

Gender Identity and Campus Resources

Language and Terms

The language and terms used in the discussion of gender identity policy and practice in higher education are complex and evolving. There are several key concepts that help to frame policy and language and definitions. The first is the core value of self-identification. The ability for an individual to self-identify should be the most fundamental principle when exploring any policy or practice. We must be able to challenge the common practice of assuming we cannot use self-identification options due to what are cultural norms and not legal guidance. A center point of understanding privilege is acknowledging that your viewpoint should not always be the point from which decisions are made and normalized. Situations where individuals trivialize or refuse to use the correct pronoun because it is too hard to remember is one such example. Continued self-education and openness to the changing landscape of identity and language is fundamental to inclusive and forward thinking policy development.

Beemyn, G. & Rankin, S (2011) The lives of transgender people. New York: Columbia Press.

The second principle is that context is key. Language is highly contextual, regional, generational, and influenced by cultural identities like race, ethnicity, and nationality. In one community terms like “preferred first name” may be the appropriate way to talk about naming policies that offer flexibility in campus systems. However, at another campus the concept of “preferred” may be highly problematic. In these communities the rationale is that using a name that fits one’s identity is not a preference. Their name, chosen or given at birth is who they are and should be respected. A better term in these situations may be name policies. Even in one community you may find individuals who openly identify as transgender men while another person with a seemingly similar situation identifies as gender fluid. This is symbolic of the complexity of gender identity and of the importance to the first key concept of self-identification.

Nestle, J., Howell, C. & Wilchins, R. (2002) Genderqueer: voice from beyond the sexual binary. New York: Alyson Books.

The last concept is person first language and most important when talking about a specific person versus a group or category of people. The concept of person first language is not limited to gender identity and is an important way to acknowledge the whole person and centering identity as self-described. Some examples of person first language are provided below. You can also use this tool to describe when you are the one making the assumptions about identity.

Person First Language

a person who identifies as transgender

a person who identifies as a trans man

a person with a disability

Non- Person First Language

a transgender person

a trans man

a disabled person

Language to acknowledge our assumptions about identity

a person who I am identifying as a man

a person who I perceive present as a woman

a person who I am assuming may identify as transgender

Tillman, L. & Scheurich, J.J. (2013) Handbook of Research on Educational leadership for equity and diversity. New York: Routledge. p. 301.

Laws in each state govern the terms needed in legal documents however the requirement to mirror that language in policy documents should be critically examined for more inclusive and campus specific options. An effective practitioner must at minimum understand core concepts like sex assigned at birth,

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sexual orientation(s), gender identity, gender expression, transgender/trans, gender fluid, gender queer, transition, and the gender binary.

A list of a few current nationally developed and disseminated terms can be found at various websites included below as well as the list of terms offered here in [Appendix XX](#)

National Center for Transgender Equality (<http://www.transequality.org/>)

Consortium for LGBT Resource Professional Campus Architect (www.lgbtarchitect.org)

Center of Excellence for Transgender Health ([www. http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/](http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/))

Athletics

Responses to athletics related to gender identity typically refer directly to NCAA policies as well as the guidance from the International Olympic Committee. A comprehensive approach must also look to the governing bodies of other collegiate sports entities NAIA, NJCAA, and other sport specific governing groups.

National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA)

The NCAA provides comprehensive guidance on transgender student-Athlete participation, hormonal treatment, mixed gender teams, and a student and school's responsibilities in these situations. Available in the NCAA document: NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (August 2011), the organization reframes this effort. Moving away from the philosophy that we must deal with the problem of transgender student-athletes based in a medical model of exclusion, a more forward thinking, socially aware and inclusive efforts exists to engage college athletic programs in inclusive excellence.

The NCAA materials are limited however in their guidance in situations where students do not meet criteria around physical transition, hormone suppression/usage, and partial gender confirming surgical efforts. The perceived barrier of the influence of the "physical advantage/disadvantage" in collegiate competition still lingers in these policy limitations. Many other governing bodies like the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) follow this same pattern.

NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (August 2011)

http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender_Handbook_2011_Final.pdf

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

The NAIA continues to review its inclusion policy for transgender athletes. The NAIA stated in their 2016 Programming, Policy & Legislation Preview (March 18, 2016) that for the past three years they have studied and reviewed participation by transgender student athletes in NAIA programs. The organizational statements about this process indicate a focus on "student welfare" and "medical aspects only". In the 2017-2018 NAIA handbook, NAIA outlines participation guidelines for transgender student athletes. The policy focuses on the use of hormones and the perceived impact of hormone usage and physical advantage. NAIA has also produced a Student-Athlete Participation Guide in National Championships.

2016 NAIA Programming, Policy & Legislation Preview

http://www.naia.org/fls/27900/1NAIA/legislative/docs/NAIA_2016ConventionProgrammingPolicyLegislation.pdf

[2017-2018 Official & Policy Handbook](#)

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Club Sports/Intercampus Athletic Competition

Numerous campuses across the country have a series of athletic opportunities that fall somewhere between NCAA/NAIA type competitions and intramural sports programs. Often referred to as Club Sports or Intercampus Athletics, these programs face an unusual challenge. Two institutions may compete and yet be operating under two very different participation policies for transgender student-athletes. Some of these teams do have sport specific guidance from regional or national governing boards like the National Intramural- Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) which serves much of soccer, flag football, basketball, golf, tennis, and volleyball for example. These groups usually organize and manage regional and national championship events. A challenge in this structure is that transgender student-athletes may be able to participate in regular season events but may be excluded from post season competition.

National Consortium of LGBT Resource Professionals. (2014). Suggested best practices for supporting trans students. Retrieved from: www.lgbtcampus.org.*

NIRSA: Leaders in College Recreation. Retrieved from nirsa.net

Intramural Sports

Intramural sports provides an opportunity for campus communities to potentially create the most inclusive and adaptable policies for transgender athletics and those who identify as gender fluid. This does require campus decision makers to use best practices and engage the campus community in a dialogue about policy development and implementation. Campus leaders must also insure that there is a process for addressing conflicts, sports performance education, and teams that are not limited only to gendered participation.

National Consortium of LGBT Resource Professionals. (2014). Suggested best practices for supporting trans students. Retrieved from: www.lgbtcampus.org.*

NIRSA: Leaders in College Recreation. Retrieved from nirsa.net

Campus Activities

Collegiate campus activities celebrate a rich tradition in the lives of students. These “co-curricular” activities are seen as the experience of college and an important part of the cultural education in a college degree. Student activities represent a broad spectrum of topics like student leadership, clubs and organizations, student government, Greek organizations, study abroad, civic and community engagement, religious and spiritual traditions, campus traditions like homecoming and parent visit days. A critical examination of these programs show an interesting presence of the gender binary embedded in many of the events. Colleges still hold mother and father visits days, king and queen selections, and awards for top senior men and woman as just a few examples.

Within each of these areas exists an opportunity to examine the influence of gender on the program and explore ways to reframe and recreate. A few noteworthy examples are mentioned below:

- 1) Greek organizations: while Title IX allows for an exception for these organizations that exception follows more transitional constructs around gender. For example, it would allow a fraternity chapter to not accept a woman as a member but an interpretation of new guidance on gender identity may not provide this exception for a student who identified as a transgender man.
- 2) Homecoming and King/Queen Events: Many campuses adapted this historic college event in one of three ways. The first is to allow any student to be a part of either the king or the queen category based on personal identity. The next option, some colleges moved to move of a royal

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court or a group of student named after the school mascot. Selection is not based on gender and focuses more on leadership, scholarship, and community service as part of the criteria. Other schools have eliminate the event entirely because they were not willing to make it more inclusive or in some cases the lack of current student participation indicated the need to put limited funds into other programming.

- 3) Study Abroad: Student abroad programs are keenly aware of the issues transgender students traveling internationally. Students may exclude countries because of their strict gender codes or punishments for transgressing gender norms. They may face harassment from host families and faculty for their gender expression. In some countries not complying with strict gender norms could lead to imprisonment. Some transgender students may also not be able to access passports due to the incongruence of their birth certificate and other ID gender markers.

These are just a few examples of the challenges for transgender students and those who identify as gender fluid in student activities. In some cases the existence of the gender binary is so subtle that it has been part of the culture for years without acknowledgement. These are some of the most challenging areas to address because the argument of traditions can be compelling and may activate very vocal stakeholders like donors and alumni.

National Consortium of LGBT Resource Professionals. (2014). Suggested best practices for supporting trans students. Retrieved from: www.lgbtcampus.org.*

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Bathrooms are a place where social justice movements struggle for access and equality. Communities of color fought against segregation, people with disabilities fought for access and the transgender and gender fluid community is the subject of legal actions in a number of states around this same issue. Restroom access is critical in the evaluation and creation of a safe environment for all students. In the 2011 report from the Institute of Medicine, the lack of access to safe and accessible restrooms are a fundamental priority when addressing issues of gender identity on campus.

Transgender and gender fluid students may schedule their days with trips back to safer restrooms or even limit much needed timely bathroom usage to avoid interactions with the “restroom police”. This pattern of regulation can lead to psychological and physiological stress as well as medical concerns. Legislation in several states always begs the questions about how these states intend to verify appropriate access. Advocates in these states have compared the ability to seek civil penalties against an individual for using the restroom that does not confirm to a person’s biological sex to a bounty placed on transgender and gender fluid people that will escalate already prevalent restroom harassment.

Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Issues and Research Gaps and Opportunities, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Institute of Medicine. (2011). The health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people: building a foundation for better understanding. National Academies Press. ISBN 9780309210652.

Herman, J. (2013) Gendered restrooms and minority stress: the public regulation of gender and its impact on transgender people’s lives. Journal of Public Management and Social Policy. Retrieved from <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu>.

Restroom Policy

Some campuses have adopted restroom policies that state that an individual should use the restroom facility that aligns with their gender identity. There is also an effort at many institutions to increase the availability of single occupancy restroom spaces that do not have a gender marker. This approach,

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providing the easiest access for transgender and gender fluid students, also served people with disabilities and families with small children. However, some municipal and state laws create barriers originally grounded in gender equity for women and make it physically or financially impossible to retrofit single occupancy restrooms. On March 24, 2016, San Francisco city legislators introduced a bill that would require business to make single occupancy gender inclusive. The argument is that these spaces would be best to serve not only transgender individuals but parents, senior or disabled residents and women who face longer lines for restrooms. A greater effort has also been placed on communicating the location of these restroom, usually in an online map and notations at gendered restrooms as to the next closest gender inclusive restroom. Campus planning departments should also consider the opportunity in all new construction and remodeled spaces for the inclusion of single occupancy restrooms. The assumption that gender inclusive spaces inherently create a threat for women is a common response to the proposal of gender inclusive restroom of all types. This principle, not ironically, is one of the same arguments used to segregate people of color from using restroom facilities. Both arguments lack the critical evidence of an actual increased report of violence.

KRON TV (March 24, 2016) Retrieved from <http://kron4.com/2016/03/24/legislation-making-single-occupancy-restrooms-gender-neutral-wins-support-in-san-francisco/>

Locker Room Policy

The philosophy of construction in athletic spaces has not changed since sports has been a part of the college experience. Locker rooms are usually wide open spaces with little privacy and an experience will patrons change clothes in a very public situation. Shower areas often even less privacy and more exposure. There are not always privacy curtains or the capacity to shower and change all in the same location.

Campus policy on access and gender varies but what varies even greater are those policies in practice. Two students on two different campuses that used a self-identification policy, where once an individual communicates that identity they are granted access to all spaces within that gender designation, may not have the same experience actually accessing those spaces. A student who is on a campus where the locker room attendants are trained appropriately on how to respond to concerns related to usage and where a well-published policy exists and is disseminated will have an experience miles ahead of another campus where those things do not take place.

Underlying all of these policies and practices in the deeply rooted Western philosophy that the presence of two people in the same space with different genitalia is inappropriate or somehow unsafe. This philosophy can be seen in the gender identity plus type policies. These policies allow for the self-identification of gender identity but also require some type of additional verification like a meeting with a campus official or documentation from a medical or mental health professional. This vetting process, where a transgender person is approved to use these spaces creates a veil of safety. There is nothing that indicates that the use of these policies addresses any kind of safety concern. This is in part to the lack of research that shows that allowing transgender or gender fluid people access to a restroom or locker room creates an increased safety concern in the first place. The issue of privacy for the other patrons of the space should be addressed from a gender free lens. Increased privacy curtains, single use changing stalls and showers, and lockable doors provide the only truly safe and private space.

LGBTQIA+ Terms

These terms are presented as an opportunity to use a shared language. Not every person may prefer or identify with these terms. The most important definition is how someone defines themselves.

Asexual people (or Aces): Individuals who generally do not experience sexual attraction to others of any gender. Some do experience romantic attractions. Asexuality differs from celibacy in that celibates have a sexual attraction, but choose to abstain from sex.

Aggressives (or AGs): Lesbians who express themselves in a masculine manner, such as by binding their breasts. They are also called studs. The terms are more commonly used in communities of color.

Agender people: Individuals who identify as not having a gender. Some describe themselves as genderless, while others see themselves as gender neutral.

Allosexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction to others of any gender (i.e., people who are not asexual).

Androgynes: Individuals who identify androgynously. They have a gender which is both feminine and masculine, although not necessary in equal amounts.

Androsexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction toward men, males, and/or masculinity, regardless of whether they were assigned male at birth.

Aromantic people (or Aros): Individuals who experience little or no romantic attraction to others of any gender.

Bisexual people (or Bi): Individuals who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to people of more than one gender.

Bigender people: Individuals who experience their gender identity as two genders at the same time or whose gender identity may vary between two genders.

Biromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of more than one gender.

Bois: Individuals assigned female at birth who identify their gender as nonbinary. Because they are not male-identified, they are “bois” and not “boys.”

Butches: Individuals of any gender or sexual identity who present and act in traditionally masculine ways, which could include being the “dominant” partner in sexual relationships.

Cisgender people (or Cis people): Individuals who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth (i.e., people who are not transgender).

Crossdressers: Individuals who, at times, wear clothes traditionally associated with people of a gender different from one’s own.

Demigender people: Individuals who feel a partial connection to a particular gender identity. Examples of demigender identities include demigirl, and demiboy, and demiandrogyne.

Demiromantic people: Individuals who do not feel romantic attraction to someone unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Demisexual people (or Demis): Individuals who typically do not feel sexual attraction to someone unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Dyadic people: Individuals who are born with chromosomes, a reproductive system, and a sexual anatomy that fit into the prevailing standard for “female” or “male” individuals (i.e., people who are not intersex).

Dyadism or binarism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that there are only two “biological” or “natural” sexes—female and male. Dyadism/binarism privileges dyadic people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against people with intersex variations.

Femmes: Individuals of any gender or sexual identity who present and act in traditionally feminine ways, which could include being the “subordinate” partner in sexual relationships.

Gay men: Men who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to other men.

Gender binary: The social system that sees only two genders and that requires everyone to be raised as a man or a woman, depending on the gender assigned to them at birth.

Gender fluid people: Individuals whose gender varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, agender, or any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.

Gender-nonconforming people: Individuals who do not to adhere to the traditional gender expectations for appearance and behavior of people of their assigned gender. Some identify as transgender, but others (like butch lesbians) do not.

Genderism or cissexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that there are only two genders and that gender is determined by one’s sex assignment at birth. Genderism/cissexism privileges cis people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against trans and gender-nonconforming people.

Genderqueer people: Individuals who identify as neither male nor female (but as another gender), as somewhere in between or beyond genders, or as a combination of genders.

Graces, gray A’s, or gray asexuals: Individuals whose sexual attraction exists within the gray area between sexual and asexual. They experience sexual attraction infrequently or not very strongly. Other terms that are used to describe this identity are semisexual, asexual-ish, and sexual-ish.

Gray romantics: Individuals whose romantic attraction exists within the gray area between romantic and aromantic. They experience romantic attraction infrequently or not very strongly.

Gynesexual/gynosexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction toward women, females, and/or femininity, regardless of whether they were assigned female at birth.

Terms adapted from NASPA Presentation: Gender Justice Forum. Dr. Genny Beemyn and Dr. Chicora Martin (2016)

Heteroflexible people: Individuals who are primarily attracted to people of a different sex and who typically identify as heterosexual, but who may engage in same-sex sexual activity in certain situations. As it is defined by the Urban Dictionary, “I’m straight but shit happens.”

Heterosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that all people are heterosexual. Heterosexism privileges heterosexual people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against asexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and other people with non-heterosexual sexual identities.

Heteroromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of a gender different from themselves.

Heterosexual people: Men who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions attraction to women, and vice versa. Also known as “straight.”

Homoflexible people: Individuals who are primarily attracted to people of the same sex and who typically identify as lesbian or gay, but who may engage in sexual activity with people of a different sex in certain situations.

Homoromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of a gender similar to themselves.

Intersex: An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural biological variations of individuals who are born with a chromosomal pattern, a reproductive system, and/or sexual anatomy that does not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

Lesbians: Women who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to other women.

Masculine of center (MoC) people: Lesbians, queer women, and non-binary trans people who tend toward the masculine in their gender expression. The term is more commonly used in communities of color.

Monosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that all people are attracted to only one other sex or gender—that one is either exclusively heterosexual or exclusively lesbian/gay. Monosexism privileges people with binary sexual identities and leads to prejudice and discrimination against bisexual, pansexual, queer, and other people with non-binary sexual identities.

Neutrois people: Individuals who identify their gender as neutral or null. They may also identify as “agender.”

Non-binary gender, gender creative, and gender expansive people:

- Umbrella terms for individuals who do not fit into traditional “male” and “female” gender categories.
- Includes individuals who identify as agender, bigender, gender fluid, genderqueer, and various other genders.

Pangender people: Individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression is numerous, either fixed (many at once) or fluid (moving from one to another, often more than two).

Panromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to others regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

Pansexual people: Individuals who are attracted to others regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

Polysexual people: Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and/or form of gender expression, but not to all.

Queer: An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ+ people. It is also a non-binary term used by individuals who see their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as fluid.

Queerplatonic: Non-romantic relationships that involve close emotional connections that are often deeper or more intense than what is traditionally found in friendships.

QPOC and QTPOC: Queer people of color, and queer and trans people of color.

Same-gender loving people: Individuals who experience same-gender attraction. The term originated within communities of color as an alternative to “lesbian” and “gay,” which they feel does not speak to their cultural heritages.

Sapiosexual people: Individuals who are attracted to people based on intelligence, rather than gender identity or biological sex.

Sexually fluid people: While many people will experience changes in their sexual orientation over their lifetimes, individuals who are sexually fluid experience changes in their sexual orientations more frequently.

Skoliosexual people: Individuals who are sexually attraction to people with non-binary gender identities.

Studs: Lesbians who express themselves in a masculine manner, such as by binding their breasts. They are also called AGs or aggressives. The terms are more commonly used in communities of color.

Trans, trans*, or transgender people:

- Umbrella terms for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth.
- Trans people include transsexuals; individuals who cross-dress or who present androgynously; agender, demigender, and genderqueer individuals; and others who cross or go beyond traditional gender categories.

Trans men: Female-to-male (FTM) transsexual people or transsexual men -- individuals assigned female at birth who identify as male.

Trans women: Male-to-female (MTF) transsexual people or transsexual women -- individuals assigned male at birth who identify as female.

Two spirit people: A Native American term for individuals who blend the masculine and the feminine. It is commonly used to describe individuals who historically crossed genders. It is also often used by contemporary LGBTQIA Native American people to describe themselves.