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Cracking the Lavender Ceiling:
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Affairs Professionals and
Their Personal Perspectives on Career Trajectory

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

by

James Capshaw Smith

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Cracking the Lavender Ceiling:
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Affairs Officers and
Their Personal Perspectives on Career Trajectory

by

James Capshaw Smith

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Richard L. Wagoner, Chair

In higher education, the people working in student affairs are as diverse as the students who are served by these professionals. Those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are often faced with challenges to moving up the career ladder. Many who seek senior-level administrative positions, such as director, dean of students, vice president or the like, are hindered because of their sexual orientation—these LGB-identified student affairs professionals are faced with the proverbial lavender ceiling that prevents them from moving to the executive level.

This study examined the perceptions of LGB-identified student affairs professionals who are employed in or working towards executive positions on their campuses. The purpose of this

research was to determine what, if any, barriers related to their career trajectories these participants faced. Further, the study sought to examine what, if any, forms of discrimination the participants encountered that prevented them from attaining the careers of their choice. The participants in the study all have more than seven years of professional experience in the field and serve at a position of director or above.

Through qualitative methods, 15 participants from four-year public universities in California were interviewed and asked a series of questions regarding their career path and how, if at all, their sexual orientation influenced their career choices. The findings indicated that, despite some negative experiences, many were still able to attain the positions they wanted.

The dissertation of James Capshaw Smith is approved.

Beverly P. Lynch

Robert A. Rhoads

Richard L. Wagoner, Committee Chair

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2013

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to the out, hardworking, devoted and amazing LGBT student affairs professionals. The role modeling and guidance you provide our students is commendable.

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Along the way there were many faculty members in the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA who have inspired me in some way. Dr. Cindy Kratzer, Dr. Stuart Biegel, Dr. Diane Durkin you each bring something special to the program and helped me to become a better writer, practitioner, and researcher. Dr. Lisa Sugimoto, thank you for reading my initial drafts and for giving me incredible feedback along the way. I am grateful for your non-stop encouragement.

To the participants in my study, I thank you for your time and dedication while allowing me into your world. I appreciate the sharing of your stories; they were truly inspirational and solidify the choices I made that led me into the field of student affairs. I am humbled by your experiences.

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VITA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Student affairs staff members are fairly visible on college campuses across the country, enhancing students' experience by providing cross-cultural and co-curricular opportunities. Without question, student affairs professionals form quite a diverse group, and they are generally educators outside the classroom (Komives & Woodard, 2003; NASPA, 2011). These groups of staff members have a number of areas of responsibility on campus; some include residential life, student activities, student advising, counseling, and cultural centers.

Within that diverse student affairs profession, some staff members identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB),¹ and they are present in professional associations, including the two dominant organizations NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) and ACPA (American College Personnel Association). Additionally, some of these staff members are “out”² on their campuses and in the field. Despite their visibility, little is known about challenges that may affect the career paths of LGB-identified student affairs professionals.

Sexual orientation is invisible in the workplace; it often manifests when workers display pictures of their spouses, attend social functions with a date, or wear wedding rings (Gedro, 2009). Being LGB is an aspect one's identity and therefore a part of the person's work life. Yet some staff members who identify as LGB keep their identities to themselves for a variety of

¹ Generally, the letters “LGB” are followed by “T,” referring to transgender individuals. However, for the purposes of this study, I will examine only sexual orientation as a factor. Being transgender is more associated with gender than sexual orientation, so I have omitted the “T.”

² “Out” refers to an individual who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) and discloses this to others, making that person a visible presence.

reasons, including fear of discrimination. Do potential fears keep LGB-identified student affairs professionals from obtaining satisfaction in their careers? Do these professionals perceive themselves as having the same opportunities to move up the career ladder and obtain senior-level positions on their campuses as readily as any equally qualified peers? Is there a lavender ceiling that prevents LGB-identified staff from attaining campus executive positions?

The term “lavender ceiling” is derived from the commonly used “glass ceiling” metaphor. The glass ceiling symbolizes invisible barriers through which women can see elite positions but cannot reach them because of gender inequities in the workplace (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2005, p. 77.); the lavender ceiling describes similar issues for LGB employees, specifically the unofficial barriers they may face in moving up the career ladder. This unwritten policy has been and continues to be unbreakable (Unger, 2008). Workplace discrimination continues to be a part of the American workforce and is prevalent among LGB workers across career fields (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001).

Students, faculty and staff who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual face a variety of challenges to being open about their identity. In the 2009–10 academic year, the news media was full of reports regarding student bullying and youth suicides rooted in LGB discrimination. The most notable story was that of Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University student who committed suicide after his roommate recorded a sexual encounter between Clementi and another man and streamed it to other members of his residence hall via the Internet (Shidler, 2012). Although colleges and universities are generally places where freedom of expression is paramount, LGB-identified individuals struggle with expressing who they are or keeping their identity hidden out of fear or retaliation.

Statement of Problem

Higher education has progressed on some issues affecting LGB people, and some college campuses are seemingly more open to discussing LGB issues than they have been in the past. Policies and practices protecting LGB rights have grown, and LGB issues are researched more often than in the past (Renn, 2010). However, it is important to note that for all of the progress that has taken place, significant problems remain for LGB people, and campus structures that would make the community inclusive for all are still lacking. Comfort with being out and, conversely, negative campus climates toward LGB people may contribute to LGB-identified student affairs professionals feeling unable to advance in their career and move into executive positions. For example, the safety of those who identify as LGB is of concern on campuses across the country. The *State of Higher Education Report for LGBT People* (2010) indicates that a majority of LGBT respondents are more likely to have negative experiences of their campus climate than their heterosexual counterparts.

No official data on the number of executive leaders in higher education is currently available. Although there are a few openly LGB-identified college presidents (30 belong to a self-identified LGBTQ Presidents Group), many are still not accessible, or out (Masterson, 2011). During college president searches, the deluge of candidate criteria inevitably results in committees assessing how a president and his/her spouse will work together for the university; this is where concerns about hiring an out president may lie (Masterson, 2011). Some hiring committees see the president as the “face of the university” and shy away from hiring an out president to represent their campuses. Out presidents face stigma because of their sexual orientation: campus constituents may infer that because they are gay, they will only focus on “gay” issues. This fearful, negative attitude may hinder a search committee in finding the most

viable candidate for a position, and it shuts out an entire group of people who might be qualified to be president. Although some in student affairs may not aspire to be a college president, the parallels of visible leadership are similar in that many higher-level administrators in student affairs often have executive authority on the campus with a number of departments in their portfolio.

Although many states have laws against discrimination that include LGB people, there is no such federal law. In the 1990s, a number of campuses ushered in nondiscrimination policies that included protecting LGB-identified people against discrimination (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). In addition to these nondiscrimination policies, many campuses opened LGBT resource centers that increase awareness for LGBT students, faculty, and staff and provide resources and education to the campus on LGBT issues. While changes continue on campus and in various states, attempts to pass a federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that includes LGBT rights have been futile. Without federal protections for LGB-identified staff members, people who identify as LGB can still be fired in some states just for disclosing their sexual orientation (Biegel, 2011).

Tilesik (2011) presented findings from a large-scale audit of discrimination against gay men during the job application process in the United States. The author sent out two fictitious resumes to 1,769 job postings at various companies in different industries; one was a control, and one identified the candidate as gay. The findings indicated significant discrimination against the applicant who appeared to be gay. The resumes that had no indication of sexual orientation received overwhelmingly larger numbers of calls for interviews or moved further in a selection process.

Beyond discrimination, there is still a challenge of creating an open campus climate for LGB-identified individuals. Often, there is difficulty in identifying and discussing issues that affect the LGB community in a public forum. Open dialogue and awareness of LGB issues assists in the creation of a receptive and caring campus for this community. Failure to learn about and discuss LGB issues hinders a university's ability to provide an inclusive environment (Joyce, 2007).

Even with an open and inclusive environment on campus, LGB-identified individuals still exhibit higher levels of stress and anxiety than their heterosexual colleagues (Cochran, 2001). The stress that LGB identified members face may be from their unique experiences as members of a socially stigmatized minority group (Herek & Garnents, 2007; Meyer, 1995, 2003). This stress and anxiety may result from exposure to rejection, perceived stigma as a member of a minority, and discrimination. Lack of legal protection from discrimination coupled with laws denying equal protection and equal benefits add to more stress that can have serious repercussions as to whether faculty, staff, or students choose to be out on campus (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). Then too, if LGB individuals seek to leave an institution for "an opportunity in another job location that does not have an inclusive nondiscrimination law, previous public disclosures about their sexual identity can affect their future educational or employment opportunities and the direction of their careers" (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005, p.9).

Given the evidence that discrimination against LGB people in the workplace remains, it is necessary to continue research in the field so that we may better understand the perceptions of those it affects. This study sought to identify relationships between ideal career paths and actual career outcomes of LGB-identified senior-level student affairs officers and whether there are barriers to obtaining the careers of their choice.

Studies About LGB Student Affairs Officers

Cullen and Smart (1991) outlined a number of concerns regarding student affairs professionals who are LGB identified. The authors discuss the visibility of LGB-identified student affairs officers and the struggles they encounter based on their identities. Many LGB-identified professionals said they feared being fired, demoted, or passed up for promotions in their positions (Cullen & Smart, 1991). Further, reasons why there are not more out LGB senior-level administrators range from discrimination to fear for safety in being identified on their campuses. Additionally, some professionals leave their campus positions because of the pressures they feel being closeted; there is a conflict between the desire to be a visible presence to help students and the fear of rejection from campus colleagues (Cullen & Smart, 1991).

“Out of the Closet and Into the Cabinet” (Renn, 2003) explores the lives of four LGB-identified senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) who agreed to answer questions about their professional experiences. Of this group, only two agreed to have their real names and positions used (Renn, 2003). The participants spoke about their choices to be out or not on their campuses and the various reasons for those choices, including politics, personal style, or partner status. Much like Cullen and Smart (1991), Renn concludes that fear of rejection is often associated with being out on campus.

Croteau and von Destinon (1994) offer empirical research on LGB-identified student affairs professionals; it is the only such work published as of 2012. The authors found that LGB-identified professionals who were open about their orientation also reported more discrimination in job searches than those who were not open (1994). This study sought student affairs professionals who attended socials and business meetings related to LGBT awareness at NASPA and ACPA conferences in 1992. Questions were asked about job searches and hiring practices,

and a range of answers resulted. Respondents indicated that they did not receive positions because of their LGB identity or were involved in search committees where positions were not offered to LGB people. Often, the true reasons communicated to candidates are hidden under the guise of “institutional fit,” which seems ambiguous enough to some but, according to respondents, hides the real reason—their sexual orientation (Croteau & von Destinon, 1994).

Croteau and Lark (1995) sought to uncover whether there was a relationship between discrimination on campus and one’s openness about sexual orientation. The study found a majority of respondents had faced some form of discrimination based on their sexual orientation in the workplace. There were also examples of unsatisfactory evaluations and lack of promotional opportunities associated with sexual orientation. Although concerns for safety were not fully addressed in the study, there were examples of descriptive homophobic comments made on the job. These types of situations can lead to unsatisfactory and unsafe working conditions.

Concern for safety is an issue for those who identify as LGB on campuses across the country. The authors of *State of Higher Education Report for LGBT People* (2010) surveyed a number of staff members across various campuses and disciplines. Of the staff members who answered the survey regarding safety, many responded that they had been the target of derogatory remarks because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, staff members felt ignored or intentionally isolated because of their orientation (Rankin, 2010). Whether these issues lead to decreased chances of moving up the career ladder in student affairs will be explored further in this study.

Research Questions

As mentioned previously, this study sought to identify perceived barriers to career outcomes of LGB-identified senior-level student affairs officers and whether there are barriers to

obtaining their careers of choice. Understanding the complexities of various career paths involves interviewing various student affairs officers to garner their perspectives on career advancement.

The research questions are

1. What perceived barriers, if any, exist that prevent LGB- identified seasoned student affairs officers from becoming senior-level administrators?
2. According to LGB-identified student affairs officers, what services and/or support systems (e.g., staff support groups, staff council for LGB awareness) exist on campus that pertain to LGB staff members?
3. Based on perceptions of the self and career trajectory for LGB-identified student affairs officers, what experiences have provided the most opportunities for career advancement?
4. What, if any, types of discrimination do LGB-identified student affairs officers say they have faced on their campus because of their sexual orientation?

The Role of Homophobia and Heterosexism

LGB-identified individuals have been described as “persons of the axis oppression” (Capper, 1993, p. 5) who not only face discrimination but are often forced to keep their sexual identities hidden for fear of homophobic acts against them.

“Homophobia” can be summed up as an irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Pharr, 1988). Feeling hated or despised because of who they are has damaging effects on people’s ability to carry out day-to-day functions and causes a constant fear among those who identify as LGB (Pharr, 1988). Homophobic behavior is carried out on campuses and is likely a reflection of the attitudes and beliefs of society as a whole

(Obear, 1991). Whether these ideas are espoused on television, in politics, by religious organizations, or in academia, the potential for one to want to be out becomes less, as there are often battles just to be visible. Although Obear's work was published in 1991, homophobia is still prevalent today.

Many believe that the act of homophobia is evidenced by teasing, bullying, or physical harm, but more often, the cases where LGB-identified people feel the most vulnerable are the covert expressions of disdain or hate, the subtle slights and jabs that one takes for breaking the norm, being different, or standing out. The mindset that drives these types of situations is also referred to as "heterosexism." Herek (1990, p. 316) defined heterosexism as "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship or community." Rhoads (1994a) further states, "heterosexism infiltrates our organizations and becomes institutionalized in ways that deny LGBT people the same basic rights that heterosexuals take for granted."

Obear (1991) contends that there may be reasons that negative attitudes toward LGB-identified people exist: limited experiences with people who are LGB, personal and cognitive development, adherence to traditional gender roles, self-esteem, and the fear of discovering their own sexual identities. When these behaviors or thoughts turn to violence, there are further reasons as to why administrators would want to mask their sexual orientations.

Need for the Study

Several factors suggest that there was a need for this study. First, student affairs officers are a critical component to the college campus, and their presence and visibility helps to shape the campus climate (Roper, 2005). Second, the data on LGB-identified senior student affairs professionals is limited and somewhat outdated. The studies done by Cullen and Smart (1991)

and by Croteau and van Destinon (1994) scratched the surface, and Renn (2003) added personal perspectives from a small number of SSAOs. Despite the clear need for this study, there were some challenges in identifying administrators who were willing to talk about this topic and its effect on career paths; perhaps some may view their own identities and career paths as personal and were unwilling or unable to share openly.

Sharing one's LGB identity is difficult enough, but doing so within the workplace has a complex set of challenges—one possible reason for the lack of studies within education. Capper (1999) contends that LGB research in education and educational administration can open windows and doors to the oppression within schools. Although her article focuses on K-12 administrators, there is a parallel between the experiences of executives in K-12 and higher education.

Sears (1996) outlines four goals with methods for research within LGB administrators in K-12: allowing LGB administrators to chronicle their lives, scholars documenting administrative lives of LGB members, research to assist in understanding heterosexism/homophobia, and finally, using what is learned to transform schools into open and inclusive environments. Utilizing some of these suggestions outlined by Sears, there are opportunities to guide research on LGB-identified student affairs administrators.

Although there is a variety of research on LGB identity development (Cass, 1979; Lee, 1977; Savin-Williams, 1990), how one comes to terms with his or her sexual orientation is not clear. Yet, many of these theories pose similar theories that suggest LGB-identified people go through various stages of identity development and search for acceptance of who they are. These theories may lay the groundwork for describing where the staff members are in their development.

Methodology

This study consisted of a purposeful sample of LGB-identified student affairs officers who work or have worked at public universities in the state of California. Further, these student affairs officers have served in the capacity of department director, dean, or associate vice president and have worked for more than seven years in the profession.

This was a qualitative study that explored the careers of LGB-identified student affairs professionals who are out on their campuses. The participants were asked a series of questions about their career paths and the challenges and triumphs that led them to their current positions. The sample population was sought from the researcher's personal connections with members who are affiliated with the Western Association of College and University Housing Officers (WACUHO) from there, others were found through snowball sampling. The use of snowball sampling relied on current contacts at institutions where there are visible LGB people in student affairs to gain further information (Goodman, 1961). As the sample branched out, more contacts from other institutions showed interest in participating.

Summary

As student affairs professionals continue to serve the needs of their students, it is important that they are self-aware, can be who they are, and can follow their career paths. LGB-identified staff members face struggles as they reconcile being out in their positions with the effects this may or may not have on their job opportunities. Because student affairs professionals can be seen as a bridge connecting oppressed and privileged groups to the larger campus, they need to balance the delicate line of personal interaction and professional position. Being out on campus may allow administrators to have additional connections to LGB-identified students by

providing role modeling to them. However, being visible and out also has the potential to limit advancement in their careers because of discrimination against LGB people on campuses and beyond. This study investigated whether this discrimination affects the career mobility of student affairs officers or if campuses have progressed enough to allow room for everyone to take a seat at the executive table.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) continue to face challenges because of their sexual orientation and the levels to which they are out. Being out can come with a variety of experiences, including but not limited to bullying, discrimination, and in some cases, physical violence. Yet, the contributions made by student affairs professionals who identify as LGB are invaluable in the assistance they provide others who may be struggling with sexual orientation identity issues. This is particularly prevalent on college campuses, given the diversity of student and staff populations.

As mentioned previously, this study explored the experiences of LGB-identified student affairs officers and the perceived career barriers they face. Despite a vast amount of literature on discrimination, especially on sexism and racism, there is a lack of studies on LGB-identified individuals and the issues they face on college campuses. Being LGB is a key piece of one's identity and therefore is an important part of a student affairs professional's work and personal life.

This chapter begins with an overview of the student affairs profession and the role these staff members play on a college campus. It then explores LGB rights in the United States during the twentieth century and the significance these rights play in a twenty-first century America. Next comes an overview of common LGB identity development theories and their relation to shaping individuals coming to terms with their sexual orientation. Within the LGB identity development theoretical context, I also discuss the intersection of LGB and other identities. Furthermore, campus climate and the issues LGB-identified staff members face in the workplace will be explored, and LGB career development concepts will be identified. In each of these areas, the foundation is the individual staff member and the choices he or she makes based on

societal and organizational influences. The individual sense of self and the ways in which one perceives the self, personally and within an organization, can have a profound affect on how that person interacts within an organization.

Overview of University Student Affairs

The development of the student affairs profession coincided with the rise of research universities in the nineteenth century in the United States (Nuss, 1996). In the late 1800s, college presidents found it increasingly difficult to handle day-to-day functions of the college and student discipline. College deans were appointed to work with student discipline. Serving in the role of parental figures (or *in loco parentis*), these early deans were also seen as important leaders on their campus (Sandeen, 2000; Sandeen & Barr, 2006). Today, student affairs professionals are still a significant bridge between classroom experiences and campus life.

By the early 1900s, college faculty members started to detach themselves from student personnel matters, and the burden of discipline and other nonacademic matters began to fall on what we now refer to as student affairs administrators (Fenske, 1980). As student populations on campuses grew, more staff members were needed outside the classroom. The importance of student affairs professions in creating an entire student experience became evident through the creation of departments such as residential life, student health services, counseling, and student activities.

In 1937, the American Council on Education published the landmark document *Student Personnel Point of View*. This document established the importance of student affairs professionals and recommended that “in addition to instruction and business management tailored to the needs of the individual students, an effective educational program should include, in one form or another, services adapted to the specific aims and objectives of each college and

university” (American Council on Education, 1937/1994a, p.69). This conveyed the need for working with the individual student and coordinating student service functions to organize support efforts to meet the mission of the college or university. In 1949, this document was revised to include attention to students being well rounded and to their physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs (American Council on Education, 1949/1994b). The philosophies outlined in the *Student Personnel Point of View* helped to shape the student affairs profession and remain guiding principals in the twenty-first century.

As the lives of college students have changed, student affairs professionals have been at the forefront of helping to provide a supportive yet challenging environment in which students could grow (Sandeem, 2000). Expanding outside the classroom, student affairs functional areas include residential life and housing, campus activities, and counseling. On many campuses, these services may also include academic advising, cultural centers, and admissions. Although the student affairs offices are diverse, the breadth of services offered has a clear line to the early foundations of developing the whole student.

As diverse as the services are within student affairs on any given campus, so too are the staff members who work in those areas. Many staff members begin their career explorations into student affairs in part-time or volunteer jobs while they are college students; many continue on to graduate preparation programs in student affairs that serve as entry points into the field. The first preparation program for student affairs professionals can be traced back to Columbia University Teacher’s College, with a Master of Arts degree awarded in 1914 (Nuss, 1996). Today, there are more than 100 masters and doctoral programs in student affairs listed in the “Directory of Graduate Preparation Programs in Student Affairs” (American College Personnel Association, 2010). While the curricula in student affairs graduate programs may differ, they often focus on

student development theories, history of higher education, and even counseling practicum or internships. Many of these programs now include a multicultural emphasis so students can learn how to cultivate educational environments that promote and support diversity. Within the area of learning diverse constructs, many student affairs programs include LGB and other identity development theories as a part of their curricula (Komives & Woodward, 2003).

Significant Highlights of the Struggle for LGB Rights in the United States

In an effort to comprehend the experiences of LGB-identified individuals, it is important to note some highlights of the struggle for civil rights in the United States. Although these historical moments certainly do not include all LGB contributions, they provide a framework for understanding what many who identify as LGB may encounter and how these items have helped shape the LGB community today.

After World War I, the United States saw a time of censorship, particularly with the topic of gender; sexual identity was not even referred to (Cain, 1993). Pockets of LGB culture existed, but to be out and identified as LGB was not an option for most, as the hostility toward anyone or anything “different” could cause for alarm (1993).

Not until after World War II did a number of organizations promoting LGB rights begin to emerge. The Mattachine Society was formed in 1950 in Los Angeles (GLBT Historical Society, 2012). The name “mattachine” was meant as a symbol that gays had to “mask” whom they were and members often met in secrecy. One of Mattachine’s first legal cases involved one of its founders (L. Jennings) who was arrested for “lewd behavior” in a Los Angeles park; the charges were allegedly based on entrapment (Cain, 1993). The 1952 trial was the first time that a gay man was willing to stand up in a courtroom and attest his legal rights as a gay person. The trial ended with a hung jury, and the district attorney eventually dropped the charges. The

Jennings case and the Mattachine Society paved the way for gay rights by creating visibility and a new openness.

Many LGB activists point to June 28, 1969 as the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement. Prior to that date, police often raided establishments that gay and lesbian individuals were known to frequent. Further, it was alleged that police would harass, intimidate, and extort members of the LGB community in an exchange for not being “outed.” In the early morning (about 1:00 a.m.) of June 28, 1969, a contingent of New York police officers raided the Stonewall Inn, and the patrons fought back. Many gay men resisted arrest, threw items at police, and fought back against what they saw as police brutality. Their actions led to three days of riots, known as the Stonewall Rebellion (Carter, 2004). The LGB solidarity generated by standing together against police brutality and harassment led to similar demonstrations throughout the United States and sparked a sense of pride within the LGB community. After Stonewall, a number of LGB identified groups and organizations began forming across the United States.

College campuses played an important role in how collegiate LGB organizations formed. In 1967, Columbia University made headlines when it allowed an LGB group to be formed on campus; the formation of the group was a culmination of struggles between the administration and students on campus (Johansson, 1990). After the Stonewall rebellion, more LGB campus groups were formed across the country, and virtually every major campus had one (1990). The groups were important for LGB individuals, as they provided a safe place for the open discussion of issues affecting the LGB and campus community. Scott (1991) identified the six roles that are fulfilled by LGB student organizations as social, political, support, service, education, and

developmental. These groups and the staff members who assisted were of great significance in helping students understand what was happening in the world around them (Mallory, 1998).

By the 1970s, the LGB movement seemed to have two strands: radical and conservative. Yet, both camps appeared to have a common thread of visibility and vitality of the gay movement (Cain, 1993). With the LGB rights movement in swing, the presence of more people who identified as LGB became evident. In 1978, Harvey Milk was elected to the board of supervisors in San Francisco, California and became the first openly gay man to be elected into public office (Shilts, 1982). While Milk worked to establish a city ordinance that would protect people from discrimination based on sexual orientation, his biggest support for an initiative against discrimination came in the form of the Briggs Initiative.

The Briggs Initiative, or Proposition 6, had lasting affects on LGB people as well as the K-12 educational community (Harbek, 1997). The 1978 ballot initiative sponsored by California State Legislator John Briggs was a measure that would have outlawed anyone who identified as LGB or supported gay rights from working in public schools in the state of California (Harbeck, 1997). While Milk worked against the measure by drumming up large protest crowds, he had assistance from then-Governor, Ronald Reagan as well as U.S. presidential candidate Jimmy Carter. With a 58% “no” vote, the measure failed and ushered in a strong sense that the LGB community was heading for greater acceptance. However, later that year, Harvey Milk, along with San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, was murdered by former Supervisor Daniel White; this led to outcry in the LGB community and, in some ways, prepared the community for an even bigger fight on the horizon.

In the early 1980s, the AIDS/HIV epidemic caused panic within the LGB community and society in general. Since the outbreaks were first found only in the LGB community, those who

identified as LGB faced an enormous amount of discrimination (Amfar, 2012). Many in the LGB community were particularly vulnerable to discrimination when they believed questions about the origins of AIDS/HIV transmission were not fully answered by the government. The lack of information about AIDS transmission resulted in stigmatization of the LGB community.

Two notable LGB organizations took to the streets and protested the actions of the U.S. government and the apathy of the American people: these organizations were ACTUP and Queer Nation. ACTUP was founded in 1987 as an organization devoted to political action (ACTUP, 2013). Their first demonstration took place on March 24, 1987 on Wall Street to protest the pharmaceutical companies who were charging excessive prices for access to the drugs to treat HIV and AIDS. Queer Nation was founded in March of 1990 to combat the escalation of violence against LGBT people that was occurring at the time. Queer Nation seemingly took on a more militant approach by protesting various organizations for their treatment and portrayal of LGBT people; the group even went so far as to out closeted LGB celebrities by presenting posters with the face of a celebrity and painting “absolutely queer” over it. Queer Nation’s premise was that if more people were visible and out, the acts of violence against LGB people would be reduced. Using activist tactics, both organizations created a heightened awareness to treatment of those with HIV/AIDS as well as reacting to the “gay bashings” that were prevalent. As a result, drug companies began lowering costs of drugs and increasing drug trials, and the U.S. government began to fund more AIDS research in the United States and around the world. As time progressed, the organizations went through many changes, and in some cases, the activism seemed to lose momentum. And as research on HIV and AIDS progressed, more information was publically available, and society came to realize that AIDS and HIV were not only in the LGB community but could affect everyone (AmFar, 2012).

LGB community activism manifested again in the late 1990s and 2000s, when same-sex marriage became a political, civil rights issue. While many states continue to struggle with the issue of same-sex (or “gay”) marriage, California is the only state where rights gained soon became rights lost. In 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that existing laws barring same-sex marriage were unconstitutional, thus allowing same-sex marriage. During a few months in 2008, over 15,000 same-sex couples were married in California (Equality California, 2010). In November of that year, voters approved Proposition 8, a measure that defined marriage as between “one man and one woman,” thus banning same-sex marriage (Human Rights Campaign, 2009). In early 2009, equality advocates challenged Proposition 8 in state court, arguing that the California Constitution did not allow voters to rescind fundamental constitutional rights at the ballot box.

In 2010, in the case of *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Walker Vaughn ruled that the vote in favor of Proposition 8, which limited the rights of LGB people, was unconstitutional. Certainly, there has been a great deal of controversy, appeals, and discussion about same-sex marriage. On February 7, 2012, in a 2–1 decision, a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals panel affirmed Walker’s decision declaring Proposition 8’s ban on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional. Additionally, the court ruled that Judge Walker, who had ruled previously, was not obligated to recuse himself because of his sexual orientation. Still, the panel continued a stay on the ruling, barring any marriages from taking place pending further appeals (Equality California, 2012). Although the judge struck down the law, a higher court has denied any same-sex marriages from continuing until further appeals. The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court where hearings were held in March 2013 for the case, now known as *Hollingsworth V. Perry* (Equality California, 2013). In June 2013, the court ruled in a 5-4

decision that the California citizens group did not have legal standing to bring the case before the Supreme Court. With the Supreme Court's ruling, the Ninth Circuit Court's decision was upheld—Proposition 8 is unconstitutional. The various legal issues and the decisions that were made point to the importance of LGB people in society and the community. As a civil rights matter, this case could impact further outcomes regarding LGB(T) rights (Equality California, 2010).

The struggle for civil rights in the United States by marginalized groups continues to take place. Discrimination, homophobia, and the unwelcoming environment they harbor occur everywhere, including the microcosms of colleges and universities.

LGB Identity Theorizing

There has been a variety of research on lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) identity development (Cass, 1979; Lee, 1977; Savin-Williams, 1990) but not one accepted account for how people come to terms with their sexual orientation. However, many of these theories suggest similar propositions in which LGB-identified people go through stages of identity confusion, compassion, exploration, tolerance, and finally acceptance of who they are. Often, these stages take place when people are becoming of independent adults, but for some, they occur later in life.

One of the earliest and generally cited works is the Cass model of homosexual identity, later known as a model of sexual identity development (Cass, 1979). Cass's initial research was based on gay men in Australia during the 1970s, which may not reflect the social climate of twenty-first century America. Still, the work provides a framework from which to understand some behaviors related to gay identity development.

The Cass model consists of a “pre-stage” and then six stages that a person moves through in sexual-identity development. The pre-stage allows for someone to become aware of LGBT issues but maybe not involved and entails reading books, seeing gay and lesbian (GL) individuals on television, or frequenting neighborhoods and communities that cater to a GL population.

When utilizing the Cass theory, it is critical to understand that not every gay or lesbian person goes through each stage in his or her development, and these theories are not applicable to every person. Also, these models may not resonate with many people who identify as bisexual or transgender. However, educators use this and other theories to learn more about LGB development and to understand where they, as educators, may need to provide assistance.

In 1994, D’Augelli introduced a more life-span approach that argues against the Cass linear identity development model. D’Augelli (1994) believes that LGB-identified individuals do not necessarily develop in stages and that other factors can influence their development over time. Three sets of related variables are involved with D’Augelli’s identity formation: personal and subjectivities actions, interactive intimacies, and socio-historical connections (1994). He points out that there are societal barriers to defining oneself as LGB, including oppression, stereotyping, and sexual experiences with someone of the same sex. Therefore, development of an LGB identity takes time, and there are more than just “stages” but experiences one connects with to comprehend that identity. It is also important to note that being LGB is only part of one’s identity and that there are multiple identity intersections within each person.

Intersectionality is a paradigm developed for studying the tensions between identity development theory and life experiences (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). This feminist sociological theory was first mentioned by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and is a methodology of

studying “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations” (McCall 2005). The theory suggests—and seeks to examine how—various biological, social and cultural categories, such as gender, race, ability, and other axes of identity, interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality (Crenshaw, 1989). Torres, Jones and Renn contend that “by bringing together all parts of the whole-self helps to bring the individual into context” (Torres et al., 2009, p. 585). Intersectionality suggests that there are socially and culturally constructed categories of discrimination that act on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to social inequalities (Anderson, 2009). In other words, the levels of discrimination one faces can be because of race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status independently or collectively. According to this theory, each person has various identities that are important, and while the different identities come together, each is still independent of the other (Torres et al., 2009). Intersectionality is further based on various levels of oppression faced by those in traditionally marginalized categories (e.g., race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status).

With all of these facets of identity that people carry, and their intersections, it can be a challenging experience to work on a college campus where like students, faculty and staff members are also experiencing issues with navigating through a welcoming campus.

Campus Climate

Today, many colleges and universities purport to provide an open and inclusive environment on campus, but LGB-identified individuals still exhibit a greater level of stress and anxiety than those of their heterosexual colleagues (Cochran, 2001). The stress that LGB-identified members face may be from their unique experiences as a socially stigmatized minority group (Herek & Garnets, 2007; Meyer, 1995, 2003). This stress and anxiety may include

exposure to rejection, perceived stigma as a member of a minority, and discrimination. The lack of legal protection from discrimination coupled with laws and policies denying equal protection and equal benefits add more stress that can have serious repercussions as to whether faculty, staff, or students choose to be out on campus (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). If LGB individuals seek to leave an institution for that does not have non-discrimination policies, it can affect further opportunities and the direction of their careers (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005, p9). When it came to reacting to harassment, the top responses included anger, embarrassment, telling a friend, avoidance, or feeling afraid (Rankin, 2010). Often, these issues are left unreported, and individuals who have experienced the harassment isolate themselves with the problems for fear of being further harassed or for their safety.

Concerns for the safety for those who identify as LGB(T) continue to be an issue on campuses across the country. In the *State of Higher Education Report for LGBT People* (2010), findings indicate that a majority of LGBT respondents are more likely to have negative persecutions on their campus climate than their heterosexual counterparts. Of the staff members who answered the survey regarding safety (N=212), 103 responded that they had been the target of derogatory remarks because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, 107 staff members felt that they were ignored or intentionally isolated because of their orientation (Rankin, 2010). LGB(T) respondents (23%) were “significantly more likely to have experienced harassment when compared to their heterosexual counterparts (12%) and seven times more likely to indicate harassment based on sexual identity” (p.57). Certainly, the sample of this population is not very large considering the many faculty and staff members who work across the United States. Meaningful assessment of campus climate should include multiple perspectives from the campus, including all roles on a college campus as well as the varying communities that may be

based on race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation (Hurtado & Dey, 1997). Additionally, several studies involving LGB(T) campus climate (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010) have analyzed climate by campus role and social group membership. However, these studies focused on campus climate as if there was a singular organizational-level climate (Vaccaro, 2012). Two subsequent climate studies, one in higher education and one from industry, suggested that assuming climate only occurs at the organizational level can be problematic. Zohar and Luria (2005) analyzed climate experiences of industry workers through the lens of organization-level, group-level, and role-specific climates. They found variation in climate perceptions of subgroups of people with different work roles. In essence, groups of people who shared common roles in an organization had a localized (or micro) perspective of climate that differed from employees with other roles (Vaccaro, 2012). These studies provides a glimpse into those who are feeling marginalized and consider how discrimination can play out in what some believe to be the most inclusive places in our society—colleges and universities.

Faculty members are not immune to similar issues with heterosexism and hostility. For example, some LGB faculty who want to do research with and about LGB populations have been discouraged from doing so (Lasala, Jenkins, Wheeler, & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2008). In their 2008 article, “LGBT Faculty, Research and Researchers: Risks and Rewards,” Lasala, Jenkins, Wheeler, and Fredriksen-Goldsen point to the issues some graduate students and faculty members encounter when attempting to research LGB populations. Doctoral students and junior faculty were told that “LGB research is not fundable” and “you cannot get tenure if all you do is LGB research” (2008). In some ways, this paints the picture that LGB research is wrong or invalid compared to other cultural studies. The authors further explore the concepts of keeping sexual orientation hidden (2008, p. 258). Because openly LGB(T) faculty members are more

likely to stand out, they may also be more likely to be scrutinized (2008). With the pressure to perform and possible criticism, faculty may keep their sexual orientation to themselves. This creates conflict with who faculty members are, what they desire to research, and how they reconcile their personal and professional lives. Similar to LGB faculty members who experience conflict between personal and professional lives, student affairs staff who are LGB identified find the unwelcoming campus climate a hindrance to their ability to seek a career promotion (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001).

In addition to the faculty and staff, LGB students face campus climate issues. During the 2009–2010 academic year, bullying and harassment of LGB youth were highly covered in the media. LGB-identified students in all levels of education were reported as being bullied because of their sexual identity. In September of 2010, Rutgers College student Tyler Clementi, who had faced harassment because of his identity, committed suicide by jumping off of the George Washington Bridge in New Jersey. Several days earlier, he discovered that his college roommate Dharan Ravi had used a webcam to record a same-sex encounter between Clementi and an unknown man and then posted comments about this encounter to various social media outlets. It was thought that the acts of invasion of privacy against Clementi led to his suicide. Ravi was later charged with a variety of offenses including intimidation, invasion of privacy, and hate crime. The indictment charged that the videotaping and live streaming of Clementi and the other man's private conduct by Ravi "intended to intimidate [them] because of their sexual orientation" (Shidler, 2012). On March 16, 2012, a jury found Ravi guilty of invasion of privacy, bias intimidation, and other charges (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2012), and he was sentenced to 30 days in jail. This case is an example of the climate that many students

face on college campuses, and it shows how the perception of an unwelcoming campus climate can lead to serious consequences for LGB-identified individuals.

Since 2010, Rutgers has been working to ensure that all students feel safe and welcome on their campuses. In an article for the Campus Events Page (2011), Jenny Kurtz director of the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities mentioned such support:

After Tyler Clementi's death, everyone was asking, "what's life like for LGBT students at Rutgers?" says Kurtz. "The conversations have always been happening here, but more people have been joining in. Last year, people were reaching out to say, 'I'm here. I'm an ally.'" It really inspired folks to be visible and reconfirmed our dedication. The truth is, we have a really extensive network of resources for students, including faculty and staff (Stetler, 2011).

Rutgers also has an active social life for LGBT students, with eight different organizations, from gay students of color to the gay men's fraternity Delta Lambda Phi. The Rutgers Queer Student Alliance includes students and an alumni arm.

Other universities, too, are working to provide inclusive communities for their students. In 1993, the University of California, Riverside (UCR) became the first University of California campus to have a LGBT resource center with a full-time director (UCR LGBT Resource Center website, 2012). Since then, the campus has continued to work to create a welcome campus climate by providing training on LGBT issues for the campus and assisting students in creating student organizations that center on queer student issues.

Another initiative to help create a better student climate is gender-inclusive or gender-neutral housing for on campus students. Whether students identify as transgender, gay, or straight, gender-neutral housing allows same-gender roommates, opposite-gender roommates, or

other gender-identity roommate pairings, regardless of physical sex. According to the National Student Genderblind Campaign, campuses that provide this option include University of Michigan, Wesleyan University, Dartmouth, Oberlin College, and University of California, Riverside. Gender-inclusive housing helps to create a supportive environment where students are more readily able to connect, and those who connect have the potential for greater success academically and socially (National Student Gender-blind Campaign, 2012). While gender-neutral housing is not specifically associated with sexual orientation, it shows that college campuses are moving in a more inclusive direction overall with regard to the LGB and T communities.

Overall, campus climate influences student, faculty, and staff success (Rankin, 2010). Therefore, more positive campus climates lead to more positive and productive work environments: students, faculty and staff are more likely to flourish in a campus that is welcoming (2010).

LGB Student Affairs Professionals

Recall the Croteau and von Destinon (1994) study referenced in Chapter 1, which offered some empirical research that is the only such work published as of 2011. Croteau and von Destinon found that LGB-identified professionals who were open about their orientation also reported more discrimination in job searches than those who were not open. This study involved student affairs professionals who attended socials and business meetings related to LGBT awareness in NASPA and ACPA during the 1992 conference season. Of the 441 surveys sent out, 348 were submitted. Ninety-four respondents identified as heterosexual, and four did not indicate a sexual orientation. Ages ranged from 23 to 53 years, with a mean of 31.2 years (Croteau & von Destinon, 1994). Questions were asked about job searches and hiring practices,

and a range of answers resulted. Many respondents indicated not receiving positions because of their LGB identity or being involved in search committees where positions were not offered to LGB people. Often the reasons candidates are not selected for positions were hidden under the guise of “institutional fit,” (Croteau & von Destinon, 1994). When people refer to institutional fit, often it is in relation to the candidate’s ability to work cohesively with a team and to whether working styles will be in harmony (Sekiguchi, 2004). Yet, “fit” has various interpretations and can change definition from one institution to another, thus masking possible discrimination.

The Croteau and Lark (1995) research sought to find if there was a relationship between discrimination on campus and one’s openness about sexual orientation. The study found a majority of respondents (61%) had faced some form of discrimination in the workplace based on their sexual orientation. Of the 270 respondents, 64% identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (n=174). The survey contained questions on demographics, work experiences related to being LGB, and opened-ended questions of homophobic encounters faced while working in the student affairs profession. The participants were all members of the ACPA standing committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Awareness and were mailed the survey. Further information that pertained to work life experiences was also collected (such as job responsibilities, family influences, and outside activities).

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents experienced discrimination or harassment at work more than twice. In the data analysis, answers were categorized into general categories of discrimination in employment decisions and policies and discrimination during work activities (Croteau & Lark, 1995). Within these categories, the data showed a number of instances where LGB student affairs professionals felt they were not given the same opportunities, benefits, and job projects as their heterosexual peers (1995). Discrimination regarding policies that were

most-frequently mentioned included those campuses that prohibited live-in staff members (residence life) from having their same-sex partner live with them. One respondent mentioned that four different institutions had similar policies stating that only “legally married” people could live together in residence. This type of policy creates a dynamic in which employees who are LGB have different parameters for their work life and may face unfair treatment.

Career Development for LGB-Identified Individuals

LGB individuals face a unique and complex set of choices surrounding career development (Gedro, 2009). A career can be defined as a “pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person’s life” (Noe, 2008, p. 500). When individuals develop their careers, they are essentially exploring a process of awareness of making commitments and decisions towards various aspects of their career.

Gedro (2009) asserts that sexual orientation in the workplace is an issue because society in the United States is “characterized by heterosexual ubiquitousness” (p. 55). As often as we try to clear ourselves of sexual identity in the workplace, it is at the core of who people are and how they maneuver in organizations. When employees discuss family, social gatherings, or dating, individuals often assume that the organization’s members are heterosexual, so these conversations are less likely to be ignored or challenged. Unfortunately, LGB-identified individuals may face an unwelcome work environment and must negotiate the heterosexual environment of their organizations.

The decisions about identity management continue to play out for LGB people in their career choices, which are influenced by “internalized messages about gender roles and sexuality” (Gedro, 2009, p. 56). In some cases, those who identify as LGB create a false heterosexual workplace identity to avoid heterosexism and homophobia (Button, 2004).

Further, Gedro (2009) points to Human Resource Development theories and their exclusion of LGB(T) workers. For instance, the theory of work adjustment (Degges-White & Shoffner, 2002) lists four components: satisfaction, person-environment reinforcement, value, and ability. “Satisfaction” corresponds to the ability to create and sustain work relationships and have open and honest authenticity (2002). These authentic relationships can be a challenge for LGB-identified people. Although keeping closed can create barriers within the workplace, being too “open” could have the potential to alienate others (Gedro, 2009). The “person-environment” component connects workers with the fit of their workplace environment. For LGB-identified individuals, fit may feel hampered by pervasive acts of homophobia or even subtle discrimination. The pressures to fit in and create true workplace relationships may contribute to career limitations if the individual is out (2009). Feelings of disconnectedness may create walls of isolation and hinder the strong sense of confidence that one could have without these workplace issues. For LGB-identified staff members, maneuvering identities and situations can cause undue professional and personal stress (Gedro, 2009).

Chung (2001) offers two conceptual models used for coping strategies when LGB persons feel they are targets of discrimination in the workplace. Chung provides two categories: vocational choice (which refers to a person’s decision about a job) and work adjustment (which refers to a person’s coping behaviors when applying to or already employed within a position). Chung contends that the adjustment to the workplace involves identity management and discrimination management: identity management is concerned with controlling the disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, and discrimination management with coping strategies for facing discrimination (2001). Chung notes four ways to respond to discrimination:

- “Quitting” refers to resignation from the position and leaving the work environment. This coping mechanism is usually evoked when the workplace discrimination becomes too unbearable to keep working.
- “Silence” refers to a lack of overt reaction. A person who is silent may tolerate the workplace discrimination and keep to him/herself.
- “Social support” refers to sharing of discrimination experiences with individuals in the hope to gain support.
- “Confrontation” refers to speaking out and addressing the discrimination with either a supervisor or the one who may be making the comments. Confrontation may take many forms including but not limited to documentation or legal action.

In both the identity management and discrimination management segments, there is a focus on the self. The individual who has perceived discrimination chooses how to respond, placing the onus of the decision to respond on the individual and his/her self-efficacy.

Sense of Self

With the barrage of issues LGB-identified student affairs professionals may face, their self-efficacy can play a major role in how they approach goals, tasks, and challenges. The main concept of self-efficacy is that an individual’s actions and reactions in almost every situation are influenced by the actions that the individual has observed in others (Bandura, 1977). As humans, we take our cues on how to act based on the situations around us. Those who work in a supportive environment seem more likely to have a successful experience than those who do not. When interacting with others, such as in a work environment, there are a variety of perspectives

in how we work. Perspectives are points of view and often guide our perceptions of reality (Charon, 2010).

The view we have of ourselves as individuals involves judgment of ourselves (Charon, 2010). In other words, we blame ourselves; we like who we are; we reject what we do, who we are. These issues may be linked to self-esteem (2010). The importance of self-judgment shapes and reflects our behavior with others. We can often internalize outside issues, and if we can break away, there is possibility for increasing independence from the self (Charron, 2010). When people are allowed to be who they are, without judgment from others, there is a potential to carry out more positive work relationships.

LGB-identified student affairs professionals, like most people, have a number of identities including race, sexual orientation, and gender, and there are perceptions others may have of their identities. Because of the nature of student affairs work, an imbalance between personal life and work life often manifests. Renn (2003) points to individual choices that are made to convey our public identities. In discussions with four senior-level LGB-identified student affairs professionals, findings indicate public identities varied based on how much information people choose to share with others. Although one respondent in the article mentioned being “out in every aspect” of life, another said that “discussing my sexual orientation is not on my ‘to do list’, but I would not deny it if asked” (p. 7). Still another mentioned being most comfortable by keeping personal life completely separate from public life. Renn contends that individual decisions regarding coming out are “shaped by a number of factors including policies, personal styles, and partner status” (Renn, 2003, p. 8). LGB-identified student affairs professionals often have to choose whether or not they will disclose their sexual orientation. Beginning with the application process for a position, some choose to avoid disclosing

publications in journals or affiliations with organizations that may have LGB overtones (Renn, 2003). The process of disclosure continues once in the position when it comes to social activities, placing family pictures in the office, or wearing a wedding ring (Gedro, 2009). There is a potential for a “charged” work environment, where some may see identity as a mere political issue, therefore a constant cycle of individual decisions takes place regarding identity disclosure that are made by LGB-identifies student affairs officers that are influenced by society and the organizations.

Summary

LGB-identified student affairs officers face challenges in the workplace that their heterosexual peers may not. When working to balance personal and professional identities, LGB-identified student affairs staff members have concerns about safety, fear, rejection, isolation, and further career development. While progress continues to take place in higher education and society in general for protection of LGB rights, issues still exist regarding career path goals for LGB student affairs officers. LGB-identified student affairs staff members are often faced with being out with their identity or keeping their identity to themselves and may experience accusations of dishonesty or lack of trustworthiness. This double-edged sword of “to be or not to be” can have severe consequences for those who are seeking to move up the career ladder and become a director, dean, or vice president at a university.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Little is known about the challenges that face LGB-identified student affairs professionals as they balance their sexual orientation and workplace environment. Although many college campuses provide open and inclusive communities, staff members who identify as LGB potentially face hurdles when it comes to being a visible presence on campus. This study explored the complex issues that LGB senior-level student affairs officers face and sought to determine what, if any, career path barriers they face.

Research Questions

This study examined the perceptions of senior-level student affairs officers who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) and the perceived barriers they face in being out in their work environments. The interview protocol included items to solicit information about the chosen careers of the participants and what, if any, issues they have faced moving up the career ladder. Using the literature described in the previous chapter as a guide, the research was conducted using the following research questions:

1. What perceived barriers, if any, exist that prevent LGB-identified seasoned student affairs officers from becoming senior-level administrators?
2. According to LGB-identified student affairs officers, what services and/or support systems (e.g., staff support groups, staff council for LGB awareness) exist on campus that pertain to LGB staff members?
3. Based on perceptions of the self and career trajectory for LGB-identified student affairs officers, what experiences have provided the most opportunities for career advancement?

4. What, if any types of discrimination have LGB-identified student affairs officers say they have faced on their campus because of their sexual orientation?

Research Design

This was a qualitative study, using stories from various LGB-identified student affairs officers at public universities in the state of California. The goal was to develop an understanding of their experiences reconciling their LGB identities and career paths. The methodology included a small sample size and descriptive findings based on interviews (Merriman, 1998).

One prior quantitative study (Cullen & Smart, 1991) was conducted with a similar population. However, the population surveyed consisted of student affairs professionals from new professionals to directors. The staff members in this study have seven years or more of professional experience in student affairs and are at a level of department director or above, because those with less experience in student affairs are unlikely to have the career mobility of those in midlevel or director-level positions.

Also, choosing staff members who work at similar public institutions allowed for some of the intervening variables to be constant, thus those individuals who participated in the study experienced similar campus climates.

Interviews and personal stories were incorporated into the research design to obtain an understanding of perceived career path barriers to garner the most accurate personal information from the participants (Creswell, 2009). Using personal narratives, from one-on-one interviews with the participants, permitted open dialogue and yielded possible follow-up questions (Riessman, 1993). Then too, because of the nature of this study and the sensitivity of the

questions, the goal of this qualitative research design was to accurately portray individuals and their in-depth, rich stories.

Sample Selection

This study was conducted on participants who are employed at four-year public universities in California. The physical locations of the universities were not the basis for the study, only those who work or have worked at four-year public institutions in California. The selection of the participants was determined based on initial responses received from those who work at four-year public institutions in California and identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual using my personal networks and professional organizations. Four-year public institutions in the state of California were chosen for a number of reasons.

First, as public institutions within a single state, they adhere to similar policies around the acceptance of LGB-identified students, faculty and staff, where private institutions may differ greatly. In other words, these four-year public institutions tend to have analogous policies with how LGB issues are viewed on their campuses. Although the institutional policies are similar, the variety of experiences held by the student affairs officers will differ.

Second, four-year public institutions were chosen because of the similar nature of student affairs work on these campuses and the comparability of student affairs departments. Student affairs operating structures are far different at community colleges, where academic officers are predominant and student affairs services are generally support centers.

California provided a blend of diverse colleges within a wide geographic region. The region of California provided for easier access to the study participants for in-depth interview experiences.

Student affairs professionals provide support for students outside of the academic/instructional classroom environment. They are often called on to be available at events and programs above and beyond the typical working day. In so doing, they are often highly visible in representing their departments on many college campuses. LGB student affairs professionals are often conflicted between being a visible presence to help students and fearful of rejection by their campus colleagues (Cullen & Smart, 1991).

The study population consisted of LGB-identified student affairs administrators who have been in the field longer than seven years, which generally allows time to move from an entry-level position to one with greater responsibility. Those student affairs officers who have moved into senior-level positions are often an important part of the institution's management team and are influential on their campus (Schuh, 2002). Using a purposeful sample allowed for participants' experiences to be explored (Merriman, 1998). Criteria for selecting participants were

- Self-identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual
- Has worked in the field of student affairs longer than seven years
- Has a position of director or above in his/her department
- Works or has worked at a four-year public institution in California (University of California or California State University campuses)

Cullen and Smart (1991) outlined a number of concerns regarding student affairs professionals who are LGB identified. They discuss the visibility of LGB-identified student affairs officers and the struggles they encounter based on their identity. Many LGB identified professionals said they feared being fired, demoted, or passed up for promotions in their positions (Cullen & Smart, 1991). Further, reasons why there are not more out LGB senior-level

administrators range from discrimination to fear for safety in being identified on their campus. In addition, some professionals leave their campus positions because of the pressures they feel being in the closet. There can be a conflict between the desire to be a visible presence to help students and a fear of rejection from campus colleagues (Cullen & Smart, 1991). While the participants in this study work in California and are protected from blatant acts of discrimination because of their sexual orientation, the conflicts of being out on campus and working with reservations are similar.

Data Collection

The participants in this study were identified by using contacts at institutions that I know where there are visible LGB people in student affairs to gain further information. The initial members were sent an e-mail seeking their participation (Appendix A). From this group, snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961) was used to collect further participants; the initial contacts were given an e-mail (Appendix B) to forward to people they knew who met the study criteria.

Intense, thoughtful interviews allowed for a wealth of data to be collected that is detailed and varied (Maxwell, 2005). The semi-structured interview protocol pertained to participants' personal work in student affairs and how their identity of being LGB has shaped their experiences. Kruger (1998) suggests that interview questions should be clear and conversational and allow for sufficient time for a response; these guidelines were used to develop the interview protocol. Further, the study sought perceived barriers to moving up to executive levels in student affairs. Concepts of workplace discrimination, homophobia, and individual choices around those issues were explored.

The interview protocol (Appendix C) focused on career work experiences and professional choices the individuals made based on society, organizations, and personal

reflection. The objectives of the interviews were to encourage the participants to tell their stories and to find out if they have experienced career path barriers, discrimination, and what, if any, support mechanisms are in place to assist LGB-identified individuals with their career goals. Finally, informed consent was communicated to interview participants detailing the voluntary nature of the study.

To encourage participation and to thank participants for their time, each was provided with a \$30 gift card to Starbucks.

Participants

The initial recruitment of began with a sample population of 20 individuals who met all criteria. After a number of attempts to schedule interviews, the final study consisted of 15 (n=15) participants, who all met the study requirements. In Table 3.1, participants are listed, along with each participant's chosen pseudonym, gender, sexual orientation, and years of full-time work in student affairs. To maintain confidentiality of the participants, I have chosen not to reveal the executive positions participants hold in student affairs. Most of the participants were gay men (n=10), and the position of director represented the largest portion of the group (n=10). Four serve in the associate vice president/chancellor role, and one as an assistant dean of students. In terms of years of experience, the group ranges from 8 to 39 years of full-time experience in student affairs. With regard to ethnicity, they identified across the spectrum: White (n=6), Latino (n=3), African American (n=3), Asian/Pacific Islander (n=2), and Middle Eastern (n=1).

Table 3.1
Interview Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	Gender	Identity	Ethnicity	Full-Time Years in Student Affairs
Jackie	F	Lesbian	Latino	8
Susan	F	Lesbian	Middle Eastern	13
Oliver	M	Gay	Asian/Pacific Islander	17
Effy	M	Gay	Latino	19
Joseph	M	Gay	White	21
Jinx	M	Gay	White	22
Marcus	M	Gay	Latino	22
Rain	M	Gay	African American	23
Serena	F	Lesbian	White	24
Max	M	Gay	White	24
Leslie	M	Gay	White	24
Derrick	M	Gay	Asian/Pacific Islander	25
Diane	F	Lesbian	White	26
Skipper	F	Lesbian	White	32
Frank	M	Gay	African American	39

Data Analysis

The interviews of the participants were recorded using a Livescribe pen recoding device and then transcribed verbatim. Verbatim transcriptions were prepared for each individual interview and captured the participants' responses, including a variety of stories describing

details about their work experiences. The transcripts from the interviews were then read again while listening to the recordings to check for accuracy, and any necessary corrections were made. Upon request, participants were allowed to listen to their recordings and/or review their transcriptions. Participants were also allowed to drop out of the study at any time or to make corrections to transcriptions. None of the participants requested to review recordings or transcriptions, and no participant left the study.

To begin the analysis process, the transcripts were coded for various themes discussed within the interview questions that pertain to the above research questions and the units of observations. The units of observation were the broad ideas gained from the interview and included, but were not limited to, career path and goals, community and campus resources for LGB populations, peer relationships, community connections, domestic partner or spouse, campus policies, laws, and garnering campus climate. Information was then broken into categories of career decisions made based on influences from the organization, society, and self-reflection. Based on the interview transcripts and the literature, the data was coded using Microsoft Excel and placed into tables to illuminate further categories and themes. From there, themes and categories were analyzed using further literature as a guide to determine findings. Cross-referencing interview responses with LGB history, identity theories, and career theories provided for rich data that was used as a guide for further analysis.

Data was continuously analyzed, and interview transcripts were compared throughout the process. Patterns were documented and interpreted while looking for research themes. It was then determined what role, if any, the perceived actions of discrimination have had on the interviewees' job performance, level of comfort, and ability to move into executive positions within student affairs.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Because of the nature of this study, there was a small sample from which to pull data, and an even smaller group of people that fit the criteria for this study. The initial sample began with eight (n=8) individuals. From there, snowball sampling was used to garner a final population of 20. After numerous e-mails and phone calls attempting to set up interviews, the final participant population of this study was 15 (n=15). This study investigated seasoned LGB-identified student affairs professionals who work at four-year public institutions in California. The geographic location, coupled with the nature of the study, produced a limited sample, but conducting in-depth interviews with the subjects allowed for much data to be collected. Lengthening the interviews required more time, but provided more information that was triangulated further.

Another issue that arose was personally knowing some of the individuals interviewed for this study. Because I currently work in the field of student affairs and know a number of individuals through various organizations, it was important that I fully explain the purpose of the study and remind them that their identities will not be shared in the study. Although the student affairs profession is a very diverse one, it is also quite small—many people know each other, making it truly essential to use coded information that ensured the anonymity of the participants. Also, maintaining professionally appropriate reactions and responses to answers in the interview was crucial to show neutrality and avoid upsetting or distracting the participant; professional reactions to answers, while maintaining composure but still being authentic in the process, was key (Merriman, 1998).

After interviews were complete and the transcript interview data was coded, an external check was performed by someone outside of the study. To verify the codes used in the study, a code sheet and four transcripts were provided to a colleague outside of the study who had

training on code verification and had an understanding of qualitative data analysis. A meeting was held to go over the study topic and research questions. The colleague was asked to code the transcripts using my codes and then compare them to my codes. Using this external check on the data helped to increase its trustworthiness.

Ethical Considerations

Because the study involves human subjects, all ethical issues as required by the UCLA Institutional Review Board (IRB) were addressed. One area for consideration was the information that was shared by each participant. The personal information being shared presented the potential for highly emotional reactions. However, there were no such emotional reactions to any of the stories given, and each individual had a professional response.

To address possible ethical concerns, I developed an informed consent form (Appendix D), which accompanied the request for an interview in the e-mail sent to participants. The purpose of the study and its voluntary nature was clearly outlined in that form. Once respondents agreed to participate in the study, I reviewed each consent form in detail with participants at the beginning of each interview, ensuring a complete understanding of their right to choose not to respond to any questions that made them uncomfortable. I also worked to ensure that participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Upon receipt of the consent forms, I sent a confirmation e-mail (Appendix E) to the participant to schedule the interview. Before interviews began, I developed the units of measurement (Appendix F) to determine what ideas and concepts I would be looking for within the interviews based on the research questions.

Pseudonyms were used in the findings so that individuals cannot be identified, because participants may prefer not to disclose personal information publically. Participants were asked

to choose their own pseudonyms, and those who did not were assigned one. Pseudonyms were also used in the transcription of the digital recordings and in data analysis as well. The use of alias coding ensured anonymity of participants and the confidentiality of their responses. Confidentiality was purposefully addressed in e-mails prior to the interview, before the interview, and afterward. Geographic locations and any other identifiers related to participants were disguised to protect their identities.

The digital recordings of all interviews were stored on an external hard drive of the desktop computer used in the study. This hard drive is located in my private residence; it is password protected, and the password is known by me only. Any hard copies of interview transcripts or data analysis documents were stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's residence and will be destroyed after one year. While ensuring the security of these records is primary, maintaining an audit trail of the research to authenticate the study's findings is also necessary.

Summary

This chapter addressed the qualitative research design and methods for use in this study. Included in this chapter are research questions, site and sample criteria, data collection and analysis methods, and issues related to reliability and ethical considerations. The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of LGB-identified student affairs professionals as related to career trajectory. The professional connections I have within the field assisted me in drawing more participants through the use of snowball sampling. The use of interviews allowed me to obtain a glimpse into the lives of the participants including their experiences within the field of

student affairs and how their LGB identity has affected their career development. Findings from this study will be presented in further chapters.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This qualitative study explored the career experiences of student affairs officers who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The study focused on the career trajectory of student affairs officers with seven years or more of experience and investigated what role if any, their LGB identity played in their career path choices. The research questions mentioned previously pertaining to career barriers, support services, perceptions of self and perceived discrimination helped to guide the study.

The findings in this chapter reflect the participants' perceptions of their career trajectories in student affairs. The frameworks presented in Chapter 2 provide a backdrop to the variety of experiences in student affairs and help to outline the choices the participants have made that have led them to their current positions. The concepts that LGB-identified student affairs professionals work with are identity development, career development, and the intersections of self-identity and career. The research further presented LGB-identified student affairs professionals and their perceived abilities to advance in their careers.

This chapter outlines the themes that emerged from the individual interviews and the common ideas that were found across the transcripts. These themes include career start, place of work, support networks, varying thoughts on discrimination, identity intersections, the ability to move into senior-level positions, and advice for new LGB-identified professionals in student affairs. While the themes in the data help to give perspective on the role LGB identity plays in the work environment, it is important to note that each individual has a different experience and that one may become a senior-level administrator in numerous ways. For example, some participants (n=2) said they have "no desire" to be at a senior-level position regardless of their identity.

The chapter begins with career development and the choices made according to the respondents' answers. This first section outlines the reasons participants chose a career in student affairs, their abilities to advance, the degrees to which they are "out," and the career hindrances they have experienced. The participants reflected on the opportunities they had to advance professionally and the challenges they have endured while working in student affairs. The next section provides an outline for support systems that the participants found to be important when continuing their career choices in student affairs. I then discuss discrimination in the workplace based on the respondents' answers and what, if any, discriminatory actions they experienced throughout their careers. Additionally, findings indicate intersections of varying identities including race, religion, and sexual orientation that some participants contended with when working in their career choice. Finally, the chapter concludes with advice from the study participants for LGB-identified new professionals in student affairs and discusses items that the participants' felt important for upcoming professionals to be cognizant of when entering the field.

Career

Why choose a student affairs career?

As mentioned previously, the field of student affairs is made up of a number of different offices on college campuses that often provide out-of-class services and learning experiences for students; these extracurricular interactions may include campus housing/residence life, student leadership offices, or financial aid. When asked how their journey into the field of student affairs began, all of the respondents (n=15) mentioned that they joined the profession because of their positive leadership experiences in college.

Campus employment.

Significantly, 80% of the participants (n=12) mentioned their spark for this career began in housing or residence life as a student resident advisor or in residence hall leadership positions; the other 20% (n=3) worked on their campuses as students in a student services office—meaning all respondents were employed in student affairs as students themselves. Having such a high number of participants who began their careers in residence life is likely because the initial sample population was drawn from my professional network of people who work in housing or residence life. Jinx, a White male student affairs professional with over 20 years of experience described his foray into student affairs in a fun yet serious little story:

I actually decided early in my undergraduate career that this was my career path, to work in student affairs.... That came about because literally my first day on campus, I had to go pay my bill... stand in line all day to pay your bill so they don't drop your registration, and they told me the amount, it was hundreds of dollars...so I just panicked and I remembered the assistant dean for student affairs on the stage that morning for orientation said, "if you ever need anything in student affairs, we're here to help," so I literally ran like full kick sprint from this building across this beautiful quad and ran into the dean of students' office.... she walked me to financial aid, you know introduced me to the director of financial aid, they talked to me about FAFSA. She ended up realizing I'm really poor; I'll probably get work-study. So she hired me as a student worker, in the dean of student's office.

The story conveys his learning about the field of student affairs by hearing someone say "we are here to help." Jinx took the advice to reach out and ask for help and eventually landed a position working in a student affairs office. Of her own work-study position in student affairs, Skipper, a

White female with over 30 years of experience recalls, “I was assigned to be a student assistant in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office. My work (with her) inspired me and solidified that I wanted to go into student affairs.” Both participants held work-study positions on campus that exposed them to a number of services that helped them stay on campus and learn more about the field of student affairs and services. Their commitment to the field was grounded in their motivation to help other students because someone had extended that help to them.

Like Jinx and Skipper, others described how someone during their undergraduate experience reached out to them to help with a student issue or to encourage their involvement on campus, to become a resident advisor or be involved in a campus leadership position, someone on campus inspired them to go into student affairs. For example, Derrick, an Asian/Pacific Islander male with over 25 years of experience started out pre-med but was unclear in what direction he wanted to go, so he sought assistance from people who worked in his residence hall. He recalled, “I had some pretty influential student affairs folks who had me thinking about going into student affairs.” He went on to talk about the motivation and praise he received from these folks, particularly those who saw his strengths as a leader and his dynamic sensibility to work with others. Derrick was able to take the advice he received and go on to graduate school to pursue a master’s degree in student affairs, and leave his pre-med thoughts behind. He believed he would still be helping people, but in a much different capacity.

Another participant, Joseph, a White male with over 20 years of experience spoke of being a first-generation college student without the necessary tools to be successful. Lacking financial resources and informed parental support, he “was failing abysmally in school.” To salvage his hopes for a degree, he “took a freshman development course that was run by a student,” whom he credits for keeping him from “flunking out of school.” After the course,

Joseph served as an orientation leader and “got hooked” on student affairs. As a first-generation college student, Joseph had to learn to navigate college life on his own; he gained insight from student affairs staff members who could guide him to collegiate success and ultimately inspire his own career path.

The participants in this study were able to utilize the skills gained working as students on campus and expand them into working in the field of student affairs professionally. Each gained a different insight into their abilities to achieve success while maintaining a connection to the work of helping students, like someone had once helped them. The idea of helping others seemed to be a common theme throughout the start of many of the participants’ careers.

Social justice.

In addition to campus involvement, findings indicate that some of the participants (n=5) had a connection to social justice education and wanted to translate that into a career in student affairs. Jackie, a Latina female with eight years of experience, mentioned that while taking a student leadership class, she began volunteer work for a nonprofit organization teaching at-risk youth that turned into a position. Upon graduation from college, she was hired as a classroom manager for the program and was quickly promoted to site coordinator, and that was her “first big, real, professional job because [she] had like a program to run, and [she] was managing people and all of these other responsibilities.” Working with at risk youth and having her own classroom gave Jackie the confidence to continue work in areas that would help others. This position inspired her to go back to school and attain a master’s degree in student affairs—a lifelong path sparked by her campus social justice endeavors.

Another participant, Susan, a female with 13 years of experience, discovered her interest in student affairs via social justice later in her academic career, while attaining her master’s

degree. She began a library science masters program but decided social justice work was more appealing. At this crossroads in her studies, a former supervisor introduced her to student affairs. She considers herself lucky that the university “offered a graduate assistantship doing LGBT student support, in an office that also did women’s resource development and sexual violence victims’ advocacy.”

Susan was able to work in an environment that she enjoyed and realized that she could help people through advocacy work without immediately abandoning her library science degree. However, she eventually changed her degree from library science to student affairs administration. Her roots in social justice and advocacy have blossomed into her continued work for LGBT populations today.

Frank, an African American male with over 35 years of experience also discussed realizing early on his commitment to social justice, to being himself and working for the rights of others. Frank’s journey began in segregated schools in the South. In community college, he held leadership positions and later became a student leader at his university, where he was a member of its first integrated class. “And so I kind of stood out,” he recalls. He went on to become the first RA (Resident Advisor) of color on campus and work for the Vice President of Student Affairs. Later, he says, “I found myself applying for jobs in student affairs.... When I came out I gravitated to be a civil rights activist. I’ve always been involved in civil rights.”

Gaining perspective outside student affairs.

Finding one’s way in any field can be a challenge if your identity is not always understood or respected. Because their gay identity was not fully appreciated, some participants spoke of “taking a break” from student affairs (n=2) and working in a different arena where they could still do social justice work and give back to their communities. Joseph mentioned his

career in the non-profit sector. He left his student affairs job “specifically because [he] was a gay man,” the city he lived in “was not conducive to being a single gay man,” and he “couldn't stand it anymore.” Despite loving his job and the poor prospects during a recession, he quit and moved to Boston in hopes of being closer to city life and “doing more outside of higher education.” Joseph feared not finding a job and losing the security he had, but he wanted to do more for the gay community and believed he could better serve the LGB community outside of a college or university. He managed to do fairly well for about ten years, working in different nonprofit organizations, before he missed the energy found on a college campus and returned to his work in student affairs.

Similarly, Frank took a break from his work in student affairs and joined the nonprofit sector. Though he did not choose to leave his job, when it ended he moved to San Francisco “during the great gay migration” in the 1970s. When everything “was happening with people from all over, well, both politically and socially.” He spent a year in that climate of social and political activism, working as a cook and a waiter in the area. After that, he worked for the mayor’s offices doing employment training. Frank described quite a colorful experience working with former Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in San Francisco. He worked with 15 public and private agencies, and up to 300 clients, but felt disenfranchised by the way things were going with regard to LGBT rights. Despite stellar reviews in his job, he didn’t feel he was “doing his best” and was “really, really missing the work he did in student affairs.” He thought he could make a better impact if he went back to the university and wanted to return to higher education. Frank’s integration back to university life was intended to last two years, but he ended up staying for another 31 years.

The data from the participant interviews provides evidence that they feel a strong connection to the field of student affairs, and their interest to help students comes from their experiences of being a student leader, insights gained in a variety of student affairs positions, as well as those within the larger LGBT community. Whether it was residence life, student leadership or working within the realm of social justice, there is a broad spectrum of backgrounds and educational experiences. Each participant has taken the skills they have gained into their careers, and has chosen to live in the state of California.

California careers.

At its core, this study sought to assess whether these professionals are attaining the careers they choose in concert with being LGB-identified. Unanimously, the respondents indicated that they have not been specifically hindered in their career type (100%). However, 80% (n=12) mentioned they did not feel they could readily obtain positions in states other than California. One such respondent, Skipper, discussed the displeasure she felt with the laws in other states that do not recognize her family. Because Skipper identifies as a lesbian and has “a child with two moms,” she “has always felt limited in terms of where [she] could live in the nation and . . . work in higher education.” She’s saddened to feel unable to “apply for a job in Colorado or Wyoming” but goes on to explain that “it’s not the institutions themselves wouldn’t be open to employing an out lesbian, but I’ve been screened out of certain states because of the politics around [domestic partnerships].”

Skipper’s response was not uncommon. She mentioned that there were parts of the country that she truly enjoyed visiting and would love to live in, but because of the ways in which marriage is defined and limited legal protections of her family, she wouldn’t feel safe living outside of California.

Rain, an African American male with over 20 years of experience also remains in California because it is so open that he feels his gay identity to be as asset in job searches at times. “When I was applying for jobs in the CSU (California State University),” he explains, “I made it, through my past involvements, I made it very clear on my resume that I was gay.” Further, he feels that having this identity in many ways has helped him obtain positions, because “in higher ed, your different identities are something that’s actually valued,” and particularly during the early 1990s, Rain felt being out and gay was “especially valued,” so he decided that highlighting his LGB involvement on his resume would “help [him] more than it could hurt [him].” Feeling valued is important to Rain, and something he did not believe he would be able to experience outside of California. Having the drive, independence and tenacity to continue working in higher education, he felt that working in other states would not provide the same opportunity to thrive. Similar to Skipper, he mentioned the legal safety net provided to those who work in public institutions in California. This feeling of security stems from the fairly consistent policies around discrimination and the allowance of domestic partner benefits at public institutions in this state.

Even when interviewing for his first professional position at the ACPA placement exchange, Marcus, a Latino male with 22 years of experience sought to work at an institution that allowed domestic partner benefits:

I remember just being thrown by how different universities from the different parts of the United States handled my questions about domestic partnerships and about having a domestic partner live on campus with me I obviously gravitated toward the universities that were more open about it, and I just remember a lot of the Midwest schools just having a very hard time with the concept.

It is important to note that Marcus was doing his job search in the mid-1990s and many universities, often on their own going beyond state policies, offered domestic partner benefits. Desiring domestic partner benefits, and what he believed to be an overall better environment for he and his partner, Marcus did not feel he could live and work in any place but California. Although other states were beginning to progress in this area, he felt California schools provided the best environment to thrive in. As pointed to in earlier chapters, the University of California and California State University systems have similar protections against discrimination and domestic partner benefits offerings.

Diane, a White female with over 25 years of experience, echoes those reasons working in California and feels that she has not been hindered in her career: “Perhaps I’ve benefited from the fact that I’ve worked at state institutions in California. That it’s just very comfortable to be out, it hasn’t even been an issue for me in any of my positions and hasn’t necessarily shaped my upward mobility, I don’t think. I mean, it’s just part of my identity, it’s who I am.”

Just as Marcus elected to focus his job search in California, some of the participants brought up the fact they had migrated from other states to live and work in California. Of the 15 participants, only 2 were originally from California. Susan, a Middle Eastern female who migrated from the southern United States, felt stifled where she grew up and looked for a change that California was able to provide: “I had my fill of conservative, religious Southern towns, and I didn’t know much about California other than my relatives would joke it was the land of fruits and nuts. But I had a perception that people would care less and be less homophobic in California, and in general that’s been true compared to most of my home state.”

Being in California has afforded the participants opportunities to advance in their careers while being out and allowed them to be visible presences on their campus. Additionally, over

time, these individuals have been able to best move into positions they are seeking without leaving their chosen home of California. It is important to note that, for all of the protections that the state of California provides, private institutions (such as religiously affiliated colleges) are not required to adhere to state policies providing protections for LGB employees. Still, the state and its publically funded universities were among the first to offer domestic partner benefits as well as nondiscrimination clauses for their employees and students. The better level of acceptance and protections in California has provided a great sense of comfort for those who are LGB-identified and work in student affairs.

Being out on campus.

A major consideration of this chapter is to determine if participants in this study were “out” on campus, specifically if others in their departments are aware of their sexual orientation. All respondents (n=15) indicated that they were currently out on campus and in some cases (n=5) were active in LGB(T) resources on their campus. Most of the participants indicated that they never had to formally disclose their sexual orientation at work. As Marcus implies, many participants allowed others to simply notice their sexual orientation without making issue of it: “The workplace provided a safe space in being my authentic self and working openly and honestly with others.”

However, being out on campus was not always the case for some of the participants, and in the early stages of their careers, most did not disclose their sexual orientation (n=13). In fact, two participants (Jinx and Frank) had previously identified as heterosexual and were married to people of the opposite sex. Some interviewees mentioned that they experienced internal homophobia early in their careers, which they believed might have hindered their ability to be a better advocate for others. For example, Skipper recalls feeling afraid and “not wanting to be, be

out in [her] own imposed homophobia” during the first half of her career. She admits that she “didn't embrace [her] own identity . . . So, up until then . . . was very closeted in terms of [her] identity and really just actually denied a lot of [her] own needs.” Compensatory hyper focus on work meant Skipper “was excelling at work and being promoted and having opportunities and so forth.” Unfortunately, though, her busy work life left little time for anything else, and perhaps worse, she notes, “I wasn't in my younger years at a place yet that I could be out as an advocate and a voice for gay and lesbian students.”

Serena, a White female with almost 25 years of experience, had a similar experience. She mentioned that “internalized oppression” played a big role in the early part of her career. Serena felt that she could have been a better advocate for LGB students but just could not bring herself to be out in her early career. Both Serena and Skipper have been in the profession for sufficient years to find their way through the systems that were created. Although they dealt with identity struggles early in their careers, they are now able to be out as senior-level administrators.

In contrast to those who delayed coming out, other participants spoke about being out when starting their careers. Oliver, an Asian/Pacific Islander male with over 15 years of experience, found residence life “very supportive” and enjoyed working with LGB-identified staff from the get-go. He noted, “I don't think I could have asked for a better environment to start my career.” In another example, Jackie says that she didn't really discover herself until graduate school, but was out in her first professional position. She recalls that, previously, she “was so into the ethnic identity piece” but in graduate school, she “began studying more about LGB(T) identity.”

Jinx is a firm believer that being out on campus is important for people, particularly for people in leadership positions. “A lot of people would argue that it's the person's truth to be

told, and maybe I'm being a little hard on people, you know, gay student affairs professionals for not coming out more, being political, [being] out there." Jinx's gay identity appears to be rooted in political activism, and he feels that other members of the LGBT community should also be politically conscious. Max, a White male with over 20 years of experience, was even more blunt about those who are not out on campus: "They just look like they're ashamed, and they're not being a role model to anyone, and they're sending a really negative message." Max went on to say that if professionals cannot be out in their positions on campuses, there are "plenty of opportunities to be out and go work with somebody who values who you are."

At least one of the participants (Susan) works on a daily basis to do LGB work on her campus. "I sometimes get resistance because of my identity, more so my gender expression, but because I am paid to do this (work in LGB affairs), there's a whole other dynamic to being out. I cannot not be the educator on campus; it's my job, so my identity just happens to come with it." Having this visibly out role on campus can also have drawbacks. Susan explains that because she is an educator on campus, she is frequently asked to be "the voice of the gays" on campus and has difficulty with that. As part of her campus job responsibilities, she does community outreach and will often see students who remember her from being a speaker in one of their high school classes. "So this 'outness' crosses off campus too." In one regard, she is doing advocacy work for students and working to create an inclusive campus. In another regard, her visibility creates privacy issues, and sometimes leaves her wanting to have some distance from the position she carries on campus. Susan talked about wishing to do more in the community, such as be a part of a nonprofit but she chose to step away to maintain some balance in her life.

Being out presents unique challenges as well, whether working in educational, nonprofit, or corporate settings. In talking about his gay identity, Max says he feels that, often, gay men are

perceived to be “too sexual” and that everything seems to have a sexual connotation where it may not in the “straight world”:

A lot of times as gay people we feel like any expression of our sexuality comes off as seedy and, hypersexual, in a context where a straight person doing the same thing would just be seen as normal. So, my boss, for example will talk to his boyfriend on the phone all the time and call him “honey” and “sweetie” and “I love you” and stuff like that, and he says it publically on the telephone. And you know, he can do that here and get away with that, but I think that in any other environment, that could be perceived as diminishing or degrading to him as a person. You know, you can be gay as long as it’s fighting for human rights or, you know, doing something noble like that, but as soon as you start talking about sex, it gets really disgusting. And really, that’s what’s at the core of a gay identity, because it is about sex. You know? So we refrain from talking about that.

Max provided a very open and frank summation of his thoughts on how LGB people are perceived with regard to sexuality and openness about their identity. There is a consistent pull between society’s perception of how LGB-identified people should be and how folks are living out their lives. Within the LGB media, there is often the mention of the *Will and Grace* syndrome, named after the popular NBC television sitcom. On the show, Will Truman, an openly gay attorney, lived a fairly successful life in his career, but viewers rarely saw him in a relationship with another man. Further, when he was in a relationship there was little display of affection towards the other man. Max concluded, “You can be funny, ironic, and do my hair but I don’t want to see you having sex or talking about it.” Max provided an interesting commentary in that many who are out also have to contend with the degree of how much someone discloses.

There are often questions posed to individuals such as: Is it appropriate to discuss family, partners, and children? Are LGB-identified individuals held to a different expectation because, at the core, there is a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex? While it would seem that there is likely no difference how LGB individuals and heterosexual individuals portray themselves in the workplace, there is still a different standard for many.

Career advancement.

As mentioned earlier, each participant in this study is at the director or higher level and has worked in student affairs 7+ years, specifically from 8 - 39 years. During the interviews, participants were asked whether they felt they could advance in student affairs, particularly whether their LGB identity affected their ability to advance. Overwhelmingly, the participants (n=15) felt they could advance as they saw fit, as long as they had the necessary skills. Jackie talks about not taking jobs specifically tied to social justice as her first positions because she did not want to be typecast. Of her current advocacy work, she says, “I feel like being of a minority group sometimes pigeonholes you to certain jobs, and it is hard to get out sometimes. So, the fact that I did it the other way around and had these other skills or developed in other areas then did this, still, I am able to branch out into other areas if I choose to do that in the future.” Jackie was referring to conversations she has had with colleagues who work in diversity education or cultural offices. She felt that those who generally start working there do not move out of those areas because of typecasting or self-imposed limitations.

Oliver echoed Jackie’s thought on choosing positions with the intention of building a broad skills base in areas of interest:

I think if you have the skills, for a position, I don’t feel like my well.... It’s kind of a two-factor situation. I don’t think that I would actually be seeking employment at a place

that isn't open to either of my identities. Whether or not I have the skills for that position or not, I don't think I would be applying to schools like that. But do I feel limited in that regard? Do I feel bad, or restricted? No. I just don't think I'd ever put myself in a position where I'd want to work somewhere you know where I felt like being Asian and being gay would become an issue.

Joseph feels that things have improved in the field so much that there are many LGB people who work in student affairs. Because the field is very open to LGB staff, he does wonder occasionally "if behind closed doors people are saying 'oh we have too many gay men'." Despite implying that being gay in student affairs is hardly even a minority status, he went on to say that he doesn't feel that there are any hindrances to his advancement and that being gay alone, in his opinion, would not stop anyone from advancing. "I know many gay vice presidents and associate vice presidents so in my experiences, I don't see it (lack of career advancement for LGB professionals) to be true at least anymore."

Jinx believes that being openly gay has helped him to advance in his career. He discussed the advantages of having different lenses from which to look and is able to provide a different perspective being at his level. He believes that being gay gives him "credibility to be at the advocacy table for marginalized populations." Similarly, Rain spoke of having a gay identity as being an advantage in the field and feels that he is "more marketable."

Leslie, a White male with almost 25 years of experience, spoke to the feeling that the field is pretty open and allows for advancement. He believes that the student affairs field has "a lot of both LGBT people and sensitivity" and that these factors have allowed him to advance "without [his] sexual orientation being a big issue."

While Susan agrees that she has not been limited in career advancement by her sexual orientation, she does feel that her gender expression has limited her in terms of where she is willing to work:

So, my gender expression has definitely affected my career path. First, it led me to student affairs as a comfortable place to be informal. And second, I, honestly, I think I get away with wearing clothing that, if I wasn't a director, I wouldn't, they wouldn't, I would be told I had to dress differently. So, that affected me; it's actually been to my benefit doing this kind of work.

Susan went on to say that she feels comfortable in being her authentic self and doing the work she is doing. She concedes that if she were to work in admissions or another more “traditional office environment,” her gender expression could limit her or cause some resistance. As a director that works in a “high-touch, student service office,” she believes she is relatable with the students she serves.

Overall, the participants felt that they have been able to advance in their careers with few or no hindrances. Those who have dealt with impediments recognized them but did not indicate that these were large roadblocks to the trajectory of their current careers. As a researcher, I found this to be surprising and challenging at the same time. Much of the literature on LGB populations suggests that there is an abundance of discrimination in the workplace that often slows the ability to attain executive-level positions. Yet, the population in this study found very little blocking their way. This is likely due to the location of the participants in the study (California) as well as the progression of LGB rights as the participants have held their careers. Additionally, some in the study (Jinx, Rain) have mentioned that their sexual orientation has helped them in their careers. In an effort to attain diversity on campus and within the field of

student affairs, LGB individuals are sought out to help bring perspective to the campus as well as assist with students who are in that population. There is a present double-edge sword that exists and can often lead participants to wonder “did I get hired because of my abilities to work with students, or because they needed a LGB person to fill this role?” This was a common amazement among the participants, but most chose to acknowledge the benefits of attaining their career choices regardless.

Support Systems

Many of the participants (n=13) spoke to their connection of being a part of a marginalized group (the LGB community) and their tendency to seek out support of those who are like themselves. The participants were asked to discuss support systems that they felt were important for them as well as for other faculty and staff who identify as LGB on college campuses. Common support systems mentioned were partners/spouses, mentors/role models, professional organizations, and resources on campus.

Partners and spouses.

A supportive spouse or partner can often play a pivotal role in the development of one’s career. Eighty percent (80%) of participants (n=12) mentioned having a significant other, spouse, or partner. Those with partners/spouses have been in committed relationships for five years or longer, and each discussed the important role that a partner has played in life and career decisions.

For example, Serena expresses a theme common among respondents—the partner influenced and supported careers in myriad ways. Serena detailed the role that her partner has played when looking for jobs and credits her with helping to shape her career explorations. “She

has definitely been my head hunter at times, looking in the Chronicle or searching at ACPA or NASPA.... She has been a visible partner in shaping my career and has been a strong proponent of my continued growth in positions and in education to help me in gaining more responsibilities in my positions.” Here, Serena is referring to her partner’s support of her going back to school to obtain her doctorate.

One of the interview questions asked of participants was whether their partners felt welcomed on campus or could attend campus functions. All of those who have partners (n=12) said they did feel comfortable with that partner coming to campus, and that the partner was welcomed. For example, Jinx has a picture of his partner on his desk, and he does feel his partner is welcome on campus. Also, Oliver specifically noted, “Within housing and residence life, it’s not even a question.... I invite him to come, sometimes force him.” Oliver went on to explain that his partner (like many of those I spoke with) is more introverted than he and does not always want to attend campus functions, even though he is welcome. And Serena goes so far as to say that her partner is part of the campus culture where she works. Then too, Effy, a Latino male with almost 20 years of experience, described his visible role on campus and how his partner works with that:

I’ve been able to introduce him to my department and my student staff know him when he comes to campus to visit. They are aware of who he is. So I think my partner does know that I am very much in the limelight on this campus and that I do need his support to also show across the board the common acceptable and its just a part of my life to have my partner be a part of campus life.

Jinx echoed Effy, saying that his partner knows what he does on campus and has attended a number of events on campus including black-tie dinners, graduations, and programs.

Additionally, Jinx has a picture of his partner on his desk, and he is known on campus.

Some participants' partners even made a place for themselves on campuses in their own right. Marcus, for example, mentioned that his partner had been such a significant part of his experience at one institution and interacted with many of his colleagues often enough to become friends with them.

Jackie also mentioned that her partner understands her role on campus and went on to explain that her awareness of—but not direct participation in—the field is an asset itself. “My partner is outside of student affairs which helps a lot. We talk about social justice or just things going on but it is not focused on work, it’s part of a more general conversation about what’s going on in the world.” Jackie further discussed the importance of boundaries around work and personal life. “Sometimes, she’ll read something that is happening (on my campus) and will ask ‘oh what’s happening with that’? or ‘do you know about that’? I’ll be like ‘yes, but I cannot comment.’” Because of the constant flow in the work life of a student affairs professional, balance between the home life and work can be daunting, but Jackie credits both her partner’s support and distance from student affairs herself with helping to make balance possible.

Diane, who does not currently have a partner, has “often wondered” if she will find someone knowing that she has such high career demands. She has spent a great deal of time and energy focused on career advancement and has not been as active in the dating world, which she is “ok with.” Additionally, a few years ago, she chose to have a child; she notes that becoming a parent has definitely changed her outlook with her career but she is “happy with that choice.”

Balancing children and career adds a different dynamic to finding support, but that topic is somewhat outside the scope of this study.

For those who have partners, the supportive nature of partners is key and allows them to be able to work in visible positions on their campuses. Some spouses play a visible role on campus and attend functions, while others choose to be supportive behind the scenes. In either case, the participants found their partners to be extremely helpful and supportive in their work, even though they may not always understand the significant time and dedication that goes into those jobs.

Mentors and role models.

A mentor is an important resource for many in the field of student affairs. Generally, a mentor is someone with more experience in the field who is willing to take on the role of career guide, teacher, or confidant. Often, mentors can provide critical support that contributes to career advancement, including assistance with position decisions. When the participants were asked about mentoring relationships, they offered various definitions of a mentor, their relationship to their mentors, and the value in having a mentor. Of the participants in this study, 40% (n=6) indicated that they had a mentor in their career who helped guide them in some way, though other participants talked about people who have been role models in their careers but did not classify them as mentors.

With mentors or role models, the participants overwhelmingly indicated that sexual orientation was not a significant indicator in finding someone with whom they could connect. However, participants did identify with people in the field because of their sexual orientation. Serena “sought out the dean of students who was an out lesbian. And you know, was really kind

of drawn to (her). She had a picture of her partner in her office and we're talking late 1980s here, so you know it was at the beginning for more out staff and others." Seeing this woman display a picture of her partner in her office inspired Serena to be more confident, but she also continued to struggle with identity into her first career position. Then too, Oliver specifically benefitted from having LGB mentors. He says "it is extremely helpful to have role models and mentors . . . can share in your identities. It's been important to find those people."

Derrick touched on the difficulty in finding those role models Oliver so values, because role models, he felt, are few and far between. "I've pretty much been on my own. There were some people along the way that I looked to, but not really strong gay role models." He found his most effective role models were straight women. Effy also described his mentor as a "heterosexual, White woman" and went on to say that the biggest thing he learned from her was being able to work with multiple populations: "Wow," he said, "here is this lady who doesn't have any form of identity connected to mine who is a professional and saw that I had potential and worked with that potential to be the best I could be." Skipper reiterated this idea when she said, "My role model and the person who probably influenced me the most is not necessarily around being a lesbian but more just, around being a good person."

In contrast to most other participants, Rain expressed his independence and did not seek out mentors: "I'm so strong headed and blaze trails for myself, and I'm sure there are people in my career I've looked towards, but no one really comes to mind." Rain's independence allowed him to find his own way in the field that he believed gave him a better sense of self.

The evidence from this study suggests that most participants had an affinity toward senior-level people in the field but did not necessary believe that mentors were an important part

of their career development. This may be because of the independent nature of the study participants or, as some indicated, they were not out in their early careers. Creating mentoring relationships requires trust and an openness that perhaps some were unable to uphold due to hiding or not realizing their sexual orientation in their early careers when they were most impressionable.

Professional organizations.

The study participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with professional organizations and whether or not they found networks of people who shared their identities and provided support. The most common affiliations were WACUHO (Western Association of College and University Housing Officers) (n=11), ACPA (American College Personnel Association) (n=12), NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) (n=13), and ACUHO-I (Association of College and University Housing Officers International) (n=8). Other organizations included NCORE (National Conference on Race and Ethnicity) (n=1) and The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resources (n=1). While 100% (n=15) found connections in those organizations, they did not necessarily rely on those groups to provide significant support when it came to only LGB identity.

That said, Joseph did note that ACPA was particularly beneficial in pushing a variety of ideas further into mainstream campus climate. “I attribute a lot of the success for the evolution of safety for gay and lesbian, transgender, and bisexual folks in the field to me and to ACPA.” Joseph went on to say that ACPA provided a great support structure to him through literature, connections in the field, and providing a place to congregate at the annual conventions. Similarly, although Rain believed various organizations allowed helped set the agenda for LGBT

issues on campuses and felt more of an affinity with ACPA. He concluded that ACPA was more nurturing to young professionals who identify as LGBT.

Frank was quick to point out that many of these professional organizations have evolved over time with regard to LGB awareness. He recalled an attempt in the early 1980s to add a clause to the ACUHO-I constitution that prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation. According to Frank, the motion presented at the conference was confusing, and people were unclear on the issue at hand; eventually, many voted against the measure. Because the parliamentary would not permit the requested recall, the organization failed to pass the measure that would have prohibited discrimination against LGBT people. Eventually, ACUHO-I did vote to add LGBT people into their diversity statement, but it was a few more years before that came into practice.

Though only indirectly related to career success, many members value social opportunities within professional organizations, and participants talked about social opportunities at these organizational annual meetings and conventions. However, there was a time when student affairs organizations were not as inclusive to LGB members and making connections with attendees who shared a similar sexual orientation was harder. “You know, we used to meet in these side rooms in the back of the hotel, and there were maybe 30 of us all crammed into a room to try to talk about issues affecting LGBT students,” Frank recalls. Fortunately, most participants (n=10) mentioned the vast amount of networking that happens at these annual conventions and how open and friendly many people can be. By having connections within these organizations, there is an ability to share experiences and resources that benefit the individuals as well as the students they serve.

Resources on campus.

The participants in this study discussed the need for campus resources such as peer groups, resource centers and academic departments. Although Marcus felt that having these types of networks and social resources seemed to segregate people, he also acknowledged that he was at a different place in his life than young professionals and felt that the resources were still important for them. The study participants had varying areas of responsibility on campus and discussed the various levels of resources that they felt were important for LGB-identified student affairs professionals. The resource areas discussed included campus leadership, networks, the use of LGBT centers, and training on campus.

Campus leadership.

Effy described the importance of supportive campus leadership: “I think it is important that campuses need to have an open and welcoming environment that is supported by other LGBT faculty and staff. I think the president on our campus is very open to LGBT issues and also talks with inclusive language, so role-modeling is going to be helpful for anybody on a college campus to have leadership that is cognizant of that.” Having leaders who understand the complexities of the LGB population on campus is paramount for creating an inclusive campus. When leaders on campus are out or are supportive, they create a culture of support.

Jinx talked about the open leaders and numerous out LGBT people on his campus. He felt it was also important to point out that in addition to just having “out” people on campus, it is also important that people are regarded for their work, not just their sexual orientation:

I can think a lot of openly gay people, our career center director's gay, our director of student life is gay, our associate director for housing is gay, rec. sports gay, I mean a lot of different areas. They're all kinds of high quality, hardworking, very respected people

so it would be interesting if somebody had a problem with it (being out and LGB) we've had openly gay deans. If anybody ever said anything about it, they would quickly be the more shocking, the more reacted to than somebody being gay.

On Jinx's campus, at least, devaluing the LGB staff and their contributions is more scandalous than being openly gay. This statement from Jinx seems contradictory to what many believe with regard to discrimination and hostile work environments. Indicating that perhaps, at least on his campus, the time has come where acceptance of LGB staff and their contributions is acknowledged. Other individuals spoke to having supportive supervisors along the way, or a visionary vice president who was able to lead the division with inclusion. And one participant spoke to issues that arise when a leader is not supportive. Susan relayed that it is challenging to do good work when a vice president "isn't supportive or necessarily understanding of the work that we do." In Susan's opinion, a good leader is one who understands the needs of the students and can "cultivate a culture of inclusion on campus."

Campus and other networks.

Many of the respondents talked about the need for finding like-minded people on campus and also exploring various faculty or staff groups that may be available. Take Skipper for example. She describes building a support network as "critical." For her, this network "served almost like a second family so to speak. You spend a lot more time with them than you do your actual, biological family in a lot of cases." Additionally, she views off-campus networks as equally "critical for development," even if those networks are harder to build. Her advice is to "find pools (of people) outside of work; even though it's really hard you know it's so easy because this is where you're going find more people. It's natural to find people at work, but I

mean its even more common even in other industries when you're seeing the real encouragement for people to look beyond the workplace."

Leslie had a similar take on networking. "Have a GLBT social network," he says. He suggests organizing, possibly through campus mixers or the campus LGBT center, other events that build social networks among peers, because "having people share your identity on campus is important."

Though Max would like to have created community networks, he was very blunt about being unable to find connections off campus. As his first position was a live-in residence life position, he found that he spent so much time on campus and involved in his work that he was not able to get out into the community more. Expectations to host programs and events, work weekends, respond to emergencies, and even eat dinners in the dining hall kept him "on campus constantly," and he notes, "the only people that you're going to meet there are students or coworkers."

Rather than advocating for off-campus support, Susan found that her greatest support systems came from colleagues who do similar work in diversity education and outreach. "We meet quarterly and do an all-day retreat in December It's an amazing tie to not only share our resources but really share the stress we're under, you know?"

All of the respondents (n=15) discussed the importance of the LGBT center on a college campus. These centers provide significant resources for LGBT students, but they are not generally meant as an active resource for faculty and staff. Yet, Susan notes, "Often faculty and staff can get hooked into community resources through the center, or can work at establishing campus connections. They (the LGBT centers) can be a gay hub that way." Oliver continued, "I believe our campus has a Pride Center which is great for student programming and outreach, but

it has little to do with our faculty and staff developments.” Because of funding structures for campus LGBT resource centers, there are limitations in the scope of programs and services they can provide for faculty and staff. However, the center staff members are often available to answer questions and help provide resources or connections for faculty and staff upon request. Additionally, LGBT centers provide resources to the campus and outer community. In some communities, the university LGBT centers are the only available resources in the area for LGBT issues, and they are often looked to for help and support within the community.

Training.

Beyond offering resources to those who identify as LGB, there is also a need for training around LGB issues on campuses. Jackie feels that must be lacking at her university, as she often runs into issues with fellow staff members about understanding the impact they have on LGB issues on campus. Her concern is that, despite offering training to her campus peers, student affairs professionals “fail to understand . . . that we need to work on each other too How are we supposed to do the work with students if we cannot do it for ourselves or each other? And that that impacts the dynamics of how that work gets carried out on campus.”

Others described situations where well-intentioned staff members said something offensive or were not using inclusive language. The participants who mentioned campus training on LGB issues (n=5) feel that more can be done. LGB populations training topics are often given as an elected component of diversity sessions, in doing this, administrators, faculty, and staff often miss out on the impact that their awareness can play.

Identity

Intersectionality.

Chapter 2 outlines the concept of intersectionality, where varying individual identities meet. The participants in this study discussed how their various identities play out in the workplace, specifically race and sexual orientation.

Derrick discussed coping with being gay as well as Asian/Pacific Islander and how that plays out in social situations, yet are transmitted in the workplace:

I think about all of these identities and I might be oppressed or not have privilege or an asterisk where I might have privilege and I think about me in the gay community, because of that I felt that I've never belonged. And I say that not necessarily as to feel sorry for me thing and marginality can change so much, but I always feel different. It manifests at work sometimes too.

Derrick's difference came to the fore via working in predominately White institutions and struggling with concepts of gay, masculine, and Asian/Pacific Islander identities. In many work situations, this "difference" came out and left him questioning whether he felt he had to work harder to prove himself or if he would be judged simply on the merits of his work.

Of his dual identities—gay man and Asian/Pacific Islander—Marcus says, "I've never hid that I was gay, but I could. I could not hide that I was not Caucasian walking into a room." Marcus and Derrick both feel that they had to work harder to prove themselves because of their racial identity. Additionally, both mentioned that while some LGB folks are able to "pass" for heterosexual, people of color are less often afforded that opportunity if they so choose. Going one step further, Marcus often felt that his career had been more shaped by his ethnic identity than his sexual orientation.

Susan described intersectionality as a big part of the work she does in educating students, faculty and staff on her campus. “Sometimes we will talk about how the university is just not getting it, they’re not understanding what’s going on here.” Susan expressed that because she appears to be a White person (though she is of multiple races), her colleagues look to her to be the voice of reason in a meeting: “I’ll be in the room and the only White person, but we’re all talking about social justice issues. But sometimes I step up (to the administration) sometimes by request and sometimes by me saying ‘I can do this’. Because I do have White privilege that protects me in a way.” Susan recognized that although her sexual orientation and gender identity may put her into a marginalized population, she is also visibly White, and based on her perceptions, being White may open doors that her other identities close.

For Effy, a significant concern with carrying various identities simultaneously is the awkwardness of trying to compartmentalize them: “I think it’s hard to separate all of my identities and say ‘oh, today I will wear my gay hat’ and I’ll only look at things through my gay perspective.” He went on to say that all of his identities are important and he carries them with him in every decision that is made. “I am able to contribute to those tough conversations on behalf of multiple identities and think that this has actually helped me in my career.” As someone who is Latino and gay, Effy works to be a whole person even when others are asking him to represent only one of his identities.

Rain also expressed his challenges in integrating his various identities. He talked about feeling not very discriminated against for being gay but feeling awkward about being a gay man of color. “I don’t think I ever felt discrimination in the LGBT professional community in student affairs, but I think I may have felt a tinge or a sense of awkwardness or definitely difference because I am a person of color who was gay.” Rain further described that depending on the

community he is in and associating with, he is referred to as a “Black, gay man” or a “gay, Black man.” “I always find that fascinating as to how people are going to define me depending on where I am.”

Diane talked about balancing her lesbian identity while having a disability, particularly when those identities intertwine or are at odds. She feels that these dual identities are often in tandem stating “having one (a disability) doesn’t necessarily take precedence over the other (being lesbian) or hindered my identity as a professional either way.

Sexual orientation is certainly a component of one’s overall identity, and the participants in this study all share that. However, it was evident that there is a difference with those who are LGB and of an ethnic minority in the United States. Working to balance and reconcile the weight either identity plays during the average work day can be stressful to say the least, and depending on the situation or meeting that the professional is in, one identity may be more prevalent than the other.

Understanding others.

Many of the participants (n=12) talked about marginality and feeling that their LGB identity has helped shape their advocacy work for students. Serena encapsulated best what many of the respondents said:

I absolutely believe that having different subordinate identities has enabled me to want to be a strong ally to folks that are marginalized in some way. I absolutely do. And I think that, however, internal oppression plays a big role, you know so maybe not so much of my career in the last couple of years but certainly as I was trying to move up in my field. Likewise, Diane said, “You know, I think it [being lesbian] has shaped my awareness a little deeper around things like gender-neutral housing and needs for transgender populations.”

Though these are not among her own identities, being part of a marginalized group has made her more aware and sensitive to the needs of other populations.

Similarly, Derrick talked about harnessing his pride in his multiple identities to work in social justice. “Because of my passion for social justice work, it’s not just from being gay, or Asian, or a minority, but because I was gay and hiding it I may not have been able to have pride in any of them [identities].”

Having gone through various experiences with their LGB identity, these professionals reported that they were able to relate to, empathize with, and advocate for LGB students on their campus. In some respect, campus culture has moved from a sense of tolerance (a word much used in the 1990s regarding LGB and other marginalized groups) to one of acceptance and understanding. This shift has afforded these professionals to live free of fear and has given them stronger voices on their campuses. Their LGB identity has allowed them an opportunity to see the perspective of their students and provides them with a unique sense of the oppression and marginality that their students may face.

Helping others understand.

As the participants continued to discuss the topic of advocacy for students, they identified their own positive responses to helping others with similar identities. Helping marginalized populations succeed is a core value of many social justice educators, and working to help all students succeed is the center of student affairs work. However, LGB staff working as advocates may face negative reactions from those who do not understand the complexities of LGB student needs. As mentioned previously, some participants are looked to as the representative of all LGB(T) students because of their own identity. This is not only unfair, but one person cannot represent the totality of a single marginalized group. Rain and Jackie separately discussed

meeting situations where they were asked by executive administrators on their campus “what do you think the gay students will think about this?” While the references were somewhat different, the parallels of being asked to represent a population still occur.

Then too, some student affairs administrators must be cautious when advocating for LGB students as some campus partners have alleged that they are “only advocating for their own,” says Jinx. The allegation that LGB professionals are “only” helping similarly identified students can lead to discriminatory behavior against the community that they are attempting to assist.

Discrimination in the Workplace

The literature in Chapter 2 points to a number of circumstances where discrimination is prevalent in the workplace, particularly for those who identify as LGB. However, all of the participants in this study mention few or no overt forms of discrimination in the workplace. While direct discrimination may not have been the case of the participants in this study, many of them mentioned there has been more of a covert “cold shoulder” sometimes, and all (n=15) talked about a discriminatory experience that occurred earlier in their careers.

Skipper, among others, talked about a “chilling affect,” a cold shoulder that felt exclusionary but stopped short of being overt, blatant discrimination. This effect left her questioning whether she could attribute “wrongs” that happen to her gay identity. “Even recently,” she said, “I worked with an individual who, even though she used all the right language, I just intuitively right from the get go felt she wasn’t comfortable with me. And again, I went to the place ‘oh it’s probably because I am gay.’” This chilling effect seemed familiar to Frank as well; he talked about an annual holiday party to which he brought a friend. “I mean there was probably like four or five hundred people there. You know? But four or five people, (who were) couples, actually physically left because I came with a man. I remember, it was

interesting because there were probably six or eight female couples there; no one challenged them.”

Max talked about a situation early in his career that was directed not at him but at one of his staff members:

I was “allowed” to be gay by my supervisor... so that was no problem for him but when I hired somebody who was going to be living on campus with her lesbian partner... he told her to “get out.” And he brought in the sheriff and shut it down. And the whole thing was just so ugly and so... it was really homophobic coming from a person who otherwise had very good, competent gay people on his staff who he respected and “it’s like okay, it’s okay to be gay, but you couldn’t really express what it looked like in real life.” So it’s fine if you’re going to do a diversity workshop or something like that, but don’t let the students see you in your home with your gay partner. I mean, that’s totally homophobia. When asked about the phrase “allowed to be gay,” Max clarified that at the time, out LGB staff members were rare and often hid their identity, passing as straight, to retain their positions. His supervisor, while aware and presumably accepting of Max’s sexual orientation, did not feel that live-in staff members should be gay, and they worked in a state where one could be fired for being LGB-identified. Live-in staff members often share proximity to the students who live in the residence halls; the supervisor made a legally valid, but morally questionable, distinction in how he would accept his staff members. This dichotomy was quite hard for Max, and he felt betrayed by his supervisor.

Although Leslie’s primary experiences with discrimination occurred while he was working in the private sector, his work was closely connected to institutions of higher education. He enjoyed his work and the connections he was making, but he also felt he had to hide himself

at times. “When I worked with small campuses in Texas and Louisiana and other small towns where it was difficult, it added pressure, expectations that you have to fit in to the town’s business community.... So there were times when I would either choose to be more closeted, or to the extent I wasn’t, it would generate negative feedback for sure.” This push and pull experience Leslie discussed was similar for all of the participants. Being out has a vulnerability factor that can lead others to judge not on the character of the person, but what they believe to be based on their preconceived ideas of LGB culture. This often leads to LGB staff members staying “in” by refusing to disclose their sexual orientation and does not allow for the authenticity of the whole person to be at the forefront of the work being done.

Some of the participants also spoke of indirect discrimination by off-campus community members or parents. Susan remembered that one of her first days of work coming to campus early and encountering a campus visitor who asked if she was the “gay center director.” When she confirmed that she was, he said “I just want you to know that what you’re doing is ruining the lives of young people and they are going to go to hell because you’re telling them it’s OK to be gay.” Susan also mentioned that this had really caught her off guard, as all of her campus interactions up to that point had been positive. “And I thought, ‘oh this is just like old times from when I was in (the south).’” This experience was not new for Susan, but she felt that things would be different in her new surroundings compared to where she grew up. This situation, while common with some has a tendency to be forgotten because for some, we are progressing as a society with regard to LGB issues.

As inclusive as the field of student affairs may appear to be currently, Frank recalls a time in the 1980s when perhaps the most difficult student affairs department to work in was housing and residence life. “One of the concerns in those days was that we had keys to student

rooms. They legitimately were thinking that we were somehow, if we were gay, that we were going to student rooms and molest them.” He further described the fear people had of him working in residence halls that had community showers; they thought that he would either stare at students or try to convert them. “So housing, as an organization was very, very, very homophobic.” This is in stark contrast to recent years where housing and residential life have tended to be a much more open environment than other campus offices. Because of the direct contact with students on a daily basis, and the number of student staff members that are employed by this area, it is the mission of many residence life departments to provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive living experience that promotes diversity and social justice.

Serena discussed a time when she had a live-in position; she and her partner were going to be living together, and both were working on campus. While it was not blatant discrimination, campus partners held training sessions about their arrival, which mystified her:

We were the first out staff people at the college. And they made a whole big deal for this. And you know she (Serena’s partner) ended up working at the women’s resource center for campus and was connected to campus as well. So we became kind of like the lesbians on campus.... We found out in our second year there, that before we came, they didn’t have police; they had full on security. They did a full day of training with the security about the lesbians coming to campus. No lie. I was like ‘what are they going to talk about for eight hours’? Wow. You know?

Some discrimination is more overt, unfortunately, and Susan admits to avoiding working with homophobic staff on campus when possible. “There are colleagues I know who are homophobic, and I know this from their actions and what they say. I have to figure out ways to work with them. And I have to be honest; I avoid them unless I have to work with them.” I was surprised

that Susan mentioned this coworker also works with a marginalized population and works regularly with diversity education on their campus. As much as campuses have changed in working to create a more open environment, there are still issues when it comes to being out and working with various groups and individuals throughout the university regardless of education or work experience.

While most participants felt there was little to no discrimination based on sexual orientation in their current workplaces, Marcus took a particularly optimistic view of the campus climate. “Maybe we’re getting to the point where this (being lesbian, gay, bisexual) is becoming more traditional. It’s never been an obstacle; it’s never been an issues; it’s never been a focal point in any of the positions I’ve held.”

Advice for New Professionals

The participants in the study discussed how working in higher education, and particularly in student affairs, can be a welcoming and supportive environment for most. Since student affairs offices work so closely with working to develop students, the people who work in those offices tend to support those who work there as well. The participants were asked about advice they would give to new professionals who identify as LGB and are coming into the field of student affairs. Since the years of experience among the respondents was so great, their individual takes were a bit different on how they would encourage, support, and challenge new professionals.

All participants (n=15) talked about the importance of focusing on the job and knowing that being gay is a part of one’s identity, but Jinx also notes that new professionals are tasked with doing a specific job at their respective institution. They must reconcile their identities with not only the student affairs profession in general but with their particular campus climates.

Derrick felt it was important to look for positions where new professionals can meet people:

You know, you've got live in the places where you can meet people, and so, you know, it's kind of like, you set up your own experiences, set up your own boundaries based on your own morals focused in your own integrity, and it's hard for me to dictate what is good for you. I mean basically, it's like getting used to, themselves... You're always in a fish tank; people are always looking in, and that is a challenge.

The fish tank concept came up for all of the interviewees. Jobs in student affairs often require long hours and close connections with various students. In spending so much time around students, the life of the professional comes under a microscope, and maintaining balances becomes important, particularly when juggling identities and finding one's place in the community and job responsibilities.

Following from Jinx's and Derrick's observations, Leslie notes that some new professionals tend to place focus on their identity as an LGB person while neglecting job responsibilities. Although understanding how identity shapes work experiences is important, he suggests job focus:

Just excel at your job, and know that your identity is a piece of that. And, and it's helpful because then you're seen as—you know, it can help to overcome some people's preconceived notions. You're seen as really competent, and good, and a pleasant colleague. "Oh and by the way, he's also gay," or "she's also lesbian." Rather than you should lead with that all the time. I think people for better or for worse, people see you as that—that's your whole thing.

Diane agreed and attempts to remind new staff members that “we are here for all students, regardless of their identity.” Advising new professionals to focus on job responsibilities and to find balance between work and identity were common threads among study participants. For example, Serena suggests that new professions be encouraged to learn who they are and to focus their identities to do good work for others:

Really take the time to understand who they are as individuals fully, with their multiple identities. And encourage them to take the time to do that self-work. Because then I think that they come back into roles as professionals in a way that can probably advocate what I would call right ways in their roles with their identity. So sometimes I think folks with their identity can't see other identities and can't see other complexities and issues and politics and so it's all about that identity. And sometimes I think can, you know may not be as effective as they could be in their positions.

Rain felt similarly and discussed the importance of embracing LGB identity while being mindful of the full spectrum of the identities that people carry and resisting the tendency to be defined by only one identity:

I would tell new professionals is you know, that's great that you've embraced that aspect of your identity but don't let a lot of people pigeon-hole you into just that identity, you know, be able to share with people the beauty of who you are, the fullness of who you are and all aspects of who you are. Because I do think that there are some new professionals who you know they, at least my experience has been that they can really get so pinpoint focused on the LGBT aspect of their identity and that's their world and everything else is like way, way, way on the periphery and it's like no, no, no you know, it's not. I

understand that you love that aspect of yourself, that's great, you should . . . just don't make it all about that be able to show all different parts of who you are.

Max suggests that young professionals work in an environment that is supportive of their various needs and values:

I think that the really most important thing is to find a place where you fit and if you don't—if you feel like you're working on campuses, you know, that are homophobic, or hostile or you're struggling or feeling alone or whatever—there's plenty of other choices and find a place where you fit.

Each ACPA and NASPA convention brings a bevy of new professionals into the field of student affairs. Whether they are coming into the field due to their leadership experiences, because someone encouraged them to be in the field, or they are looking to help others, they will be joining the ranks of a number of others who share common experiences. Additionally, they will need to learn balance of their various identities while finding their way as new professionals. Balance and time commitment seemed to be common refrains for many of the participants when giving advice to new professionals. Susan sums up balance by saying, “Be careful of your time; use self care. It may be part of who you are to reach out and be active and you need to care about how students, faculty and staff are being treated, but don't burn yourself out.”

Closing

This chapter outlined the perceptions LGB-identified student affairs professionals have of their career paths, support systems they have encountered and their reconciliations with identity and work. As mentioned earlier, the participants in this study all work or have worked in California public institutions. Further the participants talked about the ability to be out on campus and feel that they have had decent career upward mobility. The participants spoke about

the ability to be out and still hold leadership positions on their campus. Additionally, many feel that being out and in a leadership position has made them more responsible for helping marginalized students and staff on their campus.

The individuals in this study have two items working in their favor as they seek to achieve their career goals. First, they live and work for public institutions in the state of California. Public colleges and universities in California have similar policies regarding discrimination against LGBT populations as well as providing domestic partner benefits. Second, their careers have progress in an era when LGBT civil rights are becoming better recognized in the United States. All participants (n=15) felt that their careers were not hindered by their sexual orientation. The participants who have been in the field longer have certainly felt an uneasy chilling affect with regard to their sexual orientation in their early careers. Additionally, there are still some minor issues that the participants discussed with regard to the evolution of their careers. There were also internal struggles mentioned as to whether they were chosen for their positions based on their skills or because of their sexual orientation. Yet, gains in all of their careers have been made, and each shared a glimpse of their experiences working in student affairs and the affects that their sexual orientation has had on themselves and how they work with their students to be better citizens of the world.

Many of the interviewees saw social justice as their duty, and they work to achieve inclusion on their campuses by being out. Jinx summarized this best by discussing what he has learned in his experiences to make changes on his campus and in his community: "I am in an underrepresented, discriminated-against population, and it helped me to better understand and be able to fight from that perspective. Learning those kind of grassroots advocacy skills in my own

identity group enables me to think more strategically and politically to get other people to be like ‘bring down injustice.’”

For some of the participants, the focus of early career development included staying in the closet and not discussing or bringing up their sexual orientation in the workplace. The struggle of being their authentic self did not seem like an option and often, personal life took a backseat to maintaining a job that they enjoyed. However, as these individuals moved up, they also moved to California where at least, in their mind they felt had a better chance to have a career of their choosing as well as being out on campus.

The impact of being out on campus has a great effect on the students and their abilities to find advocates and role models they can turn to. Within student affairs, it has been said by some that “the higher up you go, the further back in the closet you go” referring to being out on campus. It seems that this adage did not necessarily ring true for the participants in this study. Holding positions of department director to associate vice president, this group of out individuals is helping to change the way that LGB professionals are perceived on their campus. It appears that the individuals in this study are not only cracking the lavender ceiling but breaking through it to attain the careers they want, mostly on their own terms.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, perceived barriers exist that hinder LGB-identified student affairs professionals from attaining high-level executive positions on campus. Career path choices may include executive positions in student affairs, department directors, or other senior-ranking positions on campus. Another purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, perceived types of discrimination LGB-identified student affairs officers face that may affect opportunities for career advancement. Often, overt acts of discrimination play out in the workplace and prohibit the evolution of one's career (Unger, 2011; Renn, 2003). Additionally, this study sought to determine what perceived support systems are in place to assist LGB-identified student affairs in their careers. Finally, I wanted to hear from the participants about their experiences in student affairs and what experiences they believe have provided them with opportunities to advance in the profession.

While there have been previous studies on LGB-identified student affairs professionals, they have not occurred recently. This study adds to the literature on LGB-identified seasoned student affairs professionals by focusing on a group who share commonalities in location, years of experience, and career path trajectory.

Previous research on LGB-identified student affairs professionals and other educational administrators indicates significant issues with discrimination and fear on the part of administrators to come out on campus (Cullen & Smart, 1991; Croteau & von Destinon 1994). Further, campus climate reports indicate concerns for safety, significant negative responses to sexual orientation, fear, and isolation limits the number of out campus administrators (Rankin,

2010). Additionally, some student affairs officers choose to stay in the closet on their campuses rather than risk possible discrimination or harassment (Renn, 2003). Consistent with the literature, there were similar experiences with regard to facing fear and discrimination in some of the participants of this study early in their careers. However, findings indicate that there is little to no overt experiences with harassment or discrimination due to their sexual orientation. Further, according to all study participants (n=15), there have been few or no barriers based on their sexual orientation that have prevented them from choosing their career.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and analyze the findings from this study derived from the interview participants in comparison to existing literature. The findings consider the specific research questions grounded in the perceptions of the student affairs professionals who participated in the interviews. Recommendations are presented based on information obtained from the interviews and utilize the voices of the study participants. Finally, I present the limitations of this study and outline implications for future research.

Outline of Findings

The 15 participants in this study found a career in student affairs because of their positive leadership experiences and connections they held while they attended college. Whether it was their leadership abilities, campus employment opportunities, or because of their innate connection to the students with whom they worked, these professionals sought a career in student affairs. There were a variety of reasons for choosing the student affairs profession, notably many found their passion for the field in social justice or diversity work. All participants mentioned their positive campus relationships and work experiences and felt they too could make a difference in the lives of college students. As Skipper puts it, “I fell in love with it (student

affairs), and made it, you know, my life, just said I would stay in student affairs, as long as I was happy.”

Below are the general findings of this study as related to the research questions presented.

Perceived career path barriers.

The findings in this study suggest that LGB-identified student affairs professionals are able to achieve the career path that they choose. Additionally, according to the participants in this study, there have been few to no barriers to prevent them from moving up the career ladder to achieve leadership positions on their campuses. As the participants’ current positions range from director to associate vice president/chancellor, there was little indication that their sexual orientation prevented them from career advancement. Surprisingly in some cases, participants indicated that their sexual orientation actually helped them in advancing in departments that sought a diverse pool of candidates (Jinx, Rain). According to Jinx, he felt that being out allowed him to be “more authentic and more relaxed and more open that then made me more approachable to students.”

While changes have occurred with regard to perception of LGB-identified professionals, a number of issues still preclude them from living and working in any state they choose. To date, many states do not provide protections against the discrimination of LGB individuals. In some states, LGB-identified individuals can be fired from their job for no cause other than their sexual orientation (Human Rights Campaign, 2012). Further, there are current outstanding court decisions in some states regarding same-sex marriage and domestic partner benefits. As Skipper mentioned, “it (not having protections in other states) has just limited my ability to move around the nation, differently than if I was heterosexual.” This climate provides numerous challenges for colleges and universities that wish to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff members

who may also be LGB-identified. One challenge is the loss of highly skilled and qualified faculty and staff who may choose to work at institutions that will provide necessary benefits and protections for their families.

It is no surprise that climbing the career ladder takes time, and while there were few barriers to attaining the career that they wanted because of their LGB identity, many of the participants spoke to sacrifices they have made. For example, Frank and Joseph discussed leaving the field for a time to pursue other passions because they did not feel they could be their authentic self in the places they were working. Others (Susan, Diane, and Jinx) talked about the long hours and the constant presence on campus that has assisted them in moving into their current positions. Rain, Marcus, Derrick, and Effy spoke to managing the intersections of the LGB and ethnic identities on predominately White campuses and feeling as though they had to work harder to prove that they deserved the positions they attained. Leslie felt as though he had to hide his identity in his early career in order to “blend in with the businessman” of business sectors of campus life.

Each person had their own unique struggles to contend with in an effort to attain the career they wanted. The primary career barriers that participants discussed had many contributing factors with sexual orientation being one. According to those in the study, sexual orientation was only one layer of the multidimensional issues these participants contend with in the workplace, but often, it was at the forefront of many of their decisions.

Services and support systems.

According to the participants in this study, there was a mix of support systems that LGB-identified individuals use or recommend in an effort to feel comfortable while being out on campus. LGBT campus resource centers, pride networks, outside organizations, mentors/role

models and partners/spouses were all mentioned as support for the individuals in this study. Coming from a marginalized group, the participants discussed the importance of finding continued support networks, specifically for newer professionals entering the field. Many of the interviewees discussed LGB faculty and staff groups on their campus that allowed for connections of support. Often, these groups are not therapy or support-based but are social in nature. Derrick referred to an off-campus location where “many of the gays congregated” and discussed the importance of finding people to connect with. Members of the LGB community come together to talk about issues affecting the community, campus, or the political climate but do so with socializing being the cornerstone of the events. Additionally, many in the study turned to professional organizations like WACUHO, ACPA and NASPA to find connections of others who shared their identities. Within those organizations, connections are made not only to determine best practices, but to create social networks of people who in some cases become friends.

An unexpected finding in this study was the lack of mentorship that the individuals received when coming into the profession. Often, those who begin work in student affairs find a more experienced professional to help guide them in their careers. I was somewhat surprised that many of the participants found their own way in the field and only utilized mentors primitively. There was, however, a significant sample of folks who looked to role models in the field. Many of the participants spoke of their independence in gaining a career and sought out role models or mentors for minor career advice, or looked to them for inspiration.

Finally, a partner/spouse can be a major support system for those working in student affairs and being such visible presences on their campuses. Of those in the study with a partner/spouse (n=12), each talked about the variety of ways in which their partner is a coach,

friend, and sometimes, as in Serena's case, a career counselor. While not specified by all participants, some spoke to having had their current partner for a number of years and has felt support from them during some turbulent situations on campus. Whether it was a late-night emergency call, a student protest, or the sometimes extensive nights away for travel, the participants felt that their partners were understanding and supportive of their often difficult-to-describe career. Additionally, those with partners mentioned meeting their significant other outside the realm of student affairs. Having separate careers according to the participants is helpful in keeping a balance of the sometimes overwhelming campus issues that can plague student affairs professionals. Many spoke to bringing their partner to campus events or other functions as their heterosexual counterparts do. Effy mentioned that his partner has come to many events on campus, and many of his staff members have become friends with his partner outside of work. While having a same-sex partner can often bring up a complex set of challenges, such as needing to offer additional explanation or coping with aside comments or whispers about them, none of the participants indicated any such issues in their current positions.

Opportunities for advancement.

Since all of the study participants are at a level of director or above, they have been able to move up the career ladder. For some, upward mobility seemed easier than others, and many spoke to navigating fear of coming out in their early careers.

Also many of the interviews alluded to setbacks along the way in terms of feeling security in the jobs they held. Susan and Diane, for instance, spoke of the challenges in pursuing a partner/spouse because of the time spent working in their careers. Skipper talked about the many times that she wanted to come out but stayed in the closet so she could focus on her career. For many of the participants, the fears of being out seemed to subside as they moved up in their

careers. Perhaps participants possessed a sense of confidence that the pushed them into being a better professional while being their true selves.

According to the participants, each of them has found that patience and hard work have assisted in moving up to the executive positions they sought. There was some discussion that the interviewees gave (mostly geared toward new professionals in the field) on best practices for advancing in their careers. Many of the participants mentioned the need for a keen focus on job responsibilities and understanding how to best serve their student populations while still maintaining authenticity in their LGB identity. Interestingly, two members (Rain and Jinx) felt that being LGB helped them advance in their careers. Rain felt that there were often times that institutions were seeking diversity and felt that being an LGB person of color helped his perspective on meeting the needs of students who might also share these identities.

Perceived discrimination.

Throughout the research process, each of the participants spoke of campus and national climate becoming more accepting of LGB-identified individuals. The interviewees each saw a progression in how perception of the LGB community has changed over time and how their careers have likely benefited from these changes. As the participants' years of experience ranged from 8 to 39, the career trajectory of the participants has moved in the direction that they wanted. Perhaps this sounds over simplified, and this study does not try to convey that discrimination no longer exists or that there is not still work to do regarding these issues; this study was based on the perceptions of the individuals who participated.

During the interviews, when the question was asked whether they had experienced any discrimination based on their sexual orientation, the answer was no. However, there was much discussion of the "chilling effect" that Skipper, Susan, Max, and others brought up. In the

concept of the chilling effect, the question on the mind of an LGB-identified student affairs professional seems to be “did this happen because I am LGB, or are there some other reason?” Whether it was a meeting that someone was mistakenly not invited to or a change in job classification, the questions always linger as to whether or not there is a covert target, or whether these are the mistakes and changes that happen as a natural flow of items in the work environment.

While many discussed the covert actions that could not fully be determined as discrimination, there were examples that were witnessed by others. For example, Max discussed the homophobic actions of his supervisor directed not at him, but one of his employees. Susan often questions whether comments made by one of her colleagues on campus is due to lack of knowledge, or homophobia, so she tries to avoid that colleague altogether. Additionally, Jackie talked about being in meetings with well-intentioned student affairs professionals who ask questions or make statements regarding her LGB identity that make her uncomfortable. There was also the actions of Serena’s campus in having a training on “how to deal with the lesbians”; although the incident seems almost comical, it did happen at an institution of higher learning. Even though the incidents discussed do not indicate blatant discrimination, there is still much education and training to be done around LGB issues.

Implications for Practice

Although the participants in this study felt that they were able to garner the careers that they wanted and have faced little discrimination because of their sexual orientation, many professionals are facing these issues on a daily basis. One needs only to turn to the local news to hear about hate crime or bullying situations that have occurred against someone simply for being her or his authentic self. Discrimination and maintaining an inclusive work environment are still

items to consider for this population and those who share similar identities at work in higher education.

First, it is important to note that each individual has a different perception of how his or her career should go and what positions to take. Additionally, as a profession, student affairs must continue to work on including LGB-identified individuals at all levels; this includes recruitment in campus positions as well as further research of LGB-identified student affairs professionals. An inclusive, well-intentioned support system for the LGB population is needed to continue the development of quality professionals in the field. The participants in this study took charge of their careers and worked to maintain balance while moving into executive positions on campus. Many also noted how student affairs professional organizations helped them in providing connections to others in the field who shared their experiences. As stated earlier, this study chose to look at those who work at public four-year institutions in California because these campuses have similar structures in student affairs departments as well as policies that align against discrimination.

Next, colleges and universities should continue to work with their state legislatures to provide quality comprehensive benefits packages for LGB-identified faculty and staff. With the recent U.S. Supreme Court overturning of DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), more states are likely to allow same-sex marriages and domestic partner benefits, which will work in tandem to ensure equality for all citizens. However, questions linger as to how these changes will affect state laws and regulations with the recognition of same sex-marriages within each state and how couples married in other states will be recognized. We know that incoming student populations have become more accepting of LGB rights and are often more understanding than those who

have come before (Herek, 2002). As campus climates become more accepting of their LGB students, faculty, and staff, it is important that they work to retain them. Colleges and universities must continue to move beyond mere acceptance or tolerance and work to create policies that communicate dedication that will embrace, nurture, support, and retain LGB faculty and staff members.

Additionally, there was mention of training for faculty, staff, and students across campus. In Jackie's words, "more training needs to occur to provide better understanding of LGB(T) issues on campus." LGB training should not be a mere elective in the spectrum of campus orientations but should be made a part of the curriculum for any onboard training program when hiring new staff. It is critical that continued education across the spectrum with regard to diversity and social justice take place regularly.

Finally, colleges and universities of all types (public, and private) should continue to work to protect all students, faculty, and staff by implementing policies that make it a violation to discriminate against someone because of their sexual orientation. It is common knowledge that people who feel safe in their work environment tend to be more productive, which benefits the entire campus community. The University of California and California State University systems have enacted such policies; other campuses can do the same. In fact, many institutions across the United States have enacted these policies in an effort to enhance the campus community for all of its members. Throughout this study, it has been noted that these participants live and work in the state of California. As the popular expression states, "as California goes, so goes the rest of the United States," meaning that often, because of the diverse innovation in California, many states take their cues from the laws, policies, and practices within

this state. As evidenced from the individuals in this study, it may be of benefit for other states to provide similar practices to California with regard to protections for LGB citizens. Some of these items include domestic partner benefits and nondiscrimination policies (both state and campus) regarding LGB individuals. This is not to say that federal protections for LGB citizens will suddenly end discrimination; however, it is a start that California has made, and at least according to the participants in this study, has afforded them opportunities to move up the proverbial career ladder.

It should be noted that California and its colleges and universities are not immune to discrimination and campus climate issues for LGB individuals. The institutions in this study covered a variety of locations but did not take into account the entire UC or CSU system, and each campus varies in terms of its local community and individual campus climate issues. And, while the policies around discrimination are the same or similar across state universities, these policies do not always prevent acts of hostility from happening against LGB people.

Recommendations

With regard to recommendations, the study participants themselves gave some of the most salient thoughts of how LGB-identified new student affair professionals can succeed in the field. While the advice given from the participants was directed at new professionals, the advice can also stretch to others. Specifically, advice around career development and understanding the role of a student affairs professional served as poignant for those who wish to enter the field. Therefore, it would be beneficial for student affairs preparation programs to help individuals understand not only the importance of identity but also how that identity intersects with job responsibilities and careers. Many of the participants spoke to the educative nature of student

affairs but felt that new professionals are learning so much about others that they are not taking time to learn about themselves. Additionally, some participants spoke of having to be comfortable with their own identity before they could move forward to help others. Building mentoring programs for younger professionals could help in assisting LGB-identified individuals balance their craft. It seems that consistent reflection for professionals will benefit those seeking a career in student affairs.

Additionally, Max provided some insight with regard to the lack of discussions around sex of those who are LGB-identified. Student affairs professionals consistently work to provide open, inclusive, and nonjudgmental environments where all subjects are discussed freely. In doing so, it is important to remember that not everyone chooses to define himself or herself in a way that is congruent with societal norms. Max discussed the sometimes-unconventional ideals of family and relationships as well as the ways in which we often educate our students:

Because, I'm not just like everybody else. I mean there's this whole other component to sexuality that we don't talk about because they're still too taboo they're too sexual for people to handle. And even when we're doing homophobia workshops or workshops for students, or whatever. You know what was really negative about my undergraduate experience, and being an educator at an undergraduate institution was that every time we talked about sex it was something really negative and nasty. So we had plenty of date rape workshops, we had Title IX workshops for sexual harassment; you know we had AIDS prevention workshops, because everybody was going to get AIDS if you didn't watch out. And everything that we did, ties sex to negativity.

Max further conveyed that as a profession, training and education around LGB issues do not

have to conform to sex as being a bad thing, and we should continue to allow students and staff to be open in expressing themselves around these issues. Max says, “I think that a lot of times the educators in higher education are attempting to control the sexual expression of their students. And whether that’s because of a moral judgment or they’re trying to take care too much of that student.” A powerful statement indeed as educators juggle the free flowing ideas that converge in an educational setting; we must remember that portraying sex or sexuality in a negative light has the potential to keep many members of the campus community oppressed and is not adhering to inclusivity.

Another recommendation is to continue to provide the challenge and supportive environments for which the student affairs profession has been known (Sandeem, 2000). As a profession, we should continue to support LGB-identified professionals as they come out in the work force and seek career advancement by providing mentorship, professional development, and the ability to network with other individuals who share their identity (Chung, 2001). However, we must also balance this with challenging them to think critically about their professional positions holistically, not only through the lens of their LGB identity. As mentioned by many of the interviewees, new professionals often have challenges with setting a balance between their personal and work lives. Seasoned students affairs professionals who provide the right amount on challenge and support will ultimately help the new professionals find balance.

Limitations

Although every effort was made to ensure thorough and accurate responses, all data was self-reported and based on perceptions of the participants. The researcher is led to believe that

all interviewees answered the questions honestly, but there is no way to determine the validity of their responses. However, all interviews were compared for similar themes and findings.

Additionally, the number of participants in the study (n=15) may be limiting because it does not represent all LGB-identified student affairs professionals. There was an initial response of 20; however, after three follow-up e-mails and attempts to schedule times for interviews did not garner responses from 5 individuals, the final number of participants was 15. Although qualitative findings and a small sample may lead to a lack of generalizability, strategies such as in-depth interviews yielded rich data that allows for findings to be compared against a larger population. Each unique story contributed a new item that can be translated to others with similar backgrounds. Additionally a description of each of the participants and his or her area of work allows for additional studies and comparisons to occur.

Another limitation to the study is the location of the participants. All of the participants work at or have worked at public institutions in California. The state of California and, in particular, its public institutions of higher education have some of the most stringent policies against discrimination. Additionally, California is a state that currently (as of 2013) recognizes same-sex marriages, and recognized same-sex domestic partnerships for some time prior to that. It is also a state that recognizes LGB citizens as a protected class against discrimination and loss of employment due to sexual orientation or gender identity. For this reason, one could surmise that there are less overt experiences of workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation there than in other states. However, the participants in the study do not represent all state schools or represent the campus climates across the state. There are still a number of areas in California where the climate for LGB individuals is less welcoming. One city in the central valley of California (Porterville) was the only city in the state to pass a resolution *supporting*

Proposition 8 (which stopped same-sex marriages in California). While these participants represent a segment of the LGB-identified student affairs officers in California, it is important to note that the number of factors that confound the analysis was reduced. Throughout the data of this study it is evident that the state of California can function as an exemplary case regarding LGB-identified student affairs professionals. Therefore it is important to note that the findings are that of the perceptions of the participants in this study.

Future Research Considerations

Study findings indicate the need for further research of LGB-identified student affairs officers who live outside of California or who work at private or religious institutions. Further, all participants (n=15) referenced policies and practices for LGB-identified individuals living outside of California, though other states were outside the scope of this study. Whether it was the participant speaking of their own experiences or expanding on their perceptions of living outside of California, experiences would likely be different outside of the state. Then too, religiously affiliated colleges and universities do not share the same policies and protections that state institutions hold. Therefore, research findings may differ for LGB-identified individuals who work at private institutions.

In addition to the participants working in California, there is the amount of time spent in careers that has moved in concert with the changes in society and the climate of acceptance over the past 20 years. As the individuals in this study have progressed, they have felt comfortable being out and moving up the career ladder. Over the years, colleges and universities have seen an increase in LGB students, faculty and staff coming to campus and living their lives out in the open. As visibility has grown for the LGB population, there have also been increased awareness of issues this population faces and more support systems have been made available. Using

qualitative and quantitative methods, more research is needed on the changes in society, culture, and campus climate regarding LGB issues on in society and campus. How do these changes positively affect career path?

Another item for study is to further investigate the identity intersections and correlation of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Although race was not the focus of this study, seven participants were non-White. Participants of color referenced the intersections of their varying identities and the navigation that often takes place with being LGB-identified as well as an ethnic minority in the United States. As Marcus mentioned, he can sometimes “pass” for being straight, while his ethnic identity is visible; there is often reconciliation between his identities when he walks into a room. Additionally, one participant self-identified as having a disability. The intersections of sexual orientation and disability plays out on a daily basis similar to race and ethnicity. It would be worth investigating how, if at all, these intersections affect career mobility.

Finally, this study only discussed sexual orientation as an indicator but did not consider gender identity. Although one study participant (Susan) brought up gender expression and her perception of its influence on her career, more research is needed. For instance, what role, if any does gender identity or gender expression play in the career trajectory of a student affairs professional? For example, do those who identify as transgender or somewhere else on the gender spectrum face similar issues in the work environment to those who identify as LGB?

Concluding Remarks

This study was designed to gain a more nuanced understanding of the perceptions of LGB-identified student affairs professionals with regard to career path barriers, discrimination, support systems, and opportunities they have taken to advance in their career. As more colleges

and universities work to recognize the significant contributions LGB individuals make to their campus, they are also working to enhance the campus climate for these individuals. The participants in this study represented a variety of public state institutions in California. The interviewees' perceptions indicate that career advancement is possible and that the lavender ceiling is cracking quite a bit, if not shattering all together for this group.

On a personal note, I was amazed at the honest and frank discussions that occurred throughout the interviews. Initially, I felt there would be some level of difficulties because of the emotional subject matter and the personal reflections that were shared. However, these senior-level student affairs professionals enthralled me with their humor, their stories, and the seriousness with which each of them attempts to do the best work that they can for the students they serve.

Sexual orientation is only one layer of the multiple identities one carries on a daily basis, and some people are still working in environments where they are judged based on perceived abilities based on their sexual orientation. Although campus climates tend to be more welcoming for LGB-identified individuals than other industries, there is room for improvement in ensuring that colleges and universities provide inclusive communities for all of its members regardless of sexual orientation.

APPENDIX A: E-MAIL LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Student Affairs Professional:

My name is James C. Smith, I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am working with Dr. Richard Wagoner. I am asking for your assistance with the data collection process for my dissertation.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are or have been a student affairs professional who identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and has or have worked in student affairs for seven years or longer. As a condition of participation, you must have worked at a four-year public college or university in the state of California and have held positions of 'director' or above. Through my research, I am exploring the perceptions of LGB-identified student affairs professionals related to their career trajectory. Your participation will help describe how your experiences have affected career advancement and the role your LGB identity may have played in making certain career choices. Your perspectives are important in providing insight toward understanding factors that promote and/or inhibit LGB identified individuals' access to senior leadership positions in student affairs.

Your participation will consist of partaking in an interview. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes and will be digitally recorded with your permission. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. As a participant you will be identified in the study by an alias of your choosing. The interview recording and transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location. These will be erased and destroyed within two years of completion of the study. The results of the study, if published, will not include your name or any identifiable information.

One possible benefit of your participation is gaining further insight and self-reflection on your current and past mentoring relationships.

I would greatly appreciate a response to this invitation via return email at jcapshaw@ucla.edu. In your response, please include the following information:

(1) agreement (or disagreement) to participate and (2) the name and email/phone contact information for the individual whom I can contact to schedule the interview.

Ideally the interview will be completed within the next few weeks and in a location of your choosing, or via telephone. Thank you in advance for your consideration of participation in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
James C. Smith jcapshaw@ucla.edu

APPENDIX B: SCRIPT FOR REFERRALS

Dear Student Affairs Professional:

My name is James C. Smith, I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am working under the advisement of Dr. Richard Wagoner and asking for your assistance with the data collection process for my dissertation.

As a person who works on a college campus and is familiar with areas of LGBT programming, you are connected to others who may be interested in the participation of this study. I am seeking your assistance by referring folks who are interested in participating in my study. I am interested in connecting with those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and has or have worked in student affairs for seven years or longer. As a condition of participation, they must work (or have worked) at a four-year public university in the state of California and have held positions of 'director' or above. Through my research, I am exploring the perceptions of LGB-identified student affairs professionals related to their career trajectory. Those who participate will help describe how their experiences have affected career advancement and the role their LGB identity may have played in making certain career choices. Their perspectives are important in providing insight toward understanding factors that promote and/or inhibit LGB identified individuals' access to senior leadership positions in student affairs.

If you know of colleagues or others who are interested in participating, please forward their contact information to me, as well as this information. Additionally, if you have further questions or need more information, please contact me. Upon contact with volunteers, I will fully explain the study and what the participation commitments are.

Sincerely,

James C. Smith

Email: jcapshaw@ucla.edu

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Preliminary Information:

1. Years in Student Affairs
2. Identity (lesbian, gay, bisexual)
3. Current position

Interview Protocol

1. How did you arrive at your current position?
 - a. What was your career path?
 - b. At what institutions have you worked?
 - c. Where did you earn your degree(s)?
2. What role, if any, has your LGB identity played in shaping your professional career?
3. In what ways, if any, has your LGB identity affected your day-to-day job on campus?
 - a. Interactions with subordinates?
 - b. Interactions with campus partners?
 - c. Interactions with students/parents?
4. How out are you on campus? Why?
5. Do you have a partner? What role has your partner played in your career path? What role does your partner play with the campus?
6. Have you ever experienced negative reactions to those who discover your LGB identity? What were those reactions like? What effect did these experiences have on your ability to do your job?
7. Do you feel that your LGB identity has helped or hindered your ability to obtain the positions in your career? Why do you feel that way? Or in what ways do you feel it's done so?
8. What role, if any, have other parts of your identity (race, religion, etc.) affected your job performance or career path? How so?
9. What importance do you place on your LGB identity in your ability to serve students? Your department? Your campus?
10. What resources, if any, do you feel are important for LGB-identified staff to consider when entering the profession of student affairs? To what degree are these present on your campus?
11. What mentors, if any, have you found in student affairs? Do they share your identity? Is this important? Why or why not?

12. Do you belong to any professional associations? If so, which ones? How has your involvement helped shape your career?
13. What advice do you have for others who identify as LGB entering the profession of student affairs?

APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by James C. Smith – principal investigator under the direction of Dr. Richard L. Wagoner, faculty sponsor, from the Educational Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The results of the research study will contribute to James Smith's dissertation toward his doctoral degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you meet the criteria for the study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to examine the perceptions LGB-identified student affairs officers related to their career trajectory and choices.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: an interview about your views, perceptions and experiences being a student affairs professional who identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The interview asks you to reflect and report on your own opinions and experiences within the context of LGB identity and your work in student affairs. The researcher recognizes that not all experiences are positive. Recalling your career experiences, therefore, may cause you to feel some psychological distress.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research. However, because the information collected will be used to increase understanding of your experience, others in student affairs may benefit from this study and hearing about your experiences.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive monetary compensation for your participation in this study. A \$30 gift card will be provided to study participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You will be asked to select a pseudonym and be assigned a code that will be used on your interview transcript. You have the right to review your interview transcript made as part of the study to determine whether it should be edited or erased in whole or in part. Only the researcher involved in conducting and transcribing the interviews will have access to the recordings. Once the recordings have been transcribed, they will be destroyed within one year of completion of the

study. In addition, you have the right to review initial findings from your interview transcript to determine if they reflect your interview transcript.

The investigator will keep the data secure in a locked filing cabinet and password protected external hard drive in his private residence.

Analysis of the data will be reported in cross-case aggregated findings consisting of themes that evolve from participants' responses. If sufficient variation exists in the experiences of the participants, a small number of case studies will be reported to demonstrate a spectrum of professional experiences. If quotes are used from individual participants, pseudonyms will be used to protect the author's identity.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact one of the researchers listed below:

James C. Smith, Principal Investigator

Associate Director for Residence Life

UC Riverside

3595 Canyon Crest Dr.

Riverside, CA 92507

Work: (951) 827-6075

Fax: (951) 827-2251 (work shared)

Email: jcapshaw@ucla.edu

Dr. Richard L. Wagoner, Faculty Sponsor

Assistant Professor

Graduate School of Education & Information

Studies

UCLA

Box 951521, 3131 Moore Hall

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521

Office: (310) 794-5832

Email: wagoner@gseis.ucla.edu

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to the Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Contact Number

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX E: E-MAIL LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Dear : _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As mentioned previously, your consent to participate involves the scheduling of a 90-minute interview. I would prefer to conduct the interview in your office. However, you may choose an alternate private location.

Please let me know whom I should contact to schedule the interview. Ideally, the interview will be completed within the next several weeks. Enclosed you will find the Consent to Participate in Research for your review. I will review this document with you in person during our interview. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I can be reached via email jcapshaw@ucla.edu or by phone at 951-827-6075.

Please accept my sincere gratitude in advance for your time and involvement in this study. Once I hear from you, I will contact your office/assistant to schedule the interview.

Sincerely,

James C. Smith
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership Program
University of California Los Angeles

APPENDIX F: UNITS OF OBSERVATION

Table F1

Observational Units

Research Question	Data Collection	Unit of Observation
What perceived barriers, if any, exist that prevent seasoned LGB- identified student affairs officers from becoming senior-level administrators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with student affairs officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to be mobile for different positions on the campus. ▪ Policies and practices on campus for domestic partner benefits. ▪ Campus culture of being out on campus. ▪ Potential undisclosed homophobia among senior leaders on campus. ▪ Perceived fear / fear of retaliation for coming out. ▪ Stereotypes about LGB populations in the work place. ▪ Rural or urban campus.
According to LGB-identified student affairs officers, what services and/or support systems that pertain to LGB staff members exist on campus (e.g., staff support groups, staff council for LGB awareness, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with student affairs officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human resources ▪ LGBT resource center ▪ Peer relationships ▪ Off campus community centers ▪ Mentorship
Based on perceptions of the self and career trajectory for LGB identified student affairs officers, what experiences have provided the most opportunities for career advancement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with student affairs officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connections with community ▪ Connections to the university ▪ Training support for degree attainment ▪ Mentorship opportunities ▪ Campus climate: Liberal? ▪ Former employment history ▪ Previous success/failures learning moments
What, if any types of discrimination have LGB identified student affairs officers say they have faced on their campus because of their sexual orientation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with student affairs officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not invited to attend meetings or to be a part of projects ▪ Not allowed to bring significant others to campus functions like their heterosexual peers ▪ Office gossip ▪ Rumors ▪ Blatant stereotyping

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