

LGBTQ Student Academic and Social Engagement for Success: *What Can We Do in Practice?*

- **Provide *all* students with opportunities that develop agency and empathy with specific attention to sexual identity.** Invite all students to be a part of discussing and understanding sexuality and its import to individual, society, and civility.
 - “Because we all experience race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth, as the oppressed or the privileged or both, everyone can be called on to examine how our identities have influenced our lives, the lives of others, and the communities around us... We can create environments that promote the development of voice, empathy, and other relational capacities.” (Zaytoun, 2005) Some models already exist—for example, Baxter Magolda’s Learning Partnerships Mode and Anna Ortiz and Robert Rhoads’s framework for advancing multicultural education.
 - Educators can use the term “ally” as an entry point into the conversation for straight students or a piece of identity available for straight students to adopt.
- **Take safety and civility seriously as a basis for learning and inclusion.** Institutions must define and enforce campus policies that properly address safety, bias, and discrimination.
 - College campuses should be a place where the sacredness of each person is honored, diversity is aggressively pursued, and communication across difference is defined by civility. (Boyer, 1990)
 - “Many LGBT people hid significant parts of themselves from others, creating social and emotional isolation from their peers, faculty, and campus life... LGBTQ students, and particularly multiple minority students, are more likely to experience harassment, assault, intimidation and discrimination on campus... Social media can support or hinder campus climates built on empathy and mutual respect.” (Rankin, 2005)
 - LGBTQ and Ally students should be able to find the guidance and resources they need to take the lead or get involved with community service or campus/community action projects.
- **Create visible, multi-faceted commitment to the importance of LGBTQ issues and space for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities on campus.**
 - Mobilize faculty, staff, and students of all sexualities to engage in campus activities and discussion that address issues that matter to the LGBTQ community (not queer attendance only). Consider including discussions of sexuality and inclusion in partnership with other multicultural, political, or religious organizations to make space for intersectional identity. (Rankin, 2005)
 - Start a conversation with Institutional Research Offices about the inclusion of LGBTQ self-identification in demographic analyses of campus retention and success rates.
 - Recognize when staff and faculty (including contingent faculty members) are engaging with the campus community on LGBTQ issues. Honor and incentivize that work.
 - Support LGBTQ and Queer Resources Centers to provide safe space and expertise on campus.
- **Provide intentional opportunities for guided classroom discussion and reflection related to issues of sexuality.** Learning opportunities should consider diverse viewpoints or experiences, and safe spaces to write and share autobiographically about intersecting identities. Faculty and staff should embed the value of free speech, empathy, respect, and liberally-educated civility and civic engagement.
 - Offer “discussions on contemporary social issues, books, and pop culture pertaining to intersecting identity dimensions; relevant coursework; peer discussions and mentoring; and social events that

- include faculty and staff... Offering these educational contexts through identity-focused areas that students might perceive to conflict with their sexual orientation could provide dissonance needed to develop increased meaning-making capacity.” (Abes, 2004)
- Engage students in “activities that place people in the position of seeing through others’ eyes, walking in their shoes, can be an effective means for developing students’ understanding of privilege and developing relational cognitive capacities such as empathy.” (Zaytoun, 2005)
 - **Integrate curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities and high-impact practices to bridge academic, civic, and personal, intersectional identity** (race, class, gender, religion, sexuality).
 - “Sexuality is a source of significant learning and experience for adults... Learning more about our sexual identities can create new knowledge about ourselves, about our differences, about our own humanity, and even about how learning is created or suppressed in our society.” (Edwards and Brooks, 1999)
 - Integrate student group and advocacy activities across different cultural and religious lines.
 - “Provide spaces, programs, living-learning communities, service opportunities, and classroom discussions that acknowledge multiple-minority students and discuss all of our complex identities.” (Poynter, 2005) We must engage all students, majority or minority, in discussions of identity formation and create space for speakers and role models on campus to tell their stories and spark conversation.
 - Create space to integrate curriculum and co-curriculum to maximize opportunities for reflective learning. “Incorporating community service components through which students are exposed to LGBTQ individuals and concerns is encouraged as the resulting relationships, discussions, and reflections would potentially provide a ripe context for challenging students’ stereotypes, social norms, labels, and other contextual influences.” Course material should include diversity among sexual orientation and teaching strategies should allow students to reflect on their own life and identities. (Abes, 2004)
 - **Provide visible mentoring opportunities for LGBTQ students, and create points of connection between LGBTQ faculty, staff, students, and their allies** (Leider, 2000).
 - Such opportunities are distinctly supportive of LGBTQ student retention. LGBTQ and Queer Resource Centers can be critical advocates and liaisons for the purpose.
 - Mentoring and role modeling is absolutely critical, but the opportunities to connect must be visible through people, events, and groups on campus. (Poynter, 2005)
 - Engage faculty and staff in guided development opportunities to build capacity in the campus community toward inclusive process and language. (Beemyn, 2005)
 - Include LGBTQ contingent faculty, and their contingent faculty allies, in campus meetings and events that focus on LGBTQ issues—make those events accessible to part-time faculty members who navigate tight schedules.
 - **Offer devoted courses that specifically address LGBTQ issues from various fields of study particularly in the social sciences and humanities, but also cross-listed with other disciplines and majors.** Also, embed these types of conversations into general education. This could expand opportunities to explore issues from diverse disciplinary viewpoints and to strengthen students’ understanding that knowledge and identity are socially constructed. (Zaytoun, 2005)