

# **Creating a More Welcoming Environment for Transgender Students**

## **Centrist College**

**Indiana University**

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# Stakeholders



Understanding the stakeholders is vital to ensuring all bases are covered through our action plan and timeline. These will be the individuals we focus on as we progress through our presentation.

## Applicability of Title IX

Title IX, and other non discrimination acts focus on sex, and we are not asserting that sex and gender are the same, but in believing in the spirit of the law, we believe it can be applied, as it is on many campuses, to this demographic of student when discussing gender fluidity and marginalization as a result.

## How things are going:

Before preparing for professional development, our team distributed a survey regarding staff members, as their work relates to transgender students. Based on those results, we would put together a meeting to flesh out needs moving forward.

The following will be addressed:

- \*What are we doing well?
- \*What do we need to work on?
- \*How does the university mission apply to transgender students?
- \*Does the mission need to change to accommodate for this population?
- \*What is the current climate of campus for this population of students?
- \* How do aforementioned stakeholders support or inhibit this student population's development and persistence?
  - \* Highlight specific student experiences
- \*Where do staff and faculty see gaps in their own knowledge (education, professional development)?

**Transition:** The process by which a transgender individual strives to have physical presentation more closely align with identity.

**Cisgender/ Gender Normative:**  
Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

**Gender Dysphoria:** The American Psychiatric Association defines it as “persistent discomfort about one’s assigned sex or a sense of belonging to the other sex...[and]...a desire to be...of the other sex.” It is important to note that not all transgender people experience gender dysphoria.

**Gender:** Gender refers to that which a society deems “masculine” or “feminine.” Gender is socially constructed and does not necessarily the same as an individual’s biological sex.

## Common Terms

Taken directly from  
GSAFE, Gay Straight  
Alliance for Safe  
Schools

**Gender Role:** Refers to the sets of activities, thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors traditionally considered normal for men or women within a culture.

**Transgender:** used both as an umbrella term and as an identity. Broadly, it refers to those who do not identify with or are uncomfortable with their assigned gender and gender roles. As an identity, the term refers to anyone who transgresses traditional sex and gender boxes.

**Genderqueer:** a rejection of the male/female gender binary in favor of a more fluid, nontraditional identity.

**Cisgender/ Gender Normative:** Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

**Gender Expression:** Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice and other forms of presentation. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation.

**Sex (Anatomical/ Biological):** separate from gender, the physical structure of one's reproductive organs that is used to assign sex at birth. Biological sex is determined by chromosomes, hormones and internal and external genitalia.

**Sexual orientation:** Separate from gender identity, this term refers to how one identifies regarding the people to whom one is sexually or romantically attracted. Orientation is not dependent on physical experience, but rather on feelings and attractions.

**Transsexual:** Individuals who do not identify with their birth - assigned sex and physically alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This physical transition is a complicated, multi - step process that may take years and may include, but is not limited to, sex reassignment surgery.

## Common Terms

Taken directly from  
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Schools

# Student Development Theory

Breaking assumptions that are currently held regarding gender, specifically the gender binary is especially important when working with these students (Stryker, 2008)

Gender is not equivalent to sex; gender is fluid and socially constructed

Gender identity expression is a basis for transgender politics (Newhouse, 2013)

Gender expression is a manifestation of an internal sense of self (APA, 2002)

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# Student Development Theory (cont)

Admissions set the tone for these students as they're transitioning at an average age of 16, as they're applying to college (Newhouse, 2013)

Marginalization and otherness of this community is hugely prevalent, even in the GLBT sphere (Agans, 2007)

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Chilly campus climate for these students (Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004).

\*Daily exposure micro-aggressions based on these students presence

\*less than accepting, blatantly disapproving



# Supporting the Student in the Moment



# Resources for Transgender Students

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- \*Understanding the goals, objectives, and mission of the university as it relates to the transgender community, because they're easily accessible and available
- \*Identity serving offices work together to handle factors of intersectionality
- \*Separate gender and sexual orientation spaces and resources to show an emphasis on alignment with the transgender movement
- \*Ensure gender studies include transgender studies; think about how these majors and departments exist due to a struggle or movement, and how that is incorporated into a curriculum for those majors--is it all inclusive?
- \*Medical access, counselors, and resources for the transition process through Health Services
  - \*Also look at how campus blood drives can serve as a triggering micro aggressions
  - \*<http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/publications/lgbt-health-resources/> Living-learning community or housing, restrooms, locker rooms, gyms specifically accessible to transgender students

# Brené Brown on Empathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw>



# Faculty & Staff Social Media Campaign

Faculty and staff will work with the Communications department and openly-identifying transgender students and allies at the university to put on a social media campaign to educate not only the students they work with, but their administrative and academic peers.

(Graphic: On 20/20, Trans Beauty Queen Jenna Talackova Enlightens Barbara Walters, Your Family | Autostraddle. (2012). Retrieved February 26, 2016, from <http://www.autostraddle.com/on-2020-trans-beauty-queen-jenna-talackova-enlightens-barbara-walters-your-family-136155/>)



# Expectations of Staff

- \*Participate in professional development: Safe Zone trainings, guest presenters, and workshops
- \*Share outside professional development opportunities for all stakeholders
- \*Comply with Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, and other similar laws that prohibit discrimination Senior staff must train those they supervise and then hold them accountable
- \* Understand proper language usage, stop using gender binary and feeling need to categorize
- \*Admissions forms It would be appropriate to include LGBT status along with other identity census-like data (i.e. race, ethnicity, etc.) (Hoover, 2012)
- \*Understand differences of identity, especially as it relates to sex and gender
- \* Don't assume gender identity or expression
- \*Don't separate students based on gender, that promotes discomfort and hard and fast alignment
- \*Understand the gendered spaces that do exist
- \*Don't ask for preferred pronoun; this is THEIR pronoun, not

# Alumni & Community Involvement

- \*Engage alumni as part of the process, and use them as a support system

  - \*Way of outside, targeted funding

- \*Program, not only for students, staff, faculty and alumni, but community support as well

- \*Targeted programming, using experts and activists to promote programs specifically aimed at the transgender population

  - \* Laverne Cox

  - \*Tumblr Challenges

  - \*Town Halls

  - \*Drag Fashion Shows

# Timeline

Immediately:  
Office Goals and  
Objectives

First Six Months:  
Outline the  
Non-Discrimination  
Statement

Year Two:  
Establish bystander  
intervention training

First Thirty Days:  
Campus Climate &  
Student Voice Survey

Year One:  
Counselors trained in  
Gender Identify specific  
training  
  
Establish Incident Team

Year Five:  
Reassess by  
repeating Campus  
Climate & Student  
Voice Survey

Immediately:

## Office Goals and Objectives

Upon leaving the Task Force meeting, each office will define what their office does and create goals and objectives within each area of their office as it relates specifically to transgender issues.

Once these goals and objectives are clearly defined the Task Force will check in monthly through the first year and biannually after the first year to determine dedication to and progress towards completing these goals.



First Thirty Days:

## Campus Climate & Student Voice Survey

The Campus Climate & Student Voice survey will be utilized to determine how students perceive the support on campus for transgender students. We are specifically looking for:

- \*Interest in Learning Living Community for transgender and ally students that opt in to the program
- \*How well students feel the campus works with, engages, and supports students in the transgender community

First Six Months:

Outline the  
Non-Discrimination  
Statement

Revamp Admissions  
Process

The Task Force, including campus departments and legal services, will look to the Non-Discrimination Statement for campus to determine what changes need to be made to the statement itself or campus behaviors based on the interpretation of the current Non-Discrimination Statement.

If incongruence is seen, steps will be taken by the Task Force to assess the concerns and create immediate action steps to remedy the incongruence. Examples include posting clarification that restroom use is by gender identity (Tidd, 2016), or allowing students to use their preferred name on their student identification (Policies, 2015).

Admissions is the first point of contact for our incoming students, it is important that the admissions process:

- \*remove gender binary from application
- \*train professionals in Non-Discrimination Statement and supporting transgender students
- \*explain GLBT inclusion on application (Newhouse, 2013)

Year One:

Counselors trained in  
Gender Identify specific  
training

Establish Incident Team

Two educational steps that will be taken by the Task Force are training campus counselors in gender identity specific topics and establishing an Incident Team. Providing counselors with additional, more in depth training will create a foundation for future support teams.

Secondly, the Incident Team will be charged with managing incidents as they occur and relate to transgender students. Such as residence hall concerns, bullying, or targeting of students.

Year Two:

Establish bystander  
intervention training

Utilizing our well-trained Incident Team and Counselors, the Task Force will establish or redevelop bystander intervention training.

Creating an environment with bystander intervention for students, faculty, and staff will bring together the community and place importance on looking out for one another. Clearly defining situations in which someone can and should intervene and providing them with the tools to intervene is incredibly beneficial to their student development and the institutions safety. (CITATION).

Year Five:

Reassess by  
repeating Campus  
Climate & Student  
Voice Survey

Once the wheels are set in motion, continuous reflection and adjustments will need to be made. The Task Force must reassess by repeating the Campus Climate & Student Voice Survey in the fifth year.

This will decrease survey saturation and allow the campus to hear from the new students on campus seeing transgender issues through a different perspective.

Offices should also come forward to check in on their original goals and objectives to determine success of implementation.

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