

LGBTQ+ Task Force Recommendations

Purpose: Identify salient issues regarding the climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) students, faculty, and staff on campus. Make recommendations regarding steps to improve the climate and follow-up on the Fall Flex Day LGBTQ World Café session.

Membership: Jeff Archibald (chair); Roxan Arntson; Stacy Bacigalupi; Kim Earhart; Sun Ezzell; Cheryl Gilbert; Donna Necke; Meagan Nolan-Marion; Liesel Reinhart; Daniel Staylor; Chisa Uyeki; Randy Wilson

Meetings: October 27, November 20, January 29 (1/2 day retreat) and email correspondence on recommendations

Background:

The task force identified several reasons that the LGBTQ+ climate must be addressed:

- Our mission states we will support *all* students in achieving their educational goals.
- Our college value of diversity states, “We respect and welcome all differences, and we foster equal opportunity to succeed throughout the campus community.”
- The campus climate is not fully welcoming or inclusive.
- The lack of safety experienced by some students may be stigmatizing and discouraging to achieving their educational goals.
- There is some lack of support for students in this population on campus.
- There is also a lack of awareness on how to support the students in this population.

Informational Findings:

The task force conducted a survey** of students at the pride festival held in early November as well as at a Lambda club meeting regarding their perceptions of the campus LGBT climate and suggestions for improvement. 90 students*** completed the survey with a small minority (18 respondents) indicating they had experienced negative effects of being LGBT on Mt. SAC’s campus (responses further separated into effects such as bullying, safety issues, mental health concerns, etc.). Respondents were asked which services they thought would improve the LGBT climate on campus. The highest responses were: LGBT Center (69), LGBT speakers/events (65), gender neutral restrooms (57), and ally training for faculty/staff (55).

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements (1-5 Likert scale):

- I feel safe on the Mt. SAC campus (70% agree or strongly agree)
- Mt. SAC is welcoming to LGBTQ students (70% agree or strongly agree)
- Mt. SAC is a supportive place for LGBTQ students (65% agree or strongly agree)
- Mt. SAC needs a center or safe zone for LGBTQ students (80% agree or strongly agree)
- Mt. SAC needs to have gender neutral restrooms (72% agree or strongly agree)
- Mt. SAC faculty and staff should receive ally training (82% agree or strongly agree)

***Respondents included students identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans*, queer, asexual, pansexual, straight allies, and “other/not listed”

**Full survey and results available by request from the task force chair.

Resources Consulted by Task Force:

The task force conducted research into campus services and offerings in: professional development, curriculum and programs, health services, psychological and personal counseling, facilities, student life, services for at-risk students. The task force also explored the availability of campus services to noncredit students. The task force read and discussed the article, “LGBT Campus Climate Survey – An Eye-Opening Experience” published in the ASCCC Rostrum (September 2015). Finally, the task force consulted websites and information regarding LGBTQ centers, safe spaces, and services offered on other campuses.

Recommendations:

1. Formally endorse Mt. SAC’s participation in the Campus Pride climate survey.

Mt. SAC needs to assess its campus climate regarding LGBTQ+ issues to identify areas of greatest need for LGBTQ+ initiatives. The Campus Pride climate survey is one of the most widely respected and publicized climate surveys available. Campus Pride maintains an index of schools who have taken the survey with the “grade” received. Currently, very few community college and only a handful of California Community Colleges have taken the survey. Mt. SAC would be a leader by taking the survey. Senate endorsement of the survey is important, since it must be chaired by a campus leader. In this case that would likely be a faculty member who could use formal faculty support needed to conduct research/investigation required by the survey.

2. Recommend to President’s Advisory Council the creation of a standing committee to address and monitor LGBTQ+ issues on campus or an advisory group to the LGBTQ+ Center.

The task force, while productive, clearly felt that this was only a starting point to address LGBTQ+ issues on Mt. SAC's campus. There is considerable work still to be done to improve the LGBTQ+ climate. Additionally, the task force only included faculty as formal members. Our meetings always included student and staff guests, but it was clear that there is significant interest among students, classified staff, and managers in participating in efforts to improve the campus climate. A formal committee or an advisory group for center (included in the Student Equity Plan) would allow diverse campus voices to continue the work begun by the task force.

3. Create a task force to research and/or create degrees/courses on LGBTQ+ issues.

The task force's research indicated that only a handful of courses at Mt. SAC address issues of sexuality and gender identity. There is interest from both faculty and students (surveyed informally) in boosting curricular offerings on LGBTQ+ issues. Additionally, the feasibility of a Queer/LGBT Studies major could be investigated. Since these courses could be interdisciplinary in nature or have overlap among disciplines, it is recommended that a task force explore what lower division offerings could be curated for students. There is a growing interest in creating Ethnic and Gender/Women's Studies courses and programs on campus. The task force recommends that if a group is studying those courses and programs, the Academic Senate add Queer/LGBT Studies courses and programs to the group's charge.

4. Direct the New Faculty Seminar Coordinator to include LGBTQ+ awareness training for all new, full-time faculty in the NFS.

As "owners" of the New Faculty Seminar Coordinator position, the Senate may provide direction regarding the content of the seminar. The task force felt strongly that training awareness training for all new faculty would be important, particularly as our number of hires for 2016-17 will be significant. Nearly 10% of the faculty could be reached if all new faculty received awareness training. The task force also believes it will show a strong commitment to both the improvement of our campus climate and professional development in this area if all new faculty are required to receive training.

5. Direct the Faculty Professional Development Committee to prioritize and implement formal LGBTQ+ awareness training, best practices training, and an ally training program as well as to include LGBTQ+ issues in the College's Flex Plan.

The task force felt strongly that a robust professional development program will be necessary to improve the campus climate. It was noted, however, that not all members of the campus community may wish to be allies, and "forcing" faculty to be allies would be counterproductive. The task force recommends, therefore, that a tiered system of training be developed which would include basic awareness of LGBTQ+ terminology, issues, etc., mid-level training in best practices for sensitivity to LGBTQ+ community members, and ally training for those who wish to

actively identify as campus allies of our LGBTQ+ students. Finally, the College Flex Plan was identified by the task force as a key place to include LGBTQ+ themed professional development offerings, since it has the potential to reach more faculty members.

6. Request that the Student Preparation and Success Council investigate adding LGBTQ+ information to the New Student Orientation and the feasibility of including “preferred name” on faculty rosters.

The task force determined that getting information about LGBTQ+ services to new students was critically important so that new students will feel that the campus is welcoming and can provide them with services if needed. Therefore, adding some kind of information to the New Student Orientation would be the ideal way to reach students with this message.

Secondly, the task force identified that students who are trans* (transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, etc.) face an immediate barrier with class rosters, which contain their legal names rather than preferred names. This forces trans* students to “out” themselves on the first day when a professor calls roll. The task force would like students to be able to indicate a preferred name in their portal which could be added to faculty rosters. This would have an additional benefit for international students who may prefer an Americanized name to their given name.

7. Direct Senate leaders to request that the Faculty Association study the campus climate and working conditions for LGBTQ+ faculty members.

The task force focused primarily on improving the campus climate for students. The group did discuss, however, whether or not the campus is a supportive workplace for LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, and managers. Given the Senate’s close relationship with the Faculty Association, the task force recommends that our Senate leaders carry the message to the Faculty Association leaders that further study of the workplace climate for LGBTQ+ faculty members would be beneficial.

8. Direct Senate leaders to work with campus groups (Faculty Association, Associated Students, etc.) to draft a joint resolution advocating for family restrooms (gender neutral, changing station, access to outlet/power, etc.).

The task force’s research indicated that only two (2) gender neutral restrooms exist on campus – one in Founders’ Hall and one in the Child Development Center. These restrooms are not accessible during all hours that the College is open (especially at night). They are also in inconvenient locations for trans* students who may not feel comfortable using a male/female designated restroom. Additionally, there are numerous restrooms on campus (particularly the faculty restrooms in Building 26) that have unisex signage but locked doors which lead to gender-assigned restrooms. This fosters the perception (noted in the World Café session) that

the campus has gender neutral restrooms, but they are not accessible to students. This issue was identified as a priority in the survey conducted by the task force. The task force noted, however, that this issue may transcend trans* students and also affect new mothers who need a secure, private location for breast pumping or parents who need a restroom for diaper changing, etc. Since the Senate does not have direct purview over facilities on campus, and the Director of Facilities has indicated that the State Architect's Office does not "count" the square footage of family restrooms towards building requirements, the task force recommends that the Senate work with other campus bodies to create campus-wide momentum on this issue to present to the College's administration.

9. Direct Senate leaders to discuss in the Academic Mutual Agreement Council (AMAC) what strategies would be appropriate to ensure that noncredit LGBTQ+ students have access to the same services as credit students.

The task force discussed that the noncredit area also has LGBTQ+ students who still need to feel welcome and supported on campus and may need access to information and services. Because they are physically isolated on campus and do not pay fees, however, these students do not always have access to the same services as credit students and cannot participate in student activities that support LGBTQ+ students such as Lambda Club. Senate leaders can raise the issue in AMAC to start a conversation about how these services could be provided to *all* students.

10. Endorse and publish a list of best practices for being supportive of LGBTQ+ students and request that the list be updated/maintained by the faculty LGBTQ+ Center coordinator.

The task force investigated some already developed and published effective practices to provide faculty with a starting point to improve the campus climate for LGBTQ+ individuals. This list, however, should be a living document that is frequently updated and adapted to Mt. SAC. (see attached document)

Suggested Effective Practices for Creating an Inclusive, Supportive Learning Environment for LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual) Students

Although most people don't realize it, the societal assumption that all people are heterosexual reveals itself in our communication and interpersonal interactions all the time. These guidelines provide some suggestions for creating a learning environment that is more open, comfortable, respectful, and welcoming for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex.

- Treat the topic of sexual orientation as you would any other human difference.
- Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume heterosexuality in coworkers, colleagues, or students. For example, consider as appropriate: Using inclusive terms such as partner, spouse, or date, instead of wife, husband, boyfriend, or girlfriend.
- Using inclusive terms such as committed relationship instead of only using the term marriage.
- Using pronouns that are neutral and do not assume the sex of someone's partner, such as person, someone, anyone.
- Ask individuals what terminology they prefer when you are referring to them or talking with them. Be sensitive about words to use and not use based on individual preferences.
- Avoid making assumptions about people's sexual orientation based on their appearance or behavior.
- Don't assume all unmarried people are single or have opposite sex relationships. Don't assume all mothers and fathers are heterosexual, or that all children live in families consisting of a male-female couple.
- Learn the definitions of words associated with the LGBTQI community. Don't use slang in a pejorative or derogatory manner to describe someone's sexual orientation.
- Discourage others from telling jokes about people who are LGBTQI, and refrain from telling them yourself. Do not joke or tease someone for nontraditional gender behavior. Refuse to tolerate derogatory or anti-LGBTQI remarks, actions, jokes, or name-calling. Refrain from using judgmental language that will create barriers.
- When someone shares information with you about their sexual orientation, clarify with them whether or not this information should be kept confidential. Do not disclose a person's sexual orientation to others; let them decide with whom they wish to share details about their life.

- Don't assume that the sexual orientation is the most important aspect of that person, or the only topic they will want to talk about. Remember that everyone is a multi-faceted human being.
- Value everyone's perspectives and opinions in your classrooms and committees.
- Don't tokenize LGBTQI individuals.
- Assure everyone's safety.
- Attend LGBTQI events once in a while.
- Help non-LGBTQI students understand that LGBTQI individuals are a presence on campus and in society whether they like it or not. Non-LGBTQI students do not have to accept LGBTQI students, but they must learn to live peaceably with them.
- Support LGBTQI students because they add to the vibrancy of thought, activity, and life on your campus; not because it's politically correct.
- Take the time to examine your own personal feelings about LGBTQI individuals.
- Include information in lecture and discussions about LGBTQI people who made significant contributions in the past.
- When discussing current events, include LGBTQI issues.
- Use examples of LGBTQI individuals in lectures and discussions so they are not marginalized.
- Be clear with your students that homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions are not acceptable and will be addressed in an educational, informative, and non-threatening manner.

(adapted from Cerritos College's "Being an Ally" website:
<http://cms.cerritos.edu/safezone/being-an-ally.htm>)