How Gender Inclusive Is Our Housing?

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#NASPA4E13 @abikennedy
Learning Outcomes

- Identify strategies to address the housing needs of LGBT students, especially transgender students.
- Better understand how the housing choices institutions offer impact individuals.
- Learn how to connect your housing options with gender inclusive language.
- Elicit ideas from colleagues at other institutions to explore how they have created and sustained gender-inclusive housing programs.
Definitions/Terminology

- **Pronouns**
  - *Ze / Hir* – Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here/, they replace “he”/”she” and “his”/”hers” respectively.

- **Trans* – 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.

- **Gender Identity** – A person’s sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

- **What is Gender Inclusive Housing (GIH)?**
  - “…a policy implemented by an institution of higher education that allows individuals to cohabitate with other individuals who have different gender identities than their own in an on-campus living environment.” (Anderson, 2011)

UC Riverside, LGBT Resource Center
ACUHO-I describes the mission of university housing and residence life programs as broadly promoting learning for student success in safe living environments.

GIH is one aspect of university administrators looking for ways to support LGBT students through inclusive and affirming policies (Anderson, 2011).

Power dynamics influence creation of GIH policies. As university administrators developed policies, easier for faculty, staff, and students to be out as LGBT without backlash such as harassment and discrimination (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005).
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- Housing officers surveyed at 100 of the largest universities (by enrollment) with on-campus housing (Willoughy, Larsen, & Carrol, 2012)
  - 16% already had GIH policies in place
  - 13% were seriously considering GIH
  - None located in the South
  - Clustered on East and West Coasts and in the Midwest
  - Student demand driving creation of GIH

- Apartment style housing reported as first style preference for transgender college students. Self-contained single room w/ private bath was second choice (Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2013)
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- NASPA IV-E GIH Policies
  - Illinois
    - Lake Forest College
    - Northwestern University
    - Roosevelt University
    - University of Chicago
    - University of Illinois, Springfield
  - Indiana
    - None
  - Iowa
    - Cornell College
    - Grinnell College
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- NASPA IV-E GIH Policies (cont…)

  - Michigan
    - Central Michigan University
    - Eastern Michigan University
    - Grand Valley State University
    - Michigan State University
    - Michigan Technological University
    - University of Michigan
  
  - Minnesota
    - Augsburg College
    - Carleton College
    - Macalester College
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- NASPA IV-E GIH Policies (cont…)
  - Ohio
    - Bowling Green State University
    - College of Wooster
    - Columbus College of Art and Design
    - Kent State University
    - Kenyon College
    - Miami University
    - Oberlin College
    - Ohio University
    - University of Toledo
    - Wright State University
  - Wisconsin
    - Beloit College
    - Lawrence University
    - University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse
    - University of Wisconsin, Madison
    - University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- GIH In the News
  - University of North Carolina Board of Governors voted unanimously in August 2013 to outlaw gender-neutral housing facilities on all of the system’s 16 campuses.
    - Followed failed attempts by lawmakers to stop the pilot program.
    - Forced UNC Chapel Hill to stop plans to offer gender-neutral housing options to students for the 2013-14 academic year.
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- GIH In the News (cont…)
  - Boston University
    - Student Support
      - In a 2012 BU Student Government survey, nearly 2,000 students supported gender neutral housing and roughly 500 indicated they would choose the option themselves.
    - August 2013, President approved University Council recommendation to introduce gender neutral housing, beginning limited offering for Fall 2013
      - Restricted policy to upperclassmen
      - Received 1 complaint and 2 request for more info following the announcement
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- **Marriage Equality**
  - Over 33% of Americans live in 15 states with full, state-level equality (CA, CT, DC, DE, IA, MA, MD, ME, MN, NH, NJ, RI, VT, WA)
  - 17% live in cities, countries, or states with partial equality (mainly CO, HI, IL, NM, NV, OR, WI)
  - 50% live in 29 states that still ban all types of unions except one-man-one-woman couples.
  - Legal battles happening in TN, OH, WV, WI, HI, NV
  - IL awaiting the House of Representative to vote on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, which passes in the Senate.

www.marriageequality.org
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- Transgender Protection Laws
  - 17 states and DC have laws for transgender protection, but the specific protections vary (including IL, IA, MN)
  - 160 cities and counties have passed their own laws prohibiting gender discrimination
  - Increasingly laws that prohibit sex discrimination do protect transgender people, but still limited and evolving.

https://www.aclu.org/translaw
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- Transgender Protection Laws (cont…)
  - 14 states and DC have laws specifically protecting transgender students in public schools from harassment and/or discrimination (including IL, IA, MN)
  - CT, CO, MA have clarified what schools must do to accommodate transgender students in areas regarding educational records, restroom access, and bullying prevention

https://www.aclu.org/translaw
Current Political & Sociohistorical Context

- Transgender Protection Laws (cont…)
  - In 2013, CA became 1st state to pass law that requires students in public schools to be permitted to access sex-segregates spaces, programs, and activities consistent with gender identity (Transgender Student Bill of Rights)

https://www.aclu.org/translaw
Opposing Arguments

- Arguments center around heterosexual cohabitation.
- Fears of abusing the system and taking advantage of the accessibility.
- In North Carolina:
  - Promotion of opposite sex cohabitation
  - Taxpayers against allowing students to choose to live with the opposite sex without parent input
  -Violates NC and US constitution because unfair to single out and give special privileges to a special group of students
- In California:
  - "youthful sex offenders" would take advantage of the new law
  - would violate the privacy of students who don’t want to share restrooms with members of the opposite sex (LA Times)
Policies & Student Outcomes

- **Persistence**
  - Living on campus fosters retention
    - Stronger commitment to education
    - Relationships with peers, faculty, and staff
  - GIH offers a safe space for LGBT students

- **Identity Formation**
  - Trying to force gender identity/expression into dominant gender options is problematic
  - Set a tone of inclusion

References:
- Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010
- Bilodeau and Renn, 2005
Student Learning and Development

- GIH helped create safe places for LBGT students to be themselves.
- Being out was normalized in the environment.
- LGBT students visible in the community lent support for students in general becoming more tolerant and supportive of underrepresented groups.
- Openness to diversity is shaped by peer and faculty values of multiculturalism

(Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)
Learning from Colleagues

- Sharing in pairs/groups
  - Type of institution
  - Current policies
  - What are students saying?
  - Any student requests?
  - Campus/community reaction

- Share with larger group
Current Practices

- No national standards or core competency in the housing profession related to GIH.
- Institutions are figuring out whether to offer GIH and how to implement and evaluate it independently.
- Many current GIH policies exclude first-year students from participation.
- Not all institutions offer private bathrooms within the GIH offerings.
- Multiple applications/forms may be required, which may not be aligned regarding terminology of sex and gender.
Current Practices

- Bowling Green State University (BGSU)
  - Offering GIH for the first time this year with 20 students.
  - Student driven process through residence life governing body. Also approved through undergraduate student government.
  - Targeting upper-class students, first-year students can contact the office if wish to participate.
  - In suite-style building with single and double bedrooms and a bathroom in each suite.
Current Practices

- BGSU cont...
  - Option of requesting a single room or choosing roommate in a double room, without regard to gender.
  - In addition to housing application, separate form required including narrative response regarding interest in GIH and how it will support their academic success.
  - Warning discouraging students in romantic relationships from selecting this housing option.
Gaps

- Admission & housing application forms
- Professional association involvement
- Additional research & study
- Not available to first-year students
- No private bathrooms available
- University, Student Affairs, and Housing policies not aligned
Areas for Growth

- Change of systemized gender dichotomy with uniformity across campus offices, most evident in forms and applications.
- Ensure other university units are aware of GIH policies (admissions, resource centers, orientation, campus activities, and any other office providing support for LGBT students).
- Increased research on GIH
  - Empirical data
  - Inclusive of the student voice
- National/International standards for GIH implementation, practice, and evaluation.
- Development of trans-supportive housing policy and residence hall bathroom policy (Beemyn, Negrete, Peipock, & Anderson, 2013).
Learning from Colleagues

- Thoughts/Reactions?
- Next steps?
- Challenges?
- Needs moving forward?
References and Resources


References and Resources

Websites

- Campus Pride LGBT-friendly Campus Climate Index http://www.campusprideindex.org/default.aspx
- Gender Inclusive Housing List http://www.campuspride.org/tpc-gih/
- Trans Policy Clearinghouse http://www.campuspride.org/tpc/
- Marriage Equality USA www.marriageequality.org
- American Civil Liberties Union www.aclu.org/translaw
Article References

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  http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-californias-transgender-students-bill-of-rights-going-too-far-20130812,0,2812038.story

- Atlantic Wire Article – CA bill
  http://www.theatlanticwire.com/national/2013/08/California-transgender-students/68289/

- WRAL Article – UNC
  http://www.wral.com/unc-system-leaders-vote-to-ban-gender-neutral-housing/12758320/

- Huffington Post Article – UNC
  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/12/unc-bans-gender-neutral-housing_n_3743312.html

- BU Today Article – BU
  http://www.bu.edu/today/2013/students-welcome-gender-neutral-housing/
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