Chasing Rainbows With a Net: EntomologistsBreaking LGBT Barriers

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Terms

- LGBT—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. Many also include Q for Queer and/or Questioning and A for Ally (heterosexual supporter) or Asexual
- Ally—supporter for LGBT parity
- Parity—equal rights and benefits (not special rights)
- Cisgender--Denoting or relating to a person whose self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex
- Transgender--denoting or relating to a person whose self-identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender
Differences to Most Diversity Metrics

- Not a federally protected class; protections vary widely around the globe
- Information is often based on self-disclosed information (e.g. employee surveys)
- May not be obvious and many LGBTQA feel the need to cover their identity
States That Currently Offer Workplace Protection For Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity

Only 19 states offer full protection for LGBT
Protections Varies Even Within a State

- As of April 27, 2016, at least 255 cities and counties prohibit discrimination for both public and private employees
- University towns can provide protections even if a state doesn’t offer
- Concern can be with field locations and satellite stations

Source: [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_the_United_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_the_United_States)
Very Active Year for Anti-LGBT Legislation

- 201 anti-LGBT pieces of legislation offered in 34 states
- Heavily concentrated in the south but did occur broadly across the US
- Four broad categories
  - Anti-transgender
  - Anti-marriage
  - RFRA/FADA
  - Municipal preemption
- 176 failed, only 5 passed into law
- Prominent in the current election cycle as well
- Current strategy is the Equality Bill to rewrite the Civil Rights Act of 1964
International Concerns: Students & Professionals

LGBT in STEM majors

Few STEM specific surveys; no Entomology specific (yet)
Recently, first survey published with 1427 individual responses

- Individual identity factors are often considered inconsequential to STEM professional achievement, but research suggests that being part of a marginalized or minority group can hamper job satisfaction, career success, and workplace productivity.
- Gay men and lesbians who are out in the workplace are more productive, have more positive attitudes toward their workplaces, and report greater commitment to their work (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2014).
- Approximately eight million people in the nation’s workforce identify as LGBT (Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2012).
- Life sciences were the highest represented group overall with 42% of respondents.
- The representation of different STEM fields was broadly similar among academics and nonacademics, but the largest number of academics reported working in the life sciences, while the largest group of nonacademics worked in engineering.
- Almost one half of respondents (52%) indicated that they were either currently PhD students or had completed PhD degrees.

LGBT in STEM majors

A welcoming work environment is important to being out

We are scientists first – impact of being LGBT is not as strong as general LGBT population

Key Learning from Yoder & Mattheis

LGBTQA participants working in STEM fields with better representation of women reported a higher degree of openness. They suggest two hypotheses which are not mutually exclusive:

• better gender parity fosters a workplace climate welcoming to LGBTQA identities
• or some broader tolerance for non-masculine expression may influence workplace climate for both LGBTQA individuals and straight, cisgender women.

This result corroborates prior research, which has found that LGB individuals are more likely to disclose their orientation or identity in the workplace if they perceive their coworkers to be supportive of LGB identities, and if their employer enacts and enforces policies in supportive of those identities (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005; Ragins et al., 2007).
LGBT on campus

Major schools are ranked—consider small or satellite campuses and department culture. Items for consideration:

1. LGBT Policy Inclusion
2. LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment
3. LGBT Academic Life
4. LGBT Student Life
5. LGBT Housing
6. LGBT Campus Safety
7. LGBT Counseling & Health
8. LGBT Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Find your school ranking at: Campus Pride
(www.campusprideindex.org/default.aspx)
Considerations for attracting grad students

- Don’t make assumptions on orientation/gender identity
- Use inclusive language
- If you sense reluctance to share you can put at ease

- Benefits like Domestic Partner (DP) benefits are deemed attractive by allies as well as LGBT as it is a signifier for a caring company

Dr. Kinsey studying galls

Dr. Margaret Mead

http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/about/photo-tour.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Mead

Alan Turing, “father” of computers

Considerations For Attracting Grad Students

• Be aware of LGBT policies and be comfortable discussing them
• Equal Opportunity statement at University; does it include both sexual orientation and gender identity
• Recognize same-sex marriage
• Offer transgender health benefits
  • Be aware that traditional benefit plans are often discriminatory to transgender
  • Other soft policies such as credit union, housing, meal plans, etc.
For LGBT Entomology Students

• Disclose on the resume? Interview?

• University/USDA roles—
  • EEOC usually covered—Look for culture indications
  • Ask questions on the LGBT benefits
  • Ask if there are LGBT on staff already or ally champions within the department
  • Engage with the staff/student LGBT group
  • Accommodations such as unisex restroom

• Corporations—
  • Verify EEOC statement
  • Check the HRC Corporate Equality Ratings
  • Out and Equal activity
  • Employee Resource Group (ERG)
  • Visibility within the local community where located
  • Support major national parity issues (Equality Bill, etc.)
LGBT Within the Nonacademic Workplace

• Today there are very few out CEOs in the world (e.g. Tim Cook of Apple) to serve as role models

• Covering is common (Appearance, Affinity, Advocacy, Association)*

• In a recent survey, 91% of LGB responded that they cover

• In the same survey, 59% of respondents said that they felt the company encouraged covering; leading to less commitment to the workplace#

• Conversely, when workplace allows LGBT to be open, it is linked to greater job commitment, improved workplace relationships, increased job satisfaction, and improved health outcomes among LGBT employees^  


# Uncovering talent: A new model of inclusion. 2013. Deloitte University, 20 pg

How Can You Help? Allies

• It is through Allies that many advancements have been made

• It is common for an ally to have to “come out” similar to an LGBT individual
  • Might be embarrassed to attend meetings or difficulty in introducing a same sex partner

• Often concern on asking questions or making assumptions, but if done in a positive and supportive way, it will usually be well-received

• Send reassuring signals
• Ask respectful questions
• Be honest
• Be reassuring
Key Messages

• LGBT acceptance varies widely

• Although quite controversial, perception changing rapidly. For today’s graduates--a non-issue/dated conversation

• As with any other diversity pool: attract, retain and promote the best and brightest

• Make sure your workplace/campus has key protections in place

• Create the welcoming environment you would like to see!

• Hand outs in the back