

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO MORE THAN ONE GENDER

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Donald J. Zissen for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services Administration presented on April 25, 2014.

Title: Policies and Practices of L.G.B.T. Friendly Institutions to Support Students who are Attracted to More than One Gender.

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Within the United States, the number of “out” Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) individuals attending a college or university is on the rise (Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter & Braun, 2006). With this increase, the new and/or different ways that lesbian and gay individuals can present and express their sexual orientation has also risen. For example, many college students now identify as pansexual, sapiosexual, and other identities that are not bound within the gender binary and preconceived sexual orientations. These individuals often experience marginalization, not only from the heterosexual majority, but from their homosexual counterparts as well. Forms of institutionalized support for lesbian and gay students have also continued to rise, but evidence of support for emergent LGB identities is not as evident in the literature (Fine, 2012; Sanlo, 2000). This study examined U.S. colleges and universities that have been identified as leaders in the LGB student support field and investigated how they develop policy and provide services and support for those individuals who identify on the LGB spectrum, but not as lesbian or gay. The research questions that framed this research were as follows: (a) What policies have the administrations at these institutions enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? (b) What practices have the administrations at these institutions employed to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? and (c)

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How do the physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed dimensions of involvement impact the ways in which institutions are able to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? This research used a case-study tradition with the researcher gathering data from eight US colleges/universities via interviews with institutional professionals and examination of existing institutional documents such as the website, meeting agendas and minutes. Three key findings emerged. First, inclusive LGB programming is favored by university programs serving the LGB population over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender. Second, generalizable LGBT policies are chosen more often than policies designed for specific identities. Finally, physical location of institutions, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. In considering these findings, the researcher offers three main implications. First, assessment of programs and policies designed to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender should occur on a regular basis. Second, institutions may want to examine the language used within programs and policies to ensure that constituents are truly represented. Third, practitioners may want to use a critical eye when developing programming to ensure that it is supported by institutional policy. If such programming is not motivated by policy, then practitioners should be able to show a need for the programming thereby providing insight into possible gaps in student support.

Key Words: LGB student support, supporting students who are attracted to more than one gender, college and university, qualitative study

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Policies and Practices of L.G.B.T. Friendly Institutions to Support Students who are Attracted to
More than One Gender

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Donald J. Zissen

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Donald J. Zissen, Author

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Operational definitions of key terms

Below is a list of terminology that will be used throughout the research, discussion, and writing process. These terms are continually being refined and redefined (Labor & Dolan, 2013) in the literature and culture. However, for the purpose of this research, the definitions that follow will be utilized:

- **Attracted to More than One Gender:** For the purposes of this study, individuals who are attracted to more than one gender includes any individual that does not identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or asexual.
- **Bisexual:** A fluid identity that describes sexual and emotional attraction to both men and women (Rosario et al., 2006).
- **Biphobia:** The negative attitudes towards and stereotypes of bisexual people (Scherrer, 2013).
- **Dimensions of Involvement:** A concept that illuminates the dynamics of environments that could promote student involvement (Strange & Banning, 2001).
- **Gay:** Someone who is male who has had/is currently having sexual or romantic relationships with someone of the same sex (Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009).
- **Heterosexism:** The belief that the world should be, and must be, heterosexual (Pharr, 1997).
- **Lesbian:** A female who has had/is currently having sexual or romantic relationships with someone of the same sex (Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009).
- **LGB:** Acronym representing lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. This acronym is used to represent all individuals who are homosexual (Davis, Saltzburg, & Locke, 2009).

- **Monosexual:** For the purposes of this study, this term refers to an individual who is attracted to only one gender.
- **Pansexual:** A person who is sexually or romantically attracted to all or any gender expression (Dolan & Labor, 2013).

Chapter 1: Introduction

College-age is a common time of exploration of identity and the world, and students often seek professional support on college campuses with this endeavor. However, support is generally limited to the current knowledge base. Identity—and in particular—gender and sexual identity, which is currently in a state of rapid and non-standardized change in the culture, is one such area that is affected by these limitations. As more LGB people publicly disclose their gender identities and preferences, the LGB spectrum widens, with multitudes of subgroups emerging. In recent years, academics have spent more time studying issues of gay and lesbian identity development, and this has been reflected in greater support for this population in college services. However, for people who fall outside this new set of norms, there is a dearth of literature as well as of adequate support, which is a necessity for people in marginalized groups. There is significant long-standing documentation to testify to the existence of discrimination and mistreatment against gays and lesbians in American culture, and this can be extended to people in the entire LGB spectrum. Mistreatment complicates both personality and identity development for people in marginalized subcultures, including the population focused upon in this study. This study will examine ways in which support services should be always updating to better support a wider range of students and the issues they face in their personal development.

As gender identity issues become more widely known, more people are more openly experimenting with their own gender tendencies, and this is reflected in the terminology used to describe the identity subcategories that are rapidly emerging out of this phenomenon. Many words come from medical language—until 1973, homosexuality was considered a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association; due to its history, many LGB individuals reject this language and are wary of any language that seems pathologizing. Thus, in this study, the phrase: *people attracted to more than one gender* has been chosen to refer to the population

of interest. This can include people that identify as bi-sexual, pan-sexual, homoflexible, sapiosexual, queer, and many others, too numerous and rapidly-changing to name. A primary intention of this research study is for readers with the widest varieties of gay or lesbian sexual orientations or gender identities to feel included as a member of the population discussed without feeling pathologized.

There are many reasons why people attracted to more than one gender might feel sensitive to pathologizing language. The first, mentioned above, is that the United States has a history of institutionalized discrimination against gay people. A second reason is that this anti-gay sentiment trickled down into the culture, and through the years, there have been many cases of discrimination and hate crimes directed against this population. In recent years, extreme cases of mental abuse, social rejection, and cyber-bullying have increasingly appeared in the mainstream media (Tyler Clementi Foundation, 2013; Huffington Post, 2012). Specifically, the suicide of Tyler Clementi, who identified as a gay man, made national headlines (Tyler Clementi Foundation, 2013) when he committed suicide after being videotaped having sexual relations with another male student.

However, simultaneously, there has been greater acceptance in U.S. culture of gay and lesbian people, which can be inferred from increases in same-sex relationships depicted on television, the movies and the media, political interest in equality for same-sex marriages, and the rise of college students openly expressing their gender identity and sexual orientation. Additionally, there is an increase in individuals deciding not to choose an orientation that restricts them to being attracted to only one sex (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). This is reflected in rapidly-changing labels that attempt to categorize each subgroup, and complicated hierarchical social rules in the LGB community that try to force each group into its own niche.

These issues point to a difficult existence for people attracted to more than one gender. There is marginalization in both the heterosexual and LGB communities of people who do not fit monosexual norms, and it may be that the further one lies outside the norms, the more discrimination and ostracism one may face. It has been, therefore, inferred that people attracted to more than one gender are at more risk of self-harm and suicidal ideology (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Indeed, there has been a rise in overt discrimination towards individuals on the LGBT spectrum who do not identify as either gay or lesbian (Morgan, 2002). Additionally, these individuals may experience discrimination not only from the heterosexual part of society, but also from those who identify as gay and lesbian (Labor & Dolan, 2013; Longerbeam et al., 2007; King, 2011). Discrimination can manifest as physical or mental abuse, social isolation, social rejection, and diminished social support (Almeida et al., 2009; Wyss, 2004). It may also take the form of physical violence, bullying, physical intimidation or assault, emotional violence, verbal harassment, alienation from others, social isolation, and peer rejection (Horn & Romeo, 2010; Mufioz-Paza et al., 2002). More individuals on the *queer spectrum* may feel less burdened to associate their attraction with the gender binary (Davis, Saltzburg & Locke, 2009). Individuals on the LGB spectrum who experience these forms of discrimination have a higher likelihood of developing depression, substance abuse problems, declining academic performance, and suicidal ideation and attempts (Horn & Romeo, 2010; Mufioz-Paza et al., 2002). With the increase of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, it is the responsibility of colleges and universities to also redefine and restructure their current LGB support services to include these individuals (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

However, this is a complex task: This population is not well understood either in the research or in the culture, and simultaneously, it may be one that is increasingly at risk. Because the socio-cultural subcategories are still being recognized and described, this group of people is not typically discussed within the overarching educational literature (Morgan, 2002; Valenti & Campbell, 2009). Additionally, when high profile individuals (e.g.: actors like Anna Paquin, who identifies as bisexual) publicly state alternative sexual orientations, they are continuously questioned as to whether their orientations are true or legitimate, demonstrating a lack of understanding and acceptance for this paradigm in the culture at large (Huffington Post, 2012). At the same time, there is evidence of a potential increase in discrimination against individuals who identify in this way: they are the objects of discrimination from both heterosexual and homosexual individuals (Labor & Dolan, 2013). They may be experiencing discrimination from the dominant heterosexual paradigm similar to the way that lesbian and gay individuals experienced discrimination from heterosexual individuals (Sanlo, 2004).

Thus, this population is in need of greater support and deeper understanding to that end. This research will delve more deeply into the issues of LGB identity, which is the focus of most LGB research, and examine the ways in which universities work towards supporting students. Specifically, this research will explore the policies and programs that LGBT-friendly institutions are currently taking to support students whose identity and/or behavior lay outside of the dominant & accepted paradigms.

Research topic and problem

While a number of colleges and universities are now providing support for lesbian and gay students, there is some evidence that there are inadequacies in supporting bisexual or pansexual identities, which they are also tasked to support (Labor & Dolan, 2013; Dugan &

Yurman, 2011; Sanlo, 2000). For example, some individuals who are attracted to more than one gender have reported that they do not feel welcome in some counseling or lesbian and gay support centers. They have stated that that feel as though they must defend their identities in such environments, may experience hostility from other individuals on the LGB spectrum, and institutions may not provide enough support, whether physical, emotional, or structural, to individuals who are attracted to more than one gender (Labor & Dola, 2013). Additionally, there have been accounts of people on the LGB spectrum encountering negative reactions based on the terminology they use to self-identity their gender identities.

In higher education, LGBT services on college campuses are being continuously designed and refined (Sanlo, 2000). Many institutions have refocused their work towards including more overt support for individuals who identify as transgender and bisexual, yet theorists like Roomey state that these institutions are still unprepared to fully support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender (Roomey et al., 2011; Labor & Dolan, 2013).

This research started with a focus on both the need for and the failures of LGB student support through the breadth of LGB student support literature, the researcher found myself drawn to studying the issues of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and the ways in which this group, in particular, is supported on college and university campuses. This issue is now being brought to the forefront in the LGB student-support community; however, there currently appears to be no research published that discusses how colleges and universities do so.

Youth are openly expressing their gender preferences at younger ages and are defining new sexual orientations in doing so, which is prompting administrators in higher education to re-

evaluate LGB centers and support provided to these students (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Sanlo, 2004).

Additionally, there is a void in the literature regarding the topic of supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender within colleges and universities. The majority of research focuses on gender identity development for gay and lesbian people, and thus, needs significant updating in several areas. The absence of research points to the need for theories of identity development related to people attracted to more than one gender, for research into the experiences of this population—and of students in this population, as well as research that examines the programs and policies universities have in regard to this population. Researching the ways in which leaders in LGBT student support are currently working to help individuals who are attracted to more than one gender will add to the overall body of LGB literature and provide examples of the ways in which several institutions support this growing student identity.

Research questions

This research explored the efforts of eight LGB-friendly institutions in their support of students attracted to more than one gender. The specific questions guiding this research are: (a) What policies have the administrations at these institutions enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? (b) What practices have the administrations at these institutions employed to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? and (c) How do the physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed dimensions of involvement impact the ways in which institutions are able to support students who are attracted to more than one gender?

Research significance

This research is significant because it will illuminate a subset of LGB population that has not yet been fully explored within the current higher educational literature. The intent of this study is to analyze whether students that are attracted to more than one gender are receiving support from their universities, and the ways in which that support is provided. This topic has not previously been researched, so this research will begin filling a gap within the overall educational knowledge of student support within higher education. Additionally, there is a higher level of discrimination that individuals who are attracted to more than one gender face within their education experiences (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). This discrimination can negatively impact these individuals' development (Horn & Romeo, 2010). In worse case scenarios, this discrimination takes the form of bullying or cyber-bullying, which can drive individuals who are attracted to more than one gender towards suicidal ideation, attempts, and completion (Robinson, 2013; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2012; Almedia et al., 2009; Horn & Romeo, 2010). Moreover, this research has personal significance because I, the researcher hold an identity in which I am attracted to individuals, regardless of their gender, and have experienced discrimination due to this ambiguous categorization.

Theoretical Foundation

This research study is grounded in Strange and Banning's 2001 work regarding the ways in which individuals interact with their physical environment (Strange & Banning, 2001). Strange and Banning examined how the design of a physical space affects humans' involvement with the activity within the space and its impact on students' ability to feel connected and retained at their college or university (Strange & Banning, 2001). The combination of these two seemingly disparate subjects—sexual orientation and the emotional and community impact of

architectural design— approaches the issues of community marginalization for the LGB population in a unique way, and helps to bridge, at least, a small gap in the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review discusses some of the existing literature that is relevant to the current study. Because the research on the specific topic of support for students attracted to more than one gender is sparse, this chapter will also review related literature. There are five sections in this chapter. The first section provides an overview of discrimination and support in secondary and higher education. In the second section, identity development theories in the gender studies field are examined to provide a further basis of understanding of the ways in which people struggling with gender and sexuality arrive at their identities. This is important because it is the foundation for conducting the assessments that the researcher is proposing are necessary for better serving this population. The third section will investigate LGB youth experiences within education to further show the necessity of this study. The fourth section focuses on the literature on heteronormativity and the gender binary. These provide a background that illustrates the need for support of students who are attracted to more than one gender. The fifth section surveys the current policies and practices that support of students who are attracted to more than one gender will be examined, and this exploration will show how this population's need is different than that which is currently provided within colleges and universities. Lastly, Strange and Banning's (2001) structural and organizational administration theory will be employed as a framework to the study, as well as a guide for the questions that were developed for each interview.

LGB Discrimination & Support in Secondary and Higher Education

Individuals who identify as LGB do not simply experience subconscious societal pressures to conform; they are actively discriminated against because of their sexual orientation (Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011; Adams & Carson, 2006; Doty, Willoughby, Lindahl, & Malik,

2010). Within the secondary school system, individuals who identify as LGB, or are perceived to be LGB, experience verbal, physical, and emotional violence on a regular occurrence (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Robinson, 2013; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011). As is reported in the literature, this violence goes typically unchecked within the secondary school systems, and is—in some cases—perpetuated by the very staff that should be protecting the youth (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Adams & Carson, 2006). These experiences, and the overall lack of support of LGB youth, are some of the many reasons that LGB youth are at a higher risk for drug and alcohol abuse, dropping out of school, running away from home, homelessness and suicide (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Robinson, 2013). Within schools, LGB youth are more likely to experience alienation and social isolation from their peers, which can lead to academic difficulties and suicidal ideation and actualization (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Almedia et al., 2009; Horn & Romeo, 2010; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011). Some schools are adding clubs and institutionalized forms of support for LGB students into their day-to-day operations. However, there needs to be an overhaul of the current structure to ensure that the institutionalized homophobia and fear is no longer supported or perpetuated (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Adams & Carson, 2006).

One form of support for LGB youth within the secondary school system is the *Gay-Straight Alliances* (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). Gay-Straight Alliances are extracurricular, student-lead clubs, created for a variety of students who consider themselves allies to LGB issues and individuals: those who identify on the LGB spectrum, those questioning their sexual orientation, and those with friends or family members who are gay, bi- or pan-sexual (GLSEN, 2000; Adams & Carson, 2006; Fetner, Elafors, Bortolin, & Drechsler, 2012). In these clubs, students can receive support from their peers in an environment that is LGB-positive and

promotes self-understanding and inclusion (GLSEN, 2000; Walls, Kane, & Wisneski, 2009). Gay-Straight Alliances are not only beneficial to LGB students in high schools, but to heterosexual students as well (Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011). Heterosexual students who choose to get involved the club can learn more about their fellow LGB student's experiences, as well as those of students with same-sex parents (Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011; Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009). These groups have been referred to as a place of support and protection in otherwise negative and hostile high-school environments (Fetner, Elafors, Bortolin, & Drechsler, 2012).

Although the benefits of Gay-Straight Alliances are discussed with the literature, many high schools recognize that they continue to receive resistance because of the Gay-Straight Alliance's creation and implementation (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Adams & Carson, 2006). Gay-Straight Alliances have received the following critiques: (a) the ease at which a Gay-Straight Alliance is created in a high school can be undermined if it is not supported from within the institution; (b) teachers and administrators experience a moral dilemma when deciding/taking on the role of the Gay-Straight Alliance advisor and (c) inherent racism and bias exists towards minority LGB individuals as opposed to those of Caucasian descent (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Adams & Carson, 2006).

In regard to the second critique, Gay-Straight Alliance advisors report that being in this role may cause their colleagues, supervisors, and community members to question their own sexual orientation, blame them for students "becoming" gay, and whether or not they are able to carry out their primary roles within the school (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). Although these professionals become high-school advisors with Gay-Straight Alliance for many reasons such as altruism, self-identification, and social justice awareness, the institutionalized homophobia and

hate have caused many to abandon this role as an act of self-preservation (Valenti & Campbell, 2009; Adams & Carson, 2006). As such, there is not only a need to support LGB youth, but also the professionals that support them (Valenti & Campbell, 2009).

As the third critique posits, the LGB continuum still holds bias towards the people of color who participate, and Gay Straight Alliances mirror this trend (Adams & Carson, 2006). It is well-known that white heterosexual males receive preferable treatment in a majority of situations, and this bias filters down into our various subcultures (Adams & Carson, 2006). Because of this bias, it is difficult to create a cultural microclimate a space that challenge students to give all participants an equal voice and respect, no matter what their racial or ethnic identity (Adams & Carson, 2006).

These problems do not only exist in secondary education; they continue on throughout higher educational institutions. Many LGB college students report forms of discrimination and marginalization similar to their high school experiences (Fine, 2011; Valenti & Campbell, 2009). Typically, LGB students are able to explore and solidify their sexual orientations and identities while in college, but based on negative experiences in classes, residence halls, and with staff and faculty, they are challenged to do so in healthy and safe ways (Fine, 2011). The suicide of Tyler Clementi is one example of the potentially extreme consequences of discrimination, lack of support, and isolation from other LGB individuals and support structures in Higher Education (Tyler Clementi, 2013). While it is important for colleges and universities to do what they can to develop safe and healthy environments for LGB and straight individuals to explore their sexual identities, it is important to note that they do not exist within a vacuum; they are impacted by societal trends (Fine, 2011).

LGB Theory

In order to better support the emotional needs of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender on campus, it is important to understand their internal processes better. As is well-accepted in the developmental psychology literature, adolescence and the early college years are typically a time of identity crisis and role confusion for all human beings. As such, it seems important to understand the particular identity formation processes those individuals who are attracted to more than one gender may experience. There have been several models created for identity development for gay people; however, many early sexual orientation researchers believe that a dichotomous model system, focusing on purely homosexual and heterosexual identities, is limiting and inapplicable to the complexity of the individuals within the *queer spectrum* (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002). Nevertheless, because of the dearth of research on this topic, and because studies of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender originated in those of lesbian, gay, and gender identity research, this study, too, begins there.

The theoretical foundation and context for this research is Cass's 1979 *Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation* and D'Augelli's 1994 *Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development*. These theories are being utilized because of their overall acceptance within sexual orientation developmental theory, and are part of higher education curriculums on sexual orientation identity. As such, they provide an understanding of LGB identity development in this paper. Other LGB identity development theories could have been incorporated and would have added additional complexity to the discussion and study. Cass and D'Augelli were selected based on their wide acceptance within the higher education field.

As stated earlier, there is a significant dearth of literature concerning individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The literature that covers bisexuality focuses on psychological

issues and counseling treatments and examples of discrimination. There is little on the climate for bisexual individuals (Longerbeam et al., 2007). These will be utilized in this study.

Cass's Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation.

Cass (1979) was the first to suggest that individuals who identified as homosexual experienced their sexual orientation differently than those who identify as heterosexual (Evans et al., 2010b). Although the terminology used in Cass's research seemed appropriate for its time, subsequent research utilizing this model discontinued the use of the term *homosexual* because of its negative connotations, stemming from its origination, definition, and use within the medical field (Rosario et al., 2006). Cass's work is a six-stage model that outlines a progression towards healthy sexual orientation identity for homosexuals (Evans et al., 2010b). The stages refer to acceptance and integration of the homosexual identity with all of a person's other identities (Evans et al., 2010b). The six stages of Cass's model are: (a) Identity confusion, (b) Identity comparison, (c) Identity tolerance, (d) Identity acceptance, (e) Identity pride, and (f) Identity synthesis (Evans et al., 2010b).

Before individuals begin to advance through these stages, Cass notes that all individuals enter "Prestage 1." Individuals in Prestage 1 assume that they are heterosexual and inherently understand that this is a preferred way of being (Evans et al., 2010b). Individuals will stay in this prestage until they realize that the gender to which they are attracted has changed (Evans et al., 2010b). Once this awareness occurs, individuals experience increased conflict with their behavior, self-concept, self-worth, and assumed perceptions of those close to them (Evans et al., 2010b). Individuals who experience this conflict will either continue through Cass's steps or reject their homosexual identities (Evans et al., 2010b).

In Cass's first stage, Identity Confusion, individuals first comprehend that their feelings or behaviors could be labeled as homosexual (Evans et al., 2010b). Typically, this recognition is accompanied by levels of curiosity, confusion, or anxiety and a majority of the focus of this stage is on reducing one's discomfort with the realization (Evans et al., 2010b). To move from stage one to stage two, individuals must accept the fact that they are homosexuals. Once this decision is made, the main focus shifts to managing feelings of social alienation (Evans et al., 2010b). Common feelings associated with this stage are ostracism, pain, or, conversely, relief about having feelings of difference explained (Evans et al., 2010b).

Stage three of Cass's model, Identity tolerance, focuses on self-acceptance of non-heterosexual identities and the integration of social interactions with other lesbian and gay people (Evans et al., 2010b). These interactions shape the ways in which people new to this lifestyle and mindset will view themselves and the homosexual community (Evans et al., 2010b). Evans (2010b) proposes that this stage is where most new gay and lesbian individuals reside in their development.

In stage four, identity acceptance, gay or lesbian individuals fully rectify the emotional discord pertaining to their internal identities and the external presentation of them (Evans et al., 2010b). As individuals progress through this stage, they make decisions about how to behave in the mainstream heterosexual society (Evans et al., 2010b). Generally, individuals in this stage make a greater commitment to their gay or lesbian identity, which leads to a more confident sense of self and self-worth (Evans et al., 2010b).

Stages five and six, identity pride and identity synthesis, are somewhat dichotomous in action, but one is prerequisite for the other: they allow individuals to reject, and then accept, heterosexual individuals (Evans et al., 2010b). In stage five, gay and lesbian individuals focus on

lesbian and gay issues and on becoming activists for this cause, and it often includes a rejection of heterosexual peers (Evans et al., 2010b). This renunciation stems from individuals' sense of pride in their gay or lesbian identities and their desire to combat the oppressiveness of the heteronormative society (Evans et al., 2010b). In stage six, gay or lesbian individuals come to the conclusion that their social circles need not be organized into a heterosexual/ homosexual dichotomy (Evans et al., 2010b). Additionally, people in this stage realize that individuals should be viewed in regard to their personal qualities, rather than their gender preferences (Evans et al., 2010b).

Although Cass's model is considered within academia to be the foundation of the field of sexual orientation development, this model has been heavily critiqued; additionally, it does not include the entirety of the LGB population (Evans et al., 2010b). Cass' work provides a suggested development model for gay, white men, but may not be generalizable towards women, people of color, or individuals attracted to more than one gender (Evans et al., 2010b). The model was created, based on a research participant pool comprised of approximately 40 gay white men (Evans et al., 2010b). Other theorists have challenged Cass's model because of the similarities and overlap of stages one and two, and stages five and six (Evans et al., 2010b). It is due to these critiques, and because the model was well respected, that theorists adapted and modified Cass's work. D'Augelli's model, for example, is more inclusive of other identities within the LGB spectrum (Evans et al., 2010b).

D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development.

D'Augelli's 1994 Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development states that an individual's sexual orientation can develop in a non-linear way over the course of that individual's lifetime (Evans et al., 2010b). This differs from Cass's model, which proposes that

identity development follows a more linear progression (Evans et al., 2010b). D'Augelli's model is based on the idea of developmental plasticity, or the idea that human development is responsive to both biological and environmental stimuli (Evans et al., 2010b). D'Augelli goes further to state that the fluidity of a person's identity changes and adapts based on experience, environment, and context (Evans et al., 2010b). This idea of fluidity can be further addressed within more contemporary research on gender and sexual orientation (Dugan & Yurman, 2011; King, 2011; Labor & Dolan, 2013).

This model outlines six interactive processes that D'Augelli claims lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals engage with as their identities develop (Evans et al., 2010b). D'Augelli specifically states that these are interactive processes, and not steps or stages, because he felt that individuals needed to be interactive with their processes of identity development (Evans et al., 2010b). They are as follows: (a) Exiting heterosexual identity, (b) Developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status, (c) Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity, (d) Becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring, (e) Developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status, and (f) Entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community.

Process one, exiting heterosexual identity, consists of an individual recognizing that their feelings and attractions are not heterosexual, and telling others of their attraction and feelings (Evans et al., 2010b). Applied to a collegiate context, an example of this might be: a student attending a meeting about LGB identities and identifying with a non-heterosexual identity (Evans et al., 2010b).

Process two, developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status, involves individual introspection. Within this process, individuals determine their own personal meanings

of lesbian/gay/bisexuality, as well as manage internalized myths regarding what it means to be lesbian/gay/bisexual (Evans et al., 2010b).

Process three, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity, involves individuals creating a network of supportive people who know and accept the sexual orientation of the discloser (Evans et al., 2010b). This can take time, because it can be difficult to know how people will react once individuals openly express their gender preferences (Evans et al., 2010b). It may also unfold differently for each individual given their specific life scenarios (Evans et al., 2010b). For example, dependent upon where an individual lives, whether or not an individual is involved in an intimate relationship, or the individual's experience with immediate family, can change this process and the experience of each person who goes through it (Evans et al., 2010b).

Process four, becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring, involves coming out to one's parents and negotiating the outcome of the conversation (Evans et al., 2010b). This can be extremely stressful for typically college-aged individuals, especially if they are financially-or emotionally-reliant upon their parents (Evans et al., 2010b). Students especially struggle with this process because they must reconcile the need for their parents' love with a potentially negative reaction from them (Evans et al., 2010b).

D'Augelli's fifth process, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status, is thought to be the most difficult (Evans et al., 2010b). This is not only due to the typical difficulties that occur when trying to find a partner, but also because the issues are exacerbated by the socio-political issues of being non-heterosexual in the United States (Evans et al., 2010b; Labor & Dolan, 2013). Additionally, lesbian/gay/bisexual people do not have the same social and cultural scripts that their heterosexual counterparts follow when beginning romantic relationships (Evans et al., 2010b; Labor & Dolan, 2013).

The sixth and last process—entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community—involves commitment to social or political activism at differing levels, depending on comfort, the ability to feel safe and secure while doing this work, or the individual’s own choice to do the work despite chances of it jeopardizing current circumstances (Evans et al., 2010b).

This current thesis research is grounded in D’Augelli’s model because D’Augelli recognized that identity can develop over great periods of time, dependent upon many complex factors (Evans et al., 2010b). When D’Augelli began his work, he stated that he was motivated by the need to revise the current theoretical scope of sexual orientation as well as the social support for students with differing sexual orientations (Evans et al., 2010b). This is similar to the motivation of this research.

Although considered a more inclusive theory of identity development than any before it, D’Augelli’s work still faced its share of critiques. First, while D’Augelli speaks to the importance of the individual’s socio-cultural context, psychosocial identities are not specifically addressed within the theory (Bilodeau, 2005). Bilodeau further states that sexual orientation and other social identities that an individual might hold are not expressly discussed within the theory or D’Augelli’s processes (Bilodeau, 2005). Lastly, although D’Augelli’s theory takes a significant step towards an inclusive sexual orientation identity model, Bieschke states that more must be done to encompass all forms of sexual orientations and identities (Evans et al., 2010b).

Other identity development theories

Although there is limited literature that specifically discusses the identity development of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, there are indications that individuals who identify as bisexual have a *non-distinct* path of identity formation (King, 2011). The term non-distinct refers to falling outside of commonly associative stage models and/or common themes of

development (King, 2011). This type of identity formation may be similar to that of people who identify as bi/multiracial (King, 2011). Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and individuals who identify as bi/multiracial both seem to progress through identity development outside of the common themes of current recognized identity development models. The parallels exist because both sets of identities have their origins in previously dichotomous, mono-racial, or mono-sexual models (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; King, 2011).

As such, there are several theorists and authors who address life outside of the commonly-accepted paradigms. Kristen Renn's *Ecological Theory of Multiracial Identity Development* (2000), for example, has implications for and applicability to the research of appropriate support for students that are attracted to more than one gender; because it speaks to the need of attending to individuals who do not fit within a mono-identity structure (Evans et al., 2010a). For purposes of this thesis, Renn's model (2000) was selected because of its use among higher education professions when working with and supporting individuals who identify as bi/multiracial. Additionally, Gloria Anzaldúa's idea of *borderlands* can be applied to individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, as they are not fully a part of either heterosexual nor homosexual identities and are marginalized by both (Anzaldúa, 2007).

Renn's Ecological Theory of Multiracial Identity Development.

Renn's 2000 Ecological Theory of Multiracial Identity Development was developed to provide language for individuals who identify as multiracial to understand the ways in which they racially identify (Renn, 2004; Evans et al., 2010a). Renn was dissatisfied with the lack of research on multiracial identity development and gathered information regarding multiracial individuals' experiences within higher education (Evans et al., 2010a). Through her research,

Renn was able to craft language that allows multiracial individuals the ability to self-identify through a racial lens (Evans et al., 2010a).

Specific examples of this language include the terms: (a) Monoracial identity; (b) Multiple monoracial identities; (c) Multiracial identity; (d) Extraracial identity; and (e) Situational identity (Evans et al., 2010a; Renn, 2004). In this model, an individual who identifies as *monoracial* is someone who holds a single racial identity (Evans et al., 2010a). *Multiple monoracial identities* signifies that individuals might have parents from differing racial identities and choose to label themselves as both instead of one or the other—or a combination of the two (Evans et al., 2010a). Individuals who identify as multiracial do so to represent the uniqueness of their racial identity (Evans et al., 2010a). Instead of identifying with all of their racial identities equally, multiracial individuals believe that their special ethnic combinations form unique identities that impact their lives (Evans et al., 2010a).

Several subsets of Renn's interviewees identified in other unique ways. One identified outside of the categories that the United States government provides for its census; this caused Renn to coin the term *extraracial* (Evans et al., 2010a). Another subset of the interview population reported that they identified differently based on the situation they were in (Evans et al., 2010a). These situational identity-holders believe that racial identity is fluid and societally-designed, which allows them to decide which of their identities to choose, depending on a given context (Evans et al., 2010a).

Application: Renn's theory is often utilized in the literature on providing support to multiracial individuals within colleges and universities, which lead this researcher to believe that it could be applied similarly to the population in this paper (Evans et al., 2010a). Renn's research is relevant to research for people that are attracted to more than one gender not only because

Renn has crafted language pertaining to previously or currently underrepresented identities, but also because both identities free individuals from previously monolithic identity statuses (Evans et al., 2010a; Renn, 2004). Applications of Renn's (2004) work focused on: (a) the need for more inclusive assessment efforts; (b) institutional policy to reflect the changing demographics within the United States; (c) ensuring that programs are inclusive of all forms of racial identity, regardless of the outward appearance of the individual; (d) the ability for individuals who identify as multiracial to connect with professionals who also identify as multiracial and have gone through their own identity development and formation; (e) and the importance of the need for curriculum that educates about multiracial identity (Evans et al., 2010a; Renn, 2004). All of these items can be transferred to programs for individuals who are, which shall be outlined in subsequent chapters.

Assessment. Renn's work spoke to the need for adapting current assessment methods for students enrolled within colleges and universities that identify as bi- or multiracial identity in order to provide better support to them (Evans et al., 2010a). These assessments would be both quantitative and qualitative—they would gather data on both the number of students who fall into these categories as well as their experiences in higher education in regard to their ethnicity. This data is crucial in providing better support to them (Evans et al., 2010a). Both of these points are related to this thesis research because current efforts typically do not include this type of assessment, nor does there exist an accurate assessment of the experience of these students (Labor & Dolan, 2013). By adapting current assessment practices to include these identities, as Renn suggested, colleges and universities can better understand how these students experience their time at the institution and can provide more targeted support to them (Evans et al., 2010a; Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Policy. Renn (2004) noted that by changing institutional policy to allow students to select multiple racial or ethnic identities (using the terms bi- or multiracial) gave students a sense of inclusion that they had been previously been lacking (Evans et al., 2010a). Although potentially difficult to manage at first, this same idea can be applied towards the inclusion of people who are attracted to more than one gender. By listing sexual orientation identities and/or giving students the ability to self-identify on applicable questionnaires or surveys, institutions would be showing support of these identities and potentially increasing students' feelings of inclusion and acceptance within the institution (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Programs. Along with policy development, Renn (2004) stressed the importance of developing programs to support multiracial students, e.g. The formation of multiracial-themed student groups or creating formalized multiracial student cultural centers on college campuses (Evans et al., 2010a). Both of these options allow multiracial students to find community with one another and feel more included within the institution (Evans et al., 2010a). Renn also speaks to the importance of addressing multiracial issues throughout students' time at their specific institution, e.g. student orientations, awareness workshops, speaker series on multiracial topics, and open encouragement for multiracial students to participate in cultural heritage events (Evans et al., 2010a). All of these opportunities would allow multiracial students to gain further understanding of their own identities and develop a greater sense of connectedness with the institution (Evans et al., 2010a). All of the above can be applied to students who are attracted to more than one gender, which would not only provide the aforementioned benefits but also would educate the institution as a whole (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Structural Diversity. Besides the ability for multiracial students to develop community with their peers, Renn (2004) also states that it is important for these students to have the

opportunity to have interactions with faculty, staff, and administrators who also share this identity (Evans et al., 2010a). This opportunity would give multiracial students the ability to learn from other individuals who may also have experienced similar life events in college, as well as increase their formal and information network and support systems (Evans et al., 2010a). Similarly, students attracted to more than one gender would also gain role models, support structures, and mentors (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Curriculum. Renn (2000) asserted the importance of integrating multiracial issues into college curriculums. By doing so, all students gain the experience of learning about this identity and multiracial students acquire the opportunity to discuss with, learn from, and educate their fellow classmates about their experiences (Evans et al., 2010a). It has also been stated that this action has socio-political implications, because it begins the process of legitimizing the multiracial identity (Evans et al., 2010a). This, too, can be applied to individuals who are attracted to more than one gender (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Limitations: Limitations of Renn's research and the applicability towards individuals, who are attracted to more than one gender, range from the differences between racial versus sexual orientation limitations, to limitation discussing the age of participants within Renn's research and this thesis research. Although Renn's research does focus on race instead of sexual orientation, the idea of multiraciality being a recognized experience and 'race' was originally met with resistance (Evans et al., 2010a; Renn, 2004; King, 2011). Renn utilized the societal conversation as a catalyst for research, and a chance to show that multiracial individuals progress through their identity development differently than those who identify within a monoracial identity (Renn, 2004; Evans et al., 2010a).

Although Renn's 2004 theory has been applied to college students, many individuals critique this application (Evans et al., 2010a; Renn, 2004; Renn 2000). First, Renn's research is being generalized to all multiracial individuals, when the research participant pool consisted of individuals who were from black and white mixed heritage, and thus, may not be as applicable to other types of mixed race people (Renn, 2004; Renn 2000). Each racial and ethnic combination can be treated differently in the culture, based on stereotypes and generalizations (Renn, 2004; Renn, 2000). Lastly, Renn's research focused on the qualitative experiences of children and adolescents, not those of college-aged students, though some of the findings may still be applicable to this age group (Renn, 2004; Renn, 2000).

Similarities between multiracial and identities in which an individual is attracted to more than one gender

Like multiracial identities, researchers like King consider bisexual and other identities in which individuals can be attracted to more than one gender open to more variation and state that they will ultimately replace the dichotomous views of the past (King, 2011). Instead of following the current limited paradigm of sexual orientation identities, which include an inherent preference towards either gay or lesbian constructs, researchers feel that that eventual wide acceptance of bisexuality and other identities in which an individual can be attracted to more than one gender will occur due to their higher applicability to a larger group of individuals (King, 2011).

Because of the similarities between bi/multiracial theories and bisexual development theory, the need has become apparent for researchers to reevaluate current bisexual development theories to reflect the complexity of the issue (King, 2011). For example, individuals who identify as bi/multiracial express similar experiences of being asked to "choose" a side, hide

parts of who they are, and relinquish full emotional support on college campuses just as bisexual or students who hold another identity in which individuals can be attracted to more than one gender (King, 2011). The hope is that sexual orientation identity development will be able to follow the steps that bi/multiracial identity development theories have adapted to become more inclusive of the entirety of the individuals who fall within the scope of identities that would ideally be represented (King, 2011).

Borderlands

As with multiracial people, individuals fit into what Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) referred to as a *border culture*, or borderlands. Anzaldúa (2007) defines borderlands as a “vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (p. 25). An example of this unnatural boundary is the tension between the heterosexual majority and the homosexual minority. Within the borderlands, homosexuals are in a constant state of transition; they are consistently challenged on whether or not they are part of the “other” or willing to pass for what is considered “normal” (Anzaldúa, 2007). This idea of the unknown, or not belonging to a specific group, is something that many researchers indicate when working specifically with bisexuality (Agans, 2007; Doty et al., 2010; Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Evans et al., 2011).

All identities in which an individual can be attracted to more than one gender would fall into the borderland between heterosexual and homosexual identities. They often feel pressure from each side to conform and to not cause an uncomfortable sense of ambiguity (Brewster et al., 2013). Moreover, Anzaldúa (2007) states that individuals who live in the borderlands cope by developing strategies in which they learn tolerance for contradiction and ambiguity. She (2007) requests assistance from this population in creating a new consciousness that breaks down the

duality of identity and ideologies. This new consciousness would benefit all individuals, whether or not they fall within the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2007).

Heteronormativity and the Gender Binary: Influences in Identity Development and Lived Experience

Issues of bisexuality and other identities where individuals are attracted to more than one gender stem from the larger issues of institutionalized *heteronormativity* implicit in the current higher educational system (Dugan & Yurman, 2011). Heteronormativity is defined by Roomey as the everyday expectations of societal “normality” regarding an individual’s sex, sexuality, gender, gender identity, and sex roles (Roomey et al., 2012). In this construct, heterosexuality is the norm. (Roomey et al., 2012; Dugan & Yurman, 2011) Heteronormativity includes the idea of the *gender binary*: that gender lies in two distinct poles and have separate social roles (Agans, 2007, Labor & Dolan, 2013). In contemporary U.S. culture, these concepts manifest as the expectation that men behave in a strong and stoic manner and in their familial role of financial provider. Women are expected to be weak and emotional and their role is as primary caregiver of the family. It also manifests in biases against non-heteronormative people (Agans, 2007; Dugan & Yurman, 2011). While supporting students attracted to more than one gender is a relatively new concept, it emerged as a rejection of the ideas and institutionalization of heteronormativity and the assumption that all individuals function within a patriarchal gender binary within society (Pharr, 1997). Ward and Schneider state that heteronormativity is damaging to society because its implicit use devalues all of society regardless of whether an individual identifies on the LGB spectrum or as heterosexual (Ward & Schneider, 2009).

Homonormativity, the idea that people who are homosexual should only date those of their own gender, is equally as harmful. It is a construct that emerged from heteronormativity,

and it both serves to polarize people and to create an artificial sense of stability, in that people become known, categorizable objects. However, real people do not fall easily into categories such as these, and as such, causes discrimination within the subcultures of the gay community (Ward & Schneider, 2009). Individuals that deviate from well-established norms may experience *microaggressions* from both hetero- and homosexual people on a daily basis (Swank et al., 2013). The LGB acronym is originally a political acronym used to designate any individual who was not straight. Within the acronym, there is an unspoken hierarchy and intersection of sexism, with gay men at the top (Pharr, 1997). It has been documented that individuals who are not strictly gay males receive overt or veiled discrimination from both gay and straight males, which is a message that their identity is less valid (Swank et al., 2013).

Discrimination within the LGB community is common and prevalent (Swank et al., 2013). This discrimination towards individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, from both the heteronormative society and within the LGB community, creates a form of *minority stress* which, Swank states, is detrimental to the LGB community as a whole (Swank et al., 2013). Minority stress is the phenomenon in which an individual or community experiences enough stressors that they are required to adapt their interpersonal interactions or environments (Swank et al., 2013). Although the LGB community experiences minority stress from the larger heteronormative community, it is something that any minority individual or group can experience (Swank et al., 2013).

It is documented that gendered behaviors and roles are most often learned or taught (Butler, 1990). As such, gender identity, tied to gendered behavior, is impacted by heteronormativity. Since they are learned, it is easy to surmise that an individual chooses to

adhere to what they are told to do (Butler, 1990). This gender assumption makes it difficult for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender to find support within society.

As an antidote to the ideas of the gender binary and heteronormativity, the concept of the *gender continuum* arose, which counters the assumption that only two genders exist. The gender continuum is relevant to this research because it allows for individuals to be attracted to people who display as masculine, feminine, or somewhere in between (Labor & Dolan, 2013). The population focused on in this study can fit into various places on the gender continuum that more accurately represent their feelings and inclinations, whereas they have no place in the gender binary.

Biphobia, Bisexuality, and Bisexual Identity Development

Biphobia can be found even within the most fundamental theories, even those specific to bisexual identity development (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002). For the purposes of this study, biphobia is defined as an individual's negative views and feelings towards others who identify as bisexual (Brewster et al., 2013). This is either because of the assumed difficulty in defining the term. An example of biphobia is the idea that bisexuality is a denial of one's true sexual orientation, a transitional stage towards identifying as homosexual, or a label given to someone who is conflicted or confused about their sexuality (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002). However, research shows that a significantly higher percentage of individuals exhibit bisexual behavior than exclusively monosexual behavior (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002).

It has been reported that in the collegiate setting, bisexual individuals feel social pressure to become monosexual in order to make it easier to for society to accept them (Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Labor & Dolan, 2013). Although college is thought of as a place and a time-period in which to explore identity, bisexual often experience lack of acceptance and ostracism

when being congruent with their authentic gender identities (Dugan & Yurman, 2011; King, 2011). Dugan and Yurman note that this pressure to choose makes it seem as though this population lacks a presence or is disallowed from having community on campus (Dugan & Yurman, 2011).

Students Attracted to More than One Gender

Although formal research on individuals who are attracted to more than one gender is relatively new, the identities that fall within this umbrella term are not (Labor & Dolan, 2013). There are students on college campuses that identify with a sexual orientation classified within this subset of identities (Labor & Dolan, 2011). This has manifested in terms currently used in the educational literature, like bisexual or pansexual—or with an identity that individuals identify with and define for themselves. In the only assessment on the needs of students who are attracted to more than one gender at college campuses, it was found that students who are attracted to more than one gender report dealing with issues of invisibility, lack of community and support throughout identity development, and lack of role models who identify with a sexual orientation in which they are attracted to more than one gender (Labor & Dolan, 2013). Because it seems to provide comfort and stability for people in society to define and categorize individuals, students who are attracted to more than one gender feel invisible as they feel forced to conform to a set of identities that may or may not represent their authentic selves (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Issues of invisibility and lack of community are related to each other, as students are less likely to try and create community if they feel too different from everyone else (Labor & Dolan, 2013). Also, if current institutional structures do not support ideas or identities that are not within its culture, invisibility and isolation are exacerbated (Labor & Dolan, 2013). Individuals who

identify outside the assumed heteronormative behaviors are reportedly more often rejected by peers and experience higher levels of discrimination and stigmatization (Sanlo, 2004; Rosario et al., 2006; Roomey et al., 2012; Wyss, 2004).

Identity development for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender can be more difficult for these reasons, as well as the fact that society tends to define identity based on an individual's current intimate relationship (Labor & Dolan, 2013). Within a homonormative structure, the assumption is that individuals who are in an intimate relationship within a person of the same gender are automatically gay or lesbian (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

This immediate assumption often leads non-monosexual youth to embrace identities and partners that do not accurately reflect their sexual orientations, in the hope that they will be more accepted in their communities (Labor & Dolan, 2013). Youth that are attracted to more than one gender often feel that it is better to hide aspects of their identities to be a part of the dominant culture, rather than embracing these aspects and taking the chance they will be ostracized from society (Labor & Dolan, 2013).

Strange and Banning's Environmental Components

The organizational structure of each institution also has a direct impact on the way students are able to feel connected and supported, which, in turn, can affect students' identity development (Strange & Banning, 2001). Although institutional structure is not typically thought about by students, the ability for a student to feel a part of the university and desire to be involved is one of the largest indicators of student retention (Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999). Strange and Banning describe four environmental dimensions that impact students' ability and desire to get involved with the institution: physical, aggregate, organizational and constructed—all of which have demonstrated a multitude of positive effects on educational

experience (Strange & Banning, 2001). In this thesis research, Strange and Banning's environmental components provide a framework for examining whether or not students who are attracted to more than one gender have the opportunity to connect positively to their institution.

Physical Dimension of Involvement

The physical aspects of an institution impact a students' ability to connect with the institution (Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999). Everything from the campus location to interior building design and layout has different yet compounding effects on students' experiences. These effects could apply more specifically to LGB students (Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999).

Campus Location. Depending on where a campus is located, students are either automatically given incentive to become more involved with their campus or to be distracted by opportunities off campus (Strange & Banning, 2001). For example, students at smaller, rural, residential campuses have greater motivation to stay on-campus and become involved, rather than those who attend large, urban, commuter campuses (Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999). However, for individuals on the LGB spectrum, living in rural conservative communities can actually impact their desires or abilities to become involved on the campus due to socio-cultural oppression (Drumheller & McQuay, 2010). Conversely, individuals on the LGB spectrum who live within large, urban, liberal communities typically have better experiences with not only the campus environment, but also with the surrounding community as well, as there is more acceptance for them (Drumheller & McQuay, 2010).

Human-Scale Design. Human-scale design can also affect the way in which individuals interact with their campus environment (Strange & Banning, 2001). When students arrive at a campus that seems too large for them to feel as though they can become known and a part of a

larger purpose, they can lose motivation to get involved, which is detrimental to their participation and retention on their campus (Strange & Banning, 2001). Typically human-scale design is thought of in regard to class-size, especially at large public institutions, but it can be applied to all aspects of an institution's design (Strange & Banning, 2001). One of the purposes of LGBTQ centers is to provide smaller, more supportive atmospheres for individuals looking for a place in which they feel accepted, known, and part of a community (Sanlo, 2000; Sanlo, 2004).

Layout and Flexibility. The layout and flexibility (the ability to change the layout and the elements within it) of space on the campus setting can foster—or hinder—students' comfort with becoming involved on campus (Strange & Banning, 2001). Layout and flexibility can impact the physical space of student services offices and study spaces as well as the specific placement of benches and alcoves in the university's student union (Strange & Banning, 2001). Flexibility makes it easier for students to claim ownership and personalization of their university, which can foster students' interest in becoming involved (Strange & Banning, 2001).

This flexibility can also apply to other locations on or near college campuses, like coffee shops or bookstores, which can nurture a student's need to connect with one another in a social atmosphere (Strange & Banning, 2001). Although no formalized learning takes place in these locations, these spaces release students from the typical requirements and rigor of academia and allow them to make genuine connections with their friends and colleagues (Strange & Banning, 2001). The location of a university's LGBT center can greatly impact its ability to support LGBT individuals, because of the assumed support proximity suggests to LGBT students, faculty, and staff (Sanlo, 2004; Drumheller & McQuay, 2010). By having a university's LGBT center closer

to the center of campus, where it is more visible and accessible, it can be inferred that there is a higher level of commitment and support from the institution for LGBT students (Sanlo, 2004).

Aggregate Dimensions of Involvement

In general, people tend to group with other individuals that share similar beliefs, goals, and needs (Drumheller & McQuay, 2010; Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999). Within the college setting, *aggregate dimensions of involvement* refers to groups of individuals who not only share similar interests and participate in similar activities, but also those that are likely to reinforce the need for interests and activities that benefit the university environment as a whole (Strange & Banning, 2001). Further, individuals who are a part of an aggregate with similar interests are more likely to have positive connections with, speak highly of, and be retained at their alma maters (Strange & Banning, 2001; Astin, 1999).

Colleges and universities have created specialized offices and organizations that serve specific student and staff identities, providing formal locations for support aggregates to be housed (Strange & Banning, 2001). These offices and organizations not only offer homogeneous groups of individuals, or students who share similar cultures and characteristics, spaces in which they can find other individuals who share their cultures and/or characteristics but also provide another venue for students to become involved with their institution (Strange & Banning, 2001). For example, LGBTQ centers are a prime example of supportive aggregate dimensions of involvement, providing support services for LGBTQ students, in a location in which academic and social opportunities intersect, and opportunities for students to feel as though they are connected to their universities (Sanlo, 2000).

Organizational Dimensions of Involvement

Once students become involved, their continued involvement is contingent upon their experience with their roles and organizations (Strange & Banning, 2001). For example, having too many or too few people involved in a group each has consequences for the experience of the group participants (Strange & Banning, 2001). If a group has too many people involved, there is a higher likelihood for individuals to become disengaged and a higher proclivity for absenteeism (Strange & Banning, 2001). Another example would apply to organizations which are understaffed: Participants have many chances to become involved and to gather experiences that will foster connectedness to their institution, but there is also a greater probability that those individuals will “burn out” and leave the organization (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Organizational dimensions of involvement also apply to students’ abilities to connect with the administrators who make the large-scale decisions that impact their academic experiences (Strange & Banning, 2001). In a highly centralized administration which allows for very little student interaction, it is not only difficult for students to want to participate, but also to feel as though they will be heard in a way that allows for them to connect with their institution (Astin, 1999; Strange & Banning, 2001). Maintaining the ability for students to become involved and have their voices heard and respected allows for a more dynamic and involved student body (Strange & Banning, 2001). Among the LGBT population, students benefit from the ability to connect with other staff that either represent them, or share an LGBT identity with them (Fine, 2012; Fine, 2011). LGBT students feel that by connecting with administrators they are able to receive support for themselves and impact social change on a larger scale within their institution (Fine, 2012; Dugan & Yurman, 2011).

Constructed Dimensions of Involvement

The students, staff, and faculty who are involved in an organization have the ability to construct an environment that will either increase or decrease future student interest and involvement (Strange & Banning, 2001). The creation and passing on of cultural symbols, customs, beliefs, and values are other aspects of involvement that enhance or inhibit student involvement in an institution or organization (Strange & Banning, 2001). Based upon the prominence and overall acceptance of shared experiences, symbols, and ideologies, students learn where they feel most comfortable and accepted within an organization or structure. Conversely, students also have the chance to discover and explore places where they do not feel welcome and make decisions about how to respond to such rejection. Some may eventually abandon their efforts (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Conclusion

Gender identity theories, sexual orientation identity theories, and environmental component theories provide a foundation for illustrating the importance of this topic. No single set of theories provides a holistic view; thus, the combination of the three main topic areas provides a larger perspective and applicability for this topic. It is my hope that this combination adequately conveys the complexity of the issue and shows the need for further research on this subject.

Overall, students who are attracted to more than one gender experience a different type of discrimination and marginalization than their homonormative counterparts who are attracted to one gender. This can be seen in the lack of a fully inclusive and accepted gender identity theory within the literature, forms of assumed hetero- and homonormativity within college and university settings, and the overall lack of institutional support and understanding for students

who are attracted to more than one gender (Labor & Dolan, 2013; Roomey et al., 2012; Rosario et al., 2006). While there is very little literature on this population, this researcher feels that beginning by looking at policies and practices of highly-regarded institutions in the field of overall LGBT support, the conversation will begin and the first steps taken towards supporting this group of people in a more holistic way.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology employed in this thesis research. Within the chapter, the following sections are covered: (a) research methodology, (b) research tradition—which will include site selection and data collection techniques, (c) strategies employed by the researcher to ensure validity and trustworthiness, (d) strategies employed by the researcher to protect human subjects, and (e) limitations of the research to be conducted. Each section explores the main aspects of the research methodology and tradition and its applicability towards the research questions and design.

Research Questions

The specific questions guiding this research are: (a) What policies have the administrations at institutions of higher learning enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender, (b) What practices have the administrations at these institutions employed to support students who are attracted to more than one gender and (c) How do the physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed dimensions of involvement affect the way institutions are able to support students who are attracted to more than one gender?

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to gather information about institutional support for students who are attracted to more than one gender. The research was conducted using qualitative methodology and utilizing a case study approach. This approach is most appropriate for this research because its focus is to explore, in depth, the issues of support for students who are attracted to more than one gender and understand how institutions are or are not supporting these identities.

Tradition

For the purpose of this research, I used the case study tradition. A case study, defined by Creswell (2008, p. 476), is an “in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection.” Although similar to ethnography, a case study typically focuses on an event or program that involves individuals, instead of identifying the shared behaviors of a group (Creswell, 2008). Case studies are utilized to focus on the deep exploration of a case, not necessarily the identification of cultural themes (Creswell, 2008). Within a case study, the term “case” could refer to a single focus or multiple foci. A specific case can also be selected because it is an *intrinsic case*, meaning the activity being observed is unusual and of interest, or an *instrumental case*, which sheds light on specific issues (Creswell, 2008). Other than intrinsic and instrumental cases, research can be classified as a *collective case study*, meaning that the research focuses on more than one case, all of which will be described and compared to one another to provide insight on the *overall bound system* (Creswell, 2008).

The research that I propose would be considered an instrumental and collective case study, as it is meant to showcase what institutions, the bound system in this study, do to support students who are attracted to more than one gender. In the research, multiple universities were studied, shifting it from a solely instrumental case, to a combined instrumental and collective case study. The researcher was drawn to this tradition because it can be utilized with both typical and unique topics. Since the research focus in this project is somewhat specialized, this type of methodology seemed the most appropriate.

Site selection

Participant sites were selected by consulting the *Campus Pride Index* and by choosing organizations from the list of universities that received a five-star rating (Campus Pride, 2013).

There is a division among the people in the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals regarding whether this list is a valid representation of institutions supportive of LGBT students. However, the list is being utilized due to its accessibility and because its ranking is considered a credible source within higher education. For the purpose of this study, the researcher contacted any institution that had received a five-star rating on the Campus Pride Index, totaling 56 institutions.

Out of those colleges, a total of eight responded to the interview request sent by the researcher. One of the eight universities had both the LGBT Coordinator and Dean of Students present for the interview process, one included only the Dean of Students, and six had their LGBT Coordinator as the sole participant in the interview process. While it was not the original intention of the researcher to have maximum variation of participants, the researcher decided to utilize convenience sampling based on the initial difficulty in getting institutions to respond to the participant requests. Although convenience sampling is thought of to produce data that is less diverse than other forms of sampling, the researcher utilized it because of the difficulty in gathering participants and the time constraints involved (Merriam, 2009).

Strategies to protect human subjects

Although this research focuses on colleges or universities, the researcher interviewed professionals and therefore, it is an imperative to protect their confidentiality. The researcher did not use the institution or professionals' names; instead institutions are referred to by general demographic and location information. This confidentiality will protect the institutions from any potential back-lash that could come from the research being conducted. Through the college course AHE 513, *Research and Assessment in Higher Education*, the researcher participated in the *Institutional Review Board (IRB) online tutorial*, which explained protections for human

subjects in research. This tutorial provided a set of foundational knowledge of the IRB and IRB certification process. The researcher also received approval from the Oregon State University IRB office prior to data collection. This study was deemed as not working with human subjects as the IRB defined it, because the researcher was asking questions about policy and programs versus opinion-based questions. Although officially ruled as not using human subjects, the researcher conducted his research as if he were held to the same standards bound by the IRB. This allowed the researcher to minimize any potential negative impact on the research participants.

Data collection techniques

To collect data related to the research questions, the researcher: (a) conducted phone interviews with the main contact person(s) for LGB issues on each campus and/or Dean of Students or Vice Provost of Student Affairs (b) examined each institution's website for explicit information regarding the support of students who are attracted to more than one gender, and (c) examined the notes of applicable staff and university meetings regarding the creation of policies for the target population of this study. Though participants were given a set of questions to answer, the semi-structured interview component allowed the researcher to add specific questions based on information given in the interview (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009). These questions were open-ended, to limit the effect of the researcher's unconscious biases on the answers (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Appendix A contains the list of interview questions submitted to all participants.

Although collecting documents that contained indications of the universities' policies towards the population in this paper was somewhat difficult, document collection allowed the researcher to gain a more full understanding of the central issue of the study (Merriam, 2009;

Creswell, 2008). The benefits of document analysis are that the documents are typically in the participants' own words, as well as transcription of these documents is not required (Creswell, 2008). The hope was that by interviewing participants first, they would be able to suggest or provide other documentation that might be beneficial for analysis, such as meeting minutes.

Lastly, the examination of each institution's website is similar to the analysis of documents procured (Creswell, 2008). Each website was analyzed for explicit language regarding identities that are attracted to more than one gender, other identities, and programmatic components. By doing so, general attitudes towards this population could be uncovered, as well as whether or not they are considered in policy decisions and whether the structure of the programs was inclusive for them. Each semi-structured interview included a fact-finding question about other departments that partner with GLBT centers that might also provide support students that are attracted to more than one gender. The suggested departments' websites were then also examined. This activity is similar to snowball sampling and it allowed for more depth in the data analysis (Creswell, 2008).

Phone Interviews

The primary data collection for this study was in the form of phone interviews with LGB student support coordinators from every institution and/or their direct supervisors. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded by the researcher based on similar language and themes that revealed themselves upon analysis.

Documents

Data was, additionally, gathered via the university websites and any accessible or suggested meeting notes indicating discussions about programs or policies that impact students attracted to more than one gender. In regard to the website, information was collected from each

university's public official website, as well as housing and GLBT services websites. Searches were performed using key terms, such as "bisexual" and "pansexual."

Meeting agendas and minutes were examined for any indications that the universities were cognizant of the needs of pan and bi-sexual students. During these analyses, if any further documents were found that could be beneficial, they were also evaluated, and any pertinent information was added to the analysis. This *triangulation*, or cross-verification from two or more sources, increased this study's trustworthiness and also allowed for a more holistic view of each specific university and the work that the institution is or is not doing related to the support of students who are attracted to more than one gender (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2008).

Strategies to ensure validity

Since one of the ways that data was collected was via interviews with practitioners, the researcher used a semi-structured set of questions in gathering data to analyze. After the interviews were completed, the researcher reviewed them and then coded the data gathered into themes. This was also done with data gathered from websites and meeting notes. The researcher looked for commonalities between the interviews and allowed the themes to arise through a preliminary exploratory analysis of the data (Creswell, 2008). Using interviews as a primary data collection procedure allowed the researcher to gather rich accounts that directly benefitted the study.

Strategies to ensure trustworthiness

To make this study more trustworthy, the researcher increased its confirmability by debriefing the findings with his thesis advisor. This confirmation process either supported his claim, or caused the researcher to re-evaluate whether his research was trustworthy. To ensure a higher level of trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher utilized *member checking*, or

respondent validation: After the researcher interviewed the professionals, he contacted all interviewees again and asked them to check the accuracy of their accounts by emailing them transcriptions of their interviews. The researcher worked with his thesis advisor through this process, ensuring that they had enough time to make the research as academically trustworthy as possible. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, the researcher triangulated the data received from phone interviews, data collected from each institution's website, and any data received via meeting notes or other documents. This triangulation allowed the researcher to compare the three sources of information and ascertain whether common themes emerged.

Data Analysis Strategies

After the researcher had gathered the narrative and website data, he began to look for themes within each set of data. This was done utilizing the steps outlined in Merriam's qualitative research guide because they were easily followed and understood. To begin the coding process, the researcher utilized the *open coding process*, which refers to keeping an open mind while determining themes present in the data (Merriam, 2009). The researcher opted for open coding because he wanted to identify any data that could be useful for this study, and felt he would keep an open mind while coding by following this structure (Merriam, 2009). The researcher utilized open coding for each transcript, website, and other documents examined for this research.

Once the researcher had completed open coding each transcript, website, and document he identified the most prominent codes, and determined which codes answered the posed research questions. It was also determined which codes needed renaming in order to better address other codes that had surfaced in the coding process (Merriam, 2009). While coding and naming themes, the researcher kept the following five criteria in mind: (a) the themes should

answer the research questions, (b) the themes should be exhaustive and include all aspects of the data, (c) each theme should be mutually exclusive with the others, (d) each theme should be specific enough to convey the researcher's intended meaning exactly, and (e) each category should be conceptually congruent when compared to the others (Merriam, 2009). This coding and theme development process took place over the course of two weeks, to ensure the researcher's full immersion in the data in order to better report the findings of the research (Merriam, 2009).

Limitations

In regards to this research, the foreseeable limitations are as follows: First, the sample size of interviewees was small; therefore the results are not generalizable to all higher education institutions. It was, nevertheless, important to conduct this study, as it can begin to illuminate the issues of a previously under-researched topic. It is the researchers hope that this research sparks interest in others, and the need for further understanding and support of this unique population of students can begin. Secondly, there is speculation whether or not the Campus Pride Index is a valid representation of the support of individuals towards the LBT community, as the data is self-reported. The rationale for utilizing the Campus Pride Index is because it is one of the only lists of institutions that are classified as LGB-Friendly. Lastly, it is important to speak to the potential of researcher bias in this study. The researcher identifies as pansexual, which is an identity that falls within the overarching group of identities in which individuals are attracted to more than one gender. The researcher combated potential bias by utilizing triangulation, member checking, and audits with his thesis advisor. These are meant to reduce the researcher bias within the study and increase the level of trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter includes a reintroduction of the research question, a discussion of the emergent themes, a general overview of the participating institutions and a comprehensive review of the findings based on the data collected. Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of three themes: (a) inclusive LGB programming is favored by university programs serving the LGB population over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender, (b) generalizable LGBT policies are chosen more often than policies designed for specific identities, and (c) physical location of institutions, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. For ease of understanding, this chapter contains two tables. The first, Table 1: Institution and Theme Breakdown, outlines the themes that emerged from each set of data (one data set per university), while the second provides a snapshot view of the institutions that participated in this study, Table 2: Institutional Demographic Information.

Research Questions

This research examined what LGB friendly institutions do to support students who are attracted to more than one gender. The specific questions guiding this research were: (a) What policies have the administrations at these institutions enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? (b) What practices have the administrations at these institutions employed to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? and (c) How do the physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed dimensions of involvement

(Strange & Banning, 2001) impact the way institutions are able to support students who are attracted to more than one gender?

Research Themes

After examining the data gathered through phone interviews, university websites, and documentation, such as meeting minutes, the following three themes were identified by the researcher: (a) inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender, (b) generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities, and (c) physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

Many of the practitioners interviewed spoke about the shift in their office's programming from specific identity programming to programming that is more inclusive of all identities that are served by their center. The data gathered from practitioner interviews and from university websites showed that university policy has become inclusive of sexual orientation but has opted to leave definitions broad instead of listing specific identities their policies cover. Lastly, many practitioners mentioned the importance of their availability and visibility within their university communities. Many Directors of LGB Centers noted the need for this because of students' potential initial discomfort with discussing LGB issues. Additionally, directors want to show that while they work with LGB students, they are a part of the overall university community and are there to support all students. The institutional and theme breakdown can further be examined by the table below.

Table 1: Institution and Theme Breakdown

Pseudonym	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
University A	Yes	Yes	No
University B	Yes	Yes	No
University C	No	Yes	Yes
University D	No	Yes	Yes
University E	Yes	Yes	No
University F	Yes	No	Yes
University G	No	Yes	Yes
University H	No	Yes	Yes

Overview of Participants

Eight universities participated in this study. To honor confidentiality, each participating institution was identified with a letter of the alphabet and general demographic information. Any specific identifiable data gathered through interviews or document collection that could disclose institutions' or individuals' identities were removed and replaced by the generic terms "institution" and "educator." Within each university, specific individuals were chosen by the researcher for their perceived proximity to the LGB Center and policy-making ability for each campus. The only criteria for selecting interviewees were that they needed be either LGBT Coordinators or direct supervisors at their institutions.

Summary of institutions.

Table 2: Institutional Demographic Information

Pseudonym	University Type	Degrees Granted	Attendance	Location
University A	Private Liberal Arts	Undergraduate	3,000 students	Midwest U.S.
University B	Public	Undergrad - Doctorate	30,000 students	Western U.S.
University C	Public Liberal Arts	Undergrad & Masters	6,000 students	Pacific N.W.
University D	Public Research	Undergrad & Masters	24,000 students	Pacific N.W.
University E	Public Liberal Arts	Undergrad - Doctorate	43,000 students	Midwest U.S.
University F	Private	Undergrad - Doctorate	21,000 students	Midwest U.S.
University G	Public	Undergrad – Doctorate	22,000 students	Western U.S.
University H	Private Liberal Arts	Undergrad – Doctorate	10,000 students	Midwest U.S.

University A: University A is a private liberal arts college with a bachelor’s degree residential campus with approximately 3,000 students enrolled. University A is located in a small city of between 5,000 – 10,000 people in the Midwestern United States. University A has 41 majors ranging from Africana Studies, Environmental Studies and Musical Studies. This university has an 11:1 staff-to-student ratio and strives for undergraduate class-sizes of no larger than 20 students. Both of these facts appear to show a commitment to undergraduate teaching and to student success within the institution. At University A both the Dean of Students and the LGBT Services and Outreach Director participated in this study via separate phone interviews, each ranging from 18-22 minutes long. The researcher examined University A’s Office of Equity

Concerns webpage, *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment Handbook*, and the LGBT Center's webpage for data pertaining to this research topic.

Theme One - Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender: University A favored inclusive programming that is sponsored through the institution over specific programming for specific identities. Staff at University A made a clear distinction between offering resources for specific identities within the LGB spectrum, compared to offering programming for specific communities. Upon review of the interviews with the Dean of Students and LGBT Coordinator and the corresponding websites, the data gathered showed that any programming focused on individual identities were student-led initiatives and not presented by the university. In both interviews, the Dean of Students and the Multicultural Resource Center Director spoke to the fact that the institution offers programs and design policies that are general and impact the largest amount of students. Student communities however, saw the need for specific programming and support for individual identities and provided the motivation for that targeted specific identities. During the interview, the Dean of Students spoke specifically to the university's view on inclusive programming:

I would push back on the idea of identifying something as being solely a queer program, right? Like, so, if you think in an interdisciplinary and intersectionally way, right? So if I bring [educator] from [institution], is that a queer program or is that program on race or is that a program on gender?

There seemed to be a reticence to identify specific programming for individual identities. Instead, the Dean of Students preferred to invite speakers or plan events that impact the overarching community at University A. The Dean of Students spoke further about the need to

provide support for all individuals. They stated that focusing on the intersectionality of the experiences of all identities is one way to provide institutionalized support for all identities.

Theme Two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: University A appeared to favor inclusive policies over targeted policies. Both the Dean of Students and the LGBT Center Coordinator spoke to University A's inclusive anti-discrimination policies, judicial policies, and harassment policies. Looking over the university's websites, specific identities were not mentioned within these policies; instead all of the websites favored language such as "sexual orientation" which is inclusive of the population that is the focus of this research. The only information found that spoke explicitly to students attracted to more than one gender were two student groups offered through the LGBT Center, one that provides support groups about sexual fluidity and another that focuses on creating unofficial queer mentorship between students.

University B: University B is a public state institution with approximately 30,000 enrolled students. It grants undergraduate, master's, and doctorate degrees. University B is located in the Western United States in a large city with more than 500,000 people. Approximately 78 undergraduate majors are offered, ranging from Urban Planning, Metallurgical Engineering, and Atmospheric Sciences. This university also has a 14:1 student to staff ratio. The Dean of Students from University B participated in the study through a 42-minute phone interview. The Director of the LGBT Center was unavailable. The websites for University B's LGBT Center and the Office of Equity and Inclusion were also utilized for data collection.

After examining University B's LGBT Center, Office of Equity and Inclusion websites and the transcript of the phone interview with the Dean of Students, the researcher identified that the data from University B provided insight towards both themes one and two, favoring inclusive

LGB programming over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender, and general LGB policies over those designed for specific identities, respectively. No other university documentation, other than the previously mentioned websites, could be found that would provide information regarding the policies or programs that are designed to support individuals attracted to more than one gender, nor the broader LGB community.

Theme One - Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender: Regarding theme one, in which University B shows a preference towards programming that is generalizable to the whole of the LGB spectrum instead of providing specialized programming based on specific identities, Evidence of this theme was found in the interview with the Dean of Students as well as various university websites. In the university's LGBT resource center website, none of the programs were targeted specifically towards a specific identity within the LGB spectrum. On other websites, specific identities were mentioned as a way to provide examples of the programming's intended audience, but there was never any exclusionary language towards specific identities.

Theme Two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: Looking at theme two, where generalizable LGB policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities, the interview with the Dean of Students and the examination of the anti-discrimination and equal opportunity employer policies provided stable examples of the theme. The interview with University B's Dean of Students was particularly, because University B is located in a state that is currently in debate about marriage equality. Recently, the traditional definition of marriage was ruled unconstitutional in this state, and many same-sex couples gained the ability for legal marriage. Several of the university administrators were personally affected by this change, and were themselves able to marry their same-sex

partners. The Dean of Students spoke to the Human Resources department's attentiveness towards support the LGB staff even without a formalized policy regarding marriage equality and its translation to a system that did not previously allow same sex couples to marry.

One of my directors who was one of the people who had gotten married, and he had emailed our human resources and said, "What do we do?" And our human resources basically said, 'Yeah, because that governor said that you have to still pay state taxes, but we're still considering you married... um... for our own tax purposes, tuition purposes and everything else.' So I think the university is pretty proactive in trying to respond... um... to both the, the staff and faculty issues and with student issues. Our human resources, I think, is really working hard and setting some real standards for the state in what it truly means to embrace diversity in regards to this population, as far as the benefits that are being offered.

While University B's domestic partnership, anti-discrimination, and equal-opportunity policies are designed to be general, it is not possible to determine whether this generality is for ease of policy-making or intentionality for inclusion of all identities within this specific demographic.

University C: University C is a public liberal arts institution, with a master's degree residential campus with approximately 6,000 students enrolled within. University C is located in a small town in the Pacific Northwest that has a population of 10,000-25,000. The university has approximately 36 majors—ranging from Theater Arts to Forensic Chemistry to Communication: Rhetoric and Reasoning. Additionally, there is a 20:1 student to staff ratio. The Director of the LGBT Center from University C participated in the study through a 25-minute phone interview, and the Dean of students was unavailable. The website for the university's housing office, and

additionally, the LGBT Services Offices were examined for data applicable to this study.

Themes two and three arose in the data collection

Theme two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: Evidence of inclusive language was found immediately on the homepage of the LGBT Center's website, as well as throughout the website. While the language was already inclusive of all LGB identities based on the usage 'queer', the Queer Resource Center director also spoke to the ease in which policy can be shaped at their institution.

I had been really annoyed that gender expression wasn't included in our affirmative action or non-discrimination statement, and so I just called up the director of HR and I was like 'Hey, what do you think? Don't you think that this should be included?' and like immediately, he was like, 'Yeah, I think that it should be included. I will talk to people.' And then it did take a while to get final approval, but once it gets final approval it's, it's just because there have been people willing to have the conversation and people are on board. So, it's been a relatively, I mean pretty easy to make things happen without having to have a longer, more drawn-out conversation, at least up to this point.

Because of the size of the institution, and the proximity of the professionals at this institution, the LGBT Center director felt confident that policy is easily-adapted to fit the changing needs of the institution.

Theme Three - Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The LGBT Coordinator also talked about staff availability at the Center as something that people in that organization

strive for. The coordinator's office is a part of the LGBT Center, and they stated that enjoys the ability to look out and see the students using the center. Because their office is within the center, the coordinator feels that they are not only able to be a visible part of the community but provide a better support structure for the students that utilize the center. Instead of having to search for the coordinator's office, students know they can receive LGBT support in one location. With the implementation of University C's Gender Inclusive Housing policy, the LGBT Coordinator saw an opportunity to not only support the newly created housing opportunity, but also be able to increase visibility for the center and provide support to the LGBT population.

It was two specific floors in one of the residence halls, and I think, because... Not necessarily because it was geared towards bisexual students or geared at all around sexual orientation ... um... and sexual identity, there was a natural-somehow- evolvment of those students who lived on that floor to... um... have some kind of queer identity or a strong... um... affiliation or ally kind of identity for folks who were living on those floors. And so, I think that our relationship, my relationship with the (inaudible), our residential life department on campus has been totally valuable for our bisexual students, as well as the trans student population. I was a live-in staff member the first four years that the program existed.

While this is not a possibility for all institutions, University C's LGBT Center Director said that felt lucky to be given the opportunity to be a part of an institution where trans and queer issues were discussed openly, in what is typically thought of being a non-queer and trans space.

University C's LGBT Resource Center is located in the basement of the university's student union. The university's Women's Resource Center and Environmental Center are located next to the LGBT Resource Center. The LGBT Center Director mentions that this location is beneficial for supporting students who identify as women, as both the LGBT Resource Center and Women's Resource Center have developed a strong relationship. The LGBT Resource Center has tried to provide a comfortable space for students to spend time in. The center has four rooms—with a living room, kitchenette, library, and the LGBT Resource Center Director's office. The LGBT Resource Center Director describes the space as:

One of the rooms is kind of like a kitchen where we have a fridge and a sink and microwave and that sort of thing. Our main room is the largest space in the center where we have a couple of really big couches, other arm chairs, and a few computer stations, and then we have the third room—It's a quieter space where our library is housed and some quieter work stations with computers. Then, the fourth room is my office.

By providing so much space and comfort, the LGBT Resource Center Director stated that the hope is that students not only congregate within the center, but also feel safe and secure as they do so.

University D: University D is a public comprehensive doctoral institution, with approximately 24,000 students. It is located in a medium-sized city in the Pacific Northwest, having a population of approximately 100,000-500,000. University D offers 269 academic programs including marine biology, metal-smithing and jewelry, and journalism. There is a median class size of 20 students per class, and a 19:1 student-to-staff ratio. The Director of the

LGBT Center from University D participated in the study in an 18-minute phone interview, and the Dean of Students was unavailable. University D's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity's overview of services and complaints and grievance packet, written information regarding the Queer Studies minor, the LGBT Center website, and the University Housing Academic Programs website were all examined to provide a rounded view of the institution.

Theme two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: Themes one and two were present in the data collected from University D. The staff seemed particularly proud of their commitment towards theme two, despite the fact that the state it is located in a state where the LGBT population does not have equal rights compared to their heterosexual counterparts. The LGBT Director made note that University D has had a LGBT center since the early 90s and made sure that their anti-discrimination policies included protection for non-heterosexual individuals. It was also noted that this protection extended to students and employees, and included equal access to facilities, which is mirrored in the university's *Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Handbook*. On the topic of domestic partnerships, the LGBT Director stated: "We've had domestic partnership benefits before they were cool. We've had them for quite a long time and the university recognizes all marriages, regardless of inclusive of identity." There was some discrepancy in the data in that this information was not provided on the human resources website.

Theme Three - Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Unlike other universities participating in this thesis research, neither the LGBT Coordinator's nor the Assistant

Coordinator's offices are located in the LGBT Resource Center. The coordinator acknowledged this and stated that this physical distance allows for more work to be done; however, noted that this could be limiting their student interactions and sense of connectedness. To potentially counteract any negative effects, both the LGBT Coordinator and the assistant coordinator attend all of the student general meetings simply to be visible, provide a presence, and connect with students. The coordinator stated "...That way [the] queer students know they can just stop by [the LGBT Coordinator's] office and pop in just to say hi."

The LGBT Coordinator also spoke about maintaining close relationships with the University Housing office through the Social Justice Cohort Program; the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Academic Program; the Ethnic Studies Academic Program; the Queer Studies minor; and the Career Services Center. Relationships between the LGBT Resource Center and the university housing office, and the LGBT Resource Center and the Queer Studies minor, were visible on the University Housing and Queer Studies minor's website, but the other relationships were not visible via a web presence.

University D's LGBT Center is located in the university's student union, and is wholly a student-run, student programming-focused space. The LGBT Coordinator and the Assistant LGBT Coordinator have separate offices located in the Dean of Students office in another part of campus. The university's student union, where the LGBT Center is located, is currently in the process of a major renovation that impacts the LGBT Center. Thus, the LGBT Center's programmatic availability is experiencing a brief hiatus, but after the renovation is complete, the center will not only be able to offer more programming but the center will also have more space overall. University D's LGBT Coordinator also noted that this isn't the first renovation or location change that the LGBT Center has experienced, and that the institution has been

proactive in providing the center with options as it continues to grow and support a larger population.

University E: University E is a public research-focused institution, which grants undergraduate, master's, and doctorate degrees, and which has approximately 43,000 enrolled students. It is located in a small Midwestern city, with a population of approximately 25,000-100,000. University E offers 180 majors ranging from Astronomy and Astrophysics to Sociology and Public Policy. There is an 18:1 student-to-staff ratio. The Director of the GLBT Center from University E participated in the study in a 24-minute phone interview, and the Dean of students was unavailable. The websites for University E's GLBT Center and GLBT Alumni Association as well as the 2007 *Enhancing Minority Attainment Plan* were assessed.

Theme One - Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender: While programming in a way that is inclusive to all identities within the LGBT spectrum seemed important to this university, the LGBT Coordinator of University E was increasing support opportunities for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender at the LGBT center. This took the shape of targeted support groups, speaker's bureau panels, and striving to bring speakers to campus that could assist in educating the university about the issues and experiences of people from the full LGBT spectrum.

University E has a student support group that is focused on bisexual and other identities in which students are attracted to more than one gender, and is currently working towards a broader inclusion of this group with the center. University E also brings speakers to educate students and staff on bisexuality, biphobia, and supporting bisexual-identified individuals to the campus every year. This provides an opportunity to learn about experiences of bisexual students,

bisexual student development, and how to best support bisexual students while they are attending the college or university. The GLBT Coordinator admitted that specific programming for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender is their center's lowest priority, but they aim to be inclusionary with the majority of the programming that comes from the office and try to make sure that all identities are represented.

Theme Two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: University E has inclusive policies that are similar to other universities examined within the scope of this thesis research—anti-discrimination clauses, protection during hiring processes, and domestic partner benefits, but the GLBT Coordinator states there are “not more specific [policies for] people who identify as bi or other identities that are attracted to more than one gender.” In University E's 2013 *Annual Report*, representatives from the GLBT Center stated that they were working with the university to make policy more inclusive of all identities under the GLBT umbrella. However, individuals who are attracted to more than one gender are not explicitly mentioned. This data was similar to that of other institutions within this research; University E was the first to speculate that there would be a benefit to targeted policy-making for the population focused upon in this study.

University F: University F is a private, comprehensive doctoral institution which has approximately 21,000 enrolled students. It is located in a small Midwestern city, which has an approximate population of 25,000-100,000. University F has at least 70 different major options, including Cognitive Science, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Musicology. University F also has a 7:1 student-to-staff ratio. All of their undergraduate classes are taught by full professors, and over three-quarters of undergraduate classes have no more than 20 students. The Director of the LGBT Center from University F participated in the study in a 26-minute phone conversation,

and the Dean of students was unavailable for participation in the study. The websites for University F's LGBT Resource Center, Diversity, LGBT Programs, and LGBT Campus Advisory Network were all examined for data. With respect to the research themes, University F's LGBT Coordinator and examination of the website showed an intentionality towards theme one and theme two, favoring inclusive LGB programming over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender, and favoring generalizable LGBT policies over those designed for specific identities.

Theme One – Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender: At the time of this study, University F had recently completed an assessment of their services and had revamped some of their programs to become more inclusive for individuals who identify as bisexual. The assessment utilized focus groups, and, according to the LGB Center Director, “We did have some students who identified as bi saying that they would love to see a few more resources.” To better support their bisexual students and those from other minority identities on the LGB spectrum, University F created a student group that focused on all of the identities in the LGB spectrum. This group provides support for students and staff to “really talk about the gamut of orientations [and provide] a space for individuals who may be attracted to more than one gender identity [to have community].” This student group is also advertised on the LGBT programming website, as it is a part of the Community Discussion groups that University E provides for students.

These groups are designed to create a sense of community for people with identities that are less visible within the greater queer community. The community discussion groups have a wide range of topics, including a group about gender and gender expression, a group that looks at sexual fluidity, and a discussion group that examines intersectionality, multiple identities

experiences, and contributions to society. While University E has shown evidence in utilizing generalizable LGB programming, the website and interview with the LGBT Coordinator also provided a realization that generalizable programming may not be providing enough support for those individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and there is a need for specialized programming.

Theme Three - Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. As a result of the aforementioned assessment, the LGBT Coordinator also realized that they were trying to do too much and “spreading themselves very thin” across campus. The coordinator identified a need to scale back their work, and wanted to increase their visibility to students and involvement within the university. In working towards this goal, the LGBT Coordinator began to advertise their office hours on the LGBT Resource Center website, and clearly communicates their practice of meeting students in locations other than the LGBT Resource Center, based on student comfort levels.

University H’s LGBT Center is located in the university’s student union and is transitioning to a larger space in the same building in the summer of 2014. Unlike other institutions, the LGBT Center Director noted that “students wanted more visibility of the center. They wanted it to be professional in appearance, and they wanted it to have that university office feel to it.” This request stemmed from student feedback that the LGBT center did not provide enough support, and the students wanted the physical space to reflect the important work that the center does. The LGBT Center Director’s office is also not physically a part of the center, but is

next to the center. While this is partially to give students their own space, the LGBT Center Director notes that the separation is due to the space constraint within the center itself. Though the director's office is not a part of the center, the director notes that they purposefully walks by and/or stops into the center. This is for the sole purpose of maintaining a presence and showing that s/he is a resource for the students and the overall LGBT community at University H.

University G: University G is a four year, residential college, which has approximately 22,000 enrolled students. University G is located in a small city in the western part of the United States with a population of 25,000-100,000. University G has approximately 80 majors ranging from Ecology and Evolution to Music Composition to Slavic Languages and Literatures. University G also has a 17:1 student to staff ratio, and undergraduate classes have typically 47 or fewer students. The Director of the LGBT Center from University G participated in the study via a 30-minute phone interview, and the Dean of students was unavailable to participate in the study. The websites for University G's LGBT Center, Diversity Organization, and Counseling and Psychological Services, as well as their *University Housing Residence Hall Policy Handbook* were all utilized for data collection.

Theme Two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: According to the LGBT Coordinator, University G prides itself for being inclusive of all non-heterosexual identities, without having to name individual identities. There was a student-lead movement to utilize the term "queer" instead of focusing on specific identities within the community. The Director of the LGB Center stated: "Realistically, a lot of the students who are at [institution] don't use the wording of bisexual. Maybe some would use pansexual or sexually-fluid. Students really use the word queer here a lot more." Because of this, programs and policies and University G have adopted the overarching language of queer in an

act of inclusivity and solidarity within the LGB community. This is also reflected in the name of the center—from the inception of center until now—and the language used throughout the Counseling and Psychological Services Mission Statement.

Theme Three - Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The LGBT Center Director identified the importance of being accessible to students, and meeting them where they felt the most comfortable. Thus, the Center Director not only meets with students at the LGBT Center or office, but also at students' residence halls or local coffee shops. The director stated that this flexibility allows for more tentative students to come forward when they need support or assistance, when they otherwise may not feel comfortable doing so. The Center Director, along with the Associate Director, also make a large effort to be visible to not only the LGBT community but with university partners, as well. Between the two full time staff members, the LGBT Center has representation in a variety of University G's departments: the Educational Opportunity Program, the Residence Life Department, the Judicial Affairs Office, Athletic the Department, Greek Life, the Health Center, and Mental Health and Counseling Services.

University G's LGBT Center is located on the third floor of the university's student union building, which is generally considered the hub of the campus, according to the LGBT Center Director. The LGBT Center is next to the International Student Services Office and shares a workspace with the Women's Resource Center. Being one of very few student-focused offices on the third floor, the center director noted that the LGBT Center has a good relationship with both the International Student Services office and the Women's Resource Center. The LGBT

Center is not utilized as a programmatic space, as it is outfitted to be a social space for students to spend time and find community. Instead, the LGBT Center has access to multiple spaces in the student union in which they frequently put on programming. Also, since the LGBT Center is on the third floor the union, they have access to two large balconies overlooking the ocean. This space is used in the beginning of the year for the center's welcome event and the director notes that the space is the favorite place of many students when visiting the center.

University H: University H is a four-year private liberal arts institution, with approximately enrolled 10,000 students. It has approximately 70 undergraduate majors, including Nutritional Biochemistry and Nutrition, Gerontological Studies, and Cognitive Studies. University H also has a 9:1 undergraduate student-to-staff ratio, which allows this institution to maintain close connections with their undergraduate students. University H located in a large Midwestern urban city with a population of 500,000. The Director of the LGBT Center from this university participated in the study in a 27-minute phone interview, and the Dean of students was unavailable for participation in the study. The websites of University H's LGBT Resource Center, and student group, were utilized for data collection, as were the LGBTA Committee Meeting Minutes and the Campus Non-Discrimination clause.

Theme two - Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities: The LGBT Center Director gave general examples of programs and policies that were generalizable and included individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, while the LGBT Resource Center and student group website also showed data points which the researcher grouped within theme one, the policies that these institutions have enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender. According to the LGBT Center Director, University H has made sure that the term sexual orientation is included in both their anti-

discrimination and equal opportunity employment clauses. However, policy-makers within the university chose not to identify specific identities since new ways of identifying within the LGB spectrum continue to arise. Examining University H's websites provided data that showed the institution's commitment towards inclusivity of the LGBT community.

Theme Three - Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. In terms of visibility and accessibility of the professional staff, University H's only professional staff member within the center is the LGBT Center Director. Because of this, the center director maintains awareness of their time and visibility within the center and around campus.

I have a reputation on campus... Students can come and talk to me when things aren't going well, things or experiences they've had that have not turned out the way they liked-whether that is something in their residence hall, Greek life, or in a classroom.

The LGBT Resource Center director advertises email address and phone number on the University H's LGBT Resource Center Staff Page and encourages students to connect with them at any time. While the LGBT Resource Center director notes that the staff is in meetings and working on administrative projects during most of their working hours, they try and connect with all students who come into the LGBT Resource Center and make themselves available when a student reaches out for support. Additionally, the student staff of the LGBT Resource Center at University H also has posted office hours on the LGBT Resource Center website.

University H's LGBT Resource Center is currently in transition, as it is housed in a temporary location until the new university center has been completed. The LGBT Resource

Center has participated in the master planning since the beginning of the redesign, which the center director feels is an indication of the university's commitment to the LGBT community. The current space that the LGBT Resource Center is using is very spacious—it has a total of five rooms and provides a good deal of space for meetings and programming. The new, and permanent, location of the center will be smaller, but will be technologically state-of-the-art.

Summary/Conclusion

This chapter introduced the eight institutions that participated in the study. Data collection was performed using phone interviews, exploration of each institution's website, and the examination of any university documentation containing policies and procedures in regard to students attracted to more than one gender. Within this chapter, the three themes that emerged upon analysis of the data were also presented. For each university, information was examined according to each theme present, and discussions about the data that lead the researcher to the generation of the themes were included. The following chapter provides an analysis of the themes and cases presented in chapter four with respect to the original research questions, the researcher's conclusions, limitations of this research, and ideas and questions for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This concluding chapter will cover four main areas: First, answers to the three research questions will be provided based on the data gathered. These answers will explore whether generalizable policies and programs are used more within colleges and universities—as opposed to programs targeting specific LGB subpopulations—and how professionals think this impacts student experience. Second, the literature review will be revisited and discussed. With the completion of data collection and analysis, the researcher connected the findings to the research. Third, limitations of this research will be discussed and ideas for further research proposed. As with all research, this project was unable to encapsulate all aspects of this topic. Fourth, concluding thoughts regarding this research and the process will be posited.

This research stemmed from the researcher's own identity and interest in the experiences of individuals on the LGB spectrum who do not identify as gay or lesbian. Instead of focusing on the student experience, the researcher felt that examining the larger structural processes that are, or are not, in place to support these individuals was a more fruitful discussion. Therefore, this research utilized a case study approach in order to better understand the overarching policies and programs that LGBT-friendly institutions employ to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The research questions that were designed to guide this research were: (a) What policies have the administration at these institutions enacted to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? (b) What practices have the administration at these institutions employed to support students who are attracted to more than one gender? and (c) How do the physical, aggregate, organizational, and constructed dimensions of involvement impact the way institutions are able to support students who are attracted to more than one gender?

This research examined eight LGBT-friendly institutions. As a case study, the sample size fit the intended focus of the methodology and provided rich data in a variety of ways: First, the LGBT Coordinators and/or Deans of Students were interviewed with respect to their interaction with policy and programming that would impact individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Second, institutional documents (i.e.: meeting minutes, agendas, and departmental audits) were examined to add more data to the case of each institution. Third, each institution's website was examined to further develop each case.

Research Questions Revisited

Three themes emerged from the data analysis gathered through the interviews, document analysis, and website analysis. Those themes are: (a) Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender, (b) Generalizable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities, and (c) Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. These themes present initial answers to the three research questions.

Research Finding 1: Generalizeable LGBT policies are favored over policies designed for specific identities.

While evaluating all of the data gathered from each case, it was noted that generalizable LGBT policies were utilized almost exclusively over policies designed for specific identities. Most of the policies examined were universities' anti-discrimination policies, university housing policies, and/or domestic partner or same sex marriage benefits and university hiring policies.

The examination of the participant websites showed language that was inclusive to the whole LGBT spectrum, instead of individual identities.

Within the examination of University D's website, the only policies that included LGBT individuals were inclusive to anyone on the LGBT spectrum. When asked clarifying questions regarding this issue, the LGBT Coordinator indicated that this inclusionary language had been designed by policy-makers who decided that policy would better serve all individuals by being generalized instead of being designed for specific identities. In the interview, the University E LGBT Coordinator stated that the institution was working to be more inclusive of the entire LGBT spectrum, instead of focusing on support for individual identities. But, through his interview, University E's LGBT Coordinator questioned whether the generalized policies are the best way to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

Protection for non-heterosexual individuals has become more explicit in many institutions' non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. The LGBT Coordinator at University D noted that the university has had protection for individuals who identify on the LGBT spectrum through their non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies since the early 90's "before it was cool." University D is located in a state that has not passed laws for same-sex marriage, yet the institution policy-makers decided to provide institutional benefits to same-sex couples as a point of principle. No other institution's website or interviews included a discussion about institutionalizing these types of long-term and widespread policies that impact individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

Similarly, University B is in the midst of changing its marriage policy, as the state it is located in is currently debating whether same-sex marriage is constitutional. LGB individuals within this state were allowed to marry same sex partners for several weeks before a stay was

granted until the appeal is heard by the state's Court of Appeals. The Dean of Students at University B reported that the university began instituting structural change in order to afford same-sex couples who are now married the same benefits and protections that married opposite-sex couples have. The differences between these two cases showed not only the ways in which an institution can act with the legalization of same-sex marriage, but also the allowances that institutions can make—should policy-makers be so inclined—regardless of the state's decisions.

Although many institutions utilize general policies that are meant to include people in the whole LGB spectrum, the LGBT Coordinator of University E questioned whether these policies were the best way to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Although University E's policies are generalizable to as many individuals as possible, the Coordinator began to question whether his institution should continue to develop policy in this way. His hesitation seemed to stem from the idea that there could be a way to better support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, instead of including them in policies that may not fully support their experiences.

Research Finding 2: Inclusive LGB programming is favored over targeted programming for students who are attracted to more than one gender. In the analysis of each institution's website, interviews with LGBT Coordinators and/or the Deans of Students, and the analysis of any other documentation that was found, the researcher determined that many of the institutions in this study preferred programming that was inclusive to many individuals within the LGB spectrum as opposed to targeted programming for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The rationale for inclusive programming can be broken down into three ideas: First, generalized programming that includes all subgroups is easier to provide than specialized programs for every identity. Attention to each subgroup requires preparation, time

and financial resources to ensure that each group has its own physical space and that all presenters are educated about each group. Second, by offering generalized programming, the center ensures that it is not marginalizing students via the programming it offers. LGBT Centers are still places where discrimination against specific LGB populations can occur, and generalized programming is another way in which centers can mitigate that. Third, some offices hold *intersectionality* as a core value and want to break down the cliques that can form within student support communities. For the purposes of this research, intersectionality is defined as the process where multiple identities converge and are able to shape a group's experiences (Museus & Griffin, 2011). Intersectionality can be used to support, or oppress, a group of people based on the structural support (Museus & Griffin, 2011). In the interviews from University A, both professionals spoke to the university's commitment to provide venues in which issues of intersectionality were highlighted and worked explicitly towards.

In an attempt to provide inclusive programming and not marginalize students, many institutions stated that they were able to provide a physical and emotional environment in which students could find community no matter their specific identity. Many of the LGBT Coordinators that were interviewed noted that much of their programming was designed with a broader theme in mind, instead of focusing on specific identities. Common examples of this type of programming included student-run groups and support groups led by professionals for individuals who utilize the center. Both examples typically stem from student need and motivation, but are commonly supported by institutions once interest has been expressed. For example, University G has a process in place that supports student-led initiatives in forming student groups, by providing the group a physical space and a content-based structure to follow as they become a recognized student group. This support is given to students as long as there is

continued interest, but University G also notes that it is important to let a student group disband when the need is no longer needed.

We try to often support the student organization. We throw socials for them, we try and get their leaders nominated, and we help get them registered. So we give them the tools they need to succeed and back out [give them autonomy].

The LGBT Director of University G notes that this process works well for the student population at University G, because they have a strong activist culture in which students are encouraged to be an active part of their co-curricular learning.

The interviews with University A's Dean of Students and LGBT Coordinator provides an example of an institution that holds intersectionality as a core value of its work. The Dean of Students reflected upon the view that the "*silozation*" of higher education is not beneficial to the students and institution as a whole. Silozation is a term which refers to organizing groups of people, data, etc., into completely separate parts. Instead, the staff at University A opt for a more holistic and intersectional program. University A's LGBT Coordinator stated that allowing for intersectionality invites new and innovative partnerships to develop. In the interview, the Dean of Students even challenged the researcher to break from the idea of monolithic programming.

I would push back on the idea of identifying something as being solely a queer program right? Like so, if you think in an interdisciplinary and intersectionally way, right? So if I bring [educator] from [institution] is that a queer program or is that a program on race or is that a program on gender?

The Dean of Students and LGBT Coordinator note that programming in this way has shown to provide a better community within University A, and has been able to better support students

from all minority identities, but were unable to provide specific measures that they utilize to gather this data.

Research Finding 3: Physical location of the institution, layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center are important components to supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

Throughout the interviews with LGBT Coordinators, the importance of being visible in and out of the LGBT offices on their campuses and being able to provide a LGBT Center that is not only useable for programming and work but provides a sense of safety and comfort. The data gathered from each case provided examples of how students can get involved with the center, but there was not an overarching process that encompassed all institutions' processes. Many of the coordinators mentioned students applying to and working at the institution as an easy way for them to get involved while providing themselves with financial security. Some LGBT Coordinators also noted that many students were able to get involved and find community because of the programmatic components their center provides.

Being visible members of the LGBT Center community, especially when their offices were not physically located within the LGBT Center, was the most common area of concern that the LGBT Coordinator interviews provided. Some LGBT Coordinators stated that they could be doing their best work, but without students to support, that work is underutilized. The data gathered from University C showed that LGBT Coordinators were involved with the rest of the campus while providing direct services to the LGBT individuals at their institutions. This outreach work not only helped strengthen the relationships between LGBT Coordinators and students, but also between the coordinator and other units on campus. For example, University

C's coordinator noted that her involvement within the campus made it easier to build trust when she approached both the university housing office with the idea of offering a gender-neutral housing option and the Human Resources department when she felt the affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies were not inclusive of all individuals at the institution.

University G's LGBT Coordinator also makes an effort to be visible on campus, but focused on that as a way to provide specialized support to meet the needs of each student. The LGBT Coordinator stated that make an effort to let all individuals know that they are available to meet and discuss ways in which he or the institution can provide better support for students. However, the coordinator also makes an effort to convey that meetings are not limited to the coordinator's office or the LGBT Center; this is an effort to allow individuals to have a sense of safety while they discuss topics that might be uncomfortable or difficult. Also, the coordinator indicated that since they participate in many university-wide committees, an immediate assumption is not made that any individual seen speaking to them is talking about discussing a gender or sexual orientation-related topic or issue. This information is also available on the LGBT Center's website, reiterating the LGBT Coordinator's commitment to flexibility with meeting locations.

Physical environment is the other aspect that all interviewees, LGBT Coordinators and Dean of Students, spoke about as an issue of importance. Three institutions stated that the LGBT Centers have moved, or are in the process of moving. With each move since each centers' creation, all centers gained more space as the community needs have grown. The professionals at these institutions noted their excitement for their new spaces and the significance for the LGBT community within their institutions. All but one institution expressed that the physical space on campus was in "prime locations" on campus and were decorated with the intention of creating an

informal atmosphere. This décor idea was suggested by the students of the LGBT community and has been thought to be helpful in drawing individuals, LGBT or otherwise, to utilize the space. All of the LGBT Centers advertise the accommodations that they offer, in an attempt to attract people to utilize the amenities provided and feel as though the space is for the students' use.

While the data focused on the physical location of the institution, the layout and flexibility of LGBT centers, the availability and visibility of professional staff members, and the ability for a student to become involved with institution/LGBT center, none of the data gathered was explicit about the impact on individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, specifically. Instead, the interviewees spoke to the importance of the physical location, layout and flexibility, and visibility for all students on the LGBT spectrum since individuals who are attracted to more than one gender is included within the spectrum. The data gathered via the institution website and public documents followed the same trend. This was understandable given that this group of people is not explicitly thought of when space is being designed or built on a college campus.

Discussion: Literature Review

Examination of the data showed connection to the research in Chapter Three. The findings from the data analysis supported literature previously reviewed in the following ways: (a) Universities strive to provide a physical location for LGBT individuals, as a way to show intentionality and continued support of the community; (b) Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender who do not adhere to homonormativity are categorized as “other” and are considered less often compared to their lesbian or gay counterparts; and (c) Individuals who are

attracted to more than one gender have tended to self-advocate and create community for themselves if the institution does not provide the opportunity.

Universities strive to provide a physical location for LGBT individuals, as a way to show intentionality and continued support of the community. Every case study in this research project showed a commitment to providing an environment for LGBT individuals to build community with one another. Not only was a physical space supplied for this purpose, but these organizations were also furnished with their own funding and online “spaces” to develop the programs offered by the centers. As Fine (2011) affirmed in his research, this environment is important to LGBT youth arriving to colleges and universities, because it offers a sanctuary in what could otherwise be a difficult transitional experience. Sanlo (2004) also speaks to the importance of providing an open atmosphere for LGBT individuals to find community while attending college. Fine (2011) and Valenti & Campbell (2009) state that these centers offer a place for LGBT individuals to be challenged and supported in healthy ways, while also contributing venues for support when other aspects of institutions do not. The data gathered from each case showed institutions’ commitment to individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. It also illustrated that the professionals who work within the centers are truly helpful to students throughout their time at their institution. Valenti & Campbell (2009) noted that LGBT Centers could be the first place in which newly-identified LGBT individuals are able to experience a lack of judgment or harassment of their LGBT identity; instead they are nurtured and supported throughout their college experience.

Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender who do not subscribe to homonormativity are categorized as ‘other’ and thought of less often compared to lesbian or gay counterparts. In the interview portion of the data collection process, the researcher often

redirected questions towards the population focused on in the study, because the focus tended to drift to programs or policies that supported explicitly gay and lesbian individuals, while marginalizing individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Even when trying to answer questions explicitly tailored towards individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, some professionals seemed to have difficulty providing specific answers about the programs and policies in place to support these individuals. Labor & Dolan (2013) noted that the tendency to ignore these groups can translate to implementation of support services within LGBT Centers, which can lead individuals who are attracted to more than one gender to feel further marginalized and invisible within the university.

Some LGBT Centers provide a preliminary assessment for students who first come into the center. In one some of these interviews were a question asking students to identify with a specific identity—sometimes with a provided list of choices. Labor & Dolan (2013) argue that forced categorization might lead individuals who are attracted to more than one gender to feel as though they are required to conform to an identity that is easier for the university instead of an experience that is true to their own. Many researchers, including Sanlo, (2004), Rosario et al. (2006), Roomey et al. (2012); and Wyss (2004), agree that this type of minoritization can compound the stigma and discrimination that individuals who are attracted to more than one gender feel throughout the rest of their collegiate experience and their lives.

Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender may tend to self-advocate and create community for themselves if the institution does not provide the opportunity. Labor & Dolan (2013) note that because of the assumed heteronormative binary, individuals who are attracted to more than one gender are often required to find their own community or may continue to feel isolated within the LGBT community. Many of the professionals interviewed in

the study note that their institution had student groups and support groups for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, but those groups came into existence at the insistence of individuals who said that they needed their own space to form community. Strange and Banning (2001) might interpret the development of these student groups as a prime example of students fitting in within an aggregate dimension of involvement within the institution. In this circumstance, students had a need and found a way to satisfy it when the institution was not able to do it for them. While these students most likely feel as though they can speak and be heard, Labor & Dolan (2013) state that this is not the case for many individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. This research notes the importance of having students self-advocate for the allocation of time, physical meeting spaces, or monetary resources. However, the researcher believes that the lack of presentations about specific support for this population by LGBT student affairs practitioners is doing a grave disservice to the population and the field, because in actuality, a pressing need lies unattended.

Implications

While the purpose of this study was not to provide sweeping recommendations for the whole of LGBT support services, it is important to provide implications for those institutions that took the time and participated within this study. Furthermore, these implications *may* ring true for other institutions that are challenged with similar questions about providing support to students who are attracted to more than one gender. First, assessment of institutional programs and the LGBT Center's ability to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender needs to occur regularly. While a few of the interviewees within this study indicated that they are going to begin to assess how individuals who identify as bisexual interact with the LGBT center on their campus, none indicated that this type of assessment was currently taking place. This type

of assessment might indicate whether or not individuals who are attracted to more than one gender are utilizing the center, whether or not services need to be improved to provide better support, and it might reveal the unique experiences of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

Secondly, institutions should consider how the policies have an impact on individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Although it could be implied that policies that use language that should be inclusive, like “sexual orientation,” it could help to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender if administrators knew that any individual that falls under the “sexual orientation” umbrella term was covered within the policy in question. This firsthand knowledge, or at least knowledge of who to go to with further questions, could provide students with comfort and support during what could otherwise be a stressful situation they are experiencing.

Ensuring that specific identities are covered or inclusive terminology is used within policy may not be enough. It is important that practitioners are aware of whether there is a direct connection to their institutional policies and the practices that are implemented within LGBT Centers. Even though specific social identities are mentioned within an institution’s policy that does not ensure that practices occur with those identities in mind. Conversely, practices within LGBT Centers may have evolved from a need that was identified in-center and not because institutional policy dictated action. As practitioners it is important to not only know what policies and practices inform the work that needs to be done, but to also take a critical eye when examining the alignment and motivation behind the design, inclusion, and implementation of policies and practices within higher education.

Limitations of Study

All research that is conducted has limitations. For this particular study, the researcher distinguished three different limitations: (a) identification language that is not fully inclusive, (b) convenience sampling and its implications. Both of these limitations impacted this research, but were managed by the researcher (c) a need for a greater examination of the literature.

Identification language that is not fully inclusive. One aspect of the study with which the researcher struggled was the type of language to use when describing the individuals that this research intended to focus upon. Looking over the literature, there was no overarching or agreed-upon terminology that would best encompass this population. The literature tended to focus on LGBT identities and their development, instead of policy or practice. The researcher could not find any literature that spoke to supportive policies or practices; instead the researcher attempted to craft language that would be the most inclusive of all individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Instead of opting for that is less-inclusive terminology, the researcher settled on the term *individuals who are attracted to more than one gender*, despite its awkward phrasing. Although the intent of creating new terminology to label this population was to provide a shared language for purposes of the thesis that was inclusive of many identities, within the process of labeling there is always the potential to marginalize individuals and/or identities. Within this study, the creation of language was difficult and complicate for the researcher and problematic for participants to understand. Although the researcher attempted to define the term *individuals who are attracted to more than one gender* thoroughly, many participants were still unclear as to what the target population was and provided information that was not indicative of the population in question (ie: transgender programs or policy). The researcher notes that this term is not ideal in that it does not fully encompass the intended population.

Sampling and its implications. The original goal of the researcher was to recruit institutions that allowed the data gathered to be the most diverse. The researcher's intention was to use the "Top 25 Most LGBT Friendly Institutions" list published by the *Campus Pride Index* as a recruitment pool, but he received only one response from this initial participant pool. The researcher then opened the participant pool to any institution that had received a five-star rating on the *Campus Pride Index*. Although the researcher was able to gather enough participants to complete the study, the participant pool was less diverse than the initial goal.

The sample size of this research is relatively small and does not necessarily represent the range of institutional policies and practices for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Because of this, this research is not meant to be applied to all institutions looking to increase programs or policies for individuals attracted to more than one gender. This research is explicit in the experiences of specific types of institutions, and in no way should it be applied to every institution type or situation.

A need for a greater examination of the literature. Within Chapter 2, Literature Review, theories and ideas that impacted the student experience were examined. This examination stemmed from the ability to search for data that easily accessible via the researcher's institutional library's online access and resources via the coursework through the researcher's higher education master's program. Upon reflection, this data could have benefitted from incorporation from *The Journal of Bisexuality* and *Storr's Bisexuality Reader*, further investigation and integration of Feminist critiques and lens, and the use of primary source documents. The addition of this literature and field could have provided another layer to the complexity that this research was attempting to highlight and the use of primary sources could

have allowed the researcher to use and/or critique work without the bias of a different researcher or author.

Recommendations

In order for institutions to provide better programs and policies for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, more research focusing on this specific demographic must be done, assessing the work that institutions are currently doing in support of these individuals, learning about the experiences of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, and translating that knowledge to policies and programs that would best support them while attending their university of choice.

First, more information needs to be gathered about individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The current literature tends to focus on gay and lesbian individuals, and either includes bisexuality peripherally or not at all. As more individuals begin to identify outside of the current sexual orientation binary, more knowledge would enhance the educational literature and would support the professionals that are in a position to help these students.

Second, it is important to begin to assess the work that institutions are currently doing to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Many professionals who participated in this research indicated that they are currently providing programs with individuals in mind who are attracted to more than one gender, but are not actively collecting statistical data from those programs to understand whether or not they are supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. This need for this type assessment can also translate to institutional policies. Many of the professionals interviewed could not identify policies that were explicitly designed for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, nor whether the current policies are truly supporting these individuals. Assessing these programs and policies

will allow institutions to understand how they are currently supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender, and consider physical location as a factor in providing better support for these individuals.

Finally, it would be beneficial to learn about the experiences of individuals who are attracted to more than one gender in relation to the policies and programs that institutions provide. This knowledge can assist with informing the *praxis*, or practical application, for institutions. The student experience can be a powerful tool to help administrative decision-makers begin to understand the needs of specific demographics and be a part of adapting to the changing needs of students on their respective campuses. It is important that institutions also include the experiences of faculty and staff that are attracted to more than one gender, and provide support appropriate to the needs of faculty and staff on their campus.

Concluding Thoughts

Policy is an important factor that can inform the direction that a department takes when allocating funds, time, and human resources towards initiatives within an institution. Programs offered by a LGBT Center are some of the easiest ways in which a student can make a judgment on whether or not they would be welcome in an environment or shunned (Sanlo, 2004; Labor & Dolan, 2013). Although this research is specific in scope, it has provided a venue for an exploration into ways eight institutions are supporting individuals who are attracted to more than one gender.

The eight cases presented in this research reflect a movement towards providing generalizable policies and programs in order to better include all individuals. However, this research project questions whether this trend is truly a better means of support for individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. Although more difficult to implement, there may be

gains made from specialized policies and/or programs that are explicitly geared towards individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. The information in this study can be utilized by student affairs professionals to begin the conversation around best practices when serving individuals from underrepresented sexual orientations; the literature review reveals a distinct lack in the explicit conversation regarding these individuals and their experiences. It is this researcher's hope that this study is a catalyst for a larger conversation that needs to occur about the ways in which we support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and other individuals from underrepresented identities.

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Appendix: List of Interview Questions

1a) Please describe support services at your institution offered for students who identify as bisexual or identities that can be attracted to more than one gender.

(Ask 1b only if respondent does not provide specifics about their unit within previous question. If they do provide that information, continue on to question 2a)

1b) Please describe support services within your unit/department explicitly offered for students who identify as bisexual or other identities that can be attracted to more than one gender.

2a) Please describe any policies institution has that have been created and enacted to support students who identify as bisexual other identities that can be attracted to more than one gender.

(Ask 2b only if respondent does not provide specifics about their unit within previous question. If they do provide that information, continue on to question 3a)

2b) Please describe any policies your unit/department has that are explicitly targeted for students who identify as bisexual other identities that can be attracted to more than one gender

(If respondents do not provide any support services or policies in the abovementioned questions, skip question to question 4)

3a) Does your institution assess any programs and policies that exist to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender? If so, what have been the results from these assessment efforts?

3b) Does your department/unit assess any programs and policies that exist to support individuals who are attracted to more than one gender? If so, what have been the results from these assessment efforts?

4) Are there other departments with whom your office/department partners that support students who are attracted to more than one gender? If so, what are these departments and what is the nature of your partnership(s)?

5a) Are there agendas or minutes from institutional meetings that may be beneficial for this research to examine on the topic supporting students who are attracted to more than one gender?

5b) Are there other public documents that you know of that may provide information about your institution's policies and services with respect students who are attracted to more than one gender?

6) Does your institution have a physical location for a gender/sexuality center? Where is it located? Is it a standalone office or does it share space with another office? What is the capacity of this space? How frequently is it utilized for programming?

7) Do students know how to get involved with your organization? Is this information assessed? Please explain how a student would get involved within your organization. How would a student get involved to promote or make changes within your organization/institution?

8) How are students able to connect with administrators within your unit/department and institution? Do students utilize this time to speak about questions or concerns they have, or utilize it purely to network?

9) Beyond what has already been shared, are there other ways in which your institution supports the LGBTQ+ population at your campus.