

Iowa College Climate Survey

The Life Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender & Straight Allied (LGBTQA) Students at
Iowa's Colleges and Universities

A Report from Iowa Pride Network

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Iowa's Colleges and Universities

By Lisa A. Gardner, Ph.D.
Ryan M. Roemer

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When referencing this document, we suggest the following citation:

Gardner, Lisa A. and Roemer, Ryan M. (2011) *Iowa College Climate Survey: The Life Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Allied (LGBTQA) Students at Iowa's Colleges and Universities*. Iowa: Iowa Pride Network.

Iowa Pride Network (IPN) works directly with LGBTQA youth to cultivate advocates and leaders who fight homophobia and transphobia and strive for social justice. Established in 2003, IPN is the state's leading education and advocacy organization for students. We work to improve the quality of life among LGBT students by reducing isolation through a statewide network of GSA clubs and coalitions and by providing leadership opportunities and organizing projects centered on social justice. For more information about our research, student leadership programs and development initiatives please visit www.iowapridenetwork.org.

Iowa Pride Network
777 Third Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

www.iowapridenetwork.org
Ph: 515-471-8062

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Key Findings:

Supportive Staff and Resources Create Safer Institutions

Colleges and universities that had staff that are viewed to be “supportive” or “very supportive” of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students had fewer students reporting verbal harassment, physical harassment, assault, and cyber-harassment. *Students whose classes included LGBT culture, history or events were more likely to report feeling safe at their college.*

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policies & Knowing How to Report Matters

Based on the survey results it is clear many respondents do not know how to report discrimination. Of students who reported being harassed or assaulted, the majority (62.6%) never informed campus officials (resident assistants, professors, counselors, campus security). Students who attend a college or university feel safer if they *know* that their institution has an anti-harassment and non-discrimination policy; and even more safe if they *know how to report* harassment and discrimination. Additionally, *policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity* also make LGBT students feel safer.

“Conservative” Campuses Perceived to be Less Friendly, Safe

Students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are less likely to think their school administration is supportive of their college Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). And compared to students at “moderate” or “liberal” colleges, students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are more likely to feel their college/university staff persons are “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive” of LGBT students. Students are also less likely to know of any staff persons that are open about being LGBT, and the students, themselves, are less likely to be open about being LGBT. In this survey, four in ten LGBTQQ respondents reported not being “out” at all or only to some people.

Harassment Occurs Where You Eat, Sleep and Learn:

Respondents reported that the most common locations of harassment were the common areas, such as student unions or dining halls; residence halls which serve as students’ homes on campus; and the classroom.

Verbal Harassment & Lack of Intervention is Common:

According to respondents, 82% to 95% of students have heard racist, sexist, homophobic comments or negative comments about gender expression from students on campus. When these comments are made, respondents say very few professors or students intervene. Specifically: 66.3% of professors and 84% of students only some of the time or never intervene when racist remarks are made; 73.9% of professors and 78.0% of students only some of the time or never intervene when sexist remarks are made; 52.0% of professors and 84% of students only some of the time or never intervene when homophobic remarks are made; and, 88.0% of professors and 90.0% of students only some of the time or never intervene when negative remarks about gender expression are made.

Unsafe Campus Climates Affect Both LGBTQQ & Straight Students:

LGBTQQ students face more physical harassment, because of sexual orientation or gender expression, and more cyber-harassment than their straight peers. Lesbians and bisexual students

are particularly uncomfortable talking to RAs and Advisors. Straight peers experience more harassment because of their gender than LGBTQQ students. Additionally, 44% of all respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment (inappropriate sexual remarks, touching) within the past year.

Feelings of Sadness, Depression & Suicide Common; LGBTQQ Students at Higher Risk

One in five students (21.0%) in the survey reported feeling sad or depressed most days or every day and 47.6% of all respondents said “yes” to the question, “have you ever had thoughts of suicide?” Of all respondents, one in ten (13.1%) students is thinking about suicide often or frequently. LGBTQQ students were 25% more likely to consider suicide than their straight peers.

Visible Support of LGBT Students is Lacking

Only 6.0% of students reported that their college had a program for LGBT Alumni and only 12.0% reported that their college included LGBT people in their advertising and materials.

Supportive State Laws Affect Students Decisions about Residency & College Climate

LGBTQQ students are twice as likely to stay in Iowa now that gay and lesbian couples have a right to marry. Most (83.0%) saw no change in student behavior on campus because of the marriage ruling, while 7.0% saw students become less LGBT friendly and 10.0% saw students on campus become more LGBT friendly.

Background

Iowans take education seriously. It is with this knowledge that Iowa Pride Network releases its first-ever Iowa College Climate Survey (ICCS), trusting that Iowa's higher education institutions will not only review this report but act to implement the recommendations within it.

As the only statewide organization in the United States that focuses on *both* high school *and* college LGBT students, we embarked upon a survey that would help fill a crucial void in our collective understanding of the contemporary college experience; much like our Iowa School Climate Surveys have shed light on Iowa LGBT students' high school experiences.

Our past surveys of high school students helped change the landscape in Iowa, how schools deal with LGBT harassment and transformed the public's understanding of the severity of the problem. The ICCS results paint a clear picture of where colleges are falling short and insights into the solutions for creating safe learning institutions for all students. This survey and the recommendations are intended to serve as a catalyst and guide for colleges, universities and their administrators, students, and community leaders.

Every educational institution has a responsibility to its students: To ensure that all have equal access to knowledge in an environment that supports and encourages personal and academic growth. Please read and act on these recommendations, and be bold in making Iowa's foundation set squarely upon a quality education.

Methods

The Iowa College Climate Survey was available on the internet via the Survey Monkey® web address: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/collegeclimatesurvey>. Persons interested in taking the survey could go online to take the survey or print out the survey and mail their responses to the Iowa Pride Network office. Notices about our on-line survey were emailed to our College Coalition, student organizations serving LGBTQQA students as well as sexuality studies departments, human rights groups and organizations focused on eliminating racism and sexism. Additionally, social media and networking websites were utilized to engage prospective students.

The survey was made up of twelve different sections. In each section the questions pertained to a specific topic, such as specific types of harassment, what type of college the student attends, and who the students are comfortable talking to about their sexual orientation or gender expression. In order to code the answers, Likert scales were used such as never (1) to always (4) or frequently (5) on either a four- or five-point scale. Data collection occurred from May through June 2009. Note that this survey uses the overall responses from all 276 participants unless otherwise noted. Where significant differences exist, they will be highlighted (for example, if LGBTQQ students' experiences are far different from the overall response findings).

The results herein describe our sample. No random sampling was used in the survey. A total of 361 students began the survey. However, the ICCS only includes the complete responses from 276 students hailing from 31 public, private and community colleges; specifically, students from each of the three state universities, 17 private colleges and 11 community colleges. Of the respondents, 134 identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning (LGBQQ) and 143 identified as straight. Of the straight respondents, 128 identified as allies of the LGBT community, while the remaining 15 identified as non-allies. Table 1 lists demographic characteristics of the overall sample. Please note that not all percentages will add up to 100% as respondents could select more than one response regarding questions of race, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Out of 276 respondents, 64.5% were female, 31.5% were male while 2.9% of students reported being transgender and 1.1% reported other. The majority reported being straight/heterosexual (58.1%), while 19.9% reported being gay, 12.0% reported being lesbian, 9.4% reported being bisexual, 2.9% reported that they were questioning and 4.0% identified as queer. There was an even distribution of student participants across grade levels except for graduate students; sophomores had slightly better representation than the other grade levels. The majority of the sample (95.7%) reported being White/European American while the other major ethnic group is American Indian or Alaskan Native. Those identifying as Hispanic/Latino represented 4.3% of student participants.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Lisa Gardner, Principal at Gardner Statistical Consulting and Associate Professor of Statistics and Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator for the College of Business and Public Administration at Drake University; Amy Williamson and Meredith MacQuigg; Iowa's supportive professors, academic advisors, counselors, administrators and specifically advisors of college LGBT student groups, who work endlessly to ensure the safety and affirmation of all students. And, finally, to Iowa's LGBTQQA students who took this survey to help us better understand what it is like to live and learn at Iowa's colleges and universities.

Demographics

Table 1

(Please note that not all percentages will add up to 100% as respondents could select more than one response regarding questions of race, gender/gender identity and/or sexual orientation)

	LGBTQQ	Allies	Non-Allies	Overall
<u>Race</u>				
White	97.00%	3.90%	100.00%	95.70%
African-American/Black	3.00%	93.80%	0%	4.00%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.20%	1.60%	0%	1.80%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3.00%	3.90%	0%	3.30%
Hispanic/Latino	3.70%	3.90%	13.30%	4.30%
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	47.00%	17.20%	13.30%	31.50%
Female	44.80%	82.00%	86.70%	64.50%
Transgender	6.00%	0.80%	0%	2.90%
Other gender identities	2.20%	0%	0%	1.10%
<u>Sexual Orientation</u>				
Gay	41.00%	0%	0%	19.90%
Lesbian	24.60%	0%	0%	12.00%
Bisexual	19.40%	0%	0%	9.40%
Queer ¹	8.20%	0%	0%	4.00%
Questioning ²	6.00%	0%	0%	2.90%
Straight and an Ally of LGBT People	0.70%	100%	0%	46.40%
Straight and NOT an Ally of LGBT People	0%	0%	100%	5.40%
<u>Grade</u>				
Freshman	22.40%	24.20%	20.00%	23.40%
Sophomore	23.90%	21.10%	53.30%	24.10%
Junior	23.10%	18.80%	13.30%	20.50%
Senior	21.60%	26.60%	13.30%	23.40%
Graduate School	9.00%	9.40%	0%	8.60%

¹ **Queer** - Reclaimed derogatory slang for the sexual minority community. Not accepted by all the sexual minority community, especially older members. Sometimes used for an even wider spectrum of marginalized or radicalized groups and individuals.

² **Questioning** - For this survey, "questioning" refers to a person who is questioning their sexual orientation

Key Findings

A majority (68.1%) of the students who completed this survey previously attended an Iowa high school. We asked the students in the survey about their feelings of safety in high school versus college. A majority (66.3%) shared that they feel safer at college than they did in high school. When LGBTQQ students were specifically asked to classify their college as conservative, moderate, liberal or apathetic, the majority (41.4%) responded “moderate”.

It appears that college seems to be a place where “it gets better”—for those LGBTQQ and straight allied students who are often targeted in high school. To see if this was true we asked an array of questions delving into what everyday life is like on college campuses in Iowa and their feelings about themselves and of the student body in general.

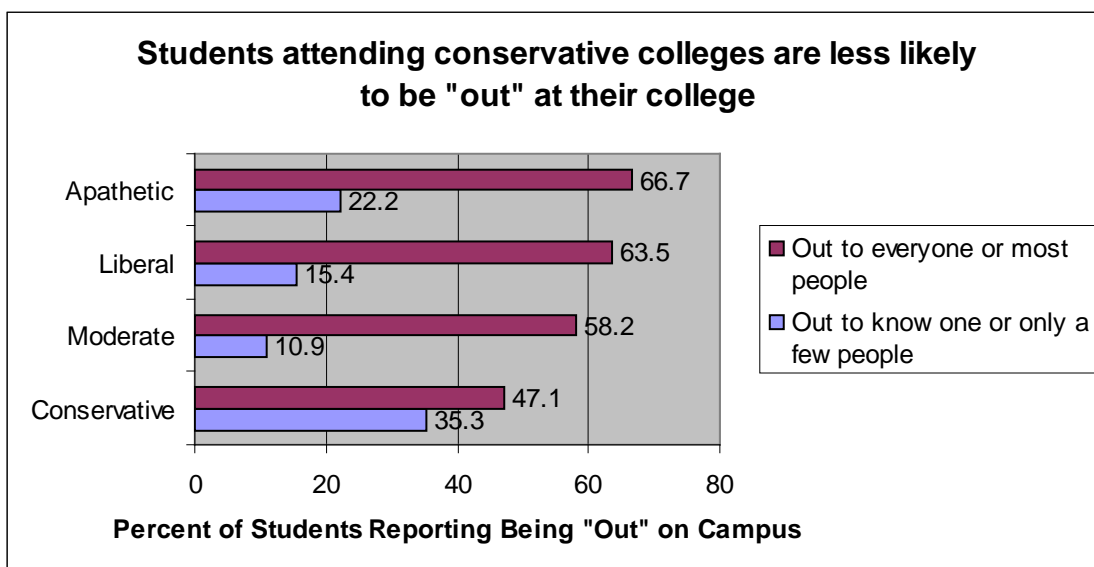
Feelings of Belonging & Comfort, Safety & Respect

Feelings of Belonging & Comfort

The majority of students (86.9%) reported feeling that they have a supportive group of friends at college. We asked them how many hours per week they spend participating in extracurricular activities to get a better picture of their level of involvement and feelings of belonging. Twenty-six percent of students reported spending between three and five hours on college related activities and 28.8% spending between one to two hours on activities outside the university.

We specifically asked LGBTQQ students about their comfort level in being out to others regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity, how open they are talking to others about LGBT issues, raising LGBT issues in class and taking a same gender date to a campus function. The majority (59.4%) were out to most people or everyone they knew, while 40.6% weren’t out at all or only to some people. Students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are less likely to be out at their college or university (See Table 2).

Table 2



We also asked all respondents about their degree of comfort in talking to their professor, roommate, college counselor, college health provider, coaches, resident assistant or academic advisor about LGBT issues.

Comfort in talking to others about LGBT issues:

- 37.9% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their coach
- 34.6% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their academic advisor
- 28.1% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their resident assistant
- 20.5% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their professor
- 20.3% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their college health provider
- 18.1% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their college counselor
- 13.3% would be somewhat uncomfortable to *very uncomfortable* talking to their roommate
- Lesbians and bisexual students are particularly uncomfortable talking to coaches, resident assistants and academic advisors.

Comfort in raising LGBT issues in class:

- 20.3% would be somewhat to *very uncomfortable* raising LGBT issues in class
- 23.3% were neutral in how they felt about raising LGBT issues in class
- 56.3 would be comfortable to very comfortable raising LGBT issues in class

Comfort in taking a same gender date to a campus function:

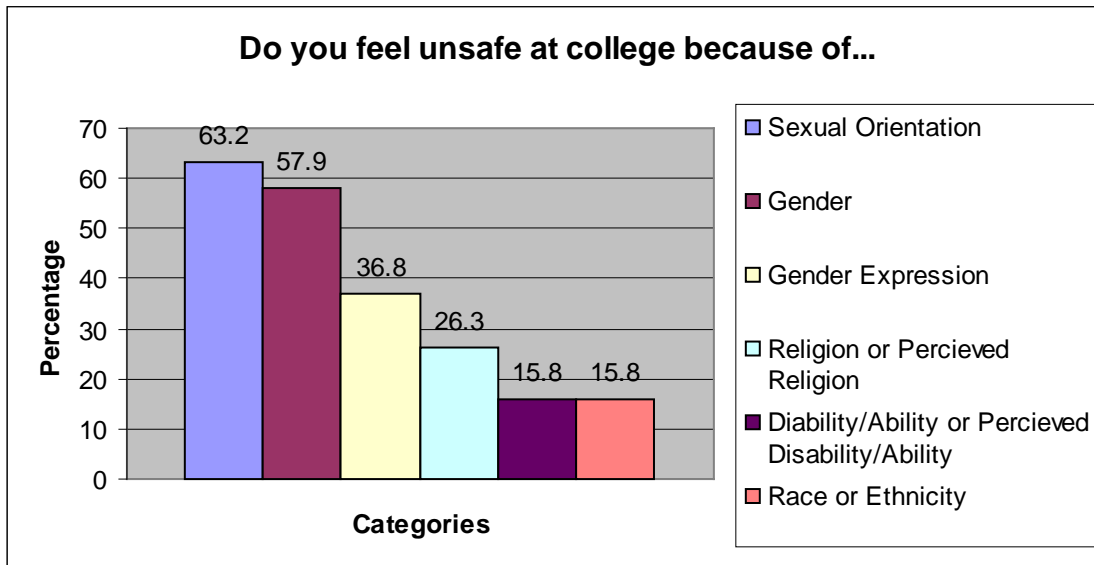
- 22.0% would be somewhat comfortable to *very uncomfortable* taking a same gender date to a campus function
- 15.2% were neutral in how they felt about taking a same gender date to a campus function
- 62.9% would be comfortable to very comfortable taking a same gender date to a campus function

Feelings of Respect & Safety

Fifty-three percent of respondents reported feeling that students at their college or university treat one another with respect or are very respectful toward one another. The remaining 47% remained neutral or felt that students were disrespectful or very disrespectful toward one another. A large majority—91.7% answered “yes” to the question, “do you feel safe at your college or university?” To assess the feelings of those who answered “no,” we asked students whether they felt unsafe at their colleges or universities because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, race/ethnicity, because of an actual or perceived disability and/or because of their religion or their perceived religion. Students were presented with a listing of these items and were asked to check all that apply.

As seen in Table 3, Students most commonly reported that they felt unsafe in their colleges because of their sexual orientation or their gender – 63.2% reported that they felt unsafe in their colleges because of their sexual orientation while 57.9% reported that they felt unsafe because of their gender.

Table 3



It should be noted that the percentage of LGBTQQ students feeling unsafe in college because of their sexual orientation was 77.0% higher than the share of their straight peers who felt unsafe. They were also 13.0% more likely than their straight peers to feel unsafe because of their gender expression. Straight students, however, were 21.0% more likely than their LGBTQQ peers to feel unsafe at college because of their gender.

Feelings of Depression & Suicide in College

With most students describing themselves as feeling safe on campus, feeling connected to a group of friends and spending about a fourth of their time on extracurricular activities, it would seem that most respondents are doing relatively well. However, the following statistics regarding feelings of sadness, depression and suicide raised warning signs.

Feelings of Sadness and Depression

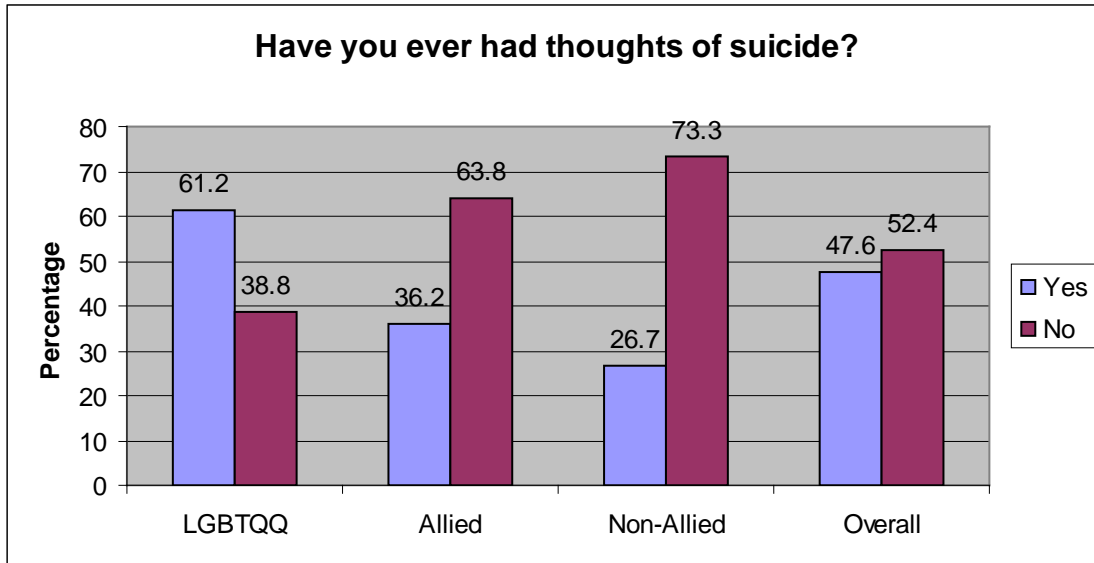
We asked students how often they felt sad or depressed. Approximately 12.0% reported never feeling sad or depressed, while the majority of students (45.1%) reported rarely having these feelings. Approximately 22.0% sometimes felt these feelings while 21.0% reported feeling sad or depressed most days or every day.

Thoughts of Suicide

When asked specifically, “have you ever had thoughts of suicide?” 47.6% said “yes” while 52.4% said “no.” When we broke out the numbers between LGBTQQ students and those that identified as heterosexual, *LGBTQQ students were 25.0% more likely to report having considered suicide than their straight peers* (See Table 4).

Of those that had thought about suicide in the past year, most (44.6%) rarely think about it, 42.4% are sometimes thinking about it while 13.1% are thinking about suicide often or frequently.

Table 4



Biased Remarks in College

We also asked students about biased remarks in schools, specifically racist, sexist and homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression.

Racist Remarks

Of respondents reporting racist remarks:

- 81.6% of students reported hearing racist remarks from students
- 17.9% of students reported hearing racist remarks from professors or teaching staff
- 14.9% of students reported hearing racist remarks from other college staff
- 32.2% of students reported hearing racist remarks from community members at college/university functions

Students reported that 17.0% of racist comments frequently or often come from other students. Only 16.0% of students intervene to stop their peers from using racist comments in front of them. Additionally, professors or staff intervene frequently or often only a third of the time (34.0%) when racist remarks are made in their presence. Nearly a third (31.2%) reportedly never intervened and 35.1% rarely or only sometimes intervened, according to respondents.

Sexist Remarks

Of respondents reporting sexist remarks:

- 95.1% of students reported hearing sexist remarks from students
- 37.5% of students reported hearing sexist remarks from professors of teaching staff
- 33.7% of students reported hearing sexist remarks from other college staff
- 49.0% of students reported hearing sexist remarks from community members at college/university functions

The majority of students (71.1%) hear sexist remarks (such as someone commenting about women's bodies or talk of women being inferior to men) frequently or often from other students. The majority of students (77.6%) rarely or never intervene when these comments are made in their presence, according to respondents. The majority (73.9%) of professors or staff only intervene some of the time or never when sexist remarks are made in front of them.

Homophobic Remarks

Of respondents reporting homophobic remarks:

- 95.1% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from students
- 28.8% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from professors or teaching staff
- 31.0% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from other college staff
- 43.5% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from community members at college/university functions

The majority (62.8%) reported hearing homophobic remarks from other students often or frequently. Incidents of homophobic remarks often appear to go unchallenged. When homophobic remarks are made in their presence, over half (52%) of the students surveyed reported that faculty/staff only some of the time or never intervene. Students were less likely to intervene when homophobic remarks are made. When homophobic remarks are made, almost all (83.6%) of the students in our survey reported that other students never intervene or only intervene some of the time.

Negative Remarks about Gender Expression

Of respondents reporting negative remarks about gender expression:

- 84.1% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from students
- 42.5% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from professors of teaching staff
- 37.5% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from other college or university staff
- 44.1% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from community members at college/university functions

In our survey we also asked students how often they heard remarks about a person not acting in traditionally gender-specified ways (not acting “masculine” or “feminine” enough). Thirty-seven percent of students report hearing negative remarks about gender expression often or frequently, but only intervene often or frequently 10.0% of the time when these comments are made in their presence. Students also reported that professors or teaching staff were inactive when it came to remarks about gender expression. Eighty-eight percent (87.6%) of professors or teaching staff intervene only some of the time or never when comments about students’ not acting “masculine” or “feminine” are made.

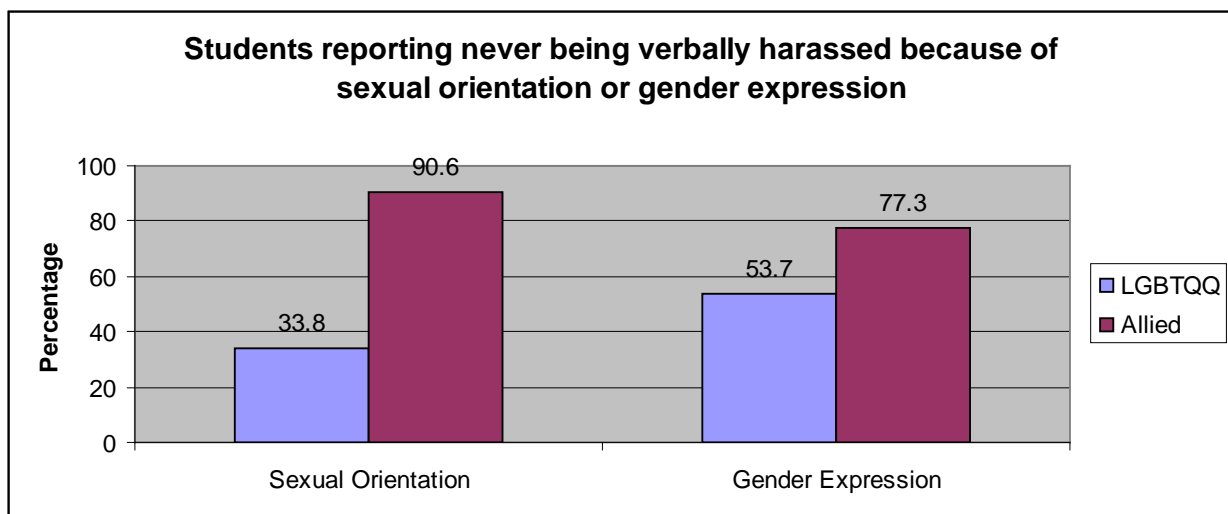
Experiences with Harassment, Assault, Demeaning Behavior & Where it Takes Place

Verbal Harassment

We asked students how often they were verbally harassed in the last year because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, race/ethnicity, because of an actual or perceived disability and/or because of their religion or their perceived religion.

Out of all the categories listed above, only those reporting verbal harassment because of sexual orientation or gender expression, experienced verbal harassment at a much higher level than the overall sample. Ninety percent of straight allied students reported never being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation while only 33.0% of LGBTQQ students said the same thing. Additionally, 77.0% of straight allied students reported never being harassed because of their gender expression, while only 54.0% of LGBTQQ students could say the same thing. (Table 5)

Table 5



Verbal Harassment vs. Supportive Environment

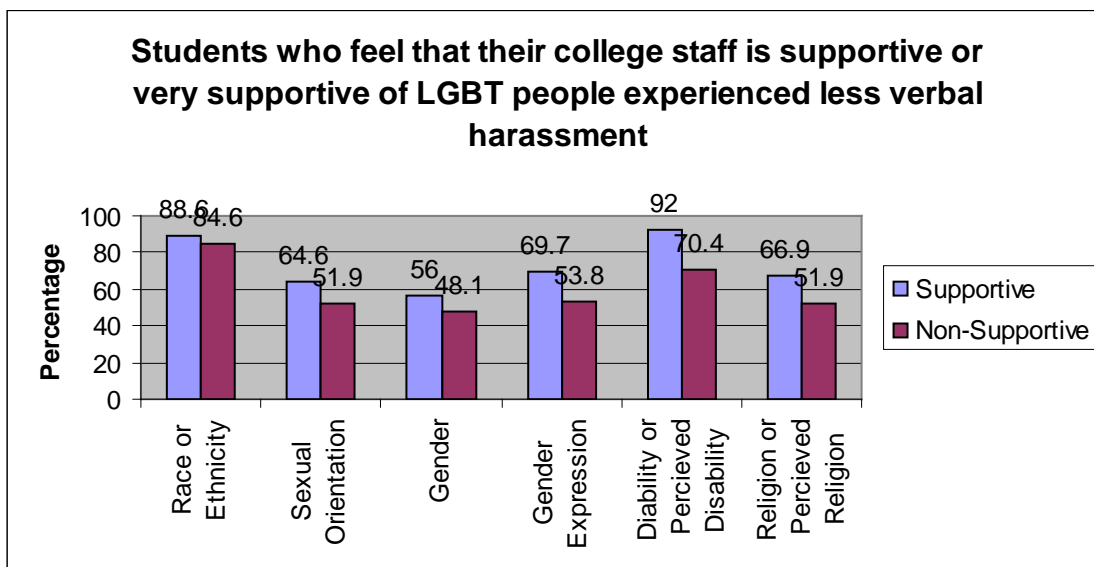
We wanted to know if verbal harassment was less likely to occur in supportive environments. Students who answered either “*supportive*” or “*very supportive*” to the question “how supportive do you feel your college/university staff persons are of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students at your college/university?” were more likely to never experience verbal harassment compared with students who answered that they felt their college/university

staff were either “*unsupportive*” or “*very unsupportive*” of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students (See Table 6).

In colleges where students feel that their college staff is supportive of LGBT people, in the last year, respondents were more likely to never be verbally harassed compared to students in colleges who say they feel staff is unsupportive of LGBT people. Specifically, students with supportive college staff are:

- 12.7% more likely to *never* be verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation
- 8.0% more likely to *never* be verbally harassed because of their gender
- 15.9% more likely to *never* be verbally harassed because of their gender expression
- 21.6% more likely to *never* be verbally harassed because of their disability/ability
- 15.0% more likely to *never* be verbally harassed because of their religion

Table 6



Physical Harassment & Assault

We asked students how often they were physically harassed (pushed or shoved) or physically assaulted (punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) in the last year because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, race/ethnicity, because of an actual or perceived disability and/or because of their religion or their perceived religion. Across all categories most had never experienced harassment or assault, except:

- 12.1% of LGBTQQ students experienced some experience with physical harassment because of sexual orientation;
- 7.5% of LGBTQQ students experienced some physical harassment because of their gender expression; and
- 11.7% of straight allied students experienced some kind of physical harassment in the past year because of their gender.

Physical Harassment & Assault vs. Supportive Environment

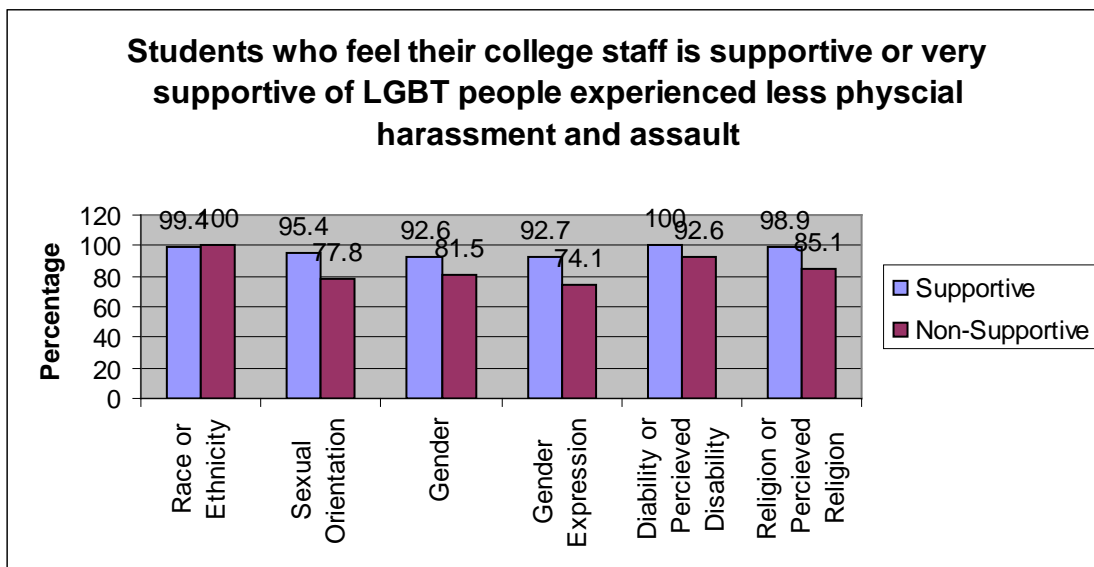
We wanted to know if supportive environments decreased physical harassment and assault. Students who answered either “*supportive*” or “*very supportive*” to the question “how supportive do you feel your college/university staff persons are of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students at your college/university?” were more likely to never experience physical harassment and assault compared with students who answered that their college/university staff were either “*unsupportive*” or “*very unsupportive*” of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students (See Table 8).

In colleges where students feel that their college staff is supportive of LGBT people, in the last year, respondents were more likely to never be physically harassed compared to students in colleges who say they feel staff is unsupportive of LGBT people. Specifically, students with supportive college staff are:

- 17.6% more likely to *never* be physically harassed because of their sexual orientation;
- 11.1% more likely to *never* be physically harassed because of their gender;
- 18.6% more likely to *never* be physically harassed because of their gender expression;
- 7.4% more likely to *never* be physically harassed because of their disability/ability; and
- 13.7% more likely to *never* be physically harassed because of their religion.

In regards to physical assault, survey participants indicated that they have rarely experienced such violence. However, in colleges where students feel that their college staff is supportive of LGBT people, in the last year, respondents were 6.3% more likely to *never* be physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation compared to students in colleges who say they feel staff is unsupportive of LGBT people (See Table 7).

Table 7



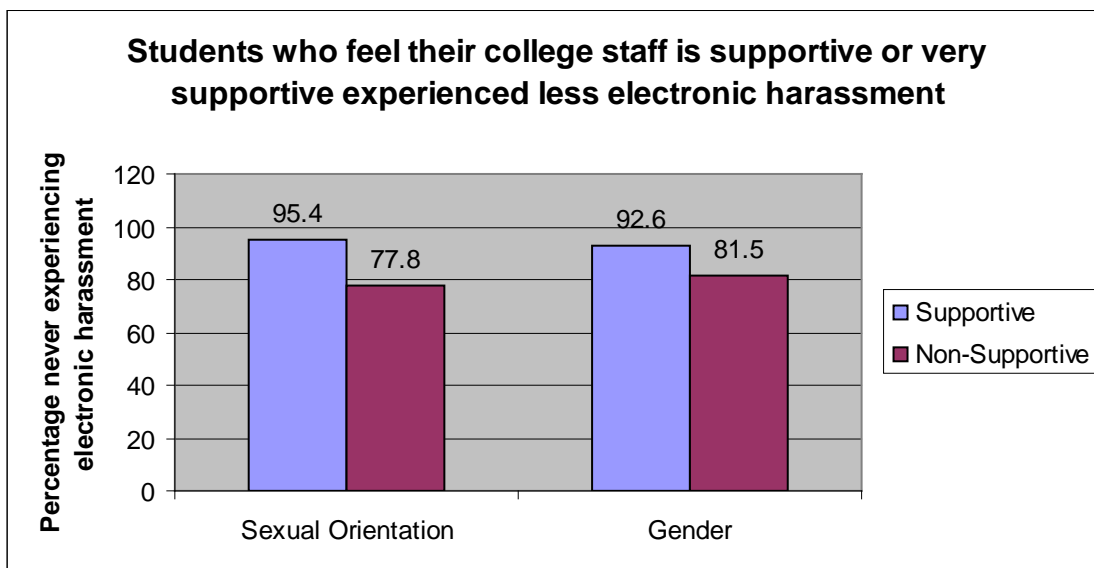
Threatening Emails/Texts

We asked students how often they received harassing or threatening emails or text messages in the last year because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, race/ethnicity, because of an actual or perceived disability and/or because of their religion or their perceived religion. Across all categories most had never experienced harassment or assault. However, 19.3% of LGBTQQ students were more likely than their straight peers to have received threatening emails or text messages because of their sexual orientation.

Cyber-Harassment vs. Supportive Environment

We wanted to know if supportive environments decreased cyber-harassment. We asked the question, “How supportive do you feel your college/university staff persons are of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students at your college/university?” Students who answered either “*supportive*” or “*very supportive*” were more likely to never experience cyber-harassment compared with students who answered that their college/university staff were either “*unsupportive*” or “*very unsupportive*” of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students (See Table 8).

Table 8



In colleges where students feel that their college staff is supportive of LGBT people, in the last year, respondents were more likely to *never* receive harassing or threatening emails or text messages because of their sexual orientation or gender compared to students in colleges who say they feel staff is unsupportive of LGBT people. Specifically, students with supportive college staff are:

- 21.6% more likely to *never* receive harassing or threatening emails or text messages because of their sexual orientation
- 6.3% more likely to *never* receive harassing or threatening emails or text messages because of their gender

Sexually Harassed

We asked students in the past year how often they had been sexually harassed (experienced inappropriate sexual remarks, touching). Fifty-six percent of those responding to the question said they had never been sexually harassed. This means that 44% have experienced sexual harassment within the past year.

Rumors or Lies

Students were asked how often in the past year others told lies about them, spread rumors about them or tried to make others dislike them. Sixteen percent of students experienced this type of harassment often or frequently; 43.3% only rarely or sometimes experienced having rumors or lies spread about them; while 39.7% percent reported not having this happen to them in the past year.

Stolen Property

The majority (68.5%) of students reported never having their property damaged or stolen, with nearly 31.5% saying that it only happens rarely or sometimes.

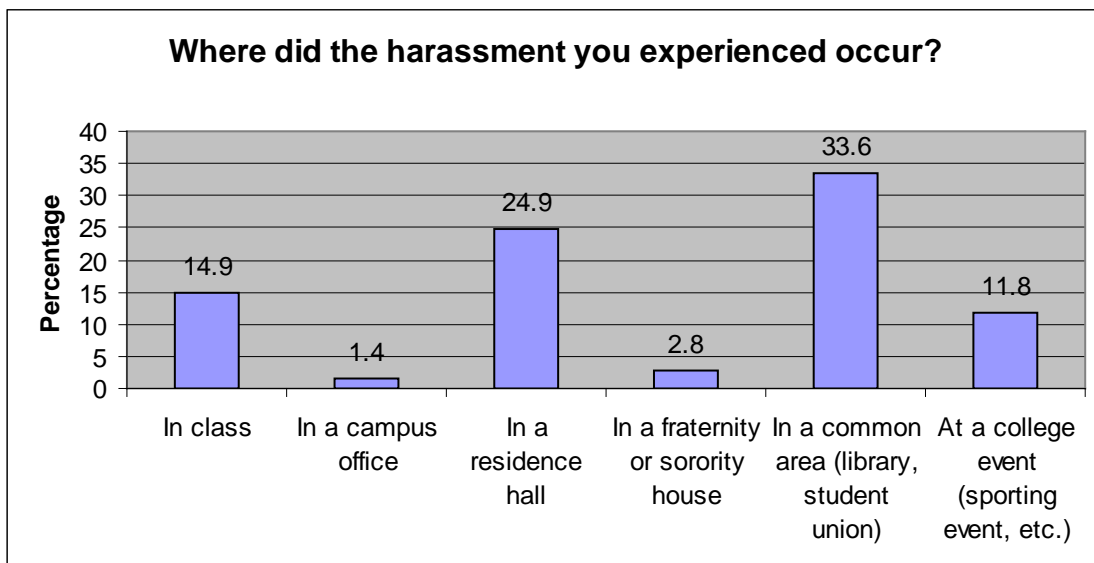
Alienation

Fifty-six percent of students reported some incident of having other students leave them out of things on purpose within the past year with 11% of students reported that it happens frequently.

Common Locations of Harassment

Knowing where harassment occurs on campus can better equip colleges and universities to be proactive about monitoring areas and enforcing university anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies. We asked students who reported that they had experienced harassment (47.4%) where the harassment had taken place on campus. A third (33.6%) of these students reported that the common areas, such as a library or student union, are the most frequent places they are harassed. A quarter of students (24.9%) said that their residence hall is the second area on campus where they are most harassed followed by classrooms on campus (See Table 9).

Table 9



Policies for Reporting & Reporting to Officials

The best way for colleges and universities to stop harassment and assault of its students is to have an informed student body that know how and when to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. Based on the survey results it is clear that many respondents simply do not know how to report discrimination.

Reporting to Campus Officials

Of the students who had reported being harassed or assaulted (76.8%), the majority (62.6%) never informed campus officials (resident assistants, professors, counselors or campus security), and only about 14.2% told campus officials about harassment or assault when it occurred.

Reporting Procedure for Harassment

When asked, “Does your college/university have a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of harassment?” the majority (70.5%) said yes while 28.8% said they didn’t know.

Reporting Harassment Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

When asked, “Does your college/university have a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of harassment specifically related to sexual orientation or gender identity?” the majority (48%) said they didn’t know, while 45% said that their college or university did have such a policy. Seven percent said that their school had no such policy. *Students who know there is a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity were 10% more likely to report feeling safe at their college or university.*

Knowing How to Report Incidents of Harassment

The majority of students (54%) said they did know how to report incidents of harassment, with 46% saying they did not.

Reporting Procedure for Discrimination

When asked, “Does your college/university have a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of discrimination?” the majority (60%) said yes while nearly 39% said they didn’t know. About 1% said that their school had no policy for reporting incidents of discrimination.

Reporting Procedure for Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

When asked, “Does your college/university have a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of discrimination specifically related to sexual orientation or gender identity?” the majority (55%) said they didn’t know, while 38% said that their college or university did have such a policy. Nearly 7% said that their school had no such policy. *Students who know there is a policy or procedure for reporting incidents of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity were 17% more likely to report feeling safe at their college or university.*

Do you know how to report incidents of discrimination?

The majority of students (52.5%) said they did not know how to report incidents of discrimination, with 47.5% saying they did know how to report discrimination. *Students who know how to report incidents of discrimination were 7% more likely to report feeling safe at their college or university.*

LGBT Resources and Support in College:

Resources and support in college are crucial tools for all students who are seeking to gain a higher education in a new and diverse environment. Resources that reflect and affirm all students are important in helping students feel safe.

Classes and Books

We asked all students taking the survey if within the past year any of their classes included LGBT culture, history or events; 48.5% said yes and 45.5% said no, 6.0% were not sure. We then asked the students who had been in a class where LGBT issues were discussed if those representations were very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative or very negative. Thirty-seven percent of all students felt that the representations were very positive; 35.0% felt representations were somewhat positive and 26.0% felt neutral. About 2.0% felt that representations were somewhat negative. No one felt that representations were very negative. *Students whose classes included LGBT culture, history or events were 7% more likely to report feeling safe at their college or university.*

Textbooks & Library Books Containing LGBT Culture, History or Events

The majority (50.0%) reported that their textbooks contain information about LGBT culture, history and events; 42.5% said their textbooks contained no such information and 7.5% were unsure. We also asked if there were any books or other resources in their college/university library that contained information about LGBT culture, history or events. Most (73.9%) said their library contained this material, 4.5% said their library did not contain this information while 21.6% were not sure if their library held these resources.

Website Access Regarding LGBT Culture, History or Events

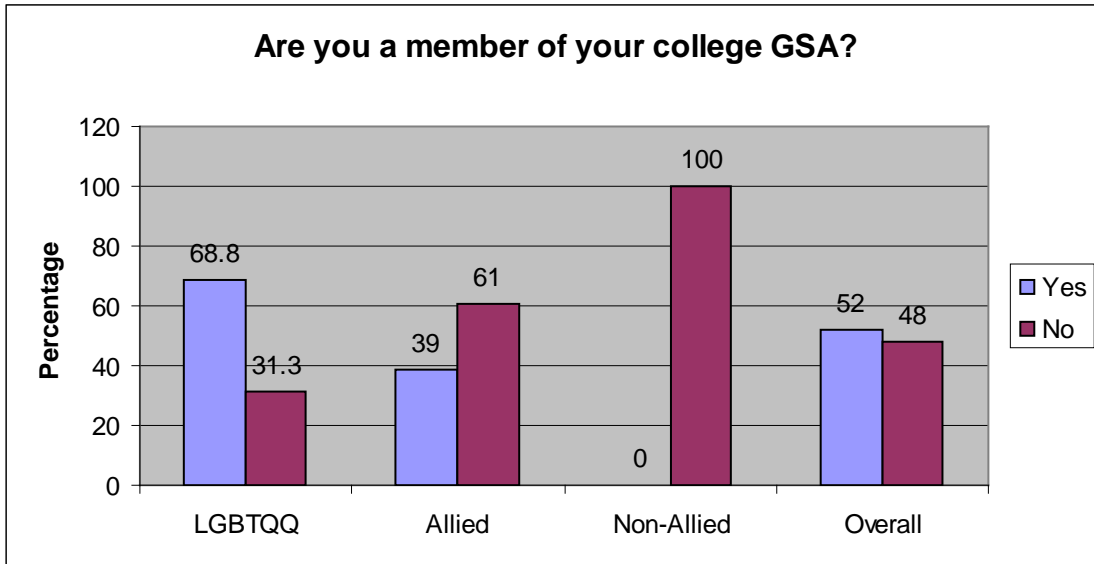
About 22.4% of students responded that they didn't know whether their college blocked access while a majority (63.4%) said that their school did not block access; 14.2% of students indicated that their school does block access to information about LGBT culture, history or events.

Student Clubs (Gay-Straight Alliances/LGBT Groups)

Gay-Straight Alliances and/or LGBT Groups can play a crucial role in the healthy development of LGBT and straight allied students. The student-run clubs provide a safe place for students to meet, support each other, and work to make the campus more inclusive and safe. Many GSAs function as a support group and provide safety and confidentiality to students who are struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity. Indeed, the majority of students (84.4%) reporting attending campus GSA meetings describe the main purpose of the GSA as "social support and networking."

We asked all participants if their school had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or diversity club with an LGBTQ component; 81.2% reported that their school did have such a group; 11.2% did not know if their school had such a group with nearly eight percent (7.6%) reported their school does not have a group. The majority (52.0%) said they were members of the GSA, while 48% said they were not. LGBTQ students were nearly 30% (29.8%) more likely to be members of the GSA than their straight allied peers (68.8% vs. 39%) and 56% reported attending the meetings often or always, indicating how important GSAs are for LGBTQ students (See Table 10).

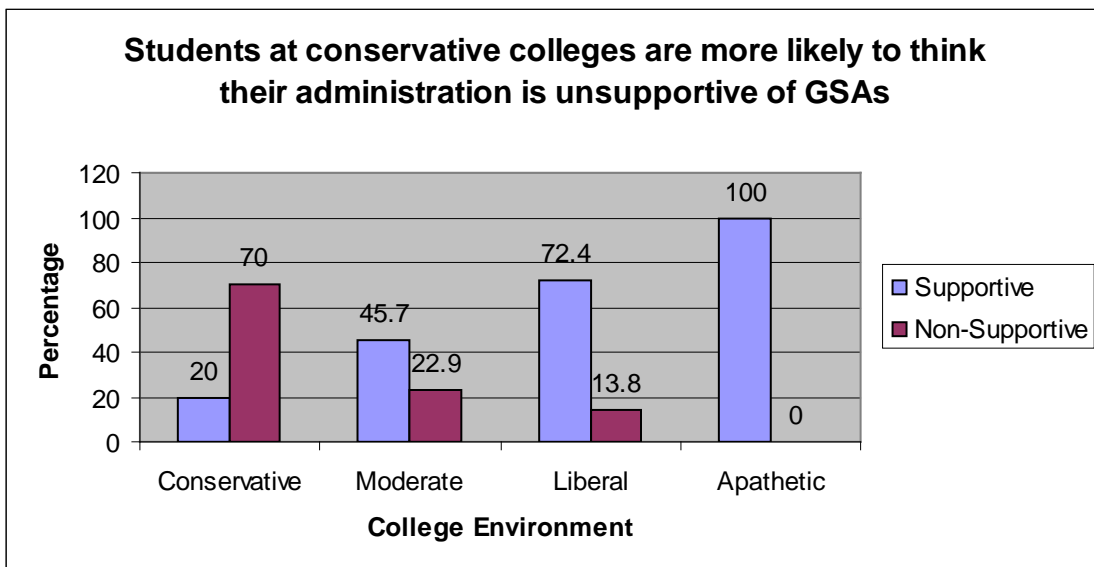
Table 10



Administration Support of GSA

When student GSA members were asked if they felt their GSA was supported by their college’s administration, the majority (59.8%) said yes, while 20.5% said no and 19.7% said they weren’t sure or did not know. Students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are less likely to think their school administration is supportive of their GSA (See Table 11):

Table 11

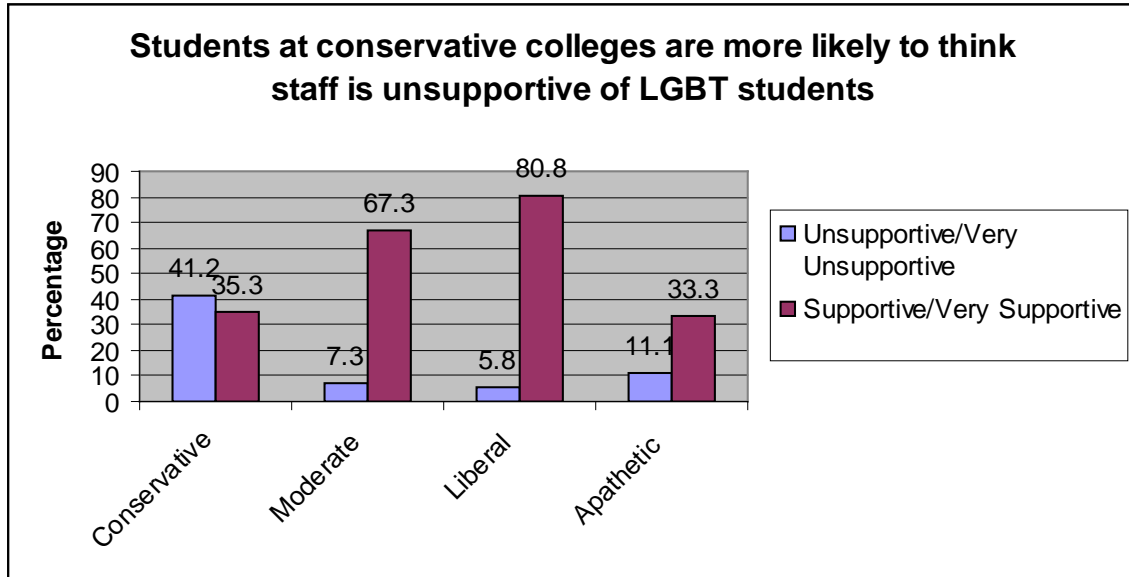


Supportive and “Out” Staff

When asked to describe how supportive they felt college or university staff people are of LGBT people at their college or university, the majority (45.7%) responded that staff is “supportive,” with 17.8% describing them as “very supportive.” Twenty-seven percent weren’t sure and about 9.5% said staff was “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive.” As compared to students at moderate

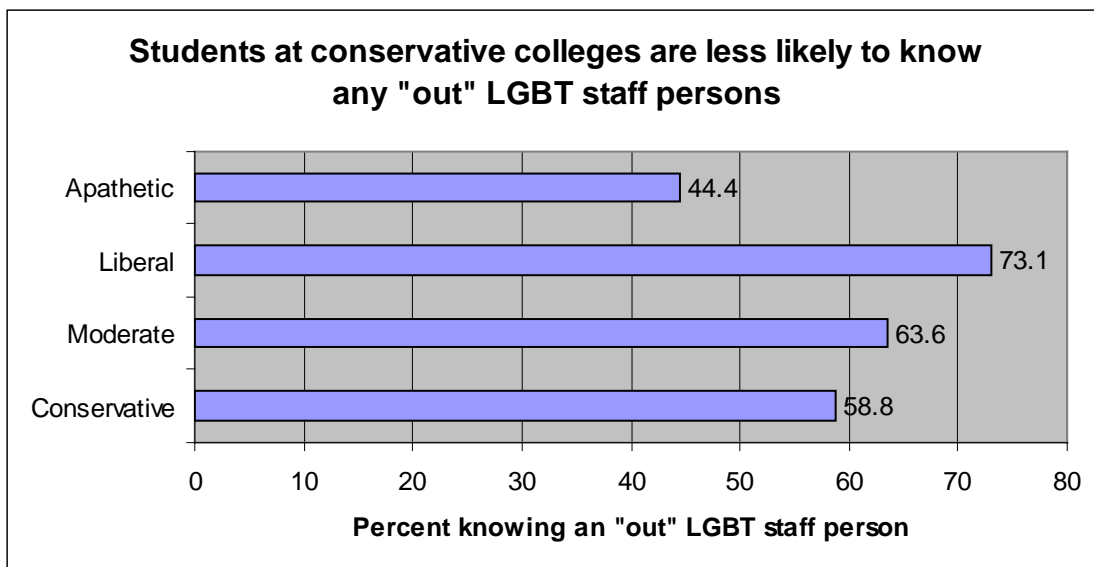
or liberal colleges, students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are more likely to feel their college/university staff persons are “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive” of LGBT students (See Table 12)

Table 12



The majority of all students (55.8%) reported that they knew of staff persons at the college who are open about being LGBT; 44.2% said that they knew of no “out” LGBT faculty or staff. LGBTQQ students were 9.0% more likely (65.0% vs. 56.0%) than their straight peers to know of out LGBT staff. As compared to students at “moderate” or “liberal” colleges, students attending what they perceive to be “conservative” colleges are less likely to know of any staff persons that are open about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (See Table 13).

Table 13



Visible Support of LGBT People

How colleges portray LGBTQ students in college admission materials and other promotional collateral sends clear signals to LGBTQ students about how the college or university views them and their role in the institutional fabric. We asked students taking the survey if their college has a program for LGBT alumni. The majority, 64.0% said they didn't know while 30.0% said that they knew their college or university did not have such a program. Only 6.0% of students indicated that their school had a program for LGBT alumni.

Similarly, the majority (46.0%) of students indicated that they didn't know if their school's admission and advertising material include LGBT people while 42.0% knew that their school did not include LGBT representations in their advertising material. Only 12.0% of students reported their school including LGBT people in their advertising and materials.

Facilities

Transgender students are some of the most overlooked individuals on campus. Many transgender individuals deal with a host of issues when it comes to safety and comfort. Beyond dealing with confused roommates, locker rooms and gyms, bathrooms are one area where schools can start to provide support and access. We asked students if their college had gender neutral bathrooms. The majority, 70.7% said their school did not have gender neutral bathrooms while 16.5% said that their school did have such facilities. About 13% did not know if gender neutral bathrooms were on campus.

Educational Achievements and Aspirations

A student's knowledge that their college or university is looking out for them and their safety, while providing resources and support as they grow may determine their ability to learn. We asked students in our survey if they had ever skipped class and if so how many times they had skipped class in the past year because they felt unsafe. Three-fourths of students reported skipping class within the past year, 14.0% of them because they felt unsafe going to class.

The majority of students (80.0%) look forward to going to class. Most (45.7%) described their grades in the past year as above average and 27.9% described them as excellent; 21.7% described their grades as just average with only 4.7% describing their grades as below average or failing. In addition to reporting that they received above average or excellent grades and looking forward to class, a majority (57.6%) stated that they expect to complete a graduate degree (Master's degree, Ph.D., M.D.).

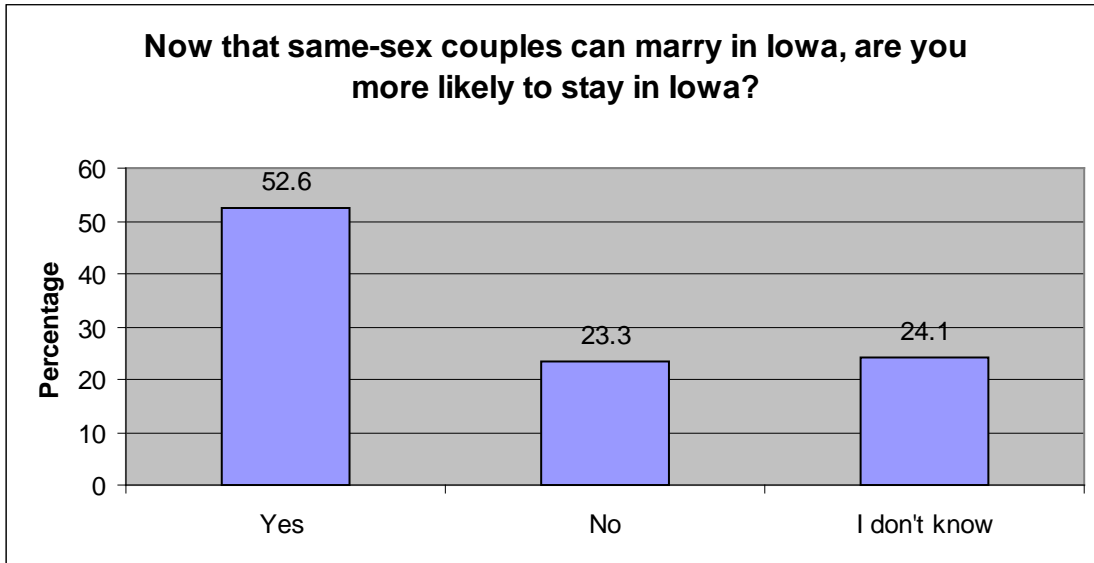
How Supportive State Laws Affect Students Decisions about Residency & College Climate

While a college or university can provide resources and support and create a welcoming climate, students are often looking at the state where they attend college and determining if the state has taken measures to support them and their future families once they leave their college campuses. This is no different for LGBTQ students.

Supportive State Law & Residency

We asked specifically, “now that same-sex couples can marry in Iowa, are you more likely to stay in Iowa?” The majority (52.6%) said yes, while 23.3% said “no.” About a quarter (24.1%) of students were not sure. Note that *LGBTQQ students are more than twice as likely to stay in Iowa because of the court ruling allowing gays and lesbians the right to marry* (See Table 14).

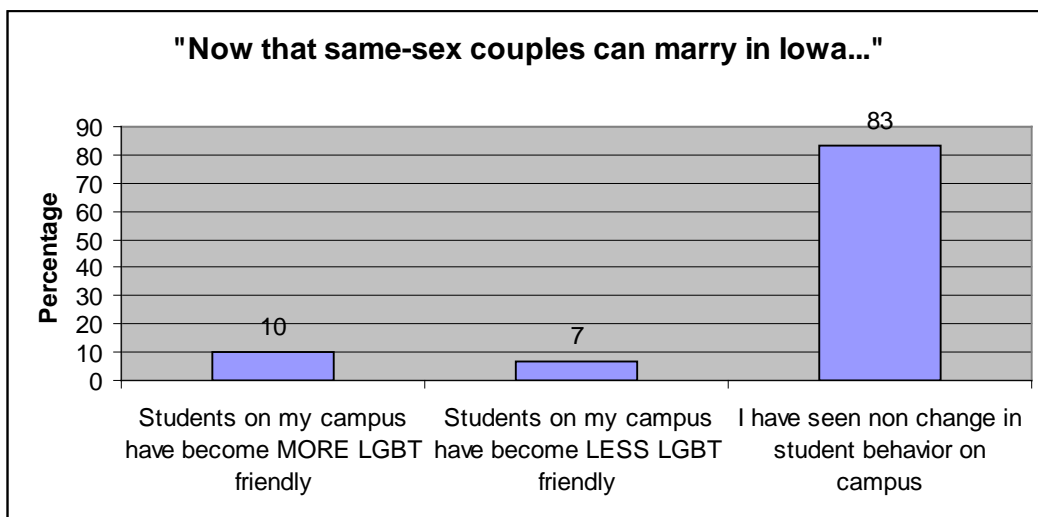
Table 14



Supportive State Law & Campus Climate

We also wanted to know if the marriage ruling had affected campus climates. We asked, “Now that same-sex couples can marry in Iowa...” and left it up to them to tell us if their campus had become more or less LGBT friendly or if it had experienced no change. The vast majority (83.0%) saw no change in student behavior on campus while 7.0% saw students become less LGBT friendly and 10.0% saw students on campus become more LGBT friendly (See Table 15).

Table 15



Conclusion:

The results of this survey show that while many LGBTQQ and straight allied students view college to be a place of opportunity and safety, many also continue to deal with negative campus climates and a lack of resources and support.

Recommendations:

Our results indicate that there is work to be done in Iowa's colleges and universities to create safe climates for all students, including LGBTQQA students. The following recommendations, if adopted, can help make a major difference across Iowa in providing a safe and supportive college environment for all college students.

Colleges and universities must adopt, meaningfully implement and effectively enforce inclusive anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies. *Specifically:*

- Policies that are inclusive of LGBTQQ people must be adopted
- Implementation includes training on the policies and processes for reporting
- Reporting methods must be clear, easy to use and accessible (electronic, etc.)
- Students, faculty and staff must understand how to report incidents of harassment and discrimination
- Investigators (RA's, Professors, Advisors, Campus Police, etc.) must understand their role in receiving and investigating reports of harassment and discrimination, including those involving sexual orientation and gender identity
- An on-going information campaign should be created, coordinated amongst student organizations and administration, to increase understanding of how to report, with resources for students, faculty/staff and the public

College and university administration, faculty, staff, students and community members must intervene when bias and hate occur, wherever they occur, every time. *Specifically:*

- Colleges and universities must create an environment where all feel empowered to intervene and stop incidents of bias and hate
 - Make clear everyone's role in ending bias and hate on campus
 - Educate how to name it, know it and stop hate and bias when it happens
 - Provide instruction on appropriate ways to intervene
- Students, faculty/staff and community members understand the consequences of harassing and/or discriminatory behavior
- Utilize student organizations, such as the GSA/LGBT groups and other minority organizations to assist in developing and conducting trainings
- Engage community organizations and the public to expand the goal of ending hate and bias on campus to include the local community
- Create a larger apparatus of support within the institution, including dorms, RAs, fraternities and sororities, coaches and common areas to develop messaging and ensure that students are receptive and adopt it

Colleges and universities must exhibit on-going institutional support for LGBTQQ students. *Specifically through:*

- **Student Engagement**
 - LGBTQQ students should be sought out to gauge feelings of support and safety; campus GSA/LGBT groups need to be utilized; LGBTQQ students must be instrumental in developing policies and practices
 - Civil campus dialogues that bring together LGBTQQ and non-LGBTQQ students need to take place regularly within residence halls and common areas such as student unions and libraries
- **Data**
 - Colleges and Universities need to collect climate data and use it to make decisions about programming and training; Institutions should review the data and modify programming, resources and support based on data
- **Resources and Support**
 - **Classes and Books**
Classes and libraries need to include information about LGBT culture, history and events and access to websites that contain this information must also be available.
 - **Campus Facilities**
Gender neutral housing options and bathrooms must be available. A campus LGBT center and/or and LGBT Students Services office should also be established to provide resources for LGBTQQ students and serve as a hub for on-going efforts to reduce homophobia and transphobia
 - **Extracurricular Support**
Minority representation in student government, university committees, and other institutional bodies should be equitable across class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. Colleges and universities must also commit to inclusive student organization recognition policies
 - **Counseling Services and Healthcare**
Campus counseling and healthcare resources must reflect the diversity of the LGBTQQ community and staff must be prepared to assist LGBTQQ students. Resources for transgender students are especially needed along with comprehensive suicide prevention efforts
 - **Marketing, Recruitment and Alumni**
Marketing and recruitment materials need to include LGBTQQ students and reflect them in admission materials and other important documents. Based on the survey findings, “conservative” colleges may need to make a more concerted effort to attract and retain LGBT students and ensure their feelings of safety. Creating a LGBT Alumni program should be a goal of colleges as they show current and past LGBTQQ students they have a meaningful role within the institutional fabric and are an asset to the university. Alumni programs can generate resources for the continuation of anti-bias trainings, LGBT Centers and/or LGBT Students Services offices.