

# **REPORT OF LGBTQ CAMPUS CLIMATE TASK FORCE**

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT NEW PALTZ**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The LGBTQ Task Force has been charged with making recommendations for improvement of the campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students, faculty, and staff at SUNY New Paltz.

Using data collected through the Campus Climate Survey, on-campus focus groups, and a Campus Pride Index assessment, we provide recommendations divided by in-progress status and priority. The recommendations are drawn from the following categories: Policy Review, Communications and Institutional Response, Binary/Sex Gender Issues, Coordination and Networks of Support, Training and Education, Academic Issues, Employee Issues, and Implementation and Ongoing Assessment.

It is important to note that SUNY New Paltz has already begun to address a number of the concerns identified in this report. These recommendations have been included in this report in order to illustrate positive movement forward in addressing the experience for LGBTQ people at SUNY New Paltz. These positive steps are listed below. But much work still needs to be done to improve campus climate and continue to engage an ever- changing population that constitutes this campus.

### **Recently Instituted or In-Progress Recommendations:**

- Inclusion of gender identity in the college's Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Policy.
- Institutional policy for renovation and new construction projects to include gender-neutral facilities where possible, including a revision of the Wooster Science Building renovation to include gender-neutral bathrooms.
- CAS change in policy to use preferred names for food and beverage orders.
- Pilot residence hall general-neutral housing accommodations.
- Residence Life expanding information regarding gender-neutral housing options available to incoming students.
- Volunteer effort to create and launch New Paltz LGBTQ Allies Program (with possible future oversight by an on-campus professional).
- Social LGBTQ mixer at freshmen orientation

### **High-Priority Recommendations:**

#### **Policy Review**

- Campus Climate Coordinator to hire an external consultant to review New Paltz-specific institutional written policies for hetero-normative language and assumptive policies that might be revised for improved LGBTQ institutional experiences.

#### **Communication and Institutional Response**

- In conjunction with the Office of Compliance and Campus Climate, senior leadership and the President's office develop a proactive process to respond to LGBTQ-related incidents

affecting our campus by consulting with campus “experts” or those most closely working with the affected parties and reaching out to affected populations through public statements that reinforce institutional values.

### **Binary Sex/Gender Issues**

- Records and Registration and other campus offices dealing with student records develop and implement a policy allowing students to have their preferred name on student ID, class rosters, and college records not bound by state or federal regulations.
- Institutional Research develop policy concerning the use of gender options on campus forms, surveys, etc.

### **Coordination and Networks of Support**

- Senior administration to provide resources and support to hire a LGBTQ Resource professional to coordinate and create programming and services, including Allies program, for all members of the campus community.
- Student Affairs / Office of Campus Climate or LGBTQ Resource professional ensures that LGBTQ campus information is available at open houses and orientations.
  - transfer and international student outreach, post-orientation programming
- Ensure there is an ongoing, consistent “coming out” support group and introduce other support groups as needed through the Counseling Center, Queer Student Union, or a Student Affairs unit.
- Office of Alumni Relations establishment of LGBTQ scholarships and other initiatives supported by alumni giving

### **Academic Issues**

- Faculty, through governance and departmental processes, investigate the possibility of creating an interdisciplinary LGBT/Queer Studies Minor
- Faculty and Residence Life investigate the possibility of creating an LGBTQ Living/Learning Community that may tie in with gender-neutral housing
- Office of Campus Climate develop a centralized mechanism for collecting, tracking, and publicizing courses with LGBTQ content

### **Employee Issues**

- Human Resources to review the LGBTQ information on the website and in new employee orientations for ease of navigating and to create a welcoming presence of an LGBTQ-focused link that addresses employment issues.
- Develop and distribute literature with a summary of benefits specific to an LGBTQ employee.
- Senior leadership, when appropriate, be aware of and speak against inequities in benefits for same-sex couples and advocate for change in this area.

### **Implementation and Ongoing Assessment**

- President convenes implementation team(s), as appropriate, including some carry-over in terms of members from this Task Force, but also with new membership.

## **Ongoing Recommendations:**

### **Policy Review**

- Responsible units revise and update language in documents and policies based on recommendations of an LGBTQ-qualified consultant directly related to specific documents/ policies and through appropriate internal processes.

### **Communication and Institutional Response**

- Shift in cultural approach to highly charged topics on campus with more proactive responses from senior leadership with the goal of improving relations between the institution and LGBTQ campus community.

### **Binary Sex/Gender Issues**

- Institutional Research or other units as appropriate should begin ongoing assessment of the effects of related campus policies, culture, and infrastructure on trans\* and other marginalized populations
- Residence Life develop and expand gender-neutral housing program to meet demand and accommodate all student requests.
- Facilities master plan of renovation and new construction plans to include a balance of gender-neutral facilities across campus in both academic and housing spaces.
- Facilities and renovation teams should specifically include plans for gender-neutral locker and shower facilities in the Athletic and Wellness Center.
- Student Association advocacy for funded hormone therapy as part of student health insurance.
- Enrollment Management and/or Campus Climate Coordinator create a guide outlining how to navigate non-campus processes associated with legal name changes.

### **Coordination and Networks of Support**

- Office of Campus Climate and Academic Affairs observe and assess student services for developing and emerging needs for the LGBTQ community
- Senior leadership support and create an ad hoc advisory group to work together with resource professional / Office of Campus Climate researching the viability of creating a LGBTQ or Diversity Resource Center on campus.

### **Training and Education**

- Provost in collaboration with Campus Climate Officer provide LGBTQ resources for new faculty and staff at employee orientation.
  - Provide research and educational opportunities for current faculty and staff to gain knowledge and expertise in LGBTQ support services, curriculum, or program development.
- Human Resources, in collaboration with Academic and Student Affairs, to provide specialized resources to create LGBTQ sensitivity and educational training for unique service areas including, but not limited to, university police, Health and Counseling Services, faculty (classroom protocol), Human Resources, Residence Life.

### **Academic Issues**

- Provost and Teaching and Learning Center provide provide opportunities for curriculum development faculty to integrate LGBTQ materials into existing courses (*ongoing once implemented*)

### **Implementation and Ongoing Assessment**

- Participate bi-annually in LGBTQ-Friendly Campus Climate Index; goal of incremental improvements based on newly achieved changes as well as ongoing efforts and a goal of reaching 4.0 rating.
- Conduct periodic assessment of our campus climate, with data about experiences/attitudes/perceptions/etc., drawn directly from campus populations.

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## INTRODUCTION

This document reports recommendations from the LGBTQ Campus Climate Task Force (hereafter, Task Force), an ad hoc group convened by President Donald Christian in Spring 2013 to continue work begun over the past several years by faculty, staff, and students to assess and address campus climate issues for LGBTQ<sup>1</sup> students and employees at SUNY New Paltz. Previous assessment related to these issues included a Campus Climate Survey, developed and administered in 2011. The charge of the current Task Force is to “review key findings of the survey of the campus climate for LGBTQ students and employees, and develop recommendations for key actions, identified as high priority, in-progress, and long-term goals, that the College might consider to further enhance a positive campus environment” (Donald Christian, email, 7 Feb 2013).

### **Campus Climate Survey – Brief Review of Findings**

The Campus Climate Survey<sup>2</sup> was undertaken to “assess the attitudes and campus experiences of students and employees at the State University of New York at New Paltz related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and issues” (CCS, p 3). Survey respondents (n=1462) overwhelmingly (97%) expressed supportive attitudes toward LGBTQ people, concerns, and issues. Yet, at the same time, the survey revealed disturbing accounts of harassment, bullying, and other expressions of negative attitudes and practices vis-à-vis LGBTQ populations. Though the strong supportive results are compelling evidence that the campus is doing quite well, it should be noted that selection/participation bias and social desirability are factors that we believe make the campus climate seem more positive than it actually is for many subgroups. For example, LGBTQ respondents were more likely than their non-LGBTQ counterparts to have encountered harassment or negative comments and sometimes have felt invisible or excluded. Students were the group most likely to feel verbally harassed or physically endangered, bullied, or intimidated because of their perceived sexuality. And transgender respondents were significantly less likely than others to feel physically safe, understood, and protected on our campus, while the campus population at large expressed less familiarity and comfort with transgender people (hereafter, trans\*, see terminology see Appendix 2) and issues than with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and issues. Experiences as well as levels of understanding and support varied significantly across campus divisions, pointing to the need for a cohesive, systematic, and formally implemented strategies for addressing LGBTQ campus climate issues especially in high need areas.

### **Other Data Informing Recommendations: Focus Groups and Campus Climate Index**

As part of its charge, the Task Force was encouraged to “meet with various student, faculty, and staff groups and subgroups to obtain feedback on survey findings, to inform development of

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<sup>1</sup> See section on Terminology for a discussion of the limitations of this term; throughout this report, we use the term LGBTQ to refer to non-heterosexual and gender nonconforming individuals, but with full cognizance of the limitations of the term and without implying that all people referred to identify with the LGBTQ moniker.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the events and efforts leading up to the survey, see “Campus Climate Survey for LGBTQ Issues” (hereafter CCS), pp. 7-9. The survey can be found at <http://www.newpaltz.edu/lgbtq/>

recommendations” (Donald Christian, email, 7 Feb 2013). During April and May 2013, we conducted 11 focus groups consisting of in-depth discussions about campus climate issues (for the protocol used in these focus groups, see Appendix 1). We held focus groups with the following groups: International Students, Student Athletes, Fraternity/Sorority Members, LGBTQ Students, Trans\* Students, Bisexual Students, Residence Life Professionals, Faculty (2 groups), Facilities Operations & Maintenance/University Police Department, and LGBTQ Employees.

Conducting focus groups allowed us to triangulate CCS data and to collect more nuanced and in-depth responses to questions about current climate, including targeted discussions about issues in specific units and experiences of specific subgroups. We also had sometimes lengthy discussions about potential resources, programs, policies, etc., that participants viewed as contributing to a more positive future climate at SUNY New Paltz. These focus groups provided us with a wealth of information that we draw on in making our recommendations and refer to at points throughout this report.

The LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index (hereafter, Index), an assessment tool for assisting campuses in improving their LGBTQ campus life, was also used to inform the recommendations. The Index was designed and is made available by Campus Pride, the “leading national nonprofit organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create safer, more LGBT-Friendly learning environments at colleges and universities” (see <http://www.campusprideindex.org/about/default.aspx>). The Index is comprised of questions about a broad range of campus climate related issues, clustered around the following eight areas: LGBT Policy Inclusion, LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment, LGBT Academic Life, LGBT Student Life, LGBT Housing, LGBT Campus Safety, LGBT Counseling & Health, and LGBT Recruitment & Retention Efforts (for full list of Index questions, see <http://www.campusprideindex.org/details/overall.aspx>).

As part of ongoing efforts to address campus climate issues, the Task Force completed an Index assessment. The Index offers an overall campus pride score as well as individual scores for each index category. New Paltz has received an overall campus pride score of 44% which is equivalent to 2.5 stars on a 5-star rating scale. Our highest score, 67/68% or 3.5 stars, was achieved in the areas of Housing and Residence Life and Sexual Orientation. The scores are accompanied by recognition of the positive framework supporting LGBTQ initiatives in these areas but also offer recommendations on building upon this momentum to expand awareness, availability, and/or visibility of these initiatives. Our lowest score, of 16% or 1 star, was assigned to the category of LGBT Support and Institutional Commitment. In many ways this echoes the findings raised in this report which call for the institution to focus resources on support systems, communication, and programming that will increase awareness and education. Resource allocation and administrative support of college division initiatives are critical to improving this score and realizing our overall academic mission of preparing all students for a diverse world. An institutional goal would be to reach a 4.0 rating. The recommendations in the report point to policies, services, and institutional changes that would assist in this goal. See Appendix 3 for a summary of the Campus Pride survey results and recommendations for all categories. Because a primary goal of the Index is to establish a “national standard of LGBT and Ally inclusive policies, programs and practices,” it is not only an excellent resource for



evaluating *existing* policies, programs, and practices, but is also an important resource for making *future* recommendations. We use it here as both a supplementary tool to gauge our current climate and as a benchmark of inclusive resources, policies, and practices to which we aspire.

### **Broad Data Synthesis Guiding Recommendations**

While there are certainly expressions of homophobia and transphobia on our campus, the broader and more pervasive context revealed by a synthesis of the data we reviewed points toward a campus largely structured around hetero-normativity, heterosexism, and a binary framework for sex and gender. That is, the often unexamined presumption embedded in campus policies, practices, and even physical structures is that members of our community are heterosexual and adhere to a binary male/female sex and gender identity system. Many of our recommendations are directed at the challenging work of addressing these kinds of pervasive, and often unseen, societal and institutional structures. One of the particular challenges here is the broadly held belief that SUNY New Paltz is a “queer-friendly” place. While there are indications that this is true (for instance, CCS findings reveal overwhelmingly positive attitudes, and SUNY New Paltz fares well on some Index items), this belief may work to mask areas where our campus has room to grow. Further, according to some people with whom we spoke, this belief may actually allow expressions of negative attitudes to go unchecked and may also mute the need for proactive response to bias incidents and other expressions of homophobia and transphobia.

Another important finding from focus group data is that the experiences of LGBTQ subpopulations vary considerably. While some LGBTQ members of our campus had few if any negative experiences related to their LGBTQ status to report, others had more negative experiences. This pattern varied somewhat according to status within the university (where students, for example, were more likely than other campus groups to report negative experiences), as well as to how subjects identified themselves. Three particular populations of concern are trans\* students, bisexuals, and LGBTQ students of color.

- **Trans\* students:** As mentioned above, trans\* respondents to our survey, as well as students who attended our trans\* focus group, expressed qualitatively different (and more negative) experiences than their cisgender (see Appendix B) counterparts. This is addressed at length in the Binary Sex/Gender Issues section of our recommendations, which includes recommendations specific to the needs of trans\* populations. However, we believe that many of these recommendations will improve the campus climate for both trans\* *and* cis-gender (See Appendix 2 Definitions) campus members.
- **Bisexuals:** Bisexuals were in many ways the “invisible” subgroup in our study. Depending on how they are defined (by self-identification or by attractions and behaviors), bisexuals constitute a large (perhaps the largest) population of non-heterosexuals at SUNY New Paltz. Yet a review of recent programming and campus events demonstrates that they are rarely prominent in discussions of LGBTQ issues here. Further, a key sentiment conveyed by participants in our focus group with bisexual students was that they do not feel “at home” in either heterosexual or LGBTQ communities. More work to include the B in LGBTQ is needed at SUNY New Paltz; we also need to find ways of addressing the needs of behaviorally bisexual people who do not identify with the term bisexual.

- **LGBTQ Students of Color:** Respondents of color were underrepresented in the 2011 survey. We also have little data from LGBTQ respondents of color in our focus groups. We did advertise and attempt to convene an LGBTQ Students of Color focus group; however, no students attended. We believe that this is largely a function of idiosyncratic events related to recruitment and follow-through for this particular focus group meeting. However, existing scholarship indicates that LGBTQ students of color may be less inclined to identify with LGBTQ identities (drawing instead from other sexual identity labels); they may be more inclined to prioritize racial or ethnic identities when in positions where they feel a need to “choose,” and typically they experience many conflicting and complicated barriers to publicly expressing non-heterosexual identities, especially in predominantly white institutions like SUNY New Paltz. Through the anecdotal, personal experiences of Task Force members, we know that there is a vital and active LGBTQ students of color community on this campus. Assessing and addressing specific needs of that community require further study at this point and should be a priority of future efforts.

### **Campus Facilities Connection to Improved Campus Climate**

Many of the issues and concerns raised by trans\* students centered around the issue of personal safety, campus facilities, and housing and food service policies. Trans\* students requested more gender-neutral restrooms in centrally located areas, increased options for gender-neutral housing on campus, and changes in policies and practices which avoid unintentionally “outing” trans\* people. The Task Force suggests that changes in these areas also may benefit all members of the campus community.

The Task Force recognizes in-progress changes that are already taking place to include gender-neutral bathrooms in new construction and renovations and an immediate change in policy in food services using preferred name, for example, as an encouraging cultural shift in priority. The Task Force recommendations that touch on in-progress improvements will be highlighted in this report.

### **A Leader within SUNY**

Adopting and implementing these recommendations will position New Paltz as a leader on LGBTQ issues within the SUNY System. It is our belief that many expect and/or perceive New Paltz to have a "gay-friendly" climate already. We need to meet these expectations and set the standards for strengthening the campus climate. The SUNY system has embarked on a system-wide review of LGBTQ campus climate. New Paltz can and should be a leader on campus climate initiatives and improving conditions for LGBTQ students and employees.

Following a brief discussion of terminology, the remainder of this report presents several major areas with key recommendations that emerge from a synthesis of the data and information outlined here in this introduction.

## TERMINOLOGY

Definitions of gender identity and sexual orientation labels vary and tend to change over time. Terminology varies across cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups as well. CCS survey results in the gender identity categories showed 5% - more than 60 individuals - of respondents using various terms to identify non-normative gender categories, ranging from “transgender” and “intersex” to “transsexual” and “gender queer,” with 1.2 respondents citing “other.” Likewise, in the responses for sexual orientation, after an already comprehensive list of identified sexual orientation terms were provided, 3.4% of respondents still chose “other” or “none.” Across the data that we collected, a portion of LGBTQ people reported limitations in the terminology and their connection to the community it represents. Some expressed a desire to move beyond labels and abandon them altogether. In focus groups the Task Force collectively heard anxiety, exclusivity, and isolation as common themes regarding the term LGBTQ. This sentiment was strongest among bisexual, trans\*, and those whose orientation is not included in the label, such as asexual and pansexual people. LGBTQ is equated with being “gay friendly” by many, but not necessarily trans\* or bi understanding. In addition, students of color may identify with alternate terms than those used by their white counterparts.

The Task Force recommends that the College be aware of the limitations of using the LGTBQ label. It is a mistake to assume that use of “LGBTQ” will result in all targeted individuals recognizing and responding to this label; in fact, for some individuals, the use of LGBTQ (or of any term) will be off-putting. While there is no easy solution and while the “terminology problem” is reflective of broader community trends beyond SUNY New Paltz, we recommend that a range of identification terms and labels (or simple narrative descriptions that avoid labels altogether) be used when appropriate (e.g., in announcing events and services) to reach the broadest population possible. For the purposes of this report, *the term LGBTQ is used as shorthand for all those whose gender and sexual orientation identities fall outside normative heterosexuality and the gender binary.*

To ensure a common context and understanding, below is a compilation of relevant terms used in this report. A list of working definitions can be found in Appendix 2.

Asexual  
Bisexual  
Cisgender  
Cissexist  
Coming Out  
Gay  
Gender  
Gender Expression  
Gender Binary  
Gender-neutral  
Gender Non-conforming  
Heteronormative

Intersex  
Lesbian  
LGBTQ  
Pansexual  
Polysexual  
Queer  
Sexual Orientation  
Trans\*  
Transactivism  
Transgender

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the sections that follow, we outline recommendations in several key areas pertinent to campus life and climate for LGBTQ students and employees. While recommendations are organized into distinct categories for the purposes of this report, many of them dovetail with one another and in some cases overlap. In each section, we begin by providing an explanation with general context and broad rationale for subsequent recommendations. This is followed by a narrative account of our recommendations, which we then present in list form organized by priority. Various offices and academic divisions are identified as best sources for implementation of recommendations. In each section, we identify various administrative offices, academic divisions, and/or student groups as the best sources for the implementation of specific recommendations; within each unit we believe there should be an inclusive process that involves broad participation. In some cases, implementation of specific recommendations will depend upon the availability of resources, but we hope the importance of the issues we address in this report will merit funding.

### **1. Policy Review**

Although Task Force members have in a sense become “experts” in local campus climate issues, none of us has the expertise of those who engage professionally in LGBTQ campus climate issues on a full-time basis. The Task Force is limited in its ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our current written New Paltz-specific policies (e.g., the Student Handbook or the Faculty Handbook). The Index gives clear indication that policy and the biases and hetero-normative assumptions that can be embedded in them drive the campus climate from the center most point of the institution. While many policies come under the guidelines of SUNY Central, NY State mandates, or union contracts and cannot be changed by a local effort, policies and procedures. Those that are exclusive to the New Paltz campus can be revised through already-in-place processes and structures in governance, academic departments and administrative offices. The Task Force commends recent efforts to update the college’s Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Policy to include gender identity as a protected status.

One of our key recommendations that we present is for the President in collaboration with the Campus Climate Coordinator to hire an external consultant to perform a comprehensive policy review, or on an case-by-case basis, provide resources or expertise to divisions (HR, Provost Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs) when updating policies. A consultant would conduct a thorough and effective review of such sensitive documents while embedding, editing, and/or adding language that is not gender biased while retaining finite language required of such policies.

#### **In-Progress Recommendation**

- Inclusion of gender identity in the college’s Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Policy.

#### **High Priority Recommendation**

- Campus Climate Coordinator to hire an external consultant to review New Paltz specific institutional written policies for hetero-normative language and assumptive policies that might be more inclusively revised for improved LGBTQ institutional experiences.

### **Ongoing Recommendation**

- Responsible units revise and update language in documents and policies based on recommendations of a LGBTQ-qualified consultant directly related to specific documents/ policies and through appropriate internal processes.

## **2. Communication and Institutional Response**

There is an expectation among students, faculty, and staff that institutional response on bias incidents or perceived threats to any part of the community should come from the President's office or a designee such as the Office of Compliance and Campus Climate. These communications must be carefully weighed in terms of legal ramifications and the emotional or ethical reactions of the community. An appropriate and timely response can help diffuse after-effects of an incident and help the community come together in a common purpose or goal. Lack of response (or inadequate response) to bias incidents may be perceived as a form of hostility or lack of caring, though unintentional, and can create a climate where more active forms of hostility are allowed to develop unchecked.

Many groups we spoke with expressed concern about the response on the part of senior leadership to LGBTQ-related bias incidents affecting our campus community. These include incidents, such as defacing of event posters with homophobic slurs and a transphobic rant on the anonymous social media site "New Paltz Secrets." Students and others have experienced these incidents as direct attacks on LGBTQ people, as the expression of homophobic and transphobic sentiments, and as forms of violence. Many students described the senior leadership response as having a lack of understanding and sensitivity for the multiple forms and sources of bias behavior against the LGBTQ community. While there may have been good legal reasons for silence, the outcome can be detrimental to an improved campus climate, and in this case, was interpreted as incongruent with the values of the institution. In cases where the administration does not have power to effect a change or even to directly address the issue, an institutional ethical response may be perceived as supportive and understanding even if there is no direct outcome other than communication itself.

### **Recommendations for Communication and Institutional Response**

We recommend that senior leadership respond to bias incident(s) in a consistent and proactive manner, recognizing and acknowledging the damage that such incidents do to our campus as a whole, and especially to our LGBTQ campus members. The Task Force recommends that senior leaders consult with an advisory body, either one convened by the administration or a proposed body outlined elsewhere in this report –concerning the most effective and appropriate response in these highly charged situations.

### **High Priority Recommendation**

- In conjunction with the Office of Compliance and Campus Climate, senior leadership and the President's office develop a proactive response process recognizing LGBTQ-related incidents affecting our campus by consulting with campus "experts" or those most closely

working with the affected parties and reaching out to affected populations through public statements that reinforce institutional values.

### **Ongoing Recommendation**

- Shift in cultural approach to highly charged topics on campus with more proactive responses from senior leadership (and other relevant governing structures) with the goal of improving relations between the institution and LGBTQ campus community.

### **3. Binary Sex/Gender Issues**

Through a synthesis of the various forms of data we collected, it became increasingly clear that transgender (trans\*) and gender nonconforming members of our campus community have qualitatively different and generally more negative experiences than do cisgender, gay, lesbian, and bisexual campus members. Both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ people told us that there are many deficits in terms of their own and others' general knowledge of trans\* issues; all expressed a desire for more information and formal training concerning these issues. Education alone, however, will not solely contribute to an improved campus climate for trans\* members of our community. Aspects of our campus' physical infrastructure, formal policies, and campus culture are structured around a binary sex/gender system which propagates an underlying assumption that all people are either male or female. Thus, people who do not conform to that binary sex/gender system are *structurally* disadvantaged. For example, trans\* students indicated that they suffer significant challenges and anxiety because there are very few centrally located gender-neutral restrooms on campus. If a trans\* student wants a cup of coffee during the day, they have experienced a staff person calling out the name printed on the student ID – rather than the name the student has chosen. The same student then goes to class only to have the professor refer to the official name on the roster even after the student has requested use of a preferred name. While in a study group, a classmate continues to call the trans\* student “she” when the student wishes to be called “he.” For trans\* students, it is a daily (if not hourly) reminder of the structural disadvantages they face. More gender-neutral facilities will create a more gender inclusive environment. While some of these challenges will require long-term cultural shifts in understanding the needs of trans\* students, some of the above can be remedied with new policies and/or changes in practice.

Here we identify concrete responses designed to remediate key drivers of those structural disadvantages. Because the binary sex/gender system is pervasive and taken-for-granted, we also urge that there be ongoing assessment about the effects of related campus policies, culture, and infrastructure, especially on trans\* populations, as we do not presume that these recommendations alone will solve all existing or future problems.

The Task Force recognizes that several shifts in policy surrounding these issues are currently underway even as this report is being written. Revised plans for the renovation of Wooster Science Building will now include a centrally located gender-neutral restroom, in addition to a new policy to include gender-neutral bathrooms in new construction and in renovations where physically possible. The Campus Auxiliary Services management has already agreed and put into place a new policy whereby preferred names are called out for pick-up of orders of food and

coffee. Additionally, gender-neutral housing is being offered for the first time as a pilot program with plans to increase the number of students served over the next several years. These improvements are noteworthy and speak largely to a campus community interested and invested in correcting practices that hurt or marginalize certain populations. However, the Task Force also wants to be clear that while these changes are commendable, much work still needs to be done to improve campus climate for our most vulnerable and non-conforming community members.

## **Recommendations for Binary Sex/Gender Issues**

### ***Gender-Neutral Facilities***

The scarcity of gender-neutral facilities, such as gender-neutral bathrooms, housing options, and locker rooms on our campus was regularly cited by focus group study participants as a key impediment to the creation of a positive and safe campus climate. We applaud changes that are currently underway in these areas. We recommend that these initiatives be strengthened and expanded, and that all future new construction include gender-neutral facilities.

In terms of student housing, we recommend that Residence Life expand gender-neutral housing options in order to accommodate all students seeking gender-neutral housing– including incoming first-year students. If all who requested gender-neutral housing are accommodated, the need for prioritizing trans\* students become unnecessary. Expanding information and resources concerning gender-neutral housing options and requests should be made easily accessible to all new students at SUNY New Paltz through the college’s website and at orientations.

While a policy is now underway to include gender-neutral restrooms in new construction and renovations, the Task Force understands the constraints that old buildings and state regulations can impose on reaching a goal of all buildings and dorms including gender-neutral facilities. Because residence halls are by definition where students *live*, providing adequate bathroom and shower accommodations in these buildings must be a priority. We recommend where limitations require a pass on gender-neutral facilities in older buildings that we aim to reach a sufficient balance of facilities across campus.

Finally, we recommend that the Athletic and Wellness Center create gender-neutral locker rooms and showers (e.g., single user) during future renovation phases.

### ***Preferred Names, Pronouns, and Gender Categories***

Along with negotiating a physical campus that is predicated on a binary sex/gender system, trans\* campus members must negotiate the effects of policies and practices that are also based on binary sex/gender. Existing policies and practices result in the misrecognition of one’s gender identity and/or may “out” someone’s trans\* status. One of the primary ways that this happens is through names assigned at birth (instead of preferred names) being listed on IDs, class rosters, and other university records. This is especially problematic concerning documents such as IDs that are used to interact with many different institutions, both on campus and off (e.g., police, banks, and food merchants). We recommend that a process and policy be developed by Records and Registration, the ID Office and other offices that deal directly with student records permitting the use of a preferred name where appropriate. While legal documents such as ID’s, official transcripts, or financial aid may have state or federal requirements that legal names be



used, other forms of internal documents, such as class rosters may be developed that could include an additional line for a preferred name. In classrooms and in social activities where ID's are most used, students would have ability to show a preferred name to a campus official, faculty or staff for a better interaction. International students and those who regularly use a nickname may also benefit from this policy shift. Trans\* members of our campus should also be permitted to update their university photo (used on IDs, class rosters, etc.) so that it matches their current physical appearance at no cost. To assist students wanting to proceed with an official name change, Enrollment Management and/or Campus Climate Coordinator create a guide outlining how to navigate non-campus processes associated with legal name changes.

Trans\* students, staff, faculty, and administrators also may experience misrecognition of their gender identities when queried by the university through forms, surveys, etc., that request information about sex/gender, where options are often limited to male and female only. We recommend that Institutional Research and other appropriate administrative offices develop a policy where any application/form/other collection of data has a contextually appropriate transgender or gender-inclusive option beyond male and female. We also note that gathering information about sex/gender status may not always be relevant, and thus questions concerning sex/gender status may not always be appropriate or necessary. Therefore, such information should only be gathered when there is a clear and compelling rationale for its inclusion or when mandated by law.

### ***Trans\* Health Concerns***

Trans\* people have unique health care concerns, especially for trans\* individuals who seek some level of medical transition/intervention. Because many students are reliant on Student Health Services, it is imperative that there be specialized support and training (including continuing education) for campus health care staff. Further, many trans\* students have little or no familial support (we heard stories from our trans\* students about a great deal of family strife related to their trans\* status), thus creating an even greater likelihood that trans\* students rely on student health insurance. We also recommend that funded hormone therapy for trans\* students be included in future negotiated student health insurance. Many state-wide systems such as the University of California system have already adopted such practices as described in a Chronicle of Higher Education article from June 2013, *Colleges Can Help Transgender Students 'Be Who They Are,' Says Leading Doctor; Libby Sandler* (See Appendix 4). We recommend that Student Association leadership or other bargaining units reiterate a basic goal of expanded services for trans\* health concerns including providing a source of funding for this service for students needing this accommodation. We also encourage Student Association to pursue advances in this area through statewide student assembly.

### **In-Progress Recommendations:**

- Institutional policy for renovation and new construction projects to include gender-neutral facilities where possible, including a revision of the Wooster Science Building renovation to include gender-neutral bathrooms.
- CAS change in policy to use preferred names for food and beverage orders.
- Pilot residence hall general-neutral housing accommodations.
- Residence Life expands information regarding gender-neutral housing options available to incoming students.

### **High Priority Recommendations:**

- Records and Registration and other campus offices dealing with student records develop and implement a policy allowing students to have their preferred name on student ID, class rosters, and college records not bound by state or federal regulations
- Institutional Research develop policy concerning the use of gender options on campus forms, surveys, etc.

### **Ongoing Recommendations**

- Institutional Research or other units as appropriate should begin ongoing assessment of the effects of related campus policies, culture, and infrastructure on trans\* and other marginalized populations
- Residence Life develop and expand gender-neutral housing program to meet demand and accommodate all student requests.
- Facilities master plan of renovation and new construction plans to include a balance of gender-neutral facilities across campus in both academic and housing spaces.
- Facilities and renovation teams should specifically include plans for gender-neutral locker and shower facilities in the Athletic and Wellness Center.
- Student Association advocacy for funded hormone therapy as part of student health insurance
- Enrollment Management and/or Campus Climate Coordinator create a guide outlining how to navigate non-campus processes associated with legal name changes

## **4. Coordination and Networks of Support**

Student focus groups point to an ad hoc method by which LGBTQ students find support at New Paltz. Current sources of support include gay and queer-friendly topics included at freshmen orientation, personal assistance from accepting RA's, courses that integrate LGBTQ issues, the Queer Student Union, other student groups, academic programming, and academic majors such as Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, English, Theatre, and other interdisciplinary programs. These efforts should be sustained and supported. The student experience is enriched by the friendships that are made by joining clubs and teams and by enrolling in a major. But some students reported in focus groups that these "typical" activities are not enough as students face coming out (and related issues of identity development) alone, feeling disconnected from the larger community. Coming out stories are peppered with family strife and friendship dissolution, resulting in loss of support networks. More organized and comprehensive programming and services would increase the likelihood that a struggling student would find the assistance needed. Hiring a LGBTQ resource person would ensure coordinated efforts, creating a front line of support in services, mentoring, straight-gay alliance programming, and other strategies to reach vulnerable populations on campus.

For LGBTQ students who are not in majors where gender and sexuality issues are part of the curriculum, bringing educational programming to the college-wide community provides an opportunity for dialogue and conversation. Likewise, many faculty and staff are in disciplines or areas where LGBTQ topics are less likely to emerge. Focus groups revealed an urgent need for

the institution to create events for students, faculty, and staff to discuss the issues of pervasive misunderstanding, cultural bias, and fear surrounding homophobia and transphobia.

All of these efforts should be coordinated to ensure a well-balanced presentation of LGBTQ-related lectures and discussions, and supportive services. These efforts need to be sustained on a regular basis for new student populations and incoming faculty and staff.

### **Recommendations for Networks of Support**

#### ***Staff Coordinator, Orientations, Programming, and Counseling***

In order to coordinate the efforts already in progress and to continue to identify populations of concern and areas of need in underserved populations, the Task Force recommends hiring of a full-time coordinator and appropriate staff support. Under the direction of the senior administration, a new line might be created under the Office of Campus Climate or in Student Affairs; the coordinator would orchestrate services for students and employees regarding sexual-orientation and gender-identity and develop and organize existing resources and LGBTQ website content, and oversee educational outreach across campus. The coordinator and associated staff should work as partner and advocate, not as a referral agent, with the entire campus community to orchestrate approaches to programming, resources, and information. Once developed, the coordinator could participate with an advisory group or task force charged with researching the viability of creating an LGBTQ and/or Diversity Resource Center on campus in the future.

Finding the right roommate is typically a stressful part of adjusting to college life for all students. For both questioning and completely out LGBTQ students, the process is compounded. Student Affairs has recently added a social/mixer for LGBTQ and straight friends and allies at Freshmen Orientation prior to residence hall room selection. The mixer is designed to help LGBTQ freshmen find like-minded communities and peer-support networks to develop from the start. Information on other support services and educational opportunities should also be made available to all incoming students at Orientation. These efforts should be supported, sustained and expanded.

Current Transfer and International student orientations are more limited in scope. Including LGBTQ support services and promotion at college-wide service fairs and open houses, in the Transfer Planner, and in orientation presentations would establish networks of support available on campus. Post-orientation programming could be directed toward these specific groups as well, ideally within 6 weeks of entry. Best practices suggest that this window of time defines the student connections with the institution. Students also expressed interest in bringing the LGBTQ and straight communities together. For questioning students, a mixed group of students can provide an avenue to connect. Since many students self-identify outside the LGBTQ labels, promoting integrated student engagement would help bridge the deficiency in this language. Currently, LGBTQ faculty and staff are developing the New Paltz Ally Program which was launched in Fall 2013. This program is designed to raise awareness on topics of cultural bias and provide support. The Ally Program will also inform clear reporting routes for bias incidents and hate crimes and will provide a support network for following through with reported incidents. Currently, this is a volunteer effort of interested straight and LGBTQ faculty and staff. It may be

difficult or impossible for the program to be successful on a completely volunteer basis and would be best served by oversight of a resource professional.

### ***Counseling and discussion groups***

Currently, SUNY New Paltz provides a support group for coming out and questioning students upon the request of students. It has been several years since any requests came forward, yet students report that many came out under traumatic family circumstances and felt isolated on campus. Developing ongoing, advertised, and dynamic support and discussion groups through Counseling Services, Queer Student Union, or other units in Student Affairs could help reach students in this vulnerable stage of identity development. Once established, a better understanding of our student's needs should prompt ongoing assessment as to approaches for outreach.

### ***Alumni Relations***

If students entered New Paltz orientated toward a strong LGBTQ community and support networks on campus, cultivating alumni support would be part of a natural cycle of return. The Office of Campus Climate, with additional staff support (as recommended), could create a Lavender Graduation Ceremony as one way to solidify this community. Once established, a strong network of LGBTQ alumni could be incorporated into programming. Office of Alumni Relations establishment of LGBTQ scholarships and other LGBTQ initiatives supported by alumni would be a tremendous resource.

By building networks of support from point of entry through graduation, the institution will have taken significant strides in improving campus climate for both straight and non-straight members of this community.

### **In-Progress Recommendations**

- Volunteer effort to create and launch New Paltz LGBTQ Allies Program with the goal to incorporate responsibility for the program with a resource professional on campus.
- Social LGBTQ mixer at freshmen orientation

### **High Priority Recommendations**

- Senior administration to provide resources and support to hire a LGBTQ Resource professional to coordinate and create programming and services, including Allies program, for all members of the campus community.
- Student Affairs / Office of Campus Climate or LGBTQ Resource professional ensures that LGBTQ campus information is available at open houses and orientations.
  - transfer and international student outreach, post-orientation programming
- Ensure there is an ongoing, consistent “coming out” support group and introduce other support groups as needed through the Counseling Center, Queer Student Union, or a Student Affairs unit.

### **Ongoing Recommendations:**

- Office of Campus Climate and Student Affairs observe and assess services for developing and emerging needs for the LGBTQ community

- Senior leadership support and create an ad hoc advisory group to work together with resource professional / Office of Campus Climate researching the viability of creating a LGBTQ or Diversity Resource Center on campus.
- Office of Alumni Relations establishment of LGBTQ scholarships and other initiatives supported by alumni giving

## **5. Training and Education**

Focus groups represented a wide sector of subgroups on campus, and each expressed a strong desire and need for education and training in LGBTQ issues as a top priority. Cultural, social, religious, educational, and family worldview provide a wide spectrum of lenses through which the various sub-populations of staff, student, faculty, and professionals experience campus climate. Together with new and contested emerging terminology, new attitudes in social activism, little understood and changing information about transgender populations, and an increasing academic focus at SUNY New Paltz on gender and sexuality studies, there is a heightened interest in education and training to navigate such complex issues.

### **Recommendations for Training and Education**

We need to create targeted LGBTQ education and training opportunities for faculty, professional faculty, and staff at point of entry and for continuing employees to ensure a common understanding of LGBTQ issues at New Paltz and the resources available to assist both straight and LGBTQ members of the community. New Paltz could go beyond a culture not only of inclusion and acceptance, but also knowledge and education about LGBTQ issues. Student groups voiced a concern about lack of education among themselves and classmates; they perceived that tolerance and acceptance are tied to understanding and education and that homophobia and transphobia are often grounded in fear, misconceptions, and cultural stereotypes. Students expressed gratitude for the focus-group conversation and the opportunity to be educated, and they requested opportunities for more. Sustained and coordinated programming as discussed in the section above is one way to fill this gap for students. Development of peer-mentor training programs for student paraprofessionals and other student leaders and educational programming are also recommended as discussed in Networks of Support.

Faculty expressed a high level of desire for training and education in current academic research and best practices for LGBTQ issues in the classroom. The Task Force recommends that the Teaching and Learning Center, Office of Campus Climate, and the Provost Office provide opportunities and resources for faculty development through workshops and shared current LGBTQ research; orientation materials for faculty and staff should include information about LGBTQ resources at New Paltz.

Human Resources should include LGBTQ sensitivity and issues training for specialized groups of employees working directly with students: university police, health care providers, psychological counselors, professional faculty, academic faculty, Human Resources personnel, Residence Life staff, and food service staff, as well to the entire faculty and staff where appropriate.

### **Ongoing Recommendations:**

- Provost in collaboration with Campus Climate Officer provide LGBTQ resources for new faculty and staff at employee orientation.
  - Provide research and educational opportunities for current faculty and staff to gain knowledge and expertise in LGBTQ support services, curriculum, or program development.
- Human Resources, in collaboration with Academic and Student Affairs, to provide specialized resources to create LGBTQ sensitivity and educational training for unique service areas including, but not limited to, university police, Health and Counseling Services, faculty (classroom protocol), Human Resources, Residence Life.

## **6. Academic Issues**

With its own peer-reviewed journals, book series, conferences, and university programs or departments, LGBT/Queer Studies<sup>3</sup> (and its many variants) is now a well-recognized field of scholarship, both as an autonomous interdisciplinary formation and as a subfield within many traditional disciplines. Strengthening related academic offerings and infrastructure plays a role in educating the campus community and in attracting and retaining students and employees. LGBTQ students identified the classroom as an important site where they sometimes did and sometimes did not find support and affirmation, both in terms of interactions with peers/professors and the inclusion and accuracy of information about LGBTQ people/issues. Courses including LGBTQ issues can play a role in educating the campus broadly; these offerings also provide an important mechanism of support and learning specifically for LGBTQ students. Thus, we recommend the faculty take steps to strengthen academic programs and offerings in LGBT/Queer studies through curriculum and hiring of faculty with LGBTQ research focus.

### **Recommendations for Academic Issues**

SUNY New Paltz has only a few on-the-books courses that have as their primary topical focus LGBTQ issues. However, there are many more courses that do not have a primary focus on LGBTQ issues, yet include LGBTQ topics in some form or another. We recommend that faculty, Records and Registration, and the Provost office take steps to make information about these course offerings easily available and accessible to students. To increase course offerings and to bolster the university's infrastructure around LGBT/Queer Studies more broadly, we recommend that faculty pursue development of a multi-disciplinary LGBT/Queer Studies minor. We recommend that there be incentives and opportunities for curriculum development for faculty to develop existing course units or new courses that include LGBTQ-related materials. Finally, we recommend that a LGBTQ resource professional and/or the Office of Campus Climate centralize and publicize information about courses that include LGBTQ content. This is especially important given that LGBTQ course content may not be immediately apparent through course titles or descriptions. This could take the form of a brochure and should be integrated into LGBTQ info on our university website.

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<sup>3</sup>We use LGBT/Queer Studies in this section when referring specifically to the academic interdisciplinary field usually called either LGBT Studies or Queer Studies (although it sometimes goes by other names as well).

While a great deal of student learning takes place in formal courses, we also note that the experience at a liberal arts campus such as SUNY New Paltz relies heavily on co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities as much as on in-class learning. One way in which to encourage out-of-class learning is through formalized Living/Learning Communities. We thus recommend that Residence Life and the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program explore the possibility of jointly developing a Living/Learning Environment structured around LGBTQ issues/identities/communities. In addition, we recommend that faculty-mentored student research on LGBTQ topics be encouraged.

Finally, faculty in our focus groups expressed interest in creating more opportunities for sharing LGBTQ-related faculty research through public lectures and forums. Such lectures and forums could help support a multi-disciplinary LGBT/Queer Studies minor.

### **High Priority Recommendation**

- Faculty, through governance and departmental processes, investigate the possibility of creating an interdisciplinary LGBT/Queer Studies Minor
- Faculty and Residence Life investigate the possibility of creating an LGBTQ Living/Learning Community that may tie in with gender-neutral housing
- Office of Campus Climate develop a centralized mechanism for collecting, tracking, and publicizing courses with LGBTQ content

### **Ongoing Recommendations**

- Provost and Teaching and Learning Center provide curriculum development opportunities for faculty to integrate LGBTQ materials into existing courses (*ongoing once implemented*)

## **7. Employee Issues**

While 82.2% of employees responded “agreed” or “strongly agreed” on the CSS survey that their work environment is LGBTQ friendly, a troubling 20% of employees responded that their work environments are unfriendly. Many factors can contribute to this impression, but campus climate for LGBTQ New Paltz employees begins upon hire and first contact with Human Resources. Making sure that LGBTQ employees have a welcoming and informative experience will ensure a smoother entry into the New Paltz community. The LGBTQ employee focus group reported a perceived and real experience of discrimination in laws and benefits for domestic partners. Changing same-sex marriage laws, union negotiated contracts, and state governor's office mandates for benefits dictate New Paltz benefits packages. Although New York recognizes same-sex marriage, federal law only recognizes same-sex marriages as domestic partnerships for benefits programs. Unlike straight and married counterparts, same-sex married couples are disadvantaged, as are all domestic partnerships under the benefits program, and pay a tax on benefits earned. Neither straight nor same-sex couples have cheaper options for covering two-person households instead of family benefits. (*Please note that the DOMA Supreme Court decision and the action, or inactions, of the federal government has implications on these employment issues. It is unclear at the time of the writing of this document what those implications are*)

### **Recommendations for Employee Issues**

The Task Force recognizes that the senior administration does not negotiate contracts for employee benefits. Still, it is important for them to know there is inequity with benefit laws and policies for campus LGBTQ employees and their same-sex partners. New Paltz should become a leader among state institutions in providing discussion and advocacy for best practices in LGBTQ employee benefits, following the guidelines of the LGBT-Friendly Campus Index. Human Resources should ensure clear and easy-to-follow guidelines for employees needing benefits for same-sex partners, along with relevant information on the SUNY New Paltz website. Finally, Human Resources employees must be trained in LGBTQ benefits concerns to be sensitive to the bias built into current benefit laws and to be able to respond accurately and sensitively to LGBTQ employees' queries and needs. Though the defeat of DOMA did address policy inequities on many fronts, there is still work to be done to improve inequities present in other policies.

### **High Priority Recommendations**

- Human Resources to review the LGBTQ information on the website and in new employee orientations for ease of navigating and to create a welcoming presence of an LGBTQ focused link that addresses employment issues.
- Develop and distribute literature with a summary of benefits explanations specific to an LGBTQ employee.
- Senior leadership, when appropriate, be aware of and speak against inequities in benefits for same-sex couples and advocate for change in this area.

## **8. Implementation and Ongoing Assessment**

We acknowledge that the recommendations outlined in the previous sections of this report are wide-ranging and will involve significant work and resources to be fully realized. We also note that we have given broad suggestions without specifying actual implementation in most cases. We thus end with recommendations about how to move forward into the implementation phase of the process that was begun with the Campus Climate Survey and continued with the work of our Task Force. We invite senior leadership to arrange any meetings with the LGBTQ Task Force to discuss our recommendations at any time.

### **Recommendations for Implementation and Ongoing Assessment**

We recommend that an implementation team(s) be convened, as needed, to institutionalize recommendations outlined in this document. Such a team or teams could take several forms (one body; a central body that delegates work out to smaller groups positioned within relevant campus units; etc.). We expect that the implementation team would also work directly with the external policy review and incorporate suggested changes made through that process. We further recommend that some members of our Task Force be included in this process to provide continuity across phases of the larger process of addressing campus climate issues, but that implementation also expand to include members of our campus community who have not been involved in the process to date.



We also recommend that SUNY New Paltz participate bi-annually in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index and set as a formal goal to reach a 4.0 rating. In addition to the Index, and as a longer term assessment tool, we recommend ongoing periodic assessment of our campus climate by surveying members of our campus (or using other means of gathering data from campus members). This allows for data collection taken directly from our campus population, thus complementing Index measures and providing us with information that can gauge the experiences and perceptions of members of our SUNY New Paltz campus community.

### **High Priority**

- President convenes implementation team(s), as appropriate, including some carry-over in terms of members from this Task Force, but also with new membership.

### **Ongoing Recommendations**

- Participate bi-annually in LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index; goal of incremental improvements based on newly achieved changes as well as ongoing efforts and a goal of reaching 4.0 rating.
- Conduct periodic assessment of our campus climate, with data about experiences/attitudes/perceptions/etc., drawn directly from campus populations.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX ONE: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### LGBTQ Task Force Constituency Meeting Facilitators Guide

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#### Room Set-up

- Set up the room so participants will be in a circle with each visible to everyone.
- Distribute name placards to each person and ask participants to write the name they wish to be referred to during the session. It does not need to be their actual name.
- Have a place to write/post the guidelines and expectations. Either in a large post-it sheet or on a dry-erase board.
- You will also need:
  - Index Cards for each participant
  - Writing utensils for participants
- Pizza and beverages have been ordered. Make sure refreshments are placed on the perimeter of the room and invite participants to grab food as they arrive.

#### Welcome and Introduction - 5 Minutes

- Have participants sign in on sheet (name optional)
- Facilitators introduce themselves and their role on campus
- The LGBTQ Task Force
  - The LGBTQ Task Force is a short-term group created of faculty, staff and students by President Christian to make recommendations on creating, improving, and strengthening the Campus Climate for LGBTQ individuals at SUNY New Paltz. This group continues the work created by the LGBTQ Campus Climate Survey conducted in the Fall 2011.
- Our Goal
  - The goal of today's session is multi-faceted. First, we want to dig a little bit deeper into specific questions and/or interpretations of the Campus Climate Survey. We are part of a team collecting data to assess community needs. We want to work with unique populations of the campus community to triangulate the data collected from the survey - we want to make determine that the data collected is or is not confirmed through these sessions. In addition, we want to identify and collect information that may not have been represented from the Campus Climate Survey. Lastly, we want to gather input and ideas on prioritizing potential recommendations for our report.

#### Guidelines and Expectations - 5 Minutes

- **TIMEFRAME:** We will spend the next 60-90 minutes conducting a structured and consistent agenda we are following for each group.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** The information collected today will be used to inform our work. We will not attribute any statement to any individual person. We invite you to be honest and share your opinions. What is shared here, stays here.
- **RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR OTHERS:** This meeting is not a debate nor is it an opportunity to judge any comments. Please take the opportunity to own your own statements by using "I" and avoiding generalizations. We also will insist on one person speaking at a time without interruption or double talk from others. Everyone will have an opportunity to speak. There are no right or wrong responses today, just ideas, opinions and experiences, which are all valuable.

- **DIVERGENT RESPONSES:** There is no correct answer today. We are seeking broad perspectives and opinions. They are expected and appreciated.
- **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** We want to hear from everyone in this session. We have structured today's meeting to maximize that process. We will conduct a session that avoids any one person from dominating this meeting. We may at any time place time limits per person to facilitate this process.
- **FACILITATORS NEUTRALITY:** Today is not about the facilitators. Our role is to listen and collect information from the participants in the room without leading, challenging, nor judging your comments.
- **NOTETAKING:** We will be taking notes throughout this session. Again, this is for us to summarize our conversation today; no comments will be attributed to any one person.
- **YOU ARE OUR EXPERTS:** We have invited you here today because you possess an important perspective. We are here to learn from you.
- **FOLLOW-UP:** We may ask during this session for more information or clarification of your comments. This is not to challenge, but rather to ensure we fully understand your thoughts without making assumptions on your intent.
- **ADDITIONS:** Are there any guidelines or expectations that participants would like to add to today's conversation?

#### Getting Started Activity - 15 Minutes

- Distribute index cards and have people write about the following:
  - If you can imagine the ideal campus climate for LGBTQ individuals at SUNY New Paltz, what factors would be present in that community?
- Give participants 5 minutes to do this writing exercise.
- Go around the group and allow all participants to read their cards.
- Collect the cards.

#### Common Questions - 20 Minutes

- What are some of the unique challenges that this sub-group faces when thinking about LGBTQ issues?
- How easy is it for LGBTQ individuals to be out on campus and/or in your area?
  - What would be different in your area if more LGBTQ individuals were out?
  - Are there times when it is not “appropriate” for an LGBTQ person to be out?
- Can you share with us experiences and observations in which you observed negative behavior/comments displayed against the LGBTQ community?
  - How did people in the situation respond to and/or report the situation?
- Can you share with us a time where you have observed a positive awareness of LGBTQ issues on campus? Be specific.
- Can you share with us your comfort and/or familiarity with transgendered concerns?
  - What would you need to be more supportive to this community?

#### Unique Questions - 10 Minutes

- Please identify 1-2 questions from the campus climate survey that we should ask this specific group:
  - QUESTION 1:
  - QUESTION 2:

### Consensus Activity - 15 Minutes

- Have each person write down 2 recommendations on an index card ideas or priority issues that they would like to see changed/implemented/improved for the LGBTQ campus community. It could be a resource, a program, a policy change. There is no limitation.
- Collect these cards (we will keep them) and write them on a large post-it sheet/dry-erase board.
- Give participants an opportunity to rank these individually on a sheet of paper - we will collect these.
- Spend at least 10 minutes having the group discuss a single group consensus on a prioritized list. It is not required that the group finishes this task. The goal is to gather input on some of the thought processes and priorities that are generated in this conversation.

### Wrap-up - 10 minutes

- **WE DID NOT ASK:** We will take the opportunity to allow folks to share or comment on things that we did not ask. If you came and wanted to make sure you said something, we will give some time now to allow that to happen.
- **QUESTIONS:** Give the opportunity for participants to ask facilitators any questions they have about today's session or the goals of the task force. Be sure to write down these questions as they will also be valuable input for our work.
- **THANK YOU:** We appreciate the time you have given today to share with us your experiences of perceptions of the LGBTQ community. The information from today's session will be used in the work of the task force to develop a set of recommendations to the college president regarding support services, policy development, and other ways to enhance the campus climate for LGBTQ individuals at the SUNY New Paltz campus.
- **STICKING AROUND:** We will be sticking around for a little bit after the session. If anyone wants to share anything individually or has one-on-one questions, we are available.

## **APPENDIX TWO: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **Asexual**

Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation

### **Bisexual**

A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over another.

### **Cisgender**

A person whose assigned sex aligns with his or her gender identity, i.e., a male/man, a female/woman. Someone who is not transgender.

### **Coming Out**

May refer to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersexed person (to "come out" to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality, gender identity, or intersexed status with others

### **Gay**

Term used to refer to the LGBTQ community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

### **Gender**

A social identity usually conflated with biological sex in a binary system that presumes one has either male and masculine characteristics and behavior or female and feminine characteristics and behavior.

### **Gender Expression**

-Masculinity and femininity are culturally specific definitions, and many people fall "in between" those cultural expectations

### **Gender Binary**

The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

### **Gender Non-conforming**

A term to describe someone whose gender identity and gender expression do not align with social prescriptions. A masculine woman, a feminine man.

### **Heteronormative**

The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is preferred.

### **Intersex**

Is a variation in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, and/or genitals that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as male or female. Such variation may involve

genital ambiguity and combinations of chromosomal genotype and sexual phenotype other than XY-male and XX-female.

#### Lesbian

Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people.

#### LGBTQ

A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer

#### Pansexual

A sexual attraction, sexual desire, romantic love, or emotional attraction toward persons of all gender identities and biological sexes and refer to themselves as gender-blind, asserting that gender and sex are insignificant or irrelevant in determining whether they will be sexually attracted to others.

#### Polysexual

The attraction to multiple genders. Bisexuality and pansexuality are forms of polysexuality; polysexuals reject the idea of a gender binary, only two genders (male and female), rather than a spectrum of genders.

#### Queer

An umbrella identity term taken by people who do not conform to heterosexual and/or gender binary norms; a reclaimed derogatory slur taken as a political term to unite people who are marginalized because of their non-conformity to dominant gender identities and/or heterosexuality.

#### Sexual Orientation

The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes

#### Trans\*

An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a gender variant person. This use allows a person to state a gender variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant community as a whole.

#### Transactivism

The political and social movement to create equality for gender variant persons.

#### Transgender

A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

## APPENDIX THREE: CAMPUS PRIDE INDEX QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

### LGBT- Friendly Campus Climate Index- National Assessment Tool

(link to questions: <http://www.campusprideindex.org/details/overall.aspx>)

#### State University of New York at New Paltz- **Confidential Report**

The LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index is a national assessment tool for assisting campuses in improving the environment for people on campus who are LGBT and ultimately shape the educational experience to be more inclusive, welcoming and respectful of LGBT and Ally people. The index is owned and operated by Campus Pride ([www.campuspride.org](http://www.campuspride.org)) and was developed with a team of national LGBT researchers which included Brett Genny Beemyn, Ph.D, Susan R. Rankin, Ph.D. and Shane L. Windmeyer, M.S, Ed. The advisory board also includes Debbie Bazarsky, M.S. from the Consortium of LGBT Resources in Higher Education and Daryl Herrschaft of the Human Rights Campaign.

Your participation in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index demonstrates your active interest in LGBT issues and ongoing commitment to LGBT & Ally people. Final percentages listed in the confidential report correspond to your responses and emphasize specific LGBT components, which are determined to contribute to a more inclusive, welcoming, and respectful LGBT and Ally campus. All eight LGBT-Friendly factors (Sections A-H) receive the same weight in the overall score. The sexual orientation score and the gender identity/expression score deal only with questions specifically referencing sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

**Overall Campus Pride Score:** 44% equals 2.5 of 5 Stars

Recommendation(s):

**2.5 STARS** -- Your campus received 2.5 Stars! Your overall campus climate index score is based on all the responses to your completed assessment from the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index. The purpose of this overall score is to provide your campus with a measure of progress and to examine key areas where you can improve your campus climate. Look closely at your responses and consider necessary actions for the future.

Due to your overall rating of 2.5 Stars, it is recommended that your campus prioritize areas of improvement through a realistic action plan based on the needs of your LGBT & Ally community. It is further recommended that you pay particular attention to making this commitment visible and encouraging support from campus administrators as well as other members of the campus community. In addition, Campus Pride encourages all campuses to continue monitoring the quality of LGBT life by listening and responding to the needs of your LGBT population as well as conducting regular assessments of attitudes and perceptions of the campus community toward LGBT people. Use this report as a way to continue building support and to further examine what you can do to implement positive change over the next year.

## **Sexual Orientation Score: 67% equals 3.5 of 5 Stars**

Recommendation(s):

**3.5 STARS** -- Your campus received 3.5 Stars! Your sexual orientation score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index which expressly use the words "lesbian, gay, bisexual" and, or "sexual orientation." Campus Pride recommends your campus build on its commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual people and visibly include issues of sexual orientation in your framework for diversity.

## **LGBT Policy Inclusion**

*Section A*

Recommendation(s):

**3 STARS (51%)** -- Your campus received 3 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Policy Inclusion." Policies are usually the first place where campuses consider changes to be more inclusive of LGBT people. Campus Pride acknowledges your efforts and encourages further examination of the needs of your LGBT community based on your responses. Campus Pride advocates that campuses have equitable treatment of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression issues within policies.

## **LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment**

*Section B*

Recommendation(s):

**1 STAR (16%)** -- Your campus received 1 Star! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment." Your score indicates that the campus lacks commitment and institutional support for LGBT & Ally people. A common mistake is that some campuses rely too heavily on LGBT & Ally student leaders and, or staff/faculty who volunteer time to provide necessary education on sexual orientation and gender/identity expression issues. If such leadership waivers from year to year, the campus commitment can suffer, be absent or negligible at best. Campus Pride recommends your campus place importance on having a visible, ongoing LGBT commitment and institutional support mechanisms for LGBT & Ally people. Such improvements will not only benefit LGBT & Ally people but also work to fulfill the academic mission of preparing students for a diverse workforce and society.

## **LGBT Academic Life**

*Section C*

Recommendation(s):

**2.5 STARS (46%)** -- Your campus received 2.5 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Academic Life." All students have the right to a safe, welcoming and respectful classroom setting. Such an academic environment should support the individual learning outcomes of every student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Your score warrants more attention to consider



ways to make the classroom experience inclusive and LGBT-Friendly. Campus Pride also recommends further attention in LGBT training for faculty and fostering open LGBT dialogue in the academic setting.

## **LGBT Student Life**

### *Section D*

Recommendation(s):

**2 STARS (32%)** -- Your campus received 2 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Student Life." One important aspect to having a welcoming, LGBT-Friendly campus is having diverse educational and social opportunities outside the classroom to offer LGBT & Ally students. Your score shows a lack of such educational and social opportunities. Campus Pride encourages follow-up with your LGBT & Ally students when it comes to asking their perspectives and needs for student involvement, social activities, educational events, etc. Campus Pride also recognizes that it is not always practical for campuses to have a student organization/club for different needs; however, we strongly recommend outreach in LGBT efforts for students of color, people of religious faith/spirituality, persons with disabilities and other often underrepresented populations.

## **LGBT Housing & Residence Life**

### *Section E*

Recommendation(s):

**3.5 STARS (68%)** -- Your campus received 3.5 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Housing & Residence Life." When students feel comfortable in their home and welcome on campus, they are more likely to succeed academically and in other aspects of their college life. The concern for safety and security is particularly an issue for LGBT students in campus housing and residence life. Your score illustrates steady progress from the campus in meeting the needs of LGBT and Ally students in housing and residence life. Campus Pride recommends your campus continue to improve and evaluate housing options and inclusive LGBT policies. Specific attention should be paid to the development of trans-sensitive housing accommodations and equitable policies to support LGBT people.

## **LGBT Campus Safety**

### *Section F*

Recommendation(s):

**3 STARS (52%)**-- Your campus received 3 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Campus Safety." Your score highlights the need to further examine your efforts to address the safety concerns of LGBT people. Campus Pride supports your efforts to build and maintain a positive, visible relationship between campus safety and the LGBT campus community. All students require a campus climate unobstructed by harassment, violence and other negative behaviors. There is a long history of distrust and fear from LGBT people toward law enforcement. Campus Pride recommends campus safety develop

an outreach plan consisting of a LGBT liaison and specific training to support LGBT people and other marginalized communities.

## **LGBT Counseling & Health**

### *Section G*

Recommendation(s):

**2.5 STARS (46%)**-- Your campus received 2.5 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Counseling & Health." LGBT students face unique challenges related to emotional and physical health care concerns. Campuses must be equipped to deal with these specific LGBT issues with appropriate counseling and health services. Your score indicates that your campus lacks necessary services and has definite areas to improve for addressing LGBT emotional and physical health needs. Campus Pride encourages a thorough examination of LGBT counseling and health concerns, particularly efforts to address the emotional and physical concerns of students coming out and transgender populations.

## **LGBT Recruitment & Retention Efforts**

### *Section H*

Recommendation(s):

**2.5 STARS (40%)** -- Your campus received 2.5 Stars! The score is based on responses to questions in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index for "LGBT Recruitment and Retention Efforts." The first generation of out LGBT students are now making their way to campus. These out students are looking for campuses that are not only LGBT-Friendly but who also actively recruit and retain LGBT people as an important component to the campus community. Your score demonstrates that there are key areas for your campus to improve when it comes to LGBT recruitment and retention efforts. Campus Pride recognizes your initial efforts and recommends continued growth in this area -- specifically by developing outreach and retention programs that target LGBT & Ally communities (e.g., LGBT & Ally scholarships, LGBT mentorship program, LGBT & Ally graduation commemoration, attending LGBT admission fairs).

## **APPENDIX FOUR: COLLEGES CAN HELP TRANSGENDER STUDENTS 'BE WHO THEY ARE,' SAYS LEADING DOCTOR**

(link to article: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-Colleges-Can-Help/139595/>)

### **THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

June 2, 2013

## **Colleges Can Help Transgender Students 'Be Who They Are,' Says Leading Doctor**

By Libby Sander

Boston

In the early 1980s, a student at Harvard University who had been born a female but lived as a male gained the trust and support of a sympathetic university registrar. Each semester, the campus official would ask the student to provide a list of the classes he'd signed up for. The registrar made sure that every class list showed the student's preferred name so as to save him the embarrassment of publicly revealing his biological gender.

Today's transgender college students still need the same compassion, says Norman P. Spack, a pediatric endocrinologist at Boston Children's Hospital who is best known for helping children change their gender. Colleges, he said, are likely to encounter transgender students like his former patient, the Harvard student, at a critical juncture in their lives. Understanding what those students have already experienced—and what they're likely to encounter on the college campus—will help practitioners care for them more effectively, he said.

"You may not know who they are or where they are. You may not know anything about them," Dr. Spack told a packed room of college-health professionals here on Friday at the American College Health Association's annual meeting. Yet despite the complexity of the issues, he said, "There's no greater thrill than to help people be who they are."

The doctor's comments come at a time of rapid change, as many colleges revamp existing policies and adopt new ones meant to deal with the [needs of transgender students](#).

Many campuses now have gender-neutral housing. Some allow students to use a preferred name on ID cards and class rosters, or permit transgender students to change the gender designation on their primary college records without requiring proof of sex-reassignment surgery.

It is the question of whether student health insurance should cover sex-reassignment surgery, which changes a person's physical characteristics to resemble the opposite sex, that has attracted the most attention in recent years. The [Transgender Law & Policy Institute](#) reports that more than

three-dozen colleges, including the entire University of California system, now include the surgery in their student health-insurance plans.

Still, advocates say that colleges do not meet the basic health-care needs of transgender students, in part because practitioners lack training in how to help people who are questioning their gender identity or in the process of transitioning to the opposite gender.

Dr. Spack, who sees hundreds of children and adolescents in his clinic, advised the college practitioners here to be vigilant. Some transgender students, he said, come to college having already transitioned to the gender with which they identify. Sometimes they have support from parents and friends back home.

But he cautioned that many more begin college still smarting, in some cases severely, from years of emotional and physical trauma. In those cases, if parents have discouraged or restricted altogether a student's gender dysphoria, students may have suppressed their emotions.

"And then they come to college, where gender nonconformity is everywhere," Dr. Spack said.

### **'A Normal Guy'**

Joining Dr. Spack in the discussion was Skylar Kergil, a gregarious recent graduate of Skidmore College. Mr. Kergil was born female. In high school, he began transitioning socially to become a male. About eight months before arriving at Skidmore, he began taking hormones that would gradually transform his features.

At first, Mr. Kergil said, he had viewed going to college as an opportunity to start fresh. He didn't want to talk about his experiences.

"I just wanted to be a normal guy," he said.

But staying silent was painful and, to his surprise, caused even more anxiety than the prospect of explaining everything to his peers. At the end of his freshman year, Mr. Kergil decided to tell his close friends. The following year, he came out completely, to professors and acquaintances alike. "I was born a female and started transitioning in high school," he would tell people. To his surprise, they took it well, and appeared enthusiastic about learning more.

Now, after graduating, he says being open about his experiences has had an "incredible" effect on his mental health.

In Mr. Kergil's case, his parents supported his transition. But Dr. Spack said campus clinicians who see transgender students in the health center or the counseling center should bear in mind that, with transgender students, "parents aren't always allies." They might be angry, once the child leaves for college, that the student is no longer in their control, he said. They might feel guilty over how they responded in the past to their child's confusion. They might wonder what damage has been done.

At the packed session, college-health officials peppered Dr. Spack with questions. Some queries were clinical, about, say, the proper administration of hormones to students transitioning to the opposite gender.

But many offered observations, or asked how to help. A mental-health professional at Ohio State University said she'd noticed a recent, subtle uptick in the number of international students who identify as transgender. A physician at Wake Forest University wondered how clinicians might screen students in a sensitive but effective way.

An official from the University of Michigan wondered whether new health-insurance exchanges would allow the university to customize its policy to continue including sex-reassignment surgery. (Another official, from Portland State University, said yes, it can be done.)

At Skidmore, Mr. Kergil said, progress came quickly. His first visit to the counseling center led him to a therapist who didn't know how to help him. But he eventually went back and found one who did.

What matters for transgender students, he said, is simply this: "Knowing that they're not going to be looked at with wide eyes and inexperience."

**Correction (6/6/2013, 3:08 p.m.):** This article originally misidentified the transgender student who appeared with Dr. Spack at the meeting. He is Skylar Kergil, not another transgender student, also named Skylar, who was featured prominently in a long article this spring in [The New Yorker](#) about transgender children. Mr. Kergil was mentioned in a [follow-up blog post](#) by the author of the **New Yorker** article. This article has been updated to reflect the correction.