "On a micro-level, a lack of centering multiracial and trans* voices silences individual narratives of those who exist between socially constructed boundaries of race and gender" (p. 230). Dani and Alex did not identify as trans*, but their gender presentation did seem to place them in a borderlands with their colleagues. For Dani, this experience was largely negative, with colleagues largely misunderstanding or ignoring their voice and concerns. Alex, however, seems to have been able to cross through the socially constructed gender border to become one of the guys, "There is also this weird thing in like I'm treated like one of the guys. I think it is very strange and it makes me a bit uncomfortable at times, but I'm happy to exploit it" (Chapter Four, Alex, Judging a Book by Its Cover). Ballenger (2010) examined conditions that serve as barriers to leadership for women in higher education and found that a major contributing factor was the "good old boy network." Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) remind us, "Within the academy, white cisgender heterosexual men, who often hold other privileged identities, e.g. upper class, able-bodied, construct the dominant culture and its borders" (p.230). Their study found that those who find themselves in the borderlands often experience feelings of not belonging as well as both hyper- and

invisibility. These seem to be feelings that both Dani and Alex experience in different ways and on different levels. Despite this fact, Dani and Alex continue to challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader, using their outsider perspective to fight for equity and recognition for their students, faculty, and staff.

Criticisms

Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship was selected as the research method for this study because not only does it allow the researcher to highlight and describe events or experiences, but it also allows the researcher to apply criticism with the goal of improving the educational process (Eisner, 2002). In the case of this study, improving the educational process means improving the educational climate for LGBTQ individuals in higher education. Criticisms in this section will focus on department chairs as well as deans. Interviews with Dani and Alex provide insight on steps department chairs can take to improve their departmental climate, make changes within their departments and institutions, and highlight the importance of finding community. Dani and Alex's experiences also demonstrate the importance of leadership in developing culture, not only department chair leadership, but leadership at the next level, the college dean.

As department chairs, Dani and Alex highlight building programs and their departmental culture as their biggest successes. For Alex, who was hired as department chair before becoming full professor and receiving tenure, building the program and protecting her faculty has been a focus for the past several years, "I've been very protective of my faculty, because they were both junior until last year...I was trying to protect them from having to do what I did, because it sucks" (Chapter Four, Alex,

Balancing Interests). Scharron-Del Rio (2018) discusses the vital role department chairs play in protecting their junior faculty, "Department chairs and deans need to actively mentor junior faculty and protect them from tokenization and too many service requests. A chair saying no to a service request...protects the scholar from future negative repercussions in promotion and tenure" (p. 8).

Dani explains, "My biggest success has been changing the workplace culture, really focusing on self-care and social and self-empowerment for faculty, staff, and students" (Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter). Dani also emphasizes the importance of collaboration with staff, faculty, and students in their department. The changes in workplace culture and collaborative philosophy that Dani has implemented seems to be successful, "We have a growing department whereas a lot of other programs are shrinking in terms of enrollments. We've got two new faculty members. Our department is like 90% LGBTQ, people of color, we've got a pretty diverse program" (Chapter Four, Dani, Making Changes While Fighting to Matter). By centering inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment in their department, Dani is helping build a community for LGBTQ faculty, staff, and students while giving these previously silenced communities a safe space to be seen and heard.

While Dani has been successful in facilitating changes within their department, they expressed frustration at their ability to impact change on a larger scale. As we discussed above, Dani has successfully changed the departmental culture to create a more collaborative and inclusive environment. However, they also discussed the challenges they have been facing for years in trying to implement a pronouns policy, only to have

their colleagues dismiss it as not important. Dani did experience some success recently in getting a BIPOC resolution that their department worked on with several other departments passed at the university level. Alex too has experienced both challenges and successes in implementing changes regarding workload and compensation at the institutional level. In Dani and Alex's experiences it seems that they have been most successful in implementing changes at the institutional level if they have first been adopted at the departmental level. In Dani's case, they first adopted the BIPOC resolution along with other departments before achieving success in having it adopted at the university level. So too did Alex, with ensuring course caps in her department were equitable. Dani reflects on the department chair position, "... it feels disempowering really" (Chapter Four, Dani, It's a Sausage Factory). By focusing on smaller incremental changes that can be implemented on departmental level first, providing a roadmap to implementation on a larger scale, Dani and Alex demonstrate how department chairs can go from feeling disempowered to making important and impactful changes at not only the departmental but also the institutional level.

The final criticism relating to Dani and Alex's experience, leads to suggestions for both department chairs as well as deans. Alex seems to not only have successfully cultivated her own departmental community, but also penetrated the borders established by cisgender, heterosexual, able bodied, upper class, white, men to become "one of the guys" (Chapter Four, Alex, Judging a Book by Its Cover). Dani, however, has not had the same experience. In absence of finding community amongst their department chair colleagues, Dani has focused on creating their own within their department as we

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discussed above. For department chairs who seek, but lack a community, focus on cultivating a community where you can, within in your department.

Research has shown that LGBTQ faculty experience is largely impacted at the department level (Bystydzienski et al., 2017), that department chairs play a big role in cultivating culture at the departmental level (Ambrose et al., 2005), and that effective department chairs can go a long way in creating an inclusive culture within their departments (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998). Dani and Alex's experience demonstrate that while this is true for faculty members, department chairs experience multiple cultures, the one they create in their department and the one they experience in their college. If department chairs play such an important role in establishing their departmental culture, it can be assumed that deans play a similar role in establishing the culture within their college. Deans could help improve the culture in their colleges by helping department chairs connect. As Dani demonstrated with their BIPOC resolution, departments can and should be encouraged to collaborate on tasks and projects that not only benefit their individual departments, but the university as a whole. Finally, deans should be aware of inequities and discriminatory policies in their colleges and institutions and listen to the voices of those most impacted. Alex reflected on discussing gender pay inequities with her dean who was also a woman, "though not a very gender conscious one" (Chapter Four, Alex, Equity...and Keeping the Wheels on the Cart). Dani too has experienced this in regard to the pronoun policy they have been pushing for which has been deemed by others as "not important right now" (Chapter Four, Dani, Outsider-ness). Even if there is

nothing the dean can do, listening and understanding can go a long way in helping individuals feel seen and heard. Palm (2006) writes,

> The administrators know where the institution is trying to go, what resources can be put to the task, and how quickly steps can and should be taken, while faculty frequently are asked to keep the faith and leave the leadership to the administration. (p. 61).

By helping department chairs understand where the college is going, deans can help department chairs see how their concerns or issues are or are not being addressed and why. The department chair position is difficult, complex, and isolating on multiple fronts, deans can help make this position a little less so by understanding the experiences and challenges of their department chairs who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Practical Implications

There are several implications from this study that could be considered to improve the educational climate for LGBTQ individuals in higher education. The first implications are for faculty who want to or are considering becoming a department chair in the future, especially those belonging to the LGBTQ community. It is important for faculty to reflect on and consider their various identities and how those may intersect with your future role as departmental leader. As we have seen with Dani and Alex, similar characteristics do not promise for the same experience so it is important to consider your identities and how those may come into play at your institution.

Current department chairs can consider their current departmental culture and determine if and where they can increase support for their marginalized faculty members. As discussed in the criticisms section, when trying to make institutional changes it seems

to help if those changes are first developed and implemented at the departmental level. Finally, relationships with leadership (deans/provosts) can provide support and guidance for department chairs so fostering those relationships is vital (Bystydzienski et al., 2017).

As for the individuals in leadership or those supporting department chairs, understanding the experiences and challenges of department chairs, especially those in marginalized groups provides insight on additional ways they can be supported. Awareness around the additional projects and requests that may be granted due to someone's identity can help to make sure the department chair is finding value and fulfillment in these tasks and they are not just doing them out of obligation to a certain community or group (Scharron-Del Rio, 2018). By nurturing an open and accepting institutional/college culture, leaders can make sure that department chairs are not experiencing vast discrepancies in the cultures they are able to develop in their department and the one they are part of, but largely have little control (Sarrors et al., 1998). Lastly, by providing guidance and transparency institutional leaders can help department chairs understand the direction of the institution or college and how/where their department and the work they are doing fits within that vision of the future (Palm, 2006).

Limitations

This study sought to share the experiences of LGBTQ department chairs, examine how their various roles intersect with their LGBTQ identity, and understand if/how they challenge what it means to be a department leader with the purpose of improving the educational environment for LGBTQ individuals. This study contributes to the body of

knowledge and begins to fill the gap in literature around LGBTQ department chairs. Despite this, there are a few limitations in this study based on design and execution.

The first major limitation of this study was largely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Observations are an important aspect of data collection in Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship, observations aid in providing intimate details that can be referenced when writing a description to help the reader get a sense of the experience (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Due to restrictions in place during the time research was conducted, I was unable to utilize observations outside of the interview with participants. Before COVID-19, my hope was to interview participants in person and then observe them in a departmental meeting as well as teaching in a classroom. In lieu of having observations from the classroom and other environments, I focused on participants' description of their experiences adding notes on their tone, facial expression, and body language.

The second major limitation of this study was the low number of participants that were able to complete an interview. Uhrmacher et al., (2017) write,

> The right number for each study may be determined by a number of factors, including access and availability of participants, the nature of the context (e.g. individual teachers or schools), and the goals of the inquiry. As with other qualitative research methods, a large population is not necessarily required in order to discern significant qualities of the situation As a general rule, we recommend a participant group of four, but of course this could vary. (p. 28)

Going into the study, I was seeking three or four participants. Potential participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire asking if they were a member of the LGBTQQIAAP/gender non-conforming community, if they were currently a department

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chair or had been one in the past, along with a few demographic questions. A diverse

group of participants within the LGBTQ community was sought, in order to provide a

broad survey of experiences across the community. However, only four individuals

accessed the survey, with three completing the survey. The three individuals who

completed the survey were contacted to determine if they would be willing to participant

in an interview, two of the three individuals replied to outreach and stated they would be

interested in participating. These two individuals (Dani and Alex) completed an

interview. The low number of participants inhibited a larger comparison across the

LGBTQ community. This was especially disappointing as trans* individuals are largely

lacking from current research. Though both Dani and Alex identified as queer, they did

have experiences and challenges related to their gender presentation which did allow for

some discussion around gender norms and expectations. The lower participant total also

allowed for deeper exploration and understanding of Dani and Alex compared to a

broader survey that would have occurred with more participants.

The final limitation of this study is that both department chairs were in gender,

women's, and sexuality studies departments. As discussed above, the goal of this study

was to provide a broad survey of experiences. It is likely that LGBTQ individuals who

are chairs of biology, engineering, history, or psychology will have different experiences

which may be discipline rooted compared to Dani and Alex who occupy an academic

space that studies gender and sexuality. However, the fact that both individuals were in

similar departments provides a bit more insight on the experiences of LGBTQ

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departments who work in gender and women's studies departments that would not have been possible if they were from different departments.

Future Research

A lot of the current research focuses on LGBTQ faculty and students, understandably, as they are the largest group of LGBTQ individual in higher education. However, there may be an albeit smaller, but more powerful group of LGBTQ individuals on campus that are ignored as a result of this, LGBTQ administrators. These are often the individuals at the table when important institutional decisions are being made, decisions that impact the administrators themselves as well as students, faculty, and staff. Future research should continue to focus on LGBTQ individuals in higher education, especially administrators such as department chairs and deans.

Additionally, future research should examine experiences of LGBTQ department chairs in other departments such as business, chemistry, education, or mathematics. Including other members of the LGBTQ community, such as trans* administrators would also deepen the knowledge regarding LGBTQ experiences in higher education. This study only focused on the intersection of gender and sexuality and roles within the department chair position. Further examination of other identity intersections such as race, class, or religion, which was briefly discussed here would add extra layers of understanding of experiences of LGBTQ and minority administrators. Finally, we saw that both Dani and Alex fought for changes in their role as administrator. A deeper examination of this aspect of their, along with others experiences would be insightful in understanding the experiences of an LGBTQ department chair.

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Summary

This chapter discussed evaluation and themes from participant interviews with two LGBTQ department chairs, Dani and Alex. Through evaluation, the significance of Dani and Alex's experiences, how the various roles in the department chair position intersect with their LGBTQ identity, and how they challenge the norm of a department leader was explored using queer theory and department chair research. Three major themes emerged that aided in answering the research questions guiding this study. Finally, criticism aimed to help improve the environment for LGBTQ individuals, study limitations, and future research were highlighted.

When evaluating Dani and Alex's experiences, we found that they had a common call to teach and strong connection with students despite their different paths into academia. While in graduate school, Dani and Alex discovered their interest in sexuality and gender studies respectively. Palmer's ideas of identity and integrity in teachers is present for Dani and Alex, Palmer (1998) writes, "The teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be but to what is real for us, of what is true" (p. 32). By bringing their identity and integrity into the classroom, Dani and Alex help forge connections for their students. We also saw that Dani and Alex shared challenges relating to climate and community, though the challenges they face related to climate and community are quite different. Dani struggles to find community outside of what they have worked to create within their department, while Alex's discussion of community and climate highlight the tensions that can exist for LGBTQ individuals who must navigate a more open and accepting campus

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environment, surrounded by a more conservative and less welcoming community. Finally, regarding evaluation of experiences, Dani and Alex highlight the challenges they face in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and how that has impacted their role as administrator. Dani and Alex discuss an increase in workload, a concern about the impact on their fight for equity, and ultimately concern for the future survival of their programs.

When evaluating the roles of teacher, administrator, and scholar and how they intersect with Dani and Alex queer identity, we see that their queer identity shows up in each of the roles in various ways. In their roles as teachers, Dani and Alex infuse their curriculum with gender and queer theory, encouraging students to examine the systems around them and challenge inequities they find, especially those relating to gender and sexuality inequities. As administrators, they put this teaching into practice. Dani works to get a BIPOC resolution and pronouns policy adopted at their institution, while Alex continues to fight for work and compensation equity for her departments and others within her college. As scholars, Dani and Alex have different experiences with their queer identity. Dani feels that their research on sexualities often serves to out them to students and colleagues, while Alex whose research focuses on a specific religious group, must negotiate her queer identity more cautiously to avoid being discredited within her research community. Rottman (2006) writes, "Viewing the past and current education system through a queer theoretical lens reveals heterosexists and sexists structures upon which our public schools were built" (p. 17). As LGBTQ department chairs, Dani and Alex are slowly bringing about awareness, which is often the first step in enacting change.

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The final area of evaluation examined how Dani and Alex challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all. The first way that Dani and Alex challenge the norm is in their fights for equity in their institutions. Both Dani and Alex have also challenged the norm of what it means to be a leader at their institution by building up their programs and developing a collaborative, supportive, and protective cultures within their departments.

Three themes were identified in interviews with LGBTQ department chairs, Dani and Alex. These themes were present in almost all aspects of participant interviews and were discussed as they answered the research questions guiding the study. The first theme examined the role of gender presentation in Dani and Alex's experiences. Many of the systems in higher education were established by cisgender, heterosexual, white, upper class, able bodied men. These policies and procedures, sometimes by design, often create borders and challenges for individuals who do not hold those same identities (Harris & Nicolazzo, 2020). This study found that Dani and Alex experienced challenges related to their gender presentation and queer identity in various areas of their work, from the classroom to the conference room. The second theme helps to answer the question, what is the impact of the faculty and department chair roles on LGBTQ identity? We see that Dani and Alex's queer identity is present in not only their roles as faculty and administrator, but also scholar. Palmer's idea of identity and integrity extends from Dani and Alex role as teachers into their roles as administrator and scholar as well. The third and final theme relates to the outsider perspective that Dani and Alex highlight in discussing the final research question, how are LGBTQ department chairs challenging

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(the norm of) what it means to be a departmental leader, if at all? Dani and Alex challenge the norm of what it means to be a departmental leader by bringing a unique outsider perspective. This outsider perspective is grounded in their experiences and it drives the changes they seek to make in their departments and at their institutions.

Criticisms focus on department chairs as well as deans and aim to improve the educational process for LGBTQ individuals in higher education. Dani and Alex provide examples of steps department chairs can take to improve their departmental climate, make changes within their departments and institutions, and highlight the importance of finding community. The importance of leadership in developing culture, not only department chair leadership, but leadership at the next level, the college dean is also highlighted through Dani and Alex's experiences. A few limitations regarding this study were also highlighted, this includes a low number of participants that hindered the ability to capture a broad snapshot of the experiences across the LGBTQ community. Both Dani and Alex identified as queer, which provided a glimpse into the experiences of queer department chairs, but their experiences likely differ from someone who identifies as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans* individual. Another limitation of this study is that it focuses only on gender, women's, and sexuality studies departments since those were the departments that Dani and Alex chair. A broader understanding needs to consider experiences of LGBTQ department chair in other disciplines such as business, engineering, math, and psychology. Since both participants in this study worked in gender and women's studies departments, we are given a bit more insight into experiences of LGBTQ department chairs who work in a gender and women's studies

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department. This would not have been possible had the participants been from different departments. Finally, due to COVID-19 restrictions in place during the research process, I was unable to include any observations of participants outside of interviews. Observations of participants campus environment, their offices, departmental meetings, and classes would have provided additional details, in lieu of this information, I relied heavily on participants tone, body language, facial expressions, and descriptions of their environments and experiences. Future research in this area should continue to focus on LGBTQ department chairs and deans, it should examine experiences of LGBTQ department chairs in other disciplines and include other members of the LGBTQ community, and finally it should consider other areas of identity intersection such as race or religion. All of this is necessary to deepen the knowledge and understanding regarding LGBTQ experiences in higher education.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge around LGBTQ individuals in higher education by providing a snapshot of the experiences of two queer department chairs, specifically two LGBTQ department chairs who work in gender and women's studies departments. We saw how Dani and Alex faced different assumptions and expectations based on their gender presentation and queer identity. When discussing their experiences, Dani and Alex largely stressed the impact of their gender presentation over their queerness, however, when discussing their roles as teacher, administrator, and scholar, their queer identity – which may or may not be linked to their gender presentation – was more of a focus for both Dani and Alex. Both their queer identity and gender presentation contributed to the outsider perspective they bring to the department

chair position. This perspective is influenced by their experiences navigating various

borderlands and helps drive their fight for equity in their departments and institutions.

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Appendix A: Call for Participants

Researcher is seeking current department chairs who are a member of the LGBTQQIAAP community or individuals who are gender non-conforming to participate in a research study examining experiences and impact of identity and role. Potential participants are asked to complete a short questionnaire. If selected to participate in the study, individuals will be interviewed about their professional experiences. Participants who complete an interview will be entered into a prize drawing for an Amazon gift card, if interested click this link to complete a short questionnaire. Please share/send to anyone you know who might fit the criteria above and be interested in participating. For questions, please contact Ashton Clouse (ashton.clouse@du.edu).

Appendix B: Potential Participant Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a research study titled "Examining Experience, Role, and Identity in Department Chairs" which seeks to examine the experiences of LGBTQQIAAP and gender non-conforming department chairs. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of LGBTQQIAAP and gender non-conforming department chairs. It also seeks to explore the impact of role and identity. Completing this initial questionnaire signals your interest in participating in this project. If you are selected to participate in the research study, you will be contacted by the researcher.

If you decide to participate, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled**. **The alternative is not to participate**. **If you do not wish to be a potential participate for this study, do not complete this questionnaire.**

If you wish to be considered as a potential participant, please complete the following questionnaire. Your completion of this questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in this research study. The questionnaire is designed to gather basic information that will help the researcher select participants. It will take approximately three minutes to complete the questionnaire. You will be asked to answer questions about the LGBTQQIAAP community and your professional experiences. No benefits accrue to you for answering the questionnaire, but your responses will be used to help identify participants for the study. Any discomfort or inconvenience to you are minimal, but they are not expected to be any greater that anything you encounter in everyday life. Data will

be collected using the Internet; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third party. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. **If you are not selected as a research participant, your information will be deleted as soon as participants are identified.**

1. Preferred Name (text field)

2. Email (text field)

3. State of Residence (text field)

4. Please select the groups with which you identify (allow multiple selections):

    a. Lesbian

    b. Gay

    c. Bisexual

    d. Transgender

    e. Queer

    f. Questioning

    g. Intersex

    h. Asexual

    i. Ally

    j. Pansexual

    k. Gender non-conforming

5. Race/Ethnicity (allow multiple selections):

    a. American Indian or Alaska Native

    b. Asian

     c.   Black or African American

     d.   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

     e.   White

6. Are you currently serving as a department chair? (Y/N)

7. Have you worked as a department chair in the past? (Y/N)

8. At what types of institutions did you serve as department chair?

     a.   Technical College

     b.   Public 2 year

     c.   Public 4 year

     d.   Private 4 year

9. What department do/did you chair?

     a.   Open text

10. How long have you been/did you serve in the department chair role?

     a.   Open text

Appendix C: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about yourself, your career, and professional background?

2. How did you decide to get into your field and how long have you been working in the field?

3. What motivates you in your work generally?

4. When you explain your job to someone, what do you tell them? How do you explain what you do?

5. How would you describe your membership to the LGBTQ community?

6. How would you describe the campus climate for LGBTQ individuals at your school?

7. How would you describe your "outness" in the workplace?

8. Can you talk to me about your experiences as a member of the LGBTQ community in your career?

9. How would you describe your experience as an LGBTQ department chair?

10. What words would you use to describe your experience as a faculty member?

11. What motivates you in your work as a faculty member?

12. Can you talk to me about some of your most positive/negative experiences as a faculty member?

13. How does your LGBTQ identity show up in your role as a faculty member?

14. How did you come into the role of department chair?

15. What motivates you in your work as a department chair?

16. Can you talk to me about some of your most positive/negative experiences as a department chair?

17. How does your LGBTQ identity show up in your role as a department chair?

18. What are some challenges you've experienced in your time as a department chair?

19. What would you say has been your biggest success as a department chair?

20. What goals/desires do you have for your department?

21. Do you think your LGBTQ identity has impacted the way you lead the department? If so, how?

22. In your role as department chair, would you say that you challenge the norms of what it means to be a leader at your school? If so, how?

23. How has COVID impacted your role as department chair?

24. Are there any questions or topics we've covered that you'd like to revisit or elaborate on?

25. Is there anything I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me at this time?