QUEERING UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION:
A FRAMEWORK TO EVALUATE AND ADDRESS BIAS
AGAINST LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS*, AND QUEER STUDENTS IN UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PRACTICES

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Project Overview

This project was designed in an answer to the research question, how can admission offices uncover and address biases in the admission process that impact students who identify as a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and queer (LGBTQ) community?

Many undergraduate admission offices discuss the ways to recruit more underrepresented students but only from within the admission practices and policies that are already in place. There are very few conversations about the ways to reimagine the process as one that is inherently more inclusive. In other words, rather than finding systems that work for all students most offices look to find ways to fit all students into a process designed to only fit a few. As a profession we need to challenge our practices and policies in order to overcome the inequities of college access.

This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful tool in admission and enrollment planning with regard to LGBTQ students. It was written primarily for admission directors and admission policymakers and other stakeholders who are directly responsible for strategic recruitment and enrollment planning for undergraduate admission offices. The handbook consists of background information, a detailed overview of the Queer evaluation framework, and resources to assist admission offices in addressing identified biases in their practices and policies.

Context and Information

The handbook includes an overview of the value of utilizing the Queer evaluation framework to increase access to LGBTQ students as well as listing multiple potential benefits of implementing the evaluation. Listed are the merits of a flexible framework that can be
individualized and are likely to result in a positive impact on enrollment of marginalized populations.

In the following sections there are short statements that make clear the limitations and scope of the handbook as well as a brief overview of background data. It is stated in multiple places that the data presented is limited and not a comprehensive overview. The decision to provide the limited background information was based on two factors. The first factor is the incomplete and unreliable nature of data pertaining to LGBTQ populations. The second factor is related to timeliness. The framework presented in the handbook is one that can be used over multiple admission cycles and is not dependent on current data and findings. It was important that this handbook not be viewed as tied to the dated background information outlined. The intent is for the handbook and the framework to remain relevant year after year with minimal annual updates.

**Queer Evaluation Framework**

The proposed Queer evaluation framework is based in a conceptual framework developed by Young et al. (2017) that was intended to be utilized in the development and evaluation of diversity-related pipeline and admission programs for Canadian Medical Schools. It is based in the Knowledge Translation framework that is centered in data collection and the subsequent use of data. It outlines six points or steps in the evaluation and recruitment process. The six points are 1) data-driven identification of underrepresented groups, 2) targeted recruitment, ensuring an inclusive process, 4) ensuring inclusive assessment, 5) ensuring inclusive selection, 6) iterative use of diversity-related data.

This model is adapted for undergraduate admission offices and incorporated a seventh point, ensuring inclusive enrollment. The addition of inclusive enrollment is intended to provide
a holistic look at the admission cycle and encourage yield practices to be evaluated along with recruitment and admission practices.

Next, a Queer theory lens is layered in to the seven point framework. The seven point queer evaluation framework incorporates the specific examination of heteronormative and gender binary assumptions within an office’s admission practices as well address the regulatory policies and practices that disenfranchise LGBTQ students. This is accomplished through specific acknowledgment and evaluation of the knowledge, in the form of data, which is included or excluded throughout the cycle; the language that is used in printed material, data collection, and among staff; and the rules or policies that guide admission practices at different stages of the admission cycle.

**Resources**

The final section is a collection of resources complied to assist admission directors and policymakers in both implementing the evaluation as well as in addressing barriers and biases identified in the process. These include examples admission rubrics designed to ensure an inclusive assessment and selection or applicants as well as information regarding how to implement reflective practice among admission staff aimed to address implicit bias against LGBTQ students. A complete references page is also included for further reading.

**Summary**

The Queer Evaluation Framework handbook is intended to provide admission directors and other stakeholders making admission policy decisions a tool for systematically evaluating their practices with the goal of increasing access for LGBTQ students. In addition to an evaluation framework it is also a starting point for resources in addressing and correcting admission practices that are inherent barriers for LGBTQ students applying to their institutions.
QUEERING ADMISSION
A Framework for Evaluation
Creating an Inclusive Admissions Process

This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful tool in admission and enrollment planning with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and queer (LGBTQ) students. It was written primarily for admission directors and admission policymakers who are directly responsible for strategic recruitment and enrollment planning for undergraduate admission offices at small liberal arts colleges.

Purpose

As admission professionals, we are continuously assessing and adjusting our admission practices to improve our enrollment. For some schools this is an increase in the number of enrolled students, other institutions are hoping to raise their academic profile, and many are hoping to also increase the diversity of their enrolled student body. Hours are spent developing data-based recruitment plans, seeking opportunities to develop our team’s cultural competency, and evaluating progress by closely monitoring our data throughout recruitment and enrollment.

This is a profession that relies heavily on data-centered methods. We track and measure data related to academics, geography, parental education levels, race and ethnicity, language spoken at home, and socio-economic status. With decades of established and time-tested strategies at the ready, we can make mid-cycle adjustments to our approach if our data indicates that we are not on track to meet our goals. While schools have seen varying levels of success in different approaches to increasing the diversity of their student body, the common theme is to monitor data throughout the cycle, react according to the data, and to reflect back on previous admission cycles to plan future efforts.

We are able to track and monitor our success for most student populations, including those from marginalized and traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. However, the vast majority of offices are not collecting data regarding LGBTQ identity. This is a marginalized population that is largely and systematically left out of traditional admission efforts.

LGBTQ students are often invisible in the college admission process for numerous reasons. The applications for admission as well as other data collection opportunities within the admission process typically do not provide an opportunity LGBTQ students to self-identify as a member of the community. Due to this invisibility of LGBTQ students in the admission process, many admission professionals may have never taken the time to consider best practices in admission counseling and recruitment for LGBTQ students.

A Queer theory- based evaluation of admission practices will enable admission offices to identify barriers in their practices for LGBTQ students, address those barriers, and develop a more inclusive admission process.
Benefits

College admission practices aim to balance the potentially conflicting recruitment goals of an increasingly diverse campus with maintaining or increasing the traditional views of academic quality and standards for incoming students. Traditional models of admission and recruitment are potentially furthering the marginalization of specific populations to favor students from the dominate culture under traditional ideas of academic quality.

Among the benefits of implementing this Queer theory-based evaluation framework:

1. This evaluation provides an evidence-informed approach to assessing admission practices and policies with the goal of increasing equity and inclusion throughout the cycle. This includes identifying and eliminating barriers for LGBTQ students as well as for students from other traditionally marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds.

2. The framework, as opposed to a set of prescribed practices, allows for flexibility in implementation. This provides individual admission offices the opportunity to address the concerns and needs of the internal and external stakeholders involved in admission policy. It also allows offices to evaluate the practices unique to them and implement changes appropriate for individual institutions.

3. It also provides continued opportunity for admission offices to re-evaluate policies and practices as new information surrounding marginalized and traditionally underrepresented populations arise.

Contribution to Public Scholarship

Diversity and inclusion are priorities in undergraduate admission offices across the country. In response, offices are utilizing data to track and evaluate how their practices and policies impact the enrollment of students from the most marginalized and traditionally under represented backgrounds. These typically include racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation college students, students from a low socioeconomic background, and first-generation Americans. Left out of this definition of marginalized populations are the LGBTQ students.

The Queer theory-based evaluation framework presented in this handbook offers an evidence-based approach to
identifying and addressing the barriers embedded in traditional admission practices for LGBTQ students.

This framework has the potential to impact the policies and practices that serve as the base of undergraduate admission in schools across the country. Creating a more inclusive process for students from LGBTQ communities.

Scope and Structure

Limitations

This evaluation framework seeks only to identify and address barriers for LGBTQ students within the undergraduate admission process.

Admission offices, while centered in higher education, bridge the divide between high school and an undergraduate education. The challenges in high school that impact academic achievement and college readiness are essential issues in addressing access to college. While these are important issues impacting LGBTQ students, the aim of this handbook is to serve admission directors within the scope their work and responsibilities.

This handbook is not meant to serve as a guide to LGBTQ related issues or information. It provides a flexible evaluative framework that is couched in limited amounts of background information meant as a starting point.

All admission professionals utilizing this handbook are encouraged to explore more information related to LGBTQ students, the specific challenges faced by them, and seek innovative solutions to addressing barriers within the admission process.

Structure

This handbook provides a brief overview of background information and data to serve as context for the Queer evaluation framework presented in the following section.

The Queer theory-based evaluation framework is broken into seven points:

1. Data-driven identification
2. Targeted recruitment
3. Ensuring an inclusive process
4. Ensuring inclusive assessment
5. Ensuring inclusive selection
6. Ensuring inclusive Enrollment
7. Iterative use of data

Following a description of each point is a list evaluative questions for consideration within an evaluation. The points conclude with suggested action steps an office may decide to implement in an effort to address bias and/or barriers identified in their process or policies.

Finally, the handbook concludes with a resources section to aid in the queer evaluation process and subsequent actions to increase inclusion within the admission process.

Background Information

It is no surprise that admission offices have limited or no data regarding how LGBTQ students enter or move through their funnels. There are unique challenges for researchers, scholars, and other professionals seeking to gain a better understanding of the LGBTQ population via data. The LGBTQ community can be difficult to study because many individuals do not publicly identify as a member. There are also multiple approaches to measuring and collecting data regarding sexual orientation and gender identity and they produce vastly different results.

It is thought that the closet effect, the phenomenon where LGBTQ individuals chose not to identify as such due to social stigma and fear of discrimination, skews poll numbers to show fewer members of the LGBTQ community than are present. There are conflicting opinions and reports on the percentage of the United States population that identifies with the LGBTQ community that range from 3% to 10% (Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds, 2002).

This is particularly true of LGBTQ students in high school or early in their college experience. Forces such as religious opposition or homophobia can serve as a deterrent for students to openly identify with the LGBTQ community. Also, this is an age where students are still in various stages of psychological development and are becoming aware of the sexual orientation and gender identity at different rates (Schindel, 2008; Young, 2011).

Despite the challenges, it is important for admission offices aiming to increase access and inclusion of marginalized populations to make the effort to collect and track data regarding LGBTQ students.
LGBTQ Data

- It is estimated the LGBTQ community in the United States may range from 3% to 10% of the population.
- One more conservative study found that 7.3% of the millennial population identifies as part of the LGBT community.

While the LGBTQ population spans social identities across society, the LGBTQ community has an increased presence of marginalized and at-risk populations:

- Individuals from households earning less than $36,000 per year have the largest reported population of LGBT individuals.
- Racial and ethnic minorities make up 40% of the LGBT population while only comprising 33% of the general population in the United States.
- Women comprise a larger percentage of the LGBT population than men.
- Despite making up an estimated 7-10% of the population, LGBTQ youth comprise 40% of homeless youth in the United States (America's shame: 40% of homeless youth are LGBT kids.

*Gallop Poll (2016)*

LGBTQ Challenges in High School

LGBTQ youth have a history of experiencing higher levels of physical and sexual assault, verbal harassment as well as homelessness in high school than their heterosexual and cisgender peers.

Research has linked the increased occurrence of mental health, physical health, and academic achievement issues among LGBTQ youth to a lack of social support both in schools and outside of the classroom. Formal support systems in schools have historically been limited and offered little prevention in regard to harassment and violence within the school.

However, there is a growing amount of support for the LGBTQ community nationally which can be seen in the increasing number of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA). These groups serve as a formal support group of peers with the possibility of staff and faculty members. The research has demonstrated the positive impact of GSAs on LGBTQ youth by showing a decrease in suicide rates and creating a more positive social climate in schools with a GSA (Russel, et. al., 2009).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. Millennials are considered to be one of the first generations to come of age while social acceptance of LGBTQ individuals had significantly increased and the risks of self-identifying are potentially perceived as less for this generation. These factors could be part of their willingness to self-identify at a higher rate than older generations (Gallup Poll, 2016).
2. It is important to note that the Gallop Poll (2016) does not offer an opportunity for individuals to identify outside of the male/female binary such as genderqueer or gender-fluid

*Gallop Poll (2016)*
*Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds, (2002)*
LGBTQ Challenges in College

Students who identify as a member of the LGBTQ community, similar to other minority populations, are less likely to persist to graduation in a postsecondary setting (Aaron, Mabe, & Wilks, 2011). Loneliness and isolation have been cited as major problems for LGBTQ youth on college campuses. LGBTQ students in college report higher levels of mental health and substance abuse problems than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. ( Longerbeam, et al., 2007).

In addition to the challenges faced by all LGBTQ students, trans* and gender nonconforming students will face unique challenges based on their gender identity. These challenges include adequate access to restrooms, single stall or gender neutral, housing policies based on a gender binary approach, and official recognition of a preferred name or pronoun. These practices have an impact on a student’s willingness to enroll and persist to graduation (Adams, 2015).

As was seen in high school environments, the addition of formal and social support networks on college campuses has shown to have a positive impact on the campus climate as well as on the health and academic achievements of enrolled LGBTQ students. These supports often take the form of women and LGBTQ resource centers and the structuring of campus activities around issues facing and support of LGBTQ students (Fine, 2012).

LGBTQ Challenges in College Admission

Despite a clear presence on college campuses and the growing need for support for enrolled LGBTQ students, there is little information available regarding this particular population within the admission process. The culturally sensitive nature and prevalence of stigma associated with the LGBTQ community have historically led to data on these populations often being incomplete and difficult to nail down. Until recently, the Common Application, used by over 400 schools across the nation, only accommodates for the male/female binary in their data collection.

In addition to a lack of data, there are numerous recruitment strategies that ignore, hesitate to acknowledge or even present outright hostility towards the LGBTQ community. It has been has called into question if schools are sincerely committed to fostering diverse and inclusive campuses. Admission professionals being mindful of their actions and intentions throughout the admission process is a necessary step to creating an inclusive and diverse school, according to Cegler (2012).
Queer Evaluation Framework

The framework developed by Young et. al. (2017) was is a conceptual framework to be utilized in the development and evaluation of diversity-related pipeline and admission programs for Canadian Medical Schools. It is based in the Knowledge Translation framework and is centered in data collection and the subsequent use of data. It outlines six points or steps in the evaluation and recruitment process that can be adapted and implemented in undergraduate admission offices.

This proposed model for evaluation will be based in those six points as well as incorporates a seventh point, ensuring inclusive enrollment. The addition of inclusive enrollment is meant to provide a holistic look at the admission cycle and encourage yield practices to be evaluated along with recruitment and admission practices.

Layered in to the seven point framework is a Queer theory lens. The foundation of Queer theory is the acknowledgment of sexual and gender identity is defined through the social construction of beliefs, values, and language that positions some people in power while disenfranchising others. Queer theorists systematically challenge binary assumptions and the social systems built on sustaining those assumptions. This approach shifts conversations related to diversity away from the study of individuals and groups to the examination regulatory practices of privilege. The seven point Queer theory-based evaluation framework incorporates the specific examination of the knowledge, language, and rules within an office’s admission practices and policies which uphold dominant cultural values and disenfranchise LGBTQ students.

1. Data-driven identification of LGBTQ population

The first step is to collect data that can be utilized in evidence-based admission program development. When data is not available, developing tools for tracking diversity markers and identifiers in the recruitment process are an essential step. All other evaluative processes are centered in the data collected in this step. The development of inclusive or targeted recruitment and enrollment plans are possible only once sufficient data has been collected. This data will be used for analysis into structural and system-based barriers in the process.

Queer Theory Lens:

Assessing the specific knowledge, in the form of data, that is included and excluded from your admission practices and policies. Additionally, this step includes analyzing how the language and tools used to collect data specifically inhibit or expand the data that is collected and reported. Collecting data on the gender identity, that includes a gender spectrum as well as sexual identity, is an essential function in identifying and addressing barriers.

Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your data collection and reporting practices:

1. What data regarding LGBTQ students exists?
2. What data are missing?
   a. How many LGBTQ students apply? How many are admitted?
b. Are LGBTQ students actively recruited? How do you know they are recruited?

c. How many LGBTQ students enroll?

**Language**

*Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your data and data collection:

1. What language is used to identify LGBTQ students?
2. What are the assumptions regarding gender or sexuality in the data or tools.

**Tools**

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your data collection and reporting practices:

1. What tools are needed to collect information regarding LGBTQ students?
2. How will these tools collect information regarding LGBTQ students?
3. How will you assess for bias in your tools?
4. How will this information be stored and reported?

**Possible Actions:**

If it is revealed that limited data or no data regarding LGBTQ students exists, building data collection tools is the next step. This may include altering language on your application or inquiry forms to be more inclusive. One example is to include Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) in a pre-made list of involvement activities. And/or updating language regarding gender to not reflect an assumed male/female binary.

Please see the the Human Rights Campaign List of Terms (Appendix A) and the recommended data collection methods (Appendix C & D) for more information and actionable suggestions related to data collection and tools.

2. **Targeted Recruitment**

Now that data is being routinely collected, it can be used in the analysis of possible structural barriers in the application and/or admission processes which prohibit or impede access for LGBTQ students. Individual schools will be able to develop

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

* When analyzing existing data or tools for data collection it is advised to seek outside help and expertise. On campus resources and include faculty with expertise in Gender and Sexuality Studies or staff from Women and LGBTQ centers.
approaches and implement strategies specific to the needs of that institution.

Targeted recruitment involves a specified commitment to the LGBTQ community beyond singular or one-off recruitment events. **Tracking, encouraging, and nurturing prospective applicants.**

*Queer Theory Lens:*

The continued collection of LGBTQ inclusive data as well as the implementation of strategic and deliberate recruitment efforts designed specifically to reach and encourage LGBTQ prospects through the funnel.

**Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion**

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your data collection and reporting practices:

1. How are LGBTQ students being tracked throughout recruitment?
2. What are the explicit outreach efforts for LGBTQ students?
3. How do you know if these efforts are successful or unsuccessful?

**Language**

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your recruitment practices:

1. What language is used in your recruitment materials and by your admission representatives including counselors and student ambassadors?
2. What consideration is given to use of preferred names and gender pronouns throughout the recruitment process?

**Rules or Policies**

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your recruitment models or plans and the policies that shape them:

1. What are the assumptions regarding gender or sexuality in your recruitment models and plans?
2. How are LGBTQ communities involved in the design and delivery of recruitment efforts?
3. How will you assess for bias in your recruitment tools and practices?

**Possible Actions:**

Utilizes experts on campus to assist in evaluating
recruitment and marketing materials for heteronormative and cisgender bias and seek input on how to be inclusive of LGBTQ identities.

Seek participation of LGBTQ student organizations or centers on campus at all recruitment events. This can include outreach to these specific parties built-in to planning documents for future events.

For more information regarding recruitment of LGBTQ students please see Appendix E.

3. Ensuring an inclusive process
An inclusive process requires continued and conscious attention to 1) actively supporting and being welcoming to persons from the LGBTQ community and 2) taking institutional measures to maximize the inclusivity of admission processes and policies.

*Queer Theory Lens:*
Intentionally analyzing and developing practices that aim to be welcoming to LGBTQ students. Identify and update policies and practices that are heteronormative and cisgendered as well as identifying and removing barriers for LGBTQ students.

*Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion*
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your data collection and reporting practices:

1. Do LGBTQ students move through the funnel in similar percentages as non-LGBTQ students?
2. Where do LGBTQ students get stuck in the funnel?
3. What data is collected is collected regarding preferred name and pronouns?
   a. How is this data tracked and distributed?
   b. What are the formal and informal approaches being used to collect and track this information?
4. What other data, if collected, could be used to identify and address barriers for LGBTQ students?

*Language*
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your engagement with students:

1. How are the recruitment and marketing materials inclusive to a range of genders and sexual orientation?
   a. How could they be more inclusive- visually, verbally, and in written copy?
Rules
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your engagement models and the policies that shape them:

1. How do admission staff and ambassadors address and work to minimize unconscious bias against LGBTQ students?
2. What practices or policies are associated with student engagement? How can they be more inclusive to LGBTQ students?
3. What policies might need to be created to ensure LGBTQ inclusion?

Possible Actions:
Taking small steps to update marketing materials to include LGBTQ students or student groups can send a welcoming and inclusive message to prospective students.

Incorporating a reflective practice regarding LGBTQ communities into admission counselors or admission teams schedules or as part of on-going professional development can make an impact in addressing unconscious bias against LGBTQ students. See the Hicks and Shere Reflective Practice document for more information (Appendix F).

4. Ensuring inclusive assessment
Inclusive assessment hinges on the continued examination of traditional applicant and admission assessment methods to identify the barriers within the process for LGBTQ students.

Queer Theory Lens:
Critical examination of the admission standards used in the evaluation of applicants for admission to identify barriers embedded in the dominant, gender-binary and heteronormative culture.

Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in the collection and use of LGBTQ data in your admission assessment criteria:

1. How are LGBTQ students represented in admission criteria?
2. Which data points are utilized in the assessment criteria?
3. Which data points are left out of the assessment criteria?
4. Compare the rate of admission for LGBTQ identified students to non-LGBTQ identified students. What is the difference?

Language
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your admission assessment criteria:

1. What assumptions or bias towards cisgender and heteronormative culture exist in the language explaining the admission criteria?
2. How are LGBTQ identities represented in the language explaining the admission criteria?
Rules

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your design and execution of admission criteria as well as the policies that shape them:

1. Who sets the admission criteria?
2. How can unconscious bias impact decisions on development of admission criteria?

Possible Actions:

Develop a rubric for evaluation of applicants. Seek input from LGBTQ community on campus and include diversity of views and experiences in the rubric. For an example please see the sample rubric (Appendix G).

Develop a training that includes information on LGBTQ students that includes background information, the value of diverse views and experiences, addressing unconscious bias, and how to utilize your admissions rubric. Introducing an office-wide reflective practice is one example. Please see the condensed overview for more information (Appendix F).

Consider your admission criteria from a new angle: If LGBTQ students were top candidates for admission, what would admission criteria and standards consist of? How different are the criteria and how can you adjust your existing criteria to incorporate some of these new ideas?

5. Ensuring inclusive selection

Inclusive selection is the investigation of the selection of applicants in the admission process and identification of barriers within the selection process. This step demonstrates the need to continually monitor admission best practices.

Queer Theory Lens:

Critical examination of the admission selection and financial aid awarding process to identify gendered and heteronormative biases and barriers to LGBTQ students embedded in admission practices.

Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in the use of data in the deployment of your admission assessment criteria in the selection of applicants for admission:

1. What is the rate of LGBTQ applicant admission as compared to non-LGBTQ applicants?
2. What is the rate and amount of scholarship funding awarded to LGBTQ admits as compared to non-LGBTQ admits?
Language

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your admission and financial aid decisions:

1. What assumptions or bias towards cisgender and heteronormative culture exist in the language explaining the decisions?
2. How are LGBTQ identities represented in the language explaining the decisions?

Rules

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your execution of admission criteria to make admission and financial aid decisions as well as the policies that shape them:

1. What assumptions or bias towards cisgender and heteronormative culture exist in the selection process?
2. How are LGBTQ community members involved in the selection and awarding process?
3. Who makes admission and financial decisions? How might implicit bias impact these decisions?

Possible Actions:

Develop an inclusive rubric for both admission and scholarship selection that includes comments from the individual making decisions. This can be used to ensure an inclusive process and identify barriers/bias in the process. See the rubric example in Appendix G for more information.

6. Ensuring inclusive enrollment

Inclusive enrollment is the investigation of the enrollment of LGBTQ students and a critical evaluation of the yield practices of the admission office to identify barriers.

Queer Theory Lens:

The development and implementation of strategic and deliberate yield efforts designed specifically to reach and encourage LGBTQ prospects to enroll.

Knowledge Inclusion/Exclusion

Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your data collection and reporting practices regarding yield:

1. How are LGBTQ students being tracked throughout
yield and enrollment process?
2. What are the explicit yield efforts for LGBTQ students?
3. How do you know if these efforts are successful or unsuccessful?

Language
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender language and assumptions in your yield and enrollment practices:
1. What language is used in your admitted and new student materials? How inclusive is it to LGBTQ identities?
2. What language is used by your admission representatives including counselors and student ambassadors? How inclusive is it to LGBTQ identities?
3. What consideration is given to use of preferred names and gender pronouns throughout the yield process?

Rules or Policies
Identify heteronormative and Cisgender assumptions in your recruitment models or plans and the policies that shape them:
1. What are the assumptions regarding gender or sexuality in your yield and enrollment models?
2. How are LGBTQ communities involved in the design and delivery of yield and enrollment efforts?
3. How will you assess for bias in your yield and enrollment tools and practices?
4. How are LGBTQ students being connected to campus?
   a. How are these efforts designed specifically for LGBTQ students?

Possible Actions:
Connect with LGBTQ resource centers and student organizations to develop yield events and approaches. Include opportunities for admits to engage with LGBTQ students and learn about resources for LGBTQ students.
7. Iterative use of data

The continued and iterative use of diversity-related and LGBTQ data to monitor and enhance admission practices and policies is essential. As new knowledge is created and best practices evolve, so must the strategies used to inform and improve them.

*Queer Theory Lens:*

The continued use of LGBTQ data to inform and improve admission practices is critical. Being able to re-evaluate practices and strategies as new information regarding LGBTQ students and students from all marginalized populations is generated. This step requires admission professionals to continue to seek new information regarding LGBTQ communities, utilize their existing data, and re-evaluate the practices and policies on a regular basis through this seven point queer evaluation regularly.
Appendix A: List of Relevant Terms

Appendix B: Pronoun Etiquette

Appendix C: Tips on data collection- Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ Resource Professionals

Appendix D: University of California LGBTQ data collection: best practices

Appendix E: Tips and Best Practices for LGBTQ Recruitment

Appendix F: Reflective Practice to Fight Implicit Bias

Appendix G: Admission Rubrics
RESOURCES

Appendix A

Terms and Definitions

**Ally** | A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

**Androgy nous** | Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

**Asexual** | The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.

**Bisexual** | A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

**Cisgender** | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Closed\text{ed}** | Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Coming out** | The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates his or her sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

**Gay** | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

**Gender-expansive** | Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

**Gender expression** | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

**Gender-fluid** | According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

**Gender identity** | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender non-conforming** | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

**Genderqueer** | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Gender transition** | The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.
RESOURCES

Appendix A
(cont.)

**Homophobia** | The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

**Lesbian** | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

**LGBTQ** | An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.”

**Living openly** | A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them.

**Outing** | Exposing someone’s lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

**Pansexual** | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

**Queer** | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with “LGBTQ.”

**Questioning** | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Same-gender loving** | A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

**Sexual orientation** | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

**Transgender** | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

**Transphobia** | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

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Adapted from the Human Rights Campaign
https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms
RESOURCES

Appendix B

Pronoun Etiquette by Dean Spade

People often wonder how to be polite when it comes to problems of misidentifying another person’s pronoun. Here are some general tips:

1. If you make a mistake, correct yourself. Going on as if it did not happen is actually less respectful than making the correction. This also saves the person who was misidentified from having to correct an incorrect pronoun assumption that has now been planted in the minds of any other participants in the conversation who heard the mistake.

2. If someone else makes a mistake, correct them. It is polite to provide a correction, whether or not the person whose pronoun as misused is present, in order to avoid future mistakes and in order to correct the mistaken assumption that might now have been planted in the minds of any other participants in the conversation who heard the mistake.

3. If you aren’t sure of a person’s pronoun, ask. One way to do this is by sharing your own. “I use masculine pronouns. I want to make sure to address you correctly, how do you like to be addressed?” This may seem like a strange thing to do but a person who often experiences being addressed incorrectly may see it as a sign of respect that you are interested in getting it right.

4. When facilitating a group discussion, ask people to identify their pronouns when they go around and do introductions. This will allow everyone in the room the chance to self-identify and to get each others’ pronouns right the first time. It will also reduce the burden on anyone whose pronoun is often misidentified and may help them access the discussion more easily because they do not have to fear an embarrassing mistake.

Taken from Dean Spade

“Some Very Basic Tips for Making Higher Education More Accessible to Trans Students and Rethinking How We Talk about Gendered Bodies”
RESOURCES

Appendix C

LGBTCampus.org  Suggested Best Practices for Supporting Trans Students

Recommendations Related to Campus Records and Documents

- Have all Admissions and Registrar’s Office staff, including student staff members, attend a trans-focused allyship training. (If such a training session is not provided on your campus, work with trans advocates to develop one).
- Change software to enable students to use a name other than their legal first name on campus records, including course and grade rosters, directory listings, unofficial transcripts, advisee lists, and other documents.
- Where not specifically prevented by law, allow students to use a name other than their legal first name on campus ID cards and diplomas.
- Enable students to change the gender marker on their campus records upon their request (i.e., without a letter from a therapist or doctor and without the need to change other documents).
- Change software to enable students to indicate the pronouns they use for themselves that would appear on course and grade rosters and advisor lists. Suggested options: she, he, ze, and they.
  - For example, the University of Vermont provides these options: not marked (nothing listed), she, ze, he, they, and “prefer name only.”
- Have an easily accessible web page that details the policies and procedures related to changing names and gender markers and indicating pronouns on campus records.
- Enable students to self-identify their gender on forms.
  - Suggested wording: Gender Identity: __________________________ or, when such an open-ended question is not possible:
  - Gender Identity (choose all that apply)
    - woman
    - man
    - trans or transgender (please specify): ____________
    - another identity (please specify): __________________
  - Ideally, institutions should only ask about gender identity. But recognizing, for example, that many women’s colleges currently limit enrollment to women whose documents identify them as such, it may still be necessary to ask “sex” on admissions forms. In such cases, both “sex” (“female” and “male”) and “gender identity” should be asked.
- Critically examine if asking gender on a document is really needed. For example, is gender identity relevant to a student’s participation in a career center event?

Taken from the Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ Professionals
“Suggested Best Practices for Supporting Trans Students”
http://www.lgbtcampus.org
RESOURCES

Appendix D

Recommended Questions for the Collection of Data

University of California System

Concerning Gender Identity

The Task Force recommends a two-step question protocol for gender identity data collection. This approach was developed in 1997 by the Transgender Health Advocacy Coalition in Philadelphia, PA. The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at UC San Francisco began advocating the use of the two-step protocol in 2007, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adopted it in 2011.

This protocol involves first querying the respondent’s current gender identity, followed by a second question that asks the respondent to state their sex assigned at birth. Research has shown that, together, these two variables accurately reflect the current gender in which the respondent is living and functioning socially.

Recommended two-step question protocol:

What is your current gender identity? (only one selection is allowed)

- Male
- Female
- Trans male/Trans man
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Different identity

What sex were you assigned at birth, such as on an original birth certificate?

- Male
- Female

Why a two-step protocol? For transgender people, asking gender identity first emphasizes that this parameter tends to be more important than assigned sex at birth. A September 2012 study by Charlotte Chuck Tate, Jay N. Ledbetter, and Cris P. Youssef (Department of Psychology, San Francisco State University) demonstrated that this approach – as compared to a single question approach – provides more accurate demographic data while increasing rates of identification of transgender individuals.

Furthermore, the two-step approach minimizes confusion among and misclassification of non-transgender people who may be unfamiliar with the concept of gender identity. Research by Kristen Schilt and Jenifer L. Bratter found that 25 percent of self-identified transgender people select “transgender” when also presented with the options of “male” and “female” and when only one answer option is allowed. The addition of question two also provides the University the information needed to comply with federal reporting standards and overcoming the practice of reporting as “male” any respondent who identifies as other than “male” or “female.”

Concerning Gender Expression

The Task Force recommends a two-question survey to assess gender conformity/non-conformity for the purpose of gathering data on gender expression. Gender conformity/non-conformity would be measured by comparing answers to each of these two items to current gender identity. Those who score as gender non-conforming on one or both
Appendix D

(items would be categorized as gender non-conforming in a measure of gender expression.)

Recommended two-item protocol:

A person's appearance, style or dress may affect the way people think of them. On average, how do you think people would describe your appearance, style or dress? (Mark one answer.)

- Very feminine
- Mostly feminine
- Somewhat feminine
- Equally feminine and masculine
- Somewhat masculine
- Mostly masculine
- Very masculine

A person's mannerisms (such as the way they walk or talk) may affect the way people think of them. On average, how do you think people would describe your mannerisms? (Mark one answer.)

- Very feminine
- Mostly feminine
- Somewhat feminine
- Equally feminine and masculine
- Somewhat masculine
- Mostly masculine
- Very masculine

Concerning Sexual Orientation

Best practices recommend against including the terms “sexual orientation” or “identity” in the stem of the question to avoid confusing respondents. The protocol that the LGBT Task Force is recommending was developed by researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics, where it has undergone cognitive testing. The recommended protocol utilizes the word “consider” to match the format of common questions assessing race and ethnicity.

- Recommended protocol:
- Do you consider yourself to be:
  - Heterosexual or straight
  - Gay or lesbian
  - Bisexual

Data Collection Disclaimer

The Task Force recommends a disclaimer be included when collecting sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression data to clearly state that data will not be used in admissions or employment evaluation or decisions and that providing information is voluntary and optional.

Taken from the UC LGBT Task Force Recommendations
http://gisoi.ucsd.edu/our-work/task-force-recs.html#Collection-of-Data-on-Sexual-Or
RESOURCES

Appendix E

RECRUITMENT RESOURCES

PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITES, PHOTOS, AND LANGUAGE

Much information is conveyed through the print and web media that colleges produce (and bombard prospects with daily!). The admissions office should pay close attention to these important publications and Websites – particularly noting the images and language that are used. Are all the glossy photos of straight couples holding hands and sitting by fountains? Are there images that are LGBTQ-friendly or at least orientation neutral? Colleges that are sensitive to LGBTQ prospective students try not to use heterosexist images and language. Are all the LGBTQ campus organizations listed where other campus involvement and activities are touted? Treat LGBTQ students like you might other targeted recruitment populations (e.g., student athletes, international students, students of color). The admissions office should create materials to target LGBTQ students specifically and make sure all admission materials are LGBTQ sensitive and inclusive.

COLLEGE FAIRS AND CAMPUS VISITS

Two popular ways of learning about colleges are college fairs and campus visits. While nearly every town has a college fair where many different campuses are represented, there are currently only a few college fairs designed just for LGBTQ prospective students. These events have met with great success in the Twin Cities (MN) and the Boston area. It is predicted that such LGBTQ-specific fairs will only continue to grow in frequency and numbers over the next few years. Also, campus visits may be individually arranged (during which prospects can visit classes, tour campus, stay overnight, meet and interview with an admissions officer) or there may be larger events for prospects or those who have been accepted. In either case, admissions staff members should provide opportunities for LGBTQ students to explore campus and talk to LGBTQ members of the campus community – from current students to faculty to alumni.

Taken from W. Houston Dougherty
"Reaching Out to LGBTQ Youth through College Admissions"
https://www.campuspride.org/resources/lgbtqandcollegeadmission/

FURTHER READINGS

Diversify Diversity: Remembering Gay Students in Recruiting
by Kristy Almeida-Neveu

Some Very Basic Tips for Making Higher Education More Accessible to Trans Students and Rethinking How We Talk about Gendered Bodies
by Dean Spade

LGBTQ Applicants and Challenges for Admission: Five cases
by Benjamin S. Baum

Targeted Recruitment of GLBT Students by Colleges and Universities
by Tyler D. Cegler
RESOURCES

Appendix F

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Developing an Office-Wide Reflective Practice

1. Develop an extensive compilation of articles, essays, clippings, and book chapters.
   a. This reader should be designed to be both informational and controversial.
   b. Locate on-campus resources
   c. See Hicks and Shere’s references below as a starting point

2. Monthly seminars, lasting two hours in length, for the entire staff.
   a. Seminars should be highly experiential
   b. Topics and discussion should be grounded in the daily work and notions of the admission staff.

3. Between each session, the staff divided itself into smaller segments, or what we called “Reflection Groups,”
   that allows them to have deeper discussions in an informal setting.

REFERENCES


From Hicks and Shere (2006)

"Toward Reflective Admission Work: Part 1: Making the Case for a Transformative Approach to Admission Practice and Reflection in Action"

Journal Of College Admission"
# RESOURCES

## Appendix G

### Example Admissions Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Academic Preparation</th>
<th>Potential for Scholarship</th>
<th>Contributions to discipline</th>
<th>Insert additional eval standards</th>
<th>Basis for Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...And so forth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example Admissions Rubric - Detailed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Academic Preparation</th>
<th>Potential for Academic Success</th>
<th>Diversity of Views and Experiences</th>
<th>Leadership and Volunteer Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPA, rigor of courses (did the applicant take more challenging courses, were they the most rigorous available?), grade trends, number of hours the student worked during school (did they have to work full time thus limiting time to devote to their studies?),</td>
<td>Test scores, grade trends, relevant coursework, additional reasons you think the applicant will perform better than current GPA or test scores might indicate (participation in research or college prep programs, etc.</td>
<td>Participation in underrepresented activities/experiences in underrepresented domestic communities and/or international experience. Identifies as LGBTQ, Low income, or first generation college student; race, ethnicity, country of citizenship, state of legal residence, student, student with disability.</td>
<td>Professional, internship, and volunteer experiences; comments from references regarding leadership or work experience; applicant statement regarding what they learned from those experiences,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant 1</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
<td>Weak-Acceptable-Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...And so on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Julie Posselt
"Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping 2016 (pg 168)"


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Spade, D. (2011). Some very basic tips for making higher education more accessible to trans students and rethinking how we talk about gendered bodies. Radical Teacher, (92), 57-62.


