Recommended Practice

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Introduction

- Diverse college populations create new challenges for institutions & are ever evolving

- Regional University -- learn how to help the diverse college population, especially those who are considered “at risk” for incompletion

- The LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) community presents such a challenge

- Brown University’s daily newspaper, The Brown Daily Herald, did a poll of their students and determined that about 85% self-identified as being heterosexual, 13% identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual and 2% responded not knowing. In the article, Sociologist Carrie Spearin agrees that these numbers are the average at most colleges (Weiss, 2010)
What makes LGBTQ students different?

- Unlike other minority groups on campus:
  - Cannot look at a student and determine their sexuality – Not visible
  - Lack of visible attributes harder for LGBTQ students as they wrestle through not only new college experience, but their own identity issues

How can Regional University address LGBTQ students’ needs?

- Make an effort to reach LGBTQ students because they are defined as at risk students
- Create visible support system on campus to address psychological & social issues
LGBTQ Students & College Engagement

Campus Climates

- LGBTQ students find college campuses less welcoming than non-LGBTQ students
- Student perception of a discriminatory campus climate can have a negative affect on:
  1. Academic experiences
  2. Academic & intellectual development
  3. Institutional commitment
  4. Persistence

(Rankin, 2006)
Discrimination

LGBTQ students experience discrimination from:

1. Fellow students 49.5%
2. Tutors/Lecturers 10.4%
3. Other higher education staff members 10.6%

(Valentine, Wood & Plummer, 2009)
Suggested Practice for Regional University

Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)

I AM GAY
I AM STRAIGHT
I AM LESBIAN
I AM BISEXUAL
I AM TRANSGENDERED
I AM HUMAN
{GSA}

(Homorazzi.com, 2013)
Purpose of a GSA

1. Create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about homophobia, transphobia, and other oppressions,

2. Educate the school community about homophobia, transphobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues, and

3. Fight discrimination, harassment, and violence in schools.

(GSA Network, 2009)

Colleges provide “a crucially important space in their life, away from family and childhood/school friendship networks, which had enabled them to ‘be themselves’ by coming out...to their peers and establishing an independent adult identity” (Valentine, Wood & Plummer, 2009)
“Most student development theories have been based on research specifically designed to determine what factors are important in development, how development occurs, and what environmental conditions facilitate development”

Theoretical Basis for a GSA

Chickering’s “Establishing Identity” Vector (1969)

- Development of identity includes being comfortable with one’s gender & sexual orientation (Evans et al, 2010)

  *GSA’s provides support to all LGBTQ students & non-LGBTQ students as they develop their sexual identity*

D’Augelli’s Lifespan Development Model (1994)

- “Entering a LGB Community”—Coming out in multiple areas of one’s life and being active within the community, including going to events, bars, clubs, organizations, etc.” (University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2014)

  *GSA’s allow for positive, healthy social interactions between all LGBTQ students & non-LGBTQ students*
Theoretical Basis for a GSA

Cass’s Model of Sexual Orientation Identity Formation (1969)

- Stage 3 – Identity Tolerance
  - LGBTQ students seek out others to reduce isolation
  
  *GSA’s provide support to reduce isolation*

- Stage 4 – Identity Acceptance
  - LGBTQ students begin to feel positive about their sexuality

  *GSA’s create a positive environment, especially regarding LGBTQ issues*

- Stage 3 – Identity Pride
  - LGBTQ students focus on LGBTQ issues & activities

  *GSA’s provide opportunities to educate everyone on campus about LGBTQ issues*

(Evans et al, 2010)
Success!

By creating a GSA at Regional University, we will:

- Decrease isolation of LGBTQ students
- Demonstrate support for members of the LGBTQ community
- Provide awareness about LGBTQ issues, helping to decrease
- Offer educational & social opportunities to students as they develop sexual identity
- Decrease discrimination on campus for all students
- Increase the retention & completion for LGBTQ students because they will feel supported & wanted
References


http://www.clcschools.org/uploaded/aclc/images/Neoteric_Bevies/GSA.jpg


https://moodle.losrios.edu/pluginfile.php/1591/course/summary/psy373Wordle.PNG

