

An Assessment of Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Students

N Y Gulley

North Carolina State University

Spring 2003

Introduction

In 1991 the Chancellor of North Carolina State University issued a policy statement regarding sexual orientation. This policy stated that North Carolina State University deemed sexual orientation as a factor that should have no bearing on educational or employment decisions. In 1998 the deans and vice chancellors of North Carolina State University adopted three university goals. The first of these goals was: “building a diverse and inclusive campus community, fostering demographic and intellectual diversity.” A year later, in 1999, the Chancellor issued an Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy Statement that reads (in part), “Discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status is in violation of federal and state law and North Carolina State University policy, and will not be tolerated.” That same day the Sexual Orientation Policy Statement was revised. A short statement was added for use in university publications that carry the abbreviated reference to the university nondiscrimination policy. The short statement reads, “North Carolina State University regards discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to be inconsistent with its goal of providing a welcoming environment in which all its students, faculty, and staff may learn and work up to their full potential. The University values the benefits of cultural diversity and pluralism in the academic community and welcomes all men and women of good will without regard to sexual orientation.” During the fall semester of 2002 the Student Government Association passed a resolution calling for the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in the university policy regarding non-discrimination instead of being addressed under a separate policy.

Assessment of Campus Climate

The spring semester of 2003 marks the first assessment of the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students at North Carolina State University (NCSU). For many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) individuals college is the time when they first begin to accept and embrace their sexuality. The process of coming to terms with and becoming open with a one's own sexual identity as non-heterosexual is referred to as, "coming out." While the coming out process is difficult in itself, this time can be more dramatic when students feel that being perceived as homosexual puts them at risk for physical or psychological abuse. While college is marked by homosexual students' acceptance of themselves, the college campus has not traditionally been a welcoming environment for such discovery. (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Evans, 2002; Rhoads, 1995) In light of information that students many times begin coming out or discovering and sharing their sexuality during the college years, (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996) institutions of higher education have recently begun to focus on campus issues for GLBT students. Research on the campus climate for these students is a recent development, as is literature on how best to work with such students (D'Emilio, 1990; Evans & Wall, 1991; Wall & Evans 2000; Schreier, 1995; Walters & Hayes, 1998). These studies look at issues related to housing, programming, teaching, and the establishment of GLBT resource centers. However, this is a new area of study and little information is available compared to many areas of interest in higher education.

The National Consortium of Directors of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Resources in Higher Education is actively leading the way in creating a base of information on campus climate. In order to better understand the campus climate for GLBT students North Carolina State University is seeking an assessment of the experiences, needs, and desires of this

population. Following a review of individual compact plans within the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Diversity and African American Affairs in Academic Affairs partnered with the Department of Campus Activities in Student Affairs in order to fund this endeavor. Better understanding of how GLBT students view the campus environment will result in an increased understanding of the experiences of GLBT students and an enhancement of the campus climate and overall experience for all students, especially those who are GLBT.

Purpose

The purpose of the assessment is to understand:

- How GLBT students feel about the campus climate,
- How institutional mission/goals/policies and the experiences of the GLBT population are congruent and incongruent,
- The positive and negative practices/aspects of the University in relation to GLBT issues as seen by GLBT students,
- Recommendations for ways to minimize and/or neutralize the negative experiences of the GLBT population.

The assessment, conducted during the spring of 2003, focused on giving voice to GLBT student perspectives of campus climate. The long-term desire is to also assess the thoughts and ideas of other students and a range of faculty and staff in regards to issues surrounding GLBT campus populations and issues.

The overarching purpose of the assessment was to formally document how GLBT students interpret the campus climate of NCSU based on issues surrounding sexual orientation.

Research Questions

Research questions were developed through analysis of literature and discussions with relevant campus administrators. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the experiences of GLBT students at NCSU based on their sexual orientation?
2. What do GLBT students identify as needs of the campus in regards to GLBT issues?
3. What areas of campus, if any, do GLBT students feel are less/more welcoming based on their sexual orientation?

This assessment looked to discover the GLBT student community's feelings based on experiences, needs, and desires. This assessment was conducted through the use of a survey questionnaire. A review of literature pertaining to GLBT student issues on the college campus was also conducted. Literature regarding queer identity development, the coming out process, discrimination, and current approaches to dealing with GLBT student issues was reviewed. An analysis of the results of the campus climate study attempt to better understand how current ideas of GLBT individuals, whether positive or negative, are created or reinforced at NCSU thus giving insight into how to change them, if necessary. After a review of the results in order to identify the needs and the experiences of the GLBT community and reviewing the literature, proposed ways to improve the campus environment based on theory, research, and student responses are provided.

Literature Review

The current available literature that informs this study can be divided into three distinct areas: queer identity development, the process of realizing and disclosing one's non-heterosexual sexual orientation or "coming out," and discrimination against the GLBT population. The literature on discrimination can be further divided into heterosexism and homophobia. There is also a substantial amount of literature on how institutions are currently approaching the concerns and needs of GLBT persons on campus.

Queer Identity Development

The term “queer” is often considered a negative term in our current society. It is often used to refer to gays and lesbians. However, this is not the only way to understand the term. Grace, Hill, Johnson, & Lewis (2003) discuss the difficulty in defining queer. They actually assert that it cannot be defined as a single category of sexual orientation but is a more inclusive term including all, of what they refer to as, sexual outlaws. They go on to say that queer can never be defined in full and is, in fact, a shifting way of knowing the world and being in it.

Queer identity development is the process of recognizing and accepting one’s sexual orientation as non-heterosexual. While a variety of theories exist around the topic, most include the common components of experiences, senses, and sensibilities (Dilley, 2002). This to say that these theories focus on what happened to an individual, how they understood what happened, and the meaning they associated with that experience.

In 1979 Vivien Cass developed one of the most widely used theories of sexual identity development applied to GLBT or queer persons. She developed a six stage model that operated under linear assumptions, meaning an individual had to pass through each stage before being able to develop on the next level. The six stages are as follows: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. (Eliason, 1996) While a number of other theories have emerged to understand the development of sexual identities, most stem from the work of Cass and incorporate the stages. More recent theories, however, allow for more fluid development through these stages (Cohen & Savin-Williams (1996). Eliason (1996) noted that, “We can assume that people will have identities, but that the meanings of these identities are constantly changing and vary from one person to another, from one time to another, from one culture to another” (p. 55).

While a significant amount of literature exists on the topic of sexual identity development and even some literature on queer identity development, until very recently (2002) there has been little effort to examine how college specifically impacts this development. Dilley (2002) attempts to begin this discussion of college and queer identity development by investigating the impact of the college experience on the queer identity development of gay men. He summarizes his work this way,

College environments most certainly impacted both the process and the product of these men: postsecondary institutions created environments (both positive and negative), provided structures for socialization and organization, gathered together like-minded peers, and offered the idea of not only the prerogative to determine through the college experiences whom one was but also, in time, the right to do so openly and publicly (p. 215).

The Coming Out Process

The discovery of one's sexual orientation is at the root of what is referred to as "coming out." This term is short for a larger discussion of an individual's "coming out of the closet" meaning to become open about his or her sexual orientation, thus no longer hiding in the metaphorical closet. Rhoads (1997) noted that the process of coming out and the degree of visibility related to it varies among individuals. As earlier noted, many GLBT students "begin coming out during the college years" (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996). The notion that GLBT students begin questioning and coming to terms with their sexual orientations during this time creates particular challenges for higher education administrators. These challenges are compounded because GLBT students "often find campus environments to be unwelcoming and even hostile" (Evans, 2002, p. 522).

The idea of “modern” homosexuality is based on the societal shift from accepting same-gender sexual encounters to the non-acceptance of such encounters as a lifestyle. For example, the ancient Greeks performed homosexual acts and such activity was accepted, not as a lifestyle but as an activity (Jagose, 1996). Today, homosexuality is seen as a lifestyle supported by such acts. Frye (as cited in Robinson, 1997) states that homosexuality is constructed out of the concept of heterosexuality, which is seen as just being. As Foucault (as cited in Spargo, 1999) saw it, homosexuality is considered abnormal, which is precisely why GLBT persons have been discriminated against by the mass of society. He went on to say that the concept of sexuality is a constructed one. This to say that sexuality, as we know it, with definitions and norms was created and not discovered (Spargo, 1999). The belief comes from Foucault’s assertion that until the 19th century sexuality was not categorized. Jung and Smith (as cited in Jung, 1993) took the concept a step further by hypothesizing that, “one discovers one’s sexual orientation rather than choosing it” (p. 18). The hypothesis that sexual orientation is not the result of choice, but natural forces, is gaining ground among the general public.

Cohen and Savin-Williams (1996) noted that coming out involves two components, the first component being that an individual has self-acknowledgement of their sexual orientation and the second that they share this with others. This is a far step from earlier stage models, which described step-by-step processes that only expressed internal influences. D’Augelli (as cited in Evans & Broido, 1999) viewed coming out as a “process influenced by personal subjectivities and actions, interactions with others, and sociohistorical connections” (p. 658). Coming out, then, is a process influenced by a variety of components. Rhoads (1997) found that coming out and being out is a fluid process and that while individuals may openly disclose their sexual orientation to one person, they may not be comfortable doing so with everyone.

The fear of negative reaction to a student being homosexual is founded in a history of discrimination against GLBT persons. Schreier (1995), noting the writings of R.L. Quackenbush, had this to say, “when heterosexist beliefs are challenged by the presence of individuals who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual a reactive attitude is formed as an attempt to maintain the belief” (p. 20). This assumption is further supported by D’Augelli (as cited in Renn, 2000) who believed that students are at higher risk of experiencing anti-gay attitudes and behaviors the more ‘out’ they are. However, he also believes that being out or open with one’s sexuality is a way of gaining support from students, faculty and staff (Renn, 2000). In this way, being out is a double-edged sword; it opens an individual up for discrimination while offering the freedom to express one’s true feelings. It is arguable, however, that once one is out the negative reactions to that sexual orientation can be less damaging due to an increased sense of self and greater self-confidence.

Discrimination

Discrimination against GLBT persons is prevalent throughout most college campuses (Hill, 1995; Rhoads, 1997; Eichstedt, 1996). This type of discrimination is a direct effect of certain factors, such as, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation being blocked from the dominant masculine culture (Gerschick & Miller, 1994). Dominant or hegemonic ideals do not allow for participation in the power culture by those who are different than those already in that culture. Marmor (as cited in Herek, 1984) “identified [stereotypes and ignorance] as the most important sources of hostility toward homosexual persons” (p. 8). These two components create false fears and negative ideas regarding GLBT individuals. Herek (1984) noted that discrimination against GLBT persons is perpetuated by social structure. Specifically, the current policies found in business and government do not allow for equal participation by those who are

GLBT. Cornel West had this to say on the topic of discrimination against GLBT persons, “it seems to me that to talk about the history of heterosexism and the history of homophobia is to talk about ways in which various institutions and persons have promoted unjustified suffering and unmerited pain” (as cited in Brandt, 1999, p. 290).

Heterosexism. Heterosexism is, “a belief in the inherent superiority of demonstrating love only toward members of the opposite sex, and therefore a belief in the right to dominate others and set societal standards and norms” (Schreier, 1995, p. 19). Rhoads (1997) explained that heterosexism is the belief that everyone is, or ought to be heterosexual. Robinson (1997) categorized it as a form of gender oppression.

Heterosexism is covert discrimination. People are not necessarily aware that they are behaving in a way that can be interpreted as heterosexist. The very nature of heterosexism supports this, in that it is based on assumptions that are rationalized as societal norms (Hill, 1995). “The language, thoughts, assumptions, and symbols of the dominant society encode [heterosexist beliefs]” (Hill, 1995, p. 146). This to say, that the language, thoughts, assumptions and symbols perpetuate the superiority of heterosexuals. Heterosexism does not manifest as planned action but results from being unaware of sexual minorities and thus not attempting to be inclusive. While it is not always a planned action, it is at the very root of discrimination against GLBT persons. This unconscious belief is what allows action against homosexuals to occur (Hill, 1995; Tierney, 1992).

Heterosexism can be seen in many aspects of society. It is, many times, most clearly evident in speech (Tierney, 1992). Tierney further noted the following as examples of heterosexist statements: “I don’t tell someone I’m straight.” “Why can’t they just keep it to themselves.” “I don’t care what they do, as long as they don’t bother me about it.” Other

examples of heterosexist activity include the common scenario of asking a female if she has a husband or a male if he has a wife. This type of questioning indicates that the only allowable or conceivable relationship for an individual is a heterosexual one. Heterosexism can result in GLBT persons being overlooked, excluded or misrepresented (Schreier, 1995).

Homophobia. Sears (1997) defines homophobia as, “prejudice, discrimination, harassment or acts of violence against sexual minorities, evidenced in a deep-seated fear or hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex” (p. 16). The term phobia itself refers to an irrational fear. Overt hatred and discrimination, based on fear, are at the roots of homophobia. Homophobia is more than an irrational fear of homosexuals though; it also has an affective component. This component involves actions attached to the fear.

Schreier (1995) always couples the term homophobia with biphobia, in an attempt to be inclusive of more sexual orientations. Biphobia is the fear and hatred of those persons who are bisexual. Schreier has the following to say when defining homophobia and biphobia, “they are illogical fears and discomforts with people who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual” (p. 19). This fear and discomfort is then turned into action. Outward signs of homophobia include speech and actions used by persons to intentionally dehumanize GLBT persons. When homophobia is coupled with bigotry it can result in violence against GLBT persons. Homophobia is found in many, if not all, ‘real world’ situations. Some examples of the outward manifestations of hatred and fear of sexual minorities on campuses are: physical assault, sexual assault, and exclusion of students. When these negative acts occur because of someone’s actual or assumed sexual orientation of GLBT, they are considered homophobic (Schreier, 1995).

Current approaches

There is a substantial amount of literature that discusses the approaches to addressing GLBT issues in institutions of higher education. These approaches are centered around a discussion of creating communities that value diversity. Sanlo (2000) noted that institutions must first acknowledge the needs of the GLBT campus population before addressing those issues. Two distinct approaches to addressing the GLBT issue on campus are found in the literature: supporting GLBT students and educating heterosexuals.

Supporting GLBT students. Literature indicates that GLBT students need to be supported on the college campus. This research indicates that the support can come in a variety of forms, including role models and the creation of safe spaces.

Several studies have noted that GLBT students have had difficulty coming out due to a lack of GLBT role models (Evans & Broido, 1999; Evans, Reason & Broido, 2001; Rhoads, 1997). Researchers indicate a need for such role models on campus. These individuals can be among faculty, staff, or students at the institution (Rhoads, 1997). Role models can assist GLBT students in creating a positive self-image by decreasing the impact of internalized homophobia.

There are several approaches being used to create spaces on campus where GLBT persons feel safe and welcome. These safe spaces come in a variety of forms including designating a floor or section of a residence hall for those who are GLBT or who are interested in fostering support for those persons (Herbst & Malaney, 1999). Support for this type of housing situation comes from sources that indicate that campus housing is a negative environment for GLBT students (McRee & Cooper, 1998; Herbst & Malaney, 1999; Evans & Broido, 1999; Evans, Reason & Broido, 2001).

Sanlo (2000) discussed the development of Campus Resource Centers (CRCs) designed to address the needs of GLBT student on campus. These CRCs are of recent origin, the first opening in 1971 at the University of Michigan. Sanlo, Rankin, and Schoenberg (2002) noted three reasons for the development of these CRCs: administrator's responses to homophobic harassment, the demands of the campus community for a safe space, and administrators' recognition of the value of a CRC in fostering campus diversity.

Educating heterosexuals. Another way that institutions of higher education have chosen to deal with GLBT issues is by focusing on educating heterosexual students about GLBT issues. This type of programming has been developed due to the idea that "as social institutions reflecting cultural values, schools, colleges, and universities sanction an environment that neglects the value of gay [lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered] students, staff and faculty" (Walters & Hayes, 1998, p. 1). These educational approaches targeted at heterosexuals are being developed both in the classroom (Eichstedt, 1996; McRee & Cooper, 1998; Sapp, 2001) and on other areas of campus such as programs sponsored by housing, student activities, and student organizations (Schreier, 1995; Evans, 2002; Sanlo, 2000). These programs may include candid question and answer sessions, speakers on GLBT issues, and films. Over the past several years the goals of these programs have begun to move from teaching tolerance of GLBT students to nurturing their experiences (Schreier, 1995).

Methodology

A critical theoretical perspective directed the assessment of campus climate at NCSU. Seale (as cited in Evans, 2002) noted that the critical perspective has "the capacity to emancipate, empower or otherwise make free a particular oppressed group of people" (p. 523).

This perspective was used due to the fact that those supporting the assessment desired to give voice to the GLBT population at NCSU.

A quantitative approach was used for this study. A survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was adapted, with permission, from one developed by the Campus Climate Research Group at the University of Georgia in the fall of 2001. A number of questions were deleted and others reworded in order to make the questionnaire compatible with the purpose of this study. Since the GLBT campus population is difficult to identify (Wall & Evans, 2000), the members of two campus organizations, Bisexual Gay Lesbian Alliance and Delta Lambda Phi, both dedicated to working with GLBT persons were solicited for assistance. The assessment coordinator attended meetings of both organizations describing the project and encouraging participation. An email was distributed to the 271 members of the groups' listserves, directing members to the web-based questionnaire. A reminder email was distributed to each list once a week, for the 5 weeks the questionnaire was available. A web-based questionnaire was used based on recent literature supporting the use of such technology, especially when dealing with special populations (Sills, S.J. & Song, C., 2002; Crawford, S., McCabe, S., Couper, M. & Boyd, C., 2002). This research indicates that since populations such as GLBT persons are reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation, web-based surveys give a feeling that they are less likely to be identified. This research also suggests that individuals are more likely to answer open-ended questions more fully when typing, as opposed to writing.

Recognizing that GLBT persons often manage their identities and choose not to disclose their sexual orientation (Evans & Broido, 1999), the questionnaire was conducted anonymously. Listserv members were directed to a webpage that was not linked from any other source than the email request for participation. In an effort to increase the number of possible respondents,

through snowball sampling, participants were encouraged to pass the email regarding the assessment to other individuals who they thought would be interested in participating.

The questionnaire remained active for five weeks. Of the 271 individuals initially solicited for participation, 60 responded, giving a response rate of 23%. Responses from GLBT students (78.3%) were analyzed for this assessment.

Respondent Demographics

Participants were asked to self-identify in a number of demographic categories (see Appendix B). Of the total number of respondents (60), 52 were students at NCSU; the remaining respondents were made up of alumni and other unidentified persons. As reflected in Appendix B, the majority of student respondents were male (69.2%). Over three quarters of the student respondents were Caucasians (80.7%), while 7.6% chose not to provide their ethnic identity. The majority of student responses came from freshmen (25%) and graduate students (25%); another 23% of those responses was made up of seniors. The percent of respondents living on versus off campus was almost identical. Of the student respondents an overwhelming majority identified their sexual orientation as gay (57.6%). In total, 47 respondents (78.3%) identified themselves as a GLBT student at NCSU.

Summary of Quantitative Questionnaire Responses

The survey questionnaire examined two issues related to the campus climate for GLBT students; the first section examined respondents experiences related to safety and the second dealt with issues of acceptance. Table C1 is a breakdown of responses to each survey question. Responses from students who self-identified as GLBT are discussed in the following analysis. Overall, 56.5% of the GLBT students reported that they had been shunned on campus based on their sexual orientation.

Safety Issues

The breakdown of GLBT students who felt that NCSU was a safe place (51.1%) versus those who did not feel safe (48.9%) was practically equal. Students, in general, had experienced little physical violence based on their sexual orientation (10.9%); while an overwhelming majority (97.9%) reported hearing negative verbal statements referencing GLBT persons. A majority (62.8%) of GLBT respondents said that they had experienced direct verbal harassment based on their sexual orientation.

These findings indicate that while students feel safe on campus they are having negative experiences based on their sexual orientation. Along with physical violence and verbal harassment, 16.3% of GLBT students reported experiencing vandalism directly connected with their sexual orientation.

On a whole, respondents indicated that they felt safe in their classrooms but unsafe in the residence halls. Of the respondents who lived in on-campus housing only 58.3% indicated that they found the residence hall a safe environment. A higher number of off-campus students (79.2%) responded that they felt safe in their residence.

Acceptance Issues

The majority of GLBT respondents (86.7%) indicated that they had experienced prejudice based on their sexual orientation while at NCSU. These students noted a variety of areas in which they had experienced such prejudice. Students reported feeling a greater risk of experiencing prejudice in social situations, such as athletic events and concerts. Of the GLBT student respondents 63% reported experience prejudice in these settings.

While student responses show that prejudice exists on campus, 88.6% of GLBT respondents indicated that when they reported incidents of prejudice the response of the university was adequate; but left room for improvement.

Although students responded that they felt safe in the residence halls, more than half (51%) reported that they had experienced prejudice based on their sexual orientation while in the their hall.

When asked to indicate how they would rate the campus climate for GLBT students, an equal number of GLBT respondents (38.3%) reported that the campus climate was tolerant or negative. Other respondents indicated that campus climate was supportive (10.6%) or discriminatory (12.8%). No respondents said the campus was nurturing.

Combining Factors

There was a distinct difference in the way GLBT students responded to certain questions, based on their level of openness regarding their sexual orientation (see Table C2). Overall, respondents who were completely open with their sexual orientation felt that campus was more safe than those who were not open with their sexual orientation. Conversely, 15.7% of openly GLBT students reported being shunned based on their sexual orientation, while only 3.9% of those students who were not open reported these experiences. Respondents who were more out also reported experiencing more prejudice based on their sexual orientation than less open GLBT students.

Summary of Open-Ended Questionnaire Responses

The survey questionnaire (Appendix A) included four open-ended questions. The purpose of these questions was to allow participants to articulate their experiences and ideas in their own words. One question (number 20) asked for respondents to describe the time when

they felt most unsafe at NCSU based on their sexual orientation. The next question (number 21) asked participants to describe the most difficult challenge they have faced at NCSU as a GLBT person. Another question (number 22) asked respondents to describe the most positive aspects of NCSU in regard to issues surrounding their sexual orientation. The last open-ended question (number 23) asked participants to describe any needed changes that NCSU could make in order to create a better experience for GLBT persons.

Responses to these open-ended questions were analyzed separately for common themes. Three to four themes were cited for each question. After collectively exploring these categories, distinct themes emerged. These six themes were then used to collectively code the responses.

Theme 1 – Ability / Inability to disclose sexual orientation

Students repeatedly made comments regarding their perceived ability or inability to disclose their sexual orientation at NCSU. The majority of these statements reflect the difficulty students faced in deciding whether or not to be open regarding their sexual orientation.

“I don’t think I would be out on State’s campus unless I already had been out for five years in a different college setting/city. If I was an undergrad at State and coming out at 18, I wouldn’t really see many viable options for being out on campus.”

“It’s difficult to know when and where it’s ok (i.e. when you won’t get hurt or harassed) to be yourself, talk about your life, etc. There is no way that a gay student on this campus can be themselves in the same way that a heterosexual student can.”

Many respondents noted that they have not disclosed their orientation because of fear. These students noted that NCSU did not present an environment where they were comfortable being out. Examples of these statements include:

“I hide my sexual orientation because I get scared of what might happen.”

“I really only tell my closer friends about it... I’m not sure if I would be entirely safe if the campus at large knew I’m bisexual.”

“I feel the main reason why I have not experienced any violence or taunting is because I try to keep my orientation secret... I don't feel that NCSU is a safe place to be openly homosexual.”

However, some students stated that there were aspects of campus that supported their existence as an openly GLBT person. These respondents noted that certain individuals were open to their orientation but did not show evidence of finding the overall environment to be as welcoming.

“Of the two professors that I feel comfortable being open with, they haven't been negative about my sexual orientation. However, it is obvious that they are uncomfortable relating to [me] and my personal life in the same way they relate to their straight students and their personal lives. This makes me feel like an outcast in some ways.”

“Although not all, most people on this campus seem to be open-minded enough to accept me and even defend me if needed.”

Theme 2 – Verbal harassment of GLBT persons

Respondents addressed the impact that verbal harassment had on their experience as a GLBT student at NCSU. 40% of the students responding to question number 20, regarding the time and feelings surrounding threatening events based on their sexual orientation, noted that they had experienced verbal harassment.

Some students noted that the verbal harassment they had experienced was directly targeted at them as an individual.

“At a PE class...A fellow gay class mate and I experienced verbal harassment by two young men walking by us...We were called ‘faggots.’ We felt quite helpless...and a sense of shame.”

“I have experienced verbal harassment and been called names.”

There were a significant number of comments that reflected the negative impact of hearing homophobic statements that were not necessarily directed at them, as an individual.

These respondents noted fear and shame associated with hearing negative comments about a group of which they were a part.

“I was at the Taco Bell when one employee yelled across the counter at another that the guy was a ‘Fag.’ I felt very uncomfortable because everyone started laughing and making jokes about how the fag would be attracted to the other males working there. This happened this semester. I felt ashamed to be a part of this campus and that my degree meant nothing.”

“I’ve heard jokes about gay people, and this campus is ok with that. If I had known this was the atmosphere here, I would not have come here.”

“When people use discriminatory language in the classrooms. It tends to make me feel that my learning environment is unsafe and unsupportive. Being uncomfortable while learning hinders my retained knowledge on the subject at hand because I tend to constantly worry about those around me instead of the material being presented.”

One student acknowledged verbal harassment by saying,

“Hate speech is readily encountered on campus in informal conversations... Such speech, to an extent, is the right of those who engage in it, but does not make the campus a very comfortable place.”

A large number of respondents mentioned the uncomfortable feelings they faced when hearing negative comments made during classes. Many of those respondents noted that, often, professors had little response to those comments. One respondent stated that,

“[Instructors] should call out those making comments during their classes.”

Theme 3 – Physical harassment of GLBT persons

Respondents discussed their experiences and feelings regarding physical harassment based on their sexual orientation. They noted that both physical acts against those who are GLBT and fear of such acts existed on campus. Students repeatedly mentioned experiencing acts of vandalism due to their sexual orientation.

“I had ‘fag’ written on my door in my residence hall. It made me feel unwanted in my community.”

One student noted feeling unsafe and threatened:

“When I had mustard squeezed on my dorm room door. When I was actually attacked in the dorm by a couple of students. When I was assaulted at Carter Finley Stadium, shouted at, called a ‘fag’ and actually grabbed and pushed to the ground.”

A majority of the references to physical acts against GLBT students were regarding the ‘free expression tunnel’ on campus. Students noted their fear related to experiences using the tunnel.

“After the tunnel markings, I suddenly felt paranoid about certain people around me... Normally, I do not feel threatened on campus, but in light of the tunnel situation, it made me think, out of nowhere, that something could possibly happen to me.”

“seeing hate speech/graffiti in the freedom of expression tunnel. I have since avoided using that tunnel when walking across campus because I feel, not only hurt, but extremely angry at the persistence of outspoken ignorance on the part of the student body.”

In general, students associated negative feelings with the vandalism that was directed toward the GLBT population. Few students mentioned instances of direct physical violence in the form of assault.

Theme 4 – Support for GLBT persons

Students commented on both the support and the lack of support they have experienced at NCSU based on their sexual orientation. Many respondents noted that they had been supported as a GLBT student at NCSU. These respondents mentioned specific individuals or offices where they had found such support.

“The administration seems to be very supportive and progressive. There is a sense of welcome that I feel from the university on the administration’s part.”

“The faculty and staff at NCSU have been understanding of my sexuality and have not held it against me.”

Several mentions of the student organization, BGLA, appeared in the responses to open-ended questions. These comments were all acclamations for the supportiveness of the group.

“BGLA here at NCSU has been a positive experience as it has allowed me to meet and interact with other gay members of the NCSU community and share interests, as well as concerns.”

“The [BGLA] really helps. Without that, I would feel like I have no support at all.”

A significant number of students stated that while they found support from specific areas of campus, they felt that more support were needed. A range of suggestions were given for the types of additional support that was needed. Many students noted a disconnect between their experiences with being tolerated as a GLBT student and being nurtured in relation to their sexual orientation.

“Tolerance on campus is plentiful. Faculty are often receptive and aware to sensitivity around gay issues. Students often tend to blurt out insensitive comments with little recourse from faculty.”

“I have been fortunate to work and attend classes with peers and professionals who are very supportive and nurturing. If it was not for this network of friends/professionals, I would have left the campus shortly after arriving. There are great, supportive allies here, but no real structure of services to connect these allies and GLBT folks and to send a unified message to students that (a) all sexual minorities are welcomed and nurtured here, and (b) discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is intolerable and does not belong in our community.”

“Right now I feel that the campus is in most ways just tolerant, it should be something better than that, we need equality.”

“Though the administration is supportive, I think there are some within the ranks of the administration that are hesitant to be as progressive.”

Another group of respondents framed their discussion of support in terms of the need for more support for GLBT students and issues on campus. These students indicated the lack of support they found at NCSU and offered specific ways that NCSU could better support them.

“I think that the school's administration needs to realize that their lack of effort in this area is causing a lot of mental strife for students, faculty, and staff...they are losing excellent, bright, and competent students/faculty/staff because of their merely ‘tolerant’ attitudes.”

“This campus is not liberating in any way and I feel that in many ways puts a damper on differences and diversity that many students house.”

Theme 5 – Awareness of GLBT community

Another theme, which emerged from the open-ended questions, focused on the awareness of GLBT issues on campus. This area of commentary included statements noting that there was a lack of awareness of the existence of non-heterosexuals on campus. Student responses indicated that they felt unable to discuss their GLBT sexual orientation specifically due to this lack of awareness. Students made comments regarding GLBT awareness when addressing the challenges they face as a GLBT person at NCSU.

“One of the most difficult challenges is the frightening lack of resources provided for young college kids who are GLBTQ.”

“Generally I do not feel ‘welcome’ at campus social events or organizations because I fear being shunned or mocked by other participants, particularly if I go with my partner.”

Some students articulated the need for greater educational programs in relation to GLBT issues in order to create a greater awareness of these issues. One student noted a need for

“more public education programs to promote acceptance and awareness about sexual orientation for the general public.”

Respondents also addressed the need for educating the general campus community on GLBT issues. Students indicated that a greater awareness of GLBT issues would assist in creating an environment that was more comfortable for GLBT students.

“I believe a greater awareness of GBLT issues needs to be made here at NCSU. Also, there should not be a double standard for justice here as currently exists (i.e.--More press coverage and administrative attention over racist comments in the Free Expression Tunnel, while the homophobic comments were virtually ignored and seen as insignificant).”

“By not recognizing the LGBT community, this university is at a great disadvantage and will continue to not attract LBGT students and their straight allies which recognize that NCSU is living in the past.”

Theme 6 – Policies / Programming affecting GLBT persons

A significant number of comments regarding policies and programming that focus on GLBT issues were found in the open-ended questions. Respondents indicated being dissatisfied with current policies specifically affecting GLBT students at NCSU. Students noted a need for changing policies to be more inclusive of GLBT persons.

“NCSU needs to change ALL of its policies to include people of the LGBT community. For instance, partners of LGBT individuals should be able to be insured, access the gym, purchase spousal tickets to events, etc... Not doing so negates any half-effort this university makes toward have a policy of non-discrimination.”

Students repeatedly mentioned the need for adding sexual orientation to the discrimination policy. At the same time, respondents addressed concerns about what they saw as a lack of enforcement of current policies dealing with discrimination of GLBT students.

“Instructors need to make non-discrimination policies known on the first day of class, add them to syllabi...and enforce them as the semester progresses. They should call out those making comments during their classes.”

Respondents addressed the need for creating new programs for GLBT persons on campus. The indication is that the main efforts to program around GLBT issues were made by the student organization, BGLA. Students stated a desire for programming to be implemented by a specific campus office, designated to working on GLBT issues.

“A GLBT Resources Center would be excellent to have... a place that advocates for GLBT students, provides centralized services for the GLBT and allied communities, and a place that provide campus-wide education for faculty, staff, and students.”

Discussion

Results of the survey questionnaire offer insight into how the GLBT student population at NCSU interprets the campus climate. In order to understand these findings, the research questions were used to analyze GLBT student responses.

GLBT Student Experiences

Respondents offered insight on their experiences as a GLBT student on the campus. Overall, students indicated that they felt the campus climate was not positive for GLBT students. Responses pointed to specific incidents that caused respondents to feel this way. Students had experienced verbal harassment in social settings, classrooms, and residence halls. There was also an indication that physical signs of negative attitudes toward GLBT persons had adversely affected respondents. Physical signs included vandalism, property damage, and graffiti. These experiences combined with the impression that school officials did not support GLBT students through actions as much as word, created an environment that many students (38.3%) referred to as negative. However, the same number of respondents perceived the campus climate as tolerant.

Respondents indication that the campus climate for GLBT students is tolerant is interesting when juxtaposed against the experiences described by these individuals in the open ended question portion of the survey. These students experienced the same harassment and prejudice as those who described the campus climate as negative. Why, then, was there not consensus on the status of the campus climate? Several factors go into analyzing this question. Several respondents stated that while they experienced negative attitudes and behaviors based on their sexual orientation, these experiences were expected as a GLBT person. This justification of discrimination, in part, explains the difference in perception of the campus climate. Another factor affecting this discrepancy is the differing levels of openness with their sexual orientation expressed by respondents. The more out the student is the more confident and supported they may feel, while at the same time opening themselves up to increased levels of discrimination. At the same time, the student who hides his/her sexual orientation may not experience as much

direct discrimination but may be more negatively impacted by those incidents based on their lack of self-acceptance or self-confidence.

GLBT Student Needs

Analysis of the GLBT student responses resulted in the identification of various needs of the GLBT student community. Overall, respondents indicated a need for greater awareness of GLBT issues on campus. They stated that increased awareness of these issues would result in more educated beliefs about the GLBT population and thus create a more positive environment for GLBT persons.

Students who reported that the campus was tolerant in relation to GLBT issues indicated that being tolerated was not enough, they needed to feel supported. Schreier (1995) discussed the need for campuses to move from tolerating GLBT students to nurturing them. Respondents addressed this need by specifically noting ways the campus could be more supportive. GLBT respondents described the need for specific changes to be made on campus, so that they felt more safe and supported. These needs included increased programming around GLBT issues, both for GLBT persons and educational programs for those not familiar with GLBT issues. Another need was for providing increased resources for supporting the GLBT community. The assumption then, is that increased support will result in GLBT students having a more positive experience while at NCSU. These individuals want to be valued as part of the larger community.

Welcoming and Non-Welcoming Areas of Campus

Results of the survey questionnaire point to areas of campus that GLBT students perceive as either welcoming and non-welcoming. Responses indicate that most areas of campus are welcoming to students regardless of their sexual orientation. However, respondents did report exceptions to this rule.

The areas of campus most often addressed in the data are classrooms and residence halls. The majority of students felt that they were safe from discrimination and prejudice in their classrooms. However, some respondents indicated experiencing non-supportive attitudes in the classrooms. This disconnect is explained, in one way, by the idea that there is a difference in the espoused ideas around GLBT issues in the classroom and actual practice. This to say, while faculty are saying there is no discrimination based on sexual orientation in the classrooms, GLBT students still experience harassment such as hearing negative comments about non-heterosexuals with little response from the faculty. Another explanation for this disconnect is that, again, GLBT students indicated that they expected and accepted a certain level of discrimination due to their sexual orientation.

Overall, while campus residents felt safe in their residence halls they did report that they had experienced prejudice in their halls. GLBT residential students indicated that their residence halls were both welcoming and non-welcoming. This mixed response can be attributed to the reasons as the divergent responses regarding the classroom setting such as GLBT students expectation and acceptance of discrimination. It is also interesting to note that students who are living in off-campus housing feel more safe than those living on-campus, possibly due to the fact that they have more choice in those they share living space.

Recommendations and Conclusion

While one of the NCSU goals is to build a diverse campus community by fostering diversity, findings of this study indicate that this goal is not being met for GLBT students. The following are recommendations on ways that NCSU can improve the campus climate for GLBT students, in an effort to fulfill the institutional goal of fostering diversity. Recommendations have been developed from analysis of survey results and related literature. The

recommendations are based on the need for great GLBT awareness on campus and are as follows: increase educational programming on GLBT issues, change policies to be more nurturing and inclusive of GLBT persons, hire a GLBT Resource Person, establish a GLBT Campus Resource Center, and continue assessing the campus climate in regards to GLBT issues.

In general, the university community needs to be more aware of GLBT issues. The majority of recommendations are related to increasing that awareness. The University community should increase the amount of educational programming that addresses GLBT issues. While select offices and student organizations offer some programming there is a need for greater education. These programs need to address the educational needs of both the heterosexual and non-heterosexual community. In terms of heterosexual education, programming should focus on understanding GLBT issues and culture and emphasize the value of GLBT persons. For the GLBT population, educational programming should be used as an opportunity to show support for the community through the use of role models.

The University community also needs to review current policies in order to determine whether or not these policies support the positive experience and value of GLBT persons. Specifically, the policy regarding discrimination should be revised to be more nurturing of these individuals by including sexual orientation as a protected area. Other policies to consider include those addressing domestic partner benefits and hate crimes. Policies that exclude GLBT persons should be updated to be more inclusive, while policies that already include GLBT persons should be reviewed to make sure that these individuals are included equally. Survey questionnaire results indicate that current policies are not being enforced. The University should also attempt to create an environment where espoused policies are carried out as they are stated.

While current policies may not sufficiently address the issue of sexual orientation, they need to be enforced with the same consistency as all other campus policies.

As part of an attempt to increase the awareness of GLBT issues on the NCSU campus, administrators should create a position designed to address these issues. Creating the position of GLBT Resource Person will assist with awareness and nurturance of GLBT students at the University. This individual could serve a variety of functions around the GLBT issue on campus, from designing and implementing educational programs to advising GLBT student organizations. This position would meet multiple needs addressed by respondents of this study, such as the need for more direct support for GLBT students. A precedent has been set for the establishment of such positions at several of NCSU's peer institutions, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The University should also establish a GLBT Campus Resource Center (CRC) in order to create a supportive space for GLBT students and other members of campus who wish to learn, dialogue about, or increase awareness of GLBT issues. The CRC should be staffed with a full-time Resource Person in order to maximize the effectiveness of the center. Sponsoring programs, providing meeting space where GLBT individuals feel safe and nurtured, and establishing connections with other campus offices and organizations are all part of what the CRC should provide. Providing resources in terms of literature, media, and support for programming on campus are also important. A collection of helpful texts has already been started with funding provided for this assessment.

This study of the campus climate for GLBT students is only one part of a larger assessment of GLBT issues that needs to be conducted at NCSU. From this study, it is evident that GLBT students have needs that are not currently being met by NCSU. Further assessment

should focus on gaining the views of a larger population on GLBT issues. That population should be diverse, including GLBT faculty and staff, as well as heterosexual students, faculty and staff. There should also be an opportunity for members of the campus community who do not identify their sexual orientation to respond. A better understanding of how the entire campus community views these issues can assist in developing programs and a more positive campus environment for GLBT persons.

Respondents to this study addressed the need for greater awareness of GLBT issues on campus. They stated that, “people are just uneducated” and called for “more public education programs to promote acceptance and awareness about sexual orientation.” Through further assessment of the climate and implementation of recommendations, the University can better understand and meet the needs of its GLBT population.

Appendix A

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Assessment

In order to better understand the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) students North Carolina State University is actively seeking an assessment of the experiences, needs, and desires of this population. It is our hope that better understanding how students view the campus environment in regards to GLBT issues will result in an enhancement in the campus climate and overall experience for all students, especially those who are GLBT.

Student Campus Climate Questionnaire

This survey is anonymous. Participants are encouraged to respond candidly to each question. The questionnaire will take about (15) fifteen minutes to complete.

To ensure accurate data, please submit only one questionnaire.

Part I: Experiences Related to Comfort, Safety, and Violence

(please check one answer)

1. Have you been shunned by people on campus because of your sexual orientation? Yes
No
2. Have you seen anti-gay images or texts on campus? Yes No
3. Have you heard negative remarks or jokes about the subject of sexual orientation? Yes
No
4. Have you experienced verbal harassment (such as hate speech) because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
5. Have you experienced property destruction or vandalism because of your sexual orientation?
Yes No
6. Have you been threatened with physical violence because of your sexual orientation? Yes
No
7. Have you experienced physical violence (such as punching, kicking, spitting, etc.) because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
8. Do you feel safe, based on your sexual orientation, in your residence hall or apartment?
Yes No

9. Do you feel safe, based on your sexual orientation, in classrooms and classroom buildings?
Yes No
10. Overall, do you find NCSU a safe place based on your sexual orientation? Yes No
11. Which of the following have you experienced on the campus of NCSU:
Verbal Harassment
Property Destruction
Vandalism
Threat of Physical Violence
Physical Violence

Part II: Experiences Related to Acceptance and Prejudice

(please check one answer)

12. During your attendance at NCSU, have you experienced prejudice in classes because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
13. While at NCSU, have you experienced prejudice in your residence because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
14. Have you experienced prejudice in social settings at NCSU because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
15. Have you experienced prejudice when dealing with university administrators or staff because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
16. Have you experienced prejudice when dealing with faculty members because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
17. Overall, have you experienced prejudice anywhere on the campus of NCSU because of your sexual orientation? Yes No
18. If you have encountered problems due to your sexual orientation, has the official university response been adequate to your needs? Yes No N/A

Part III: Your Opinions and Insights

19. How would you rate the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students at NCSU?
Supportive
Tolerant
Nurturing
Negative
Discriminatory

20. Think of the time when you felt most unsafe or threatened at NCSU based on your sexual orientation. Please describe that time and your feelings.
21. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered, please describe the most difficult challenges you face at NCSU based on your sexual orientation.
22. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered, please describe the positive aspects of life at NCSU based on your sexual orientation.
23. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered, please describe any needed changes that NCSU can make to create a better experience for you.

Part IV: Background Information

(please check one)

24. Are you a student at NCSU? Yes No
25. Which best describes your sexual orientation?
 Bisexual
 Gay
 Heterosexual
 Lesbian
 Questioning
 Transgendered
 Other _____
26. How open are you about your sexual orientation at the university?
 Not open
 Open with a few trusted people
 Open with many people
 Open with most people
 Totally open
27. What is your biological sex?
 Female
 Male
28. What year were you born?
29. What are your racial and/or ethnic identities?
 African-American (Not of Hispanic origin): Origin in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Asian or Pacific Islander: Origin in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Pacific Islands. This includes, for example, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, American Samoa, Indian Subcontinent.

Hispanic: Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Native American: Origin in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

White (Not of Hispanic origin): Origin in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

30. Which of the following best describes your residence at the university?

Campus Housing

Off-Campus Housing

31. What is your academic level?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate Student

Alumni

Not a Student

Appendix B

Respondent Demographics

		All Respondents (n = 60)	Student Respondents (n = 52)
Biological Gender			
	Female	26.6% (16)	30.7% (16)
	Male	66.6% (40)	69.2% (36)
	Unidentified	7.6% (4)	0
Ethnic Identity			
	African American	10% (6)	7.6% (4)
	Asian	5% (3)	3.8% (2)
	Caucasian	73.3% (44)	80.7% (42)
	Hispanic	5% (3)	1.9% (1)
	Native American	1.6% (1)	0
	Unidentified	5% (3)	7.6% (4)
Education Level			
	Freshman	21.6% (13)	25% (13)
	Sophomore	8.3% (5)	9.6% (5)
	Junior	13.3% (8)	15.3% (8)
	Senior	20% (12)	23% (12)
	Graduate Student	23.3% (14)	25% (13)
	Alumni	3.3% (2)	--
	Not a student	1.6% (1)	--
	Unidentified	8.3% (5)	1.9% (1)
Housing			
	Off-Campus	45% (27)	46.1% (24)
	On-Campus	43.3% (26)	50% (26)
	Unidentified	11.6% (7)	3.8% (2)
Sexual Orientation			
	Bisexual	15% (9)	17.3% (9)
	Gay	55% (33)	57.6% (30)
	Heterosexual	1.6% (1)	1.9% (1)
	Lesbian	13.3% (8)	15.3% (8)
	Questioning	1.6% (1)	1.9% (1)
	Transgendered	0	0
	Other	3.3% (2)	3.8% (2)
	Asexual	1.6% (1)	1.9% (1)
	Straight	1.6% (1)	1.9% (1)
	Unidentified	10% (6)	1.9% (1)

Appendix C

Table 1

Survey Responses

Question	Response Options	All Student Respondents (n = 52)	GLBT Student Respondents (n = 47)
1. Have you been shunned by people on campus because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	52.9% (25)	56.5% (26)
	No	47.1% (24)	43.5% (20)
2. Have you seen anti-gay images or texts on campus?			
	Yes	92.2% (47)	93.6% (44)
	No	7.8% (4)	6.4% (3)
3. Have you heard negative remarks or jokes about the subject of sexual orientation?			
	Yes	98.1% (51)	97.9% (46)
	No	1.9% (1)	2.1% (1)
4. Have you experienced verbal harassment (such as hate speech) because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	50% (25)	52.2% (24)
	No	50% (25)	47.8% (22)
5. Have you experienced property destruction or vandalism because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	12% (6)	13% (6)
	No	88% (44)	87% (40)
6. Have you been threatened with physical violence because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	16% (8)	17.4% (8)
	No	84% (42)	82.6% (38)
7. Have you experienced physical violence (such as punching, kicking, spitting, etc.) because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	10% (5)	10.9% (5)
	No	90% (45)	89.1% (41)
8. Do you feel safe, based on your sexual orientation, in your residence			

hall or apartment?			
	Yes	69.4% (34)	66.7% (30)
	No	30.6% (15)	33.3% (15)
9. Do you feel safe, based on your sexual orientation, in classrooms and classroom buildings?			
	Yes	70% (35)	67.4% (31)
	No	30% (15)	32.6% (15)
10. Overall, do you find NCSU a safe place based on your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	56% (28)	51.1% (23)
	No	44% (22)	48.9% (22)
11. Which of the following have you experienced on the campus of NCSU:			
	Verbal Harassment	63% (29)	62.8% (27)
	Property Destruction	0	0
	Vandalism	17.4% (8)	16.3% (7)
	Threat of Physical Violence	15.2% (7)	16.3% (7)
	Physical Violence	4.3% (2)	4.7% (2)
12. During your attendance at NCSU, have you experienced prejudice in classes because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	40% (20)	43.5% (20)
	No	60% (30)	56.5% (26)
13. While at NCSU, have you experienced prejudice in your residence because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	48% (24)	51.1% (23)
	No	52% (26)	48.9% (22)
14. Have you experienced prejudice in social settings at NCSU because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	60.8% (31)	63% (29)
	No	39.2% (20)	37% (17)
15. Have you experienced prejudice when dealing with university administrators or staff because of your sexual orientation?			

	Yes	11 (22%)	23.9% (11)
	No	39 (78%)	76.1% (11)
16. Have you experienced prejudice when dealing with faculty members because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	21.6% (11)	21.7% (10)
	No	78.4% (40)	78.3% (36)
17. Overall, have you experienced prejudice anywhere on the campus of NCSU because of your sexual orientation?			
	Yes	79.6% (39)	86.7% (39)
	No	20.4% (10)	13.3% (6)
18. If you have encountered problems due to your sexual orientation, has the official university response been adequate to your needs?			
	Yes	81.6% (40)	88.6% (39)
	No	10.2% (5)	9.1% (4)
	N/A	8.2% (4)	2.3% (1)
19. How would you rate the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students at NCSU?			
	Supportive	9.8% (5)	10.6% (5)
	Tolerant	41.2% (21)	38.3% (18)
	Nurturing	0	0
	Negative	37.3% (19)	38.3% (18)
	Discriminatory	11.7% (6)	12.8% (6)

Table 2

Level of openness as related to responses of safety and discrimination

<i>Level of openness in regards to sexual orientation</i>	<i>Reported feeling safe on campus</i>	<i>Reported being shunned on campus</i>	<i>Reported experiencing prejudice on campus</i>
Not open	6% (3)	3.9% (2)	4.1% (2)
Open with a few trusted people	10% (5)	13.7% (7)	18.4% (9)
Open with many people	12% (6)	5.9% (3)	20.4% (10)
Open with most people	10% (5)	13.7% (7)	18.4% (9)
Totally open	18% (9)	15.7% (8)	18.4% (9)

References

- Brandt, E. (Ed.). (1999). *Dangerous liaisons: Blacks and gays and the struggle for equality*. New York: New Press.
- Cohen, K. M., & Savin-Williams, R. C. (1996). Developmental perspectives on coming out to self and others. In R. C. S. Williams & K. M. Cohen (Eds.), *The lives of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: Children to adults* (pp. 113-151).
- Crawford, S., McCabe, S., Couper, M., & Boyd, C. (2002). *From mail to web: Improving response rates and data collection efficiencies*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Improving Surveys. Copenhagen, Denmark.
- D'Augelli, A. R., & Rose, M. L. (1990). Homophobia in a university community: Attitudes and experiences of heterosexual freshmen. *Journal of College Student Development, 31*, 484-491.
- D'Emilio, J. (1990). The campus environment for gay and lesbian life. *Academe, 76*, 16-19.
- Dilley, P. (2002). *Queer man on campus: A history of non-heterosexual college men, 1945-2000*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Eichstedt, J. L. (1996). Heterosexism and gay/lesbian/bisexual experiences: teaching strategies and exercises. *Teaching Sociology, 24*(4), 384-388.
- Eliason, M. J. (1996). Identity formation for lesbian, bisexual, and gay persons: Beyond a minoritizing view. *Journal of Homosexuality, 30*(3), 31-58.
- Evans, N. J. (2002). The impact of an LGBT safe zone project on campus climate. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*(4), 522-539.

- Evans, N. J., & Broido, E. M. (1999). Coming out in college residence halls: Negotiation, meaning making, challenges, supports. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(6), 658-668.
- Evans, N. J., & D'Augelli, A. R. (1996). Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people in college. In R. C. Savin-Williams & K. M. Cohen (Eds.), *The lives of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: Children to adults* (pp. 201-226).
- Evans, N. J., Reason, R. D., & Broido, E. M. (2001). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students' perceptions of resident assistants: Implications for resident assistant selection and training. *College Student Affairs Journal, 21*(1), 82-91.
- Evans, N. J., & Wall, V. A. (Eds.). (1991). *Beyond tolerance: Gays, lesbians and bisexuals on campus*. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.
- Gerschick, T. J., & Miller A. S. (1994). Gender identities at the crossroads of masculinity and physical disability. *Masculinities, 2*(1), 34-55.
- Grace, A. P., Hill, R. J., Johnson, C. W., & Lewis, J. B. (2003). In other words: Queer voices/dissident subjectivities impelling social change. *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 10*(1).
- Herbst, S., & Malaney, G. D. (1999). Perceived value of a special interest residential program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and Transgender students. *NASPA Journal, 36*(2), 106-119.
- Herek, G. M. (1984). Beyond homophobia: A social psychological perspective on attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.
- Hill, R. J. (1995). Gay discourse in adult education: A critical review. *Adult Education Quarterly, 45*(3), 142-158.

- Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction*. Washington Square: New York University Press.
- Jung, P. B., & Smith, R. F. (1993). *Heterosexism: An ethical challenge*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- McRee, T. K., & Cooper, D. L. (1998). Campus environments for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students at southeastern institutions of higher education. *NASPA Journal*, 36(1), 48-60.
- Renn, K. A. (2000). Including all voices in the classroom: Teaching lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. *College Teaching*, 48(4), 129-136.
- Rhoads, R. A. (1995, January 27). The campus climate for gay students who leave 'the closet'. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Rhoads, R. A. (1997). Implications of the growing visibility of gay and bisexual male students on campus. *NASPA Journal*, 34(4), 275-286.
- Robinson, C. M. (1997). Everyday heterosexism: Strategies of resistance and lesbian couples. In C. R. Ronai & B. A. Zsembik & J. R. Feagin (Eds.), *Everyday sexism in the third millenium*. New York: Routledge.
- Sanlo, R. (2000). Lavendar graduation: Acknowledging the lives and achievement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(6), 643-647.
- Sanlo, R. L. (2002). The LGBT campus resource director: The new profession in student affairs. *NASPA Journal*, 37(3), 485-495.
- Sapp, J. (2001). The interconnection between personal liberation and social change: Coming out in the classroom as a transformative fact. *Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 16-22.

- Schreier, B. A. (1995). Moving beyond tolerance: A new paradigm for programming about homophobia/biphobia and heterosexism. *Journal of College Student Development, 36*(1), 9-26.
- Sears, J. T., & Williams, W. L. (1997). *Overcoming heterosexism and homophobia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sills, S. J., & Song, C. (2002). Comparative response to a survey executed by post, email, and web form. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 6*(1).
- Spargo, T. (1999). *Foucault and queer theory*. New York: Totem Books.
- Tierney, W. G. (1992). Building academic communities of difference: Gays, lesbians and bisexuals on campus. *Change, 24*(2), 40-47.
- Wall, V. A., & Evans, N. J. (Eds.). (2000). *Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America Inc.
- Walters, A. S. & Hayes, D. M. (1998). Homophobia within schools: Challenging the culturally sanctioned dismissal of gay students and colleagues. *Journal of Homosexuality, 35*(2), 1-21.