

Campus Climate for Transgender and Nonbinary Students: A Critical Conversation

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Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. **ansrsource** and Froedtert Health and Medical College of Wisconsin have employees working around the world. **ansrsource's** home office, located in Dallas, Texas, sits on the land of the Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo), Jumanos, Tawakoni, and Wichita. Froedtert Health and Medical College of Wisconsin's home office, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sits on the land of the Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo), Peoria, Bodéwadmiakiwen (Potawatomi), Menominee, Myaamia, Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk), and Očhéthi Šakówiŋ. We also acknowledge our remote employees live and work [on the ancestral lands of the Indigenous People](#).

We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths. #HonorNativeLand

Reference: Arquette TL, Banks D, Black SS, Pourier L, Sneve S, Tangen R, et al. Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement. U.S. Department of Arts and Agriculture (2017). Available online at: <https://centerracialjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Honor-Native-Land-Guide.pdf>

In 60
minutes or
less...

- Gender and socialization
- Pronouns and recovering from mistakes
- Presentation of data and findings
- Discussion of best practices

The Why...

The truth is that while we may be hearing more about the transgender and nonbinary communities, they have always existed. The terms, language, concepts may be new.

Recommendations surrounding pronouns

- Pronouns are never preferred
- When in doubt:
 - Ask: What are your pronouns?
 - Use gender neutral pronouns they/them/their
- Do not assume someone's pronouns just because of the way they are dressed
- Asking for someone's pronouns is encouraged, but respect their silence if they choose not to tell you
- When someone tells you their pronouns, respect and use them
- Ensure the person is safe being out in other spaces

Real-Life Mistakes & Recovering

Mistakes

- “Ladies and Gentlemen, we will start in a few minutes...”
- “Hey, guys, let’s go...”
- Refusing to use someone’s name or pronouns.
- Using someone’s deadname (birth name).
- **Outing someone.**

Recovery

- Recognize and apologize
- Avoid making the mistake again
- Educate yourself

What Unanswered Questions Do You Have?

- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Pronouns
- Gender inclusive vs. gender neutral
- Difference between gender identity and sexual orientation
- Difference between sex and gender
- Difference between transgender and nonbinary and gender fluidity
- Anything we have covered (or haven't covered) so far related to the transgender and nonbinary community?



Data Collection

Student	Academic Standing	Gender Identity	Pronouns
Alex	Freshman	Nonbinary	They, them, their
Austin	Sophomore	Genderfluid	They, them, their
Ellery	Not disclosed	Nonbinary and trans*	They, them, their
Gwynn	Not disclosed	Transwoman	She, her, hers
Hank	Sophomore	Male	He, him, his
Jay	Sophomore	Transgender man	He, him, his
John	Sophomore	Male	He, him, his
Lucas	Sophomore	Transgender man	He, him, his
Raven	Junior	Genderqueer	They, them, their
Ray	Senior	Androgynous/Genderfucky	She, her, hers

Areas of Physical/Emotional Safety

Pervasive, cisnormative environments seem to implicate areas where students feel unsafe

Physically/emotionally* safe

LGBTQ services*
Library*
Supportive faculty members
coinciding with program of study

Physically/emotionally* unsafe

Counseling center*
Fraternity and sorority housing
Poorly lit areas of campus
Residence halls (first year in
particular)
Student fitness center*

Student services building*

Findings

Five major themes emerged

- Student resiliency
- Language and visibility
- Availability of and access to resources
- Education and awareness
- Campus spaces

Findings: Student Resiliency

- Persistence in an oppressive environment
- Through lack of gender recognition
- With extra levels of anxiety that their cisgender peers do not have to navigate

Findings: Language and Visibility

- Inclusive language is important to establish a welcoming campus climate
- Transgender and nonbinary students are looking for visible recognition from their faculty that they are a part of the classroom

Findings: Availability of and Access to Resources

- Despite existence of resources, students are:
 - Unaware that the resources exist; and/or
 - Resources are inadequate to meet their needs
- Students struggle to find safe bathrooms in all buildings on campus

Findings: Education and Awareness

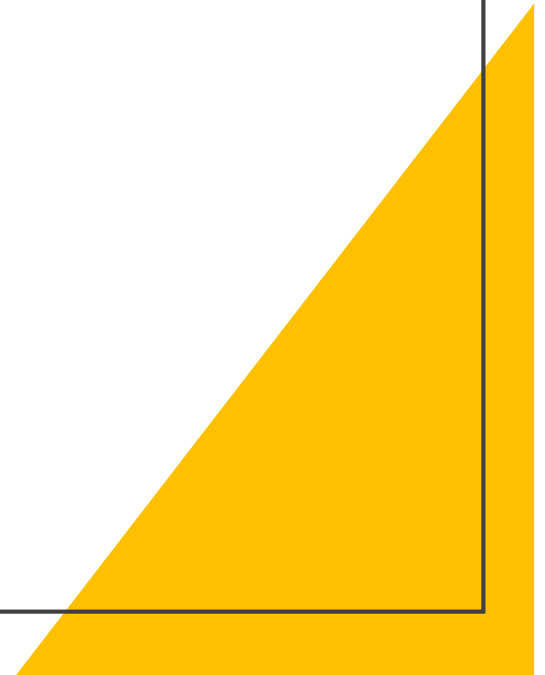
- Specifically related to classrooms
 - Not safe for transgender and nonbinary students
 - Pressure to speak up and accept the responsibility of teaching others about their identity and community

Small ways to make an impact

- Educate yourself about the community
- Attend programs
- Be aware of resources to help students, faculty and staff
- Use gender-inclusive language
- Share gender inclusive bathroom locations with every faculty, staff, and student
- Respect and use names and pronouns
- Don't use someone's deadname if they provided a chosen name
- Don't out someone

IDEAL Space

- Safe Space > Brave Space > Ideal Space
- IDEAL Spaces
 - Inclusive
 - Diverse
 - Equitable
 - Accessible and Authentic
 - Learning



Conclusion

Current transgender and nonbinary persistence seems to be solely due to the students' ability to remain resilient while navigating a hostile climate, to the LGBTQ services director, and their peer community.

If the university community is truly committed to the success of all students, there needs to be a serious commitment to the success of transgender and nonbinary students.

Student Quote

“Part of it is the fact that it is not the best climate for [transgender] students. I think. Like the fact that [transgender] students either don’t come to [the institution] or don’t stay there. You still have to care about their needs because you not caring is the reason why there’s a small population.” - Ellery

Discussion

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