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Analyzing the University of Tennessee and Its Peer Institutions for Structural Support of Queer Individuals

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**Analyzing the University of Tennessee and Its Peer Institutions for Structural Support of
Queer Individuals**

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University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Background

I was disappointed when I learned that the University of Tennessee's Office of Minority Student Affairs planned to change its name to the Office of Multicultural Affairs in late Spring 2011. I felt included in the title of the Office of Minority Student Affairs. I felt I was a minority because of my sexuality and gender identity and therefore had a place in that office's activities. I did not identify with the word multicultural because I am White, and White is currently the dominant race in the U.S.

To me, the word multicultural brought to mind imagery of Japanese *kimono* or racial or ethnic minorities – not me. My conception of multiculturalism did not include White people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, or questioning.¹ Moreover, I did not feel that the White queer community had culture and was therefore a component of multiculturalism. For me, there is a tension between my identities. My whiteness is the U.S. norm, so I benefit in many ways from the color of my skin. For this reason, I would not expect or desire a university to provide me with support based on this identity. On the other hand, I am marginalized in many ways because my gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation challenge traditional hegemonic power structures. I do expect and desire for my university to provide support in these dimensions of my being.

As I explored my feelings, my opinion changed. Through conversations with my peers and administrators over several months, I began to think the White queer community did seem to have the hallmarks of culture such as in-group language, organizations based around queer identities, and widely known stereotypes. I felt that my body could be included in a conception of multiculturalism even though I am White.

¹ Trans* is a term I have heard used in queer spaces to denote the many identities incorporated under the transgender umbrella such as transfeminine, transmasculine, genderqueer, genderfuck, femme, and many more.

I initially intended to write this thesis about whether or not and, if so, how queer communities have culture. As I explored this topic, I realized I was also interested in the structure of universities, particularly as they relate to the success or detriment of resources for queer students. This thesis will examine the structure of universities that contain queer resources and, in particular, so-called LGBT resource centers, and I will analyze how these structures affect the possible success of those resources.

Introduction

Universities are organizations and systems and we must study them as such.^{2,3}

Universities fit definitions of organizations or systems proposed by experts in organizational theory literature such as Litterer, Barnard, and Robbins. I will examine the concept of a university in the context of each of these definitions to illustrate their fit.

Litterer describes three non-independent subsystems that comprise an organization: the transformation system, the administrative system, and the social system. Each of these subsystems exists within the university structure, so the university fits Litterer's conception of an organization.

First, the transformation system corresponds to a variety of people who form "the production system of flows and form changes of materials and goods."⁴ An obvious example would be a faculty member. Using his knowledge, skills, and experience, he transforms a raw matriculated student into a finished product – a student with a degree. A vice-president of student affairs is another exemplary component of the production system. If she oversees a center for multicultural student life, she may work to transform students' perceptions of minority identities. Students also may form the production system around themselves. A student who creates a student organization will exert some transformative influence over its membership. A number of different stakeholders correspond to Litterer's transformation system in the context of the university.

Second, the administrative system corresponds to the board of trustees, the state (if it is a public institution), and various administrators such as directors, provosts, deans, and presidents.

² Perkins, James Alfred. *The University as an Organization*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), xv.

³ Birnbaum, Robert. *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1988), 1.

⁴ Burton, Richard M. & Obel, Borge. *Designing Efficient Organizations: Modelling and Experimentation*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers B.V., 1984), 2.

“The administrative system coordinates and controls activities,”⁵ and that is what these people and institutions do. For example, in 1994 the Indiana legislature threatened to withdraw funding from Indiana University because they were financially supporting an LGBT Resource Center. As a result, the president of Indiana University opted to fund the LGBT Resource Center through private gifts.⁶ In this administrative system, the state and the university’s president controlled the activities of the university. All the universities examined in this paper contain administrative systems.

Third, the social system implicates nearly every person in the university or the environment that contains it. It is the system that “includes the individuals; their beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and activities which are derived more from social values which individuals bring to the organization than from the organization itself.”⁷ So, students within a university influence its operation not only through the perspectives they bring to the classroom, but also through institutions such as student government associations and programming boards. The social system includes all stakeholders in a university.

Barnard proposes a simpler definition of organization that the university clearly fits: “a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more persons.”⁸ On a small scale in the university, this may be seen as the faculty in a department working together to craft a program of study for undergraduate students. As another example, at the University of Tennessee, the Division of Student Life works with the Office of Student Activities to coordinate the function of TeamVols, the Central Program Council, and Dance Marathon. Many people consciously coordinate the activities of a university, so according to Barnard, it is an organization.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Doug Bauder, phone conversation with director of Indiana University’s LGBT Resource Center, March 21, 2012.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Barnard, Chester I., *The Functions of the Executive*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 79.

Robbins offers another definition: “An organization is the planned coordination of the collective activities of two or more people who, functioning on a relatively continuous [sic] basis and through the division of labor and a hierarchy of authority, seek to achieve a common goal or a set of goals.”⁹ Robbins might argue that the university fits this definition because many people coordinate the activities of the organization continuously and through a hierarchy to achieve goals such as educating students and performing research.

If a queer resource center exists at a university, one would assume it is part of the structure of the organization. The LGBT OUTreach Center at the University of Tennessee operates under the jurisdiction of the Chancellor’s Commission for LGBT People. It is privately funded, and it often changes in response to demand from the structure that surrounds it. For instance, students have requested that it stay open later to accommodate a student organization meeting, and the Chancellor’s Commission for LGBT People has requested funding from the university for a full-time staff person to maintain the center.¹⁰ An LGBT resource center is usually a part of the university structure because it responds to the administrative, social, and transformation systems present in the university as an organization.

It is worth noting not all queer support has an organizational home. At the University of Tennessee, for example, the SafeZone program is not the responsibility of a particular office. Instead, a faculty member and a staff person coordinate the program because they are personally interested in it. These resources may respond to administrative, social, and transformation systems, but they are implicit components of the organizational structure. For this reason, they

⁹ Robbins, Stephen P., *Organization Theory: The Structure and Design of Organizations*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), 5.

¹⁰ As of April 2012, the university refused this request. The Commission is responsible for finding a full-time staff person to maintain the center.

are different from LGBT resource centers that institutions explicitly claim as a part of their structure. I will not examine these resources in great detail because of this difference.

When an LGBT resource center at a university is part of its structure, it may be analyzed in several ways. Hammonds explores the relationship between the structure and its component in terms of independent and dependent variables. If the university is taken as the dependent variable, “the university’s hierarchy can be seen as the outcome of forces both outside and inside the university.”¹¹ This is especially evident in the case of Indiana University’s state legislature. It forced the university to discontinue funding its resource center. If the university is taken as the independent variable, then “we can try to determine what the actual impact of some structure actually is.”¹² In this case, one may examine how the administrative structure supports or inhibits the success of its LGBT resource center and the resources it contains. Either of these relationships (with the university as the independent or dependent variable) may exhibit the characteristics of a tight or loose coupling. According to Birnbaum, this relationship is important to understand: “In order to understand how the various subsystems and elements within a system interact with each other, we must consider how they are connected, or coupled.”¹³ A tightly coupled system is deterministic, so one can reasonably predict what outputs will come from specific inputs. A loosely coupled system, on the other hand, is probabilistic. It is impossible to predict what outputs will come from specific inputs. These basic organizational theories can inform our understandings of the success of LGBT resource centers as they relate to the structure of university administration.

¹¹ Hammonds, Thomas H., *Herding Cats in University Hierarchies: The Impact of Formal Structure on Decision-Making in American Research Universities*. (Michigan State University, 2002), 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³ Birnbaum, Robert. *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1988), 35.

In this paper, I will examine the organizational relationships between universities and their queer resources. I argue the number and variety of resources available to students will play an important role in determining the success of the resources because of the diversity within queer communities and the intersections of identities such as class, race, ability, and others.¹⁴

I selected the following schools to examine because the University of Tennessee has identified them as important benchmark schools in its quest to become a top 25 public research institution:¹⁵ University of Georgia, Clemson University, Purdue University, Texas A&M – College Station, University of Minnesota, Rutgers, Indiana University, Michigan State University, Auburn University, Iowa State University, and North Carolina State University – Raleigh. I used the names of these universities and “LGBT” as search terms in Google to find relevant pages on the universities’ respective websites. Then I followed links on the web pages I found to examine information about programs and other resources. In order to understand organizational structure, I used the university name and “organizational chart” as search terms in Google. Sometimes, the relationship between queer resources and the university was clear from organizational charts and web pages devoted to LGBT resources. Other times, I deduced the relationship between administration and queer resource centers through several web pages. Finally, I took notes on each website and used a constant comparative method to analyze the similarities and differences I found.¹⁶

¹⁴ Loutzenheiser, Lisa W. and MacIntosh, Lori B., *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Sexual Identities and Schooling (Taylor & Francis, Ltd., Spring 2004), 151-158.

¹⁵ In January 2010, the University of Tennessee began a decade-long mission to become a Top 25 public research university called the Top 25 Initiative.

¹⁶ “The constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences...The overall object of this analysis is to seek patterns in the data.” Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1998), 18.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The structure of the University of Tennessee and its queer resource is contingent upon state government. This is fairly typical because governments generally exert some influence over universities by granting a charter.¹⁷ Public institutions like the University of Tennessee also rely on state appropriations to fund operations.¹⁸ The queer community faces a great deal of social and financial marginalization.^{19,20} This is particularly true in Tennessee, whose state legislators propose laws such as the Don't Say Gay bill that implicitly harm the queer community.²¹ Conversations with administrators at the University of Tennessee revealed the following problem facing the institutionalization of queer resources: if the university allocated funds to an LGBT Resource Center, then state legislators might withdraw or reduce state appropriations. Administrators speculate state legislators would rationalize this by claiming that their constituencies do not support queer people, so their constituents would oppose the University of Tennessee's support of queer people. In light of this, the Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People, an advisory body to the Chancellor composed of faculty, staff, and students, oversees the LGBT OUTreach Center at the University of Tennessee.

This structure is not ideal. First, the Commission's budget is limited, and most of its budget funds the part-time graduate assistant at the LGBT Resource Center. Due to a lack of funding, the LGBT OUTreach Center lacks a full-time staff person to carry out its mission. In the past two years, graduate students have staffed the OUTreach Center, and the Commission has

¹⁷ Blackwell, Thomas Edward. *College and University Administration*. (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966), 4.

¹⁸ Cheek, Jimmy G. Student Leadership Retreat handout. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. 20 Feb 2012.

¹⁹ "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Persons & Socioeconomic Status," accessed on April 16, 2012, <http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/factsheet-lgbt.aspx>

²⁰ "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues," accessed on April 16, 2012, <http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/lgbt/index.aspx>

²¹ Campfield, Stacey. SB 0049. Tennessee General Assembly.

compensated them with graduate assistantships. Second, the OUTreach Center lacks administrative support. The Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People is a volunteer commission. Its membership includes professors and other university faculty, staff, and students whose employment duties lie outside the Commission's work. The Center's supervisor is unable to uphold the OUTreach Center to rigorous standards such as those applied to the Office of Multicultural Student Life (an office at the University of Tennessee tasked with supporting socially marginalized students) because she lacks the necessary resources such as a director or other full-time staff member. Third, the OUTreach Center is limited in its ability to offer campus resources related to the intersection of queer identities with various other identities such as race and ability. I argue this is because the physical separation of the buildings that house the Office of Multicultural Student Life and the LGBT OUTreach Center reinforces a separation of identities that intersect for many people. The structure that contains the LGBT OUTreach Center at the University of Tennessee limits its ability to serve as the resource it could be on campus.

In the case of the University of Tennessee, the structure that contains the school's queer resources is heavily contingent upon the state. This has resulted in a structure that impedes the efficacy of the resource. I will now explore other institutions' structures and examine how they support or inhibit the success of their queer resources.

The University of Georgia (UGA)

The Department of Intercultural Affairs at the University of Georgia houses its LGBT Resource Center. An Office of Institutional Diversity exists but seems to have little to do with the day-to-day affairs of queer students particularly because the LGBT Resource Center reports to the Dean of Students as opposed to the Office of Institutional Diversity. A full-time staff member, two graduate assistants, and undergraduate staff and volunteers maintain the center and

its operations.²² The Department of Intercultural Affairs oversees the African American Culture Center, International Student Life, and Multicultural Services and Programs in addition to the LGBT Resource Center. Despite or perhaps because of this structure, the LGBT Resource Center is not particularly noteworthy.

UGA's LGBT resource center is less developed than other resource centers I will examine. Despite having a full-time staff member, the center coordinates only three sustainable programs: a history project, lavender graduation, and a safe space program. It serves as a queer-issues-specific library as most resource centers in this study do. UGA's LGBT Resource Center does not publicize student organizations that address the intersection of various identities. The only two undergraduate student identity-focused organizations I found are Lambda Alliance and Queer & Ally Athletics. UGA's resource center oversees an LGBT Resource Center Programming Board, which is unique among my sample of universities.

The lack of student organizations addressing intersections of identity perpetuates the mutual exclusivity of queerness and other identities. The divisions within the Department of Intercultural Affairs seem to reinforce this structurally. UGA does not provide support I could find that addresses, for example, queer African American students. These divisions of identity may serve as structural impediments to addressing the needs of students' intersecting identities. In this way, the structure of the university might inhibit the success of its resources.

What role does the Office of Institutional Diversity play in the success of its diversity resources? The Office of Institutional Diversity marks the borders of its definition of diversity in this quote, "The University of Georgia recognizes the importance of valuing many types of diversity -- racial, ethnic, geographic, linguistic, and experiential -- and believes that a critical

²² "University of Georgia | Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center," accessed on March 25, 2012, <http://lgbtcenter.uga.edu/contact/index.html>

part of each student's education comes from learning from and with those with different backgrounds.”²³ While one may construe “experiential” as inclusive of queer students, this relationship is not explicit. Moreover, one of the few programs the Office of Institutional Diversity administers, a faculty-student mentoring program, omits explicit opportunities for an applicant to identify himself as a sexual minority. The Office of Institutional Diversity uses a conception of diversity that does not explicitly include queer individuals.

The University of Georgia’s queer resources are not particularly outstanding, nor does the structure of the university appear to be conducive to their success. Sustainable programs and student organizations are few, and the center does not explicitly address intersecting identities. This may be due to the structure of the university because it is divided into several identity groups. UGA’s structure may restrict the success of its queer resources.

Clemson University

Clemson University has a different structure. Clemson addresses issues of diversity and multiculturalism including queer issues through the Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Center for Student Life. The Division of Student Affairs oversees the Center, and the Center administers several programs, among which are diversity education and multicultural programs and services. The Gantt Center is designated as an Executive Vice President Team.

Clemson’s Gantt Center coordinates a variety of programs. The Gantt Center executes ally training programs, a gay straight alliance, and an LGBT speakers bureau, among other programs that are not specifically queer-oriented. That these resources exist does not necessarily indicate an ideal structure is present. The relationship between these programs and campus climate would need to be assessed.

²³ “University of Georgia | Office of Institutional Diversity,” accessed on March 25, 2012, http://diversity.uga.edu/about/undergraduate_admissions/

Clemson, like UGA, divides its resources among monolithic identity groups, foreclosing full support for students who are marginalized in multiple dimensions. Diversity Education within the Gantt center controls the LGBT-related programs mentioned earlier, but the Multicultural Programs and Services area administers programs relating only to ethnic and racial minorities. For example, the CONNECTIONS program within the Multicultural Programs and Services area “is designed to assist incoming first-year students of color with their adjustment to the Clemson University environment.”²⁴ This program fails to acknowledge the experience of students of color who may also identify on the queer spectrum. Clemson’s Gantt Center appears to fail to accommodate the intersection of identities such as race, gender expression, and sexuality.

In contrast to the University of Tennessee, Clemson University has a Chief Diversity Officer. The Chief Diversity Office does not directly oversee the Gantt Center. Presumably, the Chief Diversity Officer provides input and guidance for the Division of Student Affairs who then affect change in the Gantt Center, but Clemson’s website does not describe how these relationships function in a pragmatic sense. The existence of a Chief Diversity Officer at Clemson likely supports the success of queer resources in a university, but the relationship between the Chief Diversity Officer and queer communities at Clemson is unclear.

Purdue

Purdue University is structured more like the University of Tennessee than Clemson University or the University of Georgia with respect to its queer resources. It lacks a full-time staff person dedicated to queer diversity, draws a division between diversity and queer issues, and locates its institutional support in the form of a voluntary advisory board. I argue that these

²⁴ “CONNECTIONS Peer Mentoring Program: Clemson University,” last modified March 17, 2012, <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/multicultural-programs/connections/index.html>

resources are probably less effective than the resources at Clemson or the University of Georgia because they lack institutional support (which often implies financial support).

First, Purdue lacks a full-time staff person dedicated to fulfilling the needs of queer students. Students at Purdue involved in the university's Queer Student Union feel this is a problem. One of the goals they list on their website is the "creation and hiring of a Director of LGBTQ Affairs."²⁵ They argue for this position as follows: "Purdue University is one of the few universities across the country (and the only Big Ten) to not have at least one paid staff member focusing on LGBTQ Affairs. This hurts the continuity of any support efforts."²⁶ So, one reason a university's lack of institutional support for LGBT-identifying students is its inability to provide continuity for support efforts.

As at UGA, Tennessee, and Clemson, there is a division at Purdue University between conceptions of diversity that do and do not explicitly include LGBT-identifying people. On the webpage "Division of Diversity and Inclusion," diversity is defined as "the various dimensions of identity across which individuals may vary."²⁷ The page goes on to list the statistics for four ethnic minorities (African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic American) divided along the lines of undergraduate, graduate, or professional status. Purdue publishes no data on its website regarding the proportion of its faculty, staff, and students who identify as LGBT.²⁸ It appears that Purdue's conception of diversity does not include LGBT-identifying people. This points to a lack of institutional assessment regarding queer people and therefore hinders support and development with respect to the needs of queer individuals.

²⁵ "Purdue Queer Student Union," accessed on March 17, 2012, http://www.pqsu.org/About_the_QSU.html

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Division of Diversity and Inclusion," accessed on March 17, 2012, <http://www.purdue.edu/diversity-inclusion/diversity.html>

²⁸ Presently, only one American college, Elmhurst College, allows incoming undergraduate students to self-identify as LGBT on its application materials.

In contrast, the presence of a link called “LGBTQ” on the Division of Diversity and Inclusion’s website indicates that queer people are a part of diversity and inclusion. Its separateness is confusing, then. Why are LGBTQ issues on a different webpage than “Diversity at Purdue?” In extracting one identity on which to focus a webpage, they indicate that it is different from other identities. There are not separate pages for other identities such as Asian American or disabled. It is possible that the division between diversity and “LGBTQ” is contingent upon society’s perception of LGBTQ people as different in terms of minority status compared to racial and ethnic minorities. Regardless of its cause, the separation of queer issues from broader issues of diversity and inclusion is problematic for people with intersecting marginalized identities and thereby, limits the success of resources devoted to either ethnic/racial identities or LGBT identities. For example, because the institutional structure does not accommodate queer people of color, it fails to support all queer communities.

Purdue University’s LGBT advisory board lacks hierarchical structural support. This limits its success. The LGBT advisory board advises the Office of the Provost. The advisory board in its reporting position to the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion is less able to implement, maintain, and assess change than staff people such as those in the Gantt Center for Student Life at Clemson because such programs and assessments may not take place. The advisory board is intended to advise the provost. Unlike the Gantt Center, it does not appear to impact student life directly. Because the advisory board lacks the mission and organizational home requisite for making meaningful change, it may be limited in its ability to impact queer students.

Purdue University’s queer resources are limited by its structure. Students would benefit from the continuity of support efforts, but they lack a full-time staff person to institutionalize

this. There is a division between queer identities and minority racial/ethnic identities in their electronic media. This may be harmful to people who embody both of these experiences. The LGBTQ advisory board lacks the ability to make direct meaningful change because it is merely an advisory body. Much like the University of Tennessee, Purdue is limited in its ability to create an affirming campus climate with respect to queer people.

Texas A&M – College Station

Texas A&M University has provided structural support for queer students since 1996, when the university hired the first graduate assistant for GLBT services.²⁹ Since that time, LGBT resources have expanded significantly. The GLBT Center currently has a full-time Program Coordinator and two graduate assistants. The structure of Texas A&M contributes to the quality of its LGBT resources. The continuity, number, and variety of its LGBT resources are unmatched by any of the other universities I have previously examined, and I argue institutional structure has facilitated the success of its LGBT services.

One of the goals students involved in Purdue's Queer Student Union list on their website is the "creation and hiring of a Director of LGBTQ Affairs."³⁰ They argue the lack of a full-time staff person dedicated to serving the needs of queer students "hurts the continuity of any support efforts."³¹ One would expect a university that has a full-time staff person dedicated to queer issues to provide the continuity that Purdue lacks. This appears to be the case at Texas A&M. The GLBT Resource Center lists 11 different annual events on its website.³² The University of Tennessee and Purdue lack a full-time staff person dedicated to queer students and lack the

²⁹ "Center Staff|Offices of the Dean of Student Life," accessed on March 17,2012, <http://studentlife.tamu.edu/node/233>

³⁰ "Purdue Queer Student Union," accessed on March 17, 2012, http://www.pqsu.org/About_the_QSU.html

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Annual Events|Offices of the Dean of Student Life," accessed on March 17, 2012, <http://studentlife.tamu.edu/glbtevents>

number and variety of annual events Texas A&M has. Clemson University and the University of Georgia do have full-time staff people dedicated to queer students but fail to match the number and variety of annual events at Texas A&M. It seems that a full-time staff person is a necessary but insufficient condition for the continuity of queer support efforts. The level of continuity Texas A&M exhibits is difficult to imagine without the structural support of a full-time staff person.

The GLBT Resource Center at Texas A&M coordinates a great number of programs. In addition to its 11 annual events, it has three panels available for request and a GLBT speakers bureau.³³ The University of Georgia, Clemson University, and the University of Tennessee do not have this number of annual events or programs or panels though they have LGBT resource centers. It would seem that a full-time staff person dedicated to GLBT resources is a necessary condition for a large number of programs.

The GLBT Resource Center is particularly successful in its ability to address the intersections of queer and minority racial/ethnic identities. Through the program Shades of Colour, Texas A&M aims for the following: “(1) To facilitate an educational and positive discourse on the racial, ethnic and cultural differences within the Same-Gender Loving and/or LGBTQQIAAP community, (2) to provide a nonjudgmental and open organization to all that embrace the varied racial, ethnic and cultural identities of the LGBTQQIAAP community and their allies.”³⁴ This exploration of the intersection of identities is absent in the other LGBT resource centers I have examined so far.

³³ The eleven annual events: an open house, Celebrate Bisexuality Day, GLBT History Month (October), Coming Out Week, Intersex Awareness Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, AIDS Awareness Week, GLBT Health Awareness Week, GLBT Awareness Week, Day of Silence, New Student Conferences

³⁴ “Resources|Offices of the Dean of Student Life,” accessed on March 17, 2012, <http://studentlife.tamu.edu/glbtr/resources>

There are several ways the structure of Texas A&M may have facilitated the success of the Shades of Colour program. First, Texas A&M has an associate provost for diversity. This office provides comprehensive assessment, plans, and positions on diversity issues within the university.³⁵ This office may have inspired the Shades of Colour program. Alternatively, the structure of the GLBT Resource Center may have played a greater role than the associate provost for diversity. Because three professionals work in the GLBT Resource Center, there may be a greater variety of ideas and follow-through than if only one professional or only one graduate student staffed the resource center. In either case, the structure of the university enhanced the ability of the queer resource to succeed.

Texas A&M's structure seems to enhance rather than hinder the ability of its queer resources to succeed. The number, variety, and continuity of its efforts such as annual events and its unique Shades of Colour program evince this. Institutional structure may have facilitated these successes.

The University of Minnesota

There are several sources of queer support at the University of Minnesota. First, there is an Office for Equity and Diversity that oversees eight units including the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally Programs Office. Three full-time employees staff the GLBTA Programs Office. In addition to this physical location for administrative support for queer issues, there is a space in the student union called the Queer Student Cultural Center in which nine different affinity groups have meetings. Additionally, there is support in university housing through the Lavender House. There are two commissions at the University of Minnesota composed of faculty, staff, and students. They are the Transgender Commission and the Systemwide

³⁵ "About Office of Vice President & Associate Provost for Diversity," accessed on April 15, 2012, <http://diversity.tamu.edu/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx>

Commission on GLBT Concerns. The University of Minnesota has an endowment called the Steven J. Schochet Endowment for GLBT Studies & Campus Life that presumably funds a majority of these resources. The structure of the University of Minnesota and its endowment contribute to the success of its LGBT resources.

The GLBTA Programs Office is a financially supportive resource at the University of Minnesota. It awards four students the \$500 Schochet GLBT Studies Awards for Excellence in Creativity & Scholarship annually. It sponsors a colloquia series. It coordinates a GLBTA Leadership Year, which is an “initiative offering an integrated, year-long learning experience for...undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota...culminating in a May term course where students travel to Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C. for intensive study and dialogue with national leaders of the GLBTA rights movement.”³⁶ It administers a GLBTA mentoring program and a GLBTA student leadership retreat. The programs and services at the GLBTA Programs Office are numerous and varied.

The quantity of resources the GLBTA Program Office provides could not be maintained without significant structural support. This structural support exists at the university as three full-time staff people, an Office for Equity and Diversity, and an endowment. The three full-time staff people enable the success of the many unique programs the GLBTA Programs Office coordinates such as the GLBTA Leadership Year. The Office for Equity and Diversity holds the staff people accountable and may contribute to the GLBTA Program Office’s success by facilitating connections between the GLBTA Programs Office and other resources under its purview such as Disability Services. The endowment “provides an array of programming and

³⁶ “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Programs Office: University of Minnesota,” accessed on March 18, 2012, <http://www.glbta.umn.edu/leadershipyear/>

services to the GLBTA community at the University of Minnesota.”³⁷ Presumably, this endowment funds the majority of the unique programs the GLBTA Programs Office coordinates. Structural support in the form of staff-people, administration, and funding facilitates the success of LGBT resources at the University of Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota provides support for queer students in another way. The university’s Lavender House “is a Living & Learning Community within Comstock Hall for GLBT students, friends of GLBT students, students from GLBT families, and students who are queer, genderqueer, or questioning.”³⁸ It is a joint effort between the Transgender Commission and Housing & Residential Life. Through the joint structural support between the university’s Transgender Commission and housing, students in the Lavender House “learn about the history and culture of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities, and are encouraged to participate in programs and classes... [and] connect with the larger Twin Cities GLBTA community through social events, service opportunities and guest speakers.”³⁹ The success of the Lavender House as an institutional support mechanism for queer students likely fuels the success of the Queer Student Cultural Center’s many organizations. Because students involved in the Queer Student Cultural Center also may live together in the Lavender House, they may form connections with one another that may strengthen the organizations they join together. The University of Minnesota’s structure enables the existence and success of an LGBT-themed living and learning community, and this in turn enables the success of the University of Minnesota’s student-led queer resources.

³⁷ “Steven J. Schochet Endowment for GLBT Studies and Campus Life : University of Minnesota,” accessed on March 18, 2012, <http://glbta.umn.edu/schochet/>

³⁸ “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Programs Office : University of Minnesota,” accessed on March 18, 2012, <http://glbta.umn.edu/programming/lavenderhouse.html>

³⁹ *Ibid.*

The University of Minnesota's structure includes a space for students to meet – the Queer Student Cultural Center. This Center holds the following student meetings: Arch (coming out), Biversity, Friends & Allies, Geeqs (for gamers), Kinky U (a discussion forum for all forms of kink), Queer Graduate & Professional Student Association, Queer Men, Queer Women, Tongues Untied: GLBT People of Color Discussions, and Tranarchy. This variety and number of student groups and discussion is unmatched by any of the universities I have examined so far. As I mentioned earlier, the division of queer minority status and racial/ethnic minority status can limit holistic support of LGBT students who embody more than one marginalized identity, but the University of Minnesota addresses this intersection through Tongues Untied. The division between the University of Minnesota's Disability Services and queer resources may contribute to the fact that there is no organization or discussion for queer people with disabilities. The structure of the University of Minnesota lends itself to the creation of as many discussion and activist groups as students desire to attend. In this way, the University of Minnesota's structure is conducive to the success of its queer resources.

The University of Minnesota has two commissions, the Systemwide Commission for GLBT Concerns and the Transgender Commission. Both of these groups submit recommendations to the Vice President and the Vice Provost for Equity and Diversity. This is in contrast to the University of Tennessee, which has only the Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People. The Chancellor's Commission for LGBT People submits recommendations to the Chancellor in the absence of a director of diversity such as a Chief Diversity Officer or Vice Provost of Equity and Diversity. The University of Tennessee is structured so that recommendations from the Chancellor's Commissions reach a person who may not be sensitive to the needs of various communities. The University of Minnesota's commissions have an

advantage over the UT commissions in that they provide recommendations to people who are trained in diversity issues and have the power to implement change. The structure of the University of Minnesota enables the success of its two Commissions, and this in turn enhances the resources available to queer people at the university.

The University of Minnesota has a structure that promotes the success of its queer resources. The GLBTA Programs Office is well staffed and funded. The university's housing system accommodates the needs of queer students and fuels the success of its queer students and their organizations. The university's reservation of a space for students to meet has enabled the variety and number of groups they have. The university's structure further promotes the needs of queer communities by providing a functional conduit by which the Commissions may propose and implement change to the university. The University of Minnesota's queer resources are numerous and impactful, due in part to the structure of the university itself.

Rutgers

One might expect Rutgers to have poor structural support for queer resources or inadequate queer resources in light of the widely publicized 2010 suicide of a gay student, Tyler Clementi. However, queer resources and the structure that contains them at Rutgers are fairly typical in this case study. The university's LGBT resource center, called the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities, functions under the administration of two full time employees, two graduate assistants, and four undergraduate student workers and interns.⁴⁰ The Vice President of Student Affairs supervises the center's director. The center supports nine different student groups, some of which address intersections of identity. Additionally, the center

⁴⁰ "About the Staff – About Us – Rutgers – Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities," accessed on March 18, 2012, <http://socialjustice.rutgers.edu/about-us/about-the-staff>

supports five annual events. The structure of Rutgers University may support the success of its queer resources.

As noted in the examination of Purdue, full-time staff people tend to be necessary for the continuity of queer support efforts. At Rutgers, it appears that full-time staff members have played a key role in the continuity of support efforts. The Center oversees five annual programs including an LGBTQ Fall Reception, a National Coming Out Day event, a World AIDS Day event, Gaypril, and Rainbow Graduation. That these five annual events exist suggests the structure of the university enables the success of its queer resources. I argue the annual events would be less likely to exist if the Center was not staffed full-time.

The Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities is located under the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. This means that the Center's director may report to someone who is less sensitive to diversity in its many forms than a chief diversity officer would be. So, this structure may be less ideal than if the Center was under the jurisdiction of an office solely concerned with diversity, but it does not seem to have substantively hindered the success of its queer resources.

The success of the university's queer resources is evident in its number and variety of student groups. The Center contains BRIDGE (addresses intersection of LGBTQIA and Asian American identities), Delta Lambda Phi (national social fraternity for gay, bisexual and progressive men), GSAPP QSA (queer student association for graduate psychology students), JAQs (intersection of Jewish and LGBTQIA identities), LLEGO (intersection of LGBTQIA identities and people of color), oSTEM (Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), QGPSA (Queer Graduate Professional Student Alliance), QSA (Queer Student Alliance), and SWAGGER (Social Workers Advocating for GLBT and Gender-nonconforming

Equal Rights). Groups that address the intersections of various identities are absent from universities with inadequate structural support such as the University of Tennessee. The presence of these many and varied organizations indicates the structure of Rutgers contributes to the success of its queer resources.

Most of the Center's social groups appear to be unavailable at the other schools I have examined. This may be surprising considering that Rutgers lacks a chief diversity officer position and an endowment, both of which structurally support the success of the University of Minnesota and Texas A&M's comparable queer resources. It seems that endowments and chief diversity officer positions, while they may promote the success of queer resources, are not necessary to the success of queer resources.

Queer resources at Rutgers appear to thrive despite a structure that is less normatively ideal than the University of Minnesota or Texas A&M. There are a variety of annual programs and student groups, many of which address intersecting identities. It is difficult to label Rutgers a success considering its theoretically inadequate structure and widely publicized gay suicide, but Rutgers appears to have highly successful queer resources.

Indiana University

Indiana University is a large system of campuses, so its structured somewhat differently from other institutions I have examined so far. At Indiana University, the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs "serve[s] as an effective advocate for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff and to provide programs and services that promote excellence through diversity, equity, and culture at Indiana University."⁴¹ This position is system-wide, affecting the eight campuses of Indiana University. I will focus on the

⁴¹ "IU Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs," accessed on March 18, 2012, <http://www.indiana.edu/~dema/index.shtml>

Bloomington campus's support services because it is the only campus with an LGBT resource center.

The Bloomington campus's LGBT resource center is called the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Support Services Office. It is a part of the Office of Student Ethics which reports to the Division of Student Affairs. A Diversity and Equity Office was established about five years ago on campus, but the LGBT resource center has not been incorporated in it. Regarding this structure, Doug Bauder, the director of the Center, remarked, "The diversity and equity office came about only in the last five years. I'm very pleased to be associated with the Dean of Students. It would make sense if their office [Diversity and Equity Office] had been in place when these issues came to the fore, but again it was about personalities and the particular structure of universities." Bauder points out the university's idiosyncrasies played a large role in determining where the LGBT resource center would be located within the university hierarchy. This may indicate that there is not a single best solution to the problem of where to house queer support resources at a university.

The Center seems to be fairly successful. It hosts a library, listserv, and counseling services. The center also publicizes a number of student organizations, several of which target students with intersecting identities.⁴² Though it may not be normatively appealing for the LGBT center to operate within the Office of Student Ethics as opposed to the Diversity and Equity Office, the LGBT center seems to be flourishing.

⁴² Five organizations target more than one identity: Girls Like Us (LGBT women), Keshet (LGBT Jews), Men Like Us (LGBT men), Out at Kelley (LGBT students in the Kelley School of Business), and Resonate (LGBT international students)

Michigan State University

At Michigan State University, queer resources are channeled through the LGBT Resource Center organized under the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Services. An Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives exists, but it seems to focus mostly on compliance with anti-discrimination policies and laws. The LGBT Resource Center is staffed full-time with several different positions. The Center hosts several student groups. It maintains four continuous programs and administers two scholarships for LGBT-identifying students. The Center and its full-time staff support the success of its queer resources.

MSU's Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives seems to have little to do with the LGBT Resource Center. Similarly, the equity and diversity offices at the University of Tennessee and Indiana University have nothing to do with their LGBT resource centers. This seems structurally problematic for LGBT centers in theory. If offices that concern themselves with equity, diversity, and intercultural initiatives do not affect LGBT centers, are they truly promoting equity and diversity? The division between equity and diversity offices and LGBT resource centers may be a result of different staffing concerns. LGBT resource centers work primarily with students, so it would be best to have student affairs professionals interfacing with the students because they are trained for that. Equity and diversity offices tend to be more concerned with compliance with university policies and state and federal laws and regulations. The people trained in compliance are not trained to interface with students. This division, present at Michigan State University, the University of Tennessee, and Indiana University, does not seem to affect the LGBT resources because equity and diversity offices function completely independently of LGBT resource centers.

Several full-time employees staff the LGBT Resource Center at MSU. The positions include: Assistant Director/LGBT Resource Center Liaison, Program Coordinator, Graduate Assistant, Secretary, Program Support Intern, Program Assistant, and Program Media Assistant. Other campuses I have examined lack these clear distinctions in position titles. This may lend the MSU LGBT Resource Center a structural advantage relative to other resource centers. The four continuous programs at the resource center evidence the success of the division of duties within the center. The structure of MSU's LGBT Resource Center promotes the division of labor within its full-time staff force, which may contribute to the success of its resources.

MSU lacks queer resources that other campuses such as the University of Minnesota and Texas A&M have. For example, there is no living and learning community for queer students. There is also no commission such as at the University of Tennessee or many of the other institutions I have examined. This may be due to a lack of structural support in the university. For example, because the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives does not oversee the LGBT Resource Center, it may be difficult for the LGBT Resource Center to connect to housing and create a learning community. It may also be difficult for the LGBT Resource Center to connect to faculty and staff to form a commission because it is located under the Division of Student Affairs. The structure of MSU may in some ways inhibit the success of MSU's queer resources.

MSU locates many resources for queer students in its LGBT Resource Center. This is in part due to the structure of the resource center. Several full-time staff oversees its operations and labor is neatly divided among by position titles. MSU lacks two programs and services other institutions have: LGBT-themed living and learning residence and a university commission. This

may be due to structural inadequacies in the university. MSU's structure contributes to the success of its queer resources, but may also inhibit their growth.

Auburn University

Auburn University lacks an LGBT resource center. It coordinates its queer resources through its Multicultural Center, which is a department in the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. The Office supports Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual [sic], Transgender Pride Month and the Auburn Gay Straight Alliance. Auburn lacks an LGBT library, a full-time staff person devoted to LGBT issues, and the number and variety of programs and student organizations found on other campuses. It is possible that Auburn's structure plays a role in this.

Auburn centralizes its queer resources in the Multicultural Center, and this appears to be ineffective. There are very few resources available for queer students at Auburn relative to comparable universities. The Women's Resource Center at Auburn, on the other hand, is very successful. It oversees five student organizations, several leadership programs, and many campus events such as brownbag lunches and speakers. It may be the case that creating a separate organizational unit based on a certain identity supports the success of resources targeted for that identity. Auburn's lack of queer resources may have its source in the lack of an LGBT resource center.

Iowa State University⁴³

Iowa State University's LGBT Student Services is an LGBT resource center and reports to the Dean of Students Office. A full-time staff person has overseen the resource center since

⁴³ I experienced first-hand the strength of Iowa State University's commitment to LGBT resources in February 10-12, 2012 when I attended the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference. This conference was funded in large part by Iowa State University and hosted over 1000 students from across the country. Additionally, there were four keynote speakers and nearly 100 different workshops.

2008.⁴⁴ The center supports a variety of student organizations, email lists, scholarships, a Safe Zone program, a speakers bureau, lavender graduation, and an advisory board similar to the University of Tennessee’s Chancellor’s Commission for LGBT People.

This structure is similar to the structure of many of the universities I have examined such as Michigan State University and Indiana University. This structure seems to correspond to fairly successful LGBT resources. Universities such as Texas A&M are organized in a similar manner, but have the benefit of endowments that enable them to produce more LGBT resources than schools lacking funding like the University of Tennessee.

North Carolina State University – Raleigh

Queer resources at North Carolina State University are located in its GLBT Resource Center, organized under the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity. One full-time staff person, two graduate assistants, and an undergraduate student assistant support the operation of the center. The center appears to be fairly successful because it administers many different programs such as an “Everyone Welcome Here series, a mentoring program, Project SAFE ally and Transgender 101 training...Lunch and Learn series, a Speakers Bureau program, and...Coffee Talks weekly discussion group to name a few.”⁴⁵

The GLBT Resource Center at NC State is fairly unique among the sample in its location under the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity. This may be conducive to the success of its queer resources. The Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity “helps to align similar offices and units to provide better service and functionality for students, faculty, staff, and the

⁴⁴ “History of the LGBTSS | Dean of Students Office,” accessed on March 25, 2012, <http://new.dso.iastate.edu/lgbtss/about/history>

⁴⁵ “Program & Services,” accessed on April 23, 2012, http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_affairs/glbtp/programs/index.php

larger community as it relates to equity and diversity.”⁴⁶ This seems to be beneficial to students with intersecting marginalized identities, for example. On the other hand, highly successful queer resources are located under the Dean of Students Office such as Texas A&M’s resource center. NC State’s GLBT Resource Center is unusual in its structure, but it does not seem to have an unusual resource center.

Limitations

There are problems with the approach I have used. A large quantity and variety of queer-oriented programs, events, and services, does not necessarily mean that students benefit from them. A strong LGBT center does not mean students feel comfortable questioning their identities. Without surveying or interviewing administrators, staff, and students, I cannot claim correlations between queer resources and success, however, it is clear from many of the websites I examined that students value affinity groups, meeting spaces, queer spaces, dependable staff, programs, and leadership opportunities. I do not think the value of this thesis is in the arguments or opinions I have presented regarding the success of queer resources. The value is in the questions I am now asking about this idea.

Further Questions

One question is how does one gauge the success of an LGBT resource center. The quantity and variety of programs, events, and services the center offers may suggest it is successful, as I have proposed. Campus climate indices may suggest whether or not an LGBT resource center is successful, particularly if the campus climate with respect to queer people improved with the creation of an LGBT resource center on campus. Another way to measure the

⁴⁶ “Mission Statement,” accessed on March 25, 2012, http://www.ncsu.edu/stud_affairs/glb/aboutus/index.php

success of an LGBT resource center would be to survey or interview students, faculty, and staff at universities about how LGBT resource centers serve them. A combination of these approaches may be successful for further research on this topic.

Does university structure matter to an LGBT resource center? In general, an organization divides its tasks according to expertise. So it makes sense that an LGBT resource center would be located under an office for diversity or a dean of students office because it deals with students and with diversity issues. It seems that either of these structures are fairly unrelated to the quality and quantity of LGBT programming in an LGBT resource center. So it may be that the connection between administrative structures and LGBT centers is loose. Loosely coupled structures are probabilistic, so it is impossible to predict what outputs will come from specific inputs.⁴⁷ So one answer to the question of how to relate queer resource quality to structure is that one cannot relate them.

I studied this in order to determine what organizational structure produces the best chance of success for queer resources. I do not think it is as simple as that. The success of queer resources seems to be dependent on many factors other than university structure, such as campus climate, state political climate, administrator's personalities and views, and student leadership. So in many cases the organizational structure that contains an LGBT resource center is a product of many other contingencies rather than a planned and perfected structure.

Conclusion

This case study presents my analysis regarding the relationships between organizational structure and queer resources. I have documented the structure of the University of Tennessee

⁴⁷ Birnbaum, Robert. *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1988), 35.

and its peer universities and the quality and number of queer-oriented resources they contain. Originally, I hoped this would indicate what university structure is best for bringing about the success of queer resources, however, there is variability among these peer institutions. One LGBT Resource Center director remarked, “Some people have asked whether I would want this [structure] changed and with the current administrators in our division and the other office I would not. We just get a lot of support from the division we’re under.”⁴⁸ For this LGBT resource center, the ideal structure for their university was based not on organizational theory but on the idiosyncrasies of its administration. The structure of universities with respect to where their queer resources are located is highly dependent on the culture of the university, administrators’ personalities and attitudes toward queer people, governmental attitudes toward queer people, and financial support at each individual university.

⁴⁸ Doug Bauder, phone conversation with director of Indiana University’s LGBT Resource Center, March 21, 2012.

Ideas for further research

Below is an assessment tool that may be used to collect the data one needs to begin comparing LGBT resource centers at public institutions:

Does the university have an LGBT Resource Center?

If so, what is its title?

How many full-time staff work there?

What are their titles?

How many part-time staff (professional) work there?

How many part-time staff (graduate assistants) work there?

How many part-time staff (undergraduate students) work there?

Does the resource center have a library?

Does the resource center have an endowment?

How large is the endowment?

How many annual or continuous programs does the resource center sponsor?

How many LGBT-related student organizations or discussion groups does the resource center sponsor?

What percentage of these is related to intersecting identities?

How many university-specific scholarships are offered to queer students?

When was it founded?

University Structure

Does the university have a Chief Diversity Officer position?

Do LGBT Resource Center staff report to it?

Does the university have an office for multiculturalism, diversity, equity, or intercultural initiatives?

Do LGBT Resource Center staff report to it?

Does the university directly fund the LGBT Resource Center?

Public, private, or both?

Does the LGBT resource center fall under the Division of Student Life's responsibilities?

Does the university have a counseling center?

Does it have LGBT-specific programs?

If so, how many LGBT-specific programs?

Does the Development Office agree to support LGBT resources?

Does the university have a queer advisory group composed of students, faculty, and staff?

It would be useful to conduct interviews with administrators of LGBT resource centers to confirm that the success of LGBT resource centers is contingent upon supportive administrators rather than a particular organizational structure. Additionally, it would be useful to assess student perceptions of LGBT resource centers and how they impact their experience as students.