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Reaching an Invisible Minority: A Survey of Admissions Department Leaders' Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Student Outreach Efforts and Campus Climate in the Upper Midwest

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Abstract

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Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students face challenges and barriers to higher education that heterosexual students do not. Many of these challenges are rooted in negative high school experiences of LGB youth, such as social stigmatization and family rejection. Additionally, LGB students have historically been excluded from admissions office outreach considerations. This has resulted in structural and symbolic barriers in secondary and post-secondary institutions. These barriers limit LBG student access and also limit available resources to support the successful transition to higher education institutions. Higher education admissions leaders have a unique opportunity to reach out to and actively support LGB students in their transition to college.

Higher education admissions department leaders were surveyed about the role of institutions and admissions departments in creating proactively inclusive and welcoming

environments for LGB students. The leaders indicated an overall need for institutions

and admissions departments to be welcoming, but stopped short of endorsing many

specific, proactive measures that target LGB students. Admissions leader educational

achievement levels, years of admissions work experience, non-white identity, and non-

heterosexual identity were positively correlated with an overall sense of responsibility to

LGB students. Admissions department leaders also indicated that the university as a

whole, as opposed to their specific admissions department, had a greater responsibility to

LGB students. At the institutional level, mid-to-large institutions in or near mid-to-large

cities that were religiously unaffiliated, public, and with a bachelor's degree as the

highest degree offered were positively correlated with an overall sense of responsibility

to LGB students. Demographic breakdowns of responses, both institutional and

respondent, indicated patterns helpful in targeting diversity initiative resources and

sharpening admissions department diversity action policies.

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Introduction

If post-secondary institutions seek to create the most educationally powerful learning environments for all students, it is necessary to attend to issues of sexual difference as well as other dimensions of diversity. By further examining the positive educational and societal outcomes of contact across sexual identity, we can learn more about how to more effectively serve all of our students and society at large. (Liang & Alimo, 2005, p. 249)

Higher education admissions offices are at the front lines of the practical implementation of diversity policies. This is obvious when considering recruitment, in that admissions leaders choose where to send their admissions representatives. The mere act of choosing to attend one recruiting event, located in an affluent suburb, for example, over another, perhaps in a high-poverty community, signals a sort of commitment to one population over another, whether intended or not. There are other, more subtle ways, though, in which admissions officers act as practitioners of diversity initiatives. For example, admissions leaders can have influence over the structure and content of admissions application materials. Their professional opinions could influence, say, whether or not a college chooses to provide a demographic check box for sexual or gender identity. Even if the officer does not have direct influence over the structure of applications, they are often charged with creating channels for the use and flow of information. For example, though applications might not have explicit boxes for students to check to reveal sexual or gender identity, that identification can be revealed through self-disclosure in admissions essays (Young, 2011); even the inclusion of essay options with carefully worded questions sends messages of value and inclusion (Kirkland &

Hansen, 2011). A central question, though, is what is an admissions officer to do with this sexual identity information? Should this information affect an admissions rubric positively, thus giving another "point" to an applicant? Or could this information merely be used to connect enrolled sexual identity minority students with those applicants in order to communicate a welcoming campus climate? Additionally, admissions officers are often responsible for the content of their media: virtual and print, official and social. Each year colleges and universities churn out web pages and brochures full of information about academics, student life, and support services, among many others. We know, through the work of Foucault and other deconstructive linguists, that language is a powerful instrument that can serve to support existing power structures of exclusion and inequity; it can also, however, be used as a positive instrument of change (as cited in Iverson, 2012). Admissions officers have authority over the language used within their departments. This language is communicated to many potential students, and conveys messages of value and power. Therefore, admissions leaders must consider: What are these materials saying to sexual identity minority students? The admissions officer must not only consider meaning transmitted through language, but also meaning transmitted through images and symbols. How might heteronormative photographs of a college straight couple holding hands inform or act upon sexual identity minority applicants? Conversely, how might the subtle inclusion of a rainbow flag in the background of a marketing photograph speak to the same applicants?

In the last twenty or so years, we have seen a gradual chipping away of the legal foundation of affirmative action policy, though some modified structures and processes have survived (Niemann & Maruyama, 2005; Hurtado, 2005). Interestingly, even after

decades of affirmative action policy, inequities still exist, at least with respect to race (as cited in Niemann & Maruyama, 2005). This, coupled with the legal troubles the policies have encountered, suggests that something else needs to be done. While alternative admissions measures and criteria have been proposed (Sedlacek, 2003), a more holistic approach, covering the gamut from early contact with potential applicants to foster a sense of inclusion to structural support services - both social services and brick-and-mortar offices on campuses - to aid in-progress minority students, needs to be considered.

There is an increasing body of research, especially in the last decade, regarding the challenges and experiences of sexual and gender identity minorities in higher education, which we will explore more fully. This research covers a wide swath, and includes studies focusing on unique challenges faced by LGBQ students, self-image studies, opinions of the sexual identity minority population by majority groups, campus climate, and linguistic symbolism and deconstruction relating to identity. Specifically regarding higher education admissions roles, literature tends to focus either on anecdotal recommendations from experienced admissions professionals, or analysis of admissions marketing materials. There is a lack of literature addressing the role of admissions offices and officers in sexual orientation minority diversity policy and practice.

This review is ultimately concerned with the translation of diversity policy into actionable procedures by admissions departments; in other words, what role does the admissions office play in putting sexual identity diversity statements, if they even exist at an institution, into action? More specifically, what steps are admissions departments

taking to turn those diversity plan wish-lists, often vague but grandiose in form, into observable and measurable practice?

Review of Literature

Terms and Framing

The acronym LGBT, and variations such as LGBTQ and GLBT, condense broad identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer experiences. The umbrella acronyms group and classify what are very different segments of the population. For example, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual specifically refer to sexual orientation. The term transgender, on the other hand, refers, historically, to gender identity. As LGBTQ people have become more visible and accepted by society in recent years, a necessary dialogue has emerged between LGBTQ members and other segments of the majority population. This new dialogue is becoming more fully an exchange, seeking less to group and classify LGBTQ people on the part of straight people and more to understand the diversity and complexity of experiences of LGBTQ people, also noting the power that language serves in reinforcing or challenging power (Iverson, 2012).

There are a number of problems with the term LGBTQ. The most obvious assumption stemming is that all LGBTQ experiences and challenges are one and the same. This is especially important when considering practical policy in higher education. The umbrella term assumes, for example, that the experiences of gay men are somehow analogous to those of transgender individuals. This would imply that residential life departments could adopt blanket diversity policies that would serve and meet the needs of all of those individuals. We know that transgender individuals face issues in residential life that do not apply to gay men; for example, issues of restroom facilities access for transgender people can be much more nuanced than those for gay

men. This principle applies to the other categories in the traditional acronym; we know that lesbian women face problems that bisexual people do not, and vice versa (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009).

There is an additional layer of complexity to this categorization problem, as well. It is most apparent in the trans* community. The asterisk used highlights this problem. Within the trans* community, there are a number of identifiers that individuals choose to use that are ill-served by the traditional "transgender" umbrella term. For example, a sample of trans* identifiers now commonly used includes transsexual, transgender, transitioning, intersex, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, two-spirit, and non-binary, among others (Schindel, 2008). So even within the trans* community, there is an incredible diversity of identifiers. Grouping all of these identities together can certainly be helpful and practical when looking for patterns of experience, but can also be counter-productive and even damaging, and serve to reinforce existing inequities (Schindel, 2008).

As a note, the term LGBTQ will be amended for the remainder of this review and study – with the exception being where the terms LGBTQ or LGBT are specifically used in the literature referenced. We will shift to the term LGBQ, dropping the trans* identifier. This is in response to several issues briefly noted, but also importantly it is a recognition of the unique experiences of the trans* community – concerned with gender identity – that distinguish it from the lesbian, gay and questioning/queer communities – concerned with sexual orientation. It is problematic when these lines are blurred in research (Schindel, 2008).

It should also be noted that though the LGBTQ communities are tied together by some common experiences that stem from their sexual and gender identities, the communities represent a diversity of other categories, as well, that mirror the makeup of straight society. As with their heterosexual contemporaries, so too do LGBQ identities intersect (Poynter & Washington, 2005; Hurtado, 2005). For example, the LGBQ community is relatively equally dispersed across race, ethnicity, religious, educational, and economic categories, among many more, though there are some significant departures, which will be discussed (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). Much of the current research in LGBQ studies ignores these other categorical differences. That, as much as the lumping of trans* groups in with LGBQ in studies, can be as damaging and counter-productive. Black gay men, for example, face social stigmatization problems unique from their white counterparts, or that individuals who come from fundamentalist Christian families face mental health challenges unique from their non-religious counterparts (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009; Rankin, 2005), or that bisexual individuals can face exclusion or ostracism from both heterosexual and homosexual communities (Dugan & Yurman, 2011). Interestingly, some studies also suggest that LGBQ students are no more likely than their straight counterparts to recognize and value other forms of diversity, such as ethnic or racial diversity (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). Recognizing and working from these sometimes-subtle and increasingly-complex identity issues can serve to enrich higher education access and diversity policy, providing administrators opportunities to more fully and authentically engage with diverse LGBQ communities (Poynter & Washington, 2005). An important first step, though, is to recognize and value that in our own discourse.

Demographics

There are unique challenges for scholars in the field of LGBQ research. For one, it is notoriously difficult to study LGBQ individuals. Because of the socio-historical stigmatization of the community, many LGBQ individuals still do not publicly identify as such – termed "in the closet". This can be especially true of LGBQ individuals in high school or early college. Many at that age are still dependent upon the support structures of their families or the communities in which they live. Various forces, such as religious opposition within a family unit, can serve to discourage open identification. We know, though, that LGBQ youth are coming out at younger and younger ages. According to a recent survey, the average age of coming out has dropped from between 19 and 23 in the 1980s to around 16 in 2011 (Young, 2011). However, in terms of psychological development, many at that age might not even be aware of their own sexual orientation. We know that identity development can course through a series of stages, from discovery to full identity integration (Schindel, 2008).

According to a 2012 Gallup poll, the largest study to date of LGBT Americans with over 121,000 polled, 3.4% of American adults identify as LGBT (Gallup poll, 2013, as cited in Gates & Newport, 2012). It is believed that the "closet effect" skews those numbers lower than actually reflects reality. 4.4% responded that either they did not know, or refused to answer the question. This might support the idea that for some, at least, sexual orientation and gender identity can be non-binary, or at least more nebulous than previously thought (Schindel, 2008). There are conflicting reports regarding the actual percentage of the overall population that the LGBT community represents: studies report ranges anywhere from 3% to 10% (Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds,

2002). Not surprisingly, the Gallup poll also revealed that younger Americans, aged 18-29, were much more likely to identify as LGBT, at 6.4%. This is in stark contrast with the 65+ category, where only 1.9% self-identified as such. The poll also found many interesting and surprising patterns at the intersection of identities. Among them: racial minorities and women are more likely identify as LGBT; LGBT-identified percentages are highest at the lowest levels of education, with exception at the category of "some college"; LGBT-identified percentages are highest at lower levels of income; LGBT women report having children under 18 in the home at about the same rate as their straight counterparts (Gates & Newport, 2012). The findings reveal a rich picture of the experiences and challenges that the LGBT communities face (Rankin, 2005). Higher education policy-makers can draw from this to craft more focused, meaningful, and effective diversity initiatives.

LGBQ-specific Challenges and Barriers

Is there a problem? Though the concept of increasing diversity on college campuses would most likely not generate fierce opposition, a central question needs to be addressed: do LGBQ students need to be targeted by higher education diversity efforts? In other words, is there any evidence of forces, either social or institutional, that act as barriers to educational opportunity for LGBQ students? Also, is there any evidence that supports the notion that LGBQ students are less present in higher educational institutions than their straight counterparts? The scant literature up to and around 2005 has indicated no correlation between LGBQ status and educational level achievement. In fact, Carpenter (2009) stated, "It has been well documented that sexual minority individuals are significantly more likely to be educated than heterosexual

individuals" (p. 693). Carpenter offers the work of Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor (2007) as evidence. However, a closer look at their work reveals some uncertainty. For example, Black, et al. (2007) stated that, "Lesbian and gay partnered individuals are better-educated than their heterosexual counterparts" (p. 62). Their conclusion is based on analysis of U.S. Census self-reported data of those who indicated that they were in a same-sex relationship, and that data was paired with General Social Survey (GSS) data to account for those not reporting being in a same-sex relationship. In terms of self-identifying, the data sets are from 1988-1996, a time of increasing acceptance for LGBQ people, but one not marked by broad social support (Gallup, 2013). The possible reluctance of people to self-identify should not be overlooked, as it does affect the likelihood of a representative sample. Additionally, the authors admitted that there could be a flaw in representation in both data sets if poorly-educated LGBQ people were less likely than their educated counterparts to disclose their LGBQ identity. To account for this, they used the father's education level achievement as a check, expecting that if this flaw was present, there would be a skewing to the higher level of the fathers' educational achievement. They found no such pattern. However, they based their check on the assumption that, "Education is highly correlated across generations" (p. 62). What is important here is the heteronormative assumption they make in assuming that education is highly correlated across straight-to-LGBQ generations as well as straight-to-straight generations. They provide no citations for this statement, and do not acknowledge that possible problem. Additionally, as previously noted, they define gay and lesbian as either reporting being in a same-sex relationship, via the census data, or engaging in same-sex sexual behaviors, via the GSS. Though these identifications on surveys are a convenient

way for researchers to seek out LGBQ populations, they assume a binary, either/or approach to sexuality that was discussed earlier here, and that is problematic. For example, a person who engages in same-sex sexual behavior might not identify as strictly gay or lesbian. This would skew the GSS data as well. The Black, et al. findings might be valid, but further research is certainly needed to substantiate their claims.

More recent research seems to suggest that there are indeed higher education achievement gaps between LGBT and heterosexual populations. The Gallup poll previously examined points to this. Though LGBTQ respondents identified as 3.4% of the overall population, they are over-represented in the "High school or less" category at 3.5%, and significantly underrepresented at the "College graduate" level (2.8%), as well as at the "Postgraduate education" level (3.2%). In terms of income levels, those who identified as LGBT were over-represented at both the "Under $24,000" (5.1%) and "$24,000 to <$60,000" (3.6%). On the other side, those LGBT-identified are under-represented at both the "$60,000 to <$90,000" (2.8%) and "$90,000+" (2.8%) categories, typically associated with middle- to upper-class wages (Gates & Newport, 2012, pp. 3-4). In sum, according to the Gallup results, LGBT individuals, in terms of a percentage of their population, achieve lower levels of education and make less than their straight counterparts. It should be mentioned, though, that this data might be challenged in the same way as the Black data, in that it relies on self-identification. Additionally, the inclusion of *trans respondents might skew the overall percentages.

Framework for analysis. In her overview of LGBT and queer research in higher education, Renn (2010) employs a helpful categorization framework through which to analyze current topics and directions in higher education LGBQ research. Though it is

not completely inclusive in terms of examining the whole breadth of LGBQ research, it

does capture many important trends. Essentially, according to Renn, existing research

can be divided into three branches: visibility of LGBT people, campus climate for LGBT

people, and changing constructions of LGBT identities and experience. Each branch is

necessarily subdivided. For example, campus climate studies can involve surveys of

attitudes by other students, professors, or administrators towards LGBQ communities, the

presence of LGBQ resources such as campus centers or student organizations, inclusion

of LGBQ topics in diversity policies, practices, and curricula, and use of LGBQ symbols

or images in print and online materials, among others. All of these threads coalesce to

inform a campus' climate. It should also be noted that though the three categories are

distinct, certain studies bridge two or more categories. For example, a case study in the

"visibility of LGBT people" category might shed some light on and inform topics in

"campus climate for LGBT people." The first category, visibility of LGBT people,

centers largely on gathering information about LGBT students and allows them a voice to

share their stories. Much of this thread of research began as qualitative – case studies,

interviews, focus groups – and functioned largely as a way to initiate conversation about

a demographic that had been largely ignored (Renn, 2010, p. 134). With the campus

climate category already introduced, the last category, changing constructions of LGBT

identities and experiences, represents the most current trends in research, including

analysis via queer theory, and has added practical value for higher education

professionals because actual policy recommendations, scaffolded by the voices and

perspectives of LGBQ people, can result. It is authentic applied theory, in a sense. We

will modify Renn's categories a bit, considering visibility and identity construction

together, both in the high school and college experiences. We will then take up the topic of campus climate.

Barriers and challenges rooted in the high school experience. Though we are primarily concerned here with LGBQ access to, acceptance within, and full involvement in higher education, the roots of the obstacles that LGBQ individuals face lay firmly in the high school experience. The road to higher education begins in high school. LGBQ youth face myriad challenges that undoubtedly affect their chances for academic success and college participation. Compared to their heterosexual counterparts, LGBQ youth experience:

- Higher levels of physical assault and verbal harassment

- Increased risk for substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and prostitution

- Decreased school performance

- Lack of social supports   (Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002)

LGBQ youth also report higher levels of depression, self-harm, social dissatisfaction, and loneliness (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009). And, perhaps most telling, the primary cause of LGBT youth death is suicide. LGBT youth are two to six times more likely to commit suicide, and represent 30% of all teen suicides (Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds, 2002; Cook, 2002). Also, when comparing prevalence of mental health disorders among LGBT youth to national heterosexual youth samples, Mustanski, Garofalo, & Robert (2010) found that LGBT youth had higher rates of every mental health disorder measured, from anorexia to major depression and suicide

attempts. It is important to note, though, that when the data was compared to a sample of more similar racial diversity, age, and urbanicity than the national sample, results were similar, indicating that some mental health disorders might have their genesis in other demographic factors.

Another particular challenge for LGBQ youth is access to and assistance from social and school support systems to combat the psychological and physical challenges they face. LGBQ youth report that, in formal school settings, they are not getting the support needed at the most basic levels to prevent harassment and harm (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009). In one survey of Alabama high school counselors, Leggett & Satcher (2006) found that, "…almost one-third of the counselors believed that gay men and lesbians are immoral." In the same study, researchers also found that, "…over two-thirds of the counselors did not believe that gay men and lesbians should have the same rights as people who are heterosexual" (pp. 5-6). Though certainly limited in terms of geographic scope, this survey illustrates the intolerance that some LGBQ youth experience from those charged with advocating for their well-being. And though trends in recent years are changing, historically speaking, the overwhelming reaction to LGBQ identities has been one defined by negativity (Leggett & Satcher, 2006; Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). This culture of negativity by the sexual identity majority community limits the traditional options to which LGBQ youth can turn. Because many do not disclose their orientation to their families, they cannot rely on the support that a family would traditionally offer (Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). Additionally, faith organizations, traditional pillars of community support, often ignore LGBQ people (Poynter & Washington, 2005).

There are efforts that have been launched, though, to fill the void of social and school support systems for LGBQ youth. The proliferation of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) is one example. According to the GSA Nework, since the founding of the first GSA in Michigan in 1989, similar organizations have spread to over 3,000 high schools (Schindel, 2008). Studies linking the presence of GSAs to positive outcomes for LGBQ students – including lower rates of suicide and a more positive school climate – suggest that they are helping to improve conditions (Russel, et al., 2009). It is also important to note the symbolic nature of current trends of increasing visibility and acceptance of LGBQ themes in popular culture and politics (DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009). Mere incorporation in the cultural dialogue is a major advancement. Recent political trends, particularly the statutory de-criminalization of same-sex relationships and increasing acceptance of same-sex marriage in state law, serve to legitimize LGBQ issues, pulling them in from the periphery (Gallup, 2013).

Barriers and challenges rooted in the college experience. If LGBQ youth are able to successfully navigate and overcome the documented challenges that they face in their high school experiences, there remain a number of barriers when confronting the process of enrollment in college. Many of these barriers are related to the lack of social support structures previously noted. For example, how might an out LGBQ student, disowned by her or his parents, navigate the financial aid process that requires parental involvement, or at least parental financial documentation (Baum, 2012)? How might a closeted student, concerned about the disclosure of sexuality, indicate on application or interest forms her or his sexual orientation? How might a closeted LGBQ student learn

more about the climate of a campus, particularly if concerned about their health and well-being during their college experience?

As mentioned, the same challenges that exist in studying LGBQ populations in high school exist in higher education settings. The problem of self-identification persists. Additionally, there are very few institutions that provide opportunities for students to self-identify on application or other survey materials. This can be especially problematic for conducting longitudinal research (Angeli, 2009). The Common Application, used by over 500 higher education institutions in 47 states, does not include a way for applicants to self-identify (Lipka, 2011; Young, 2011). Even if there are options for self-identification, there have been problems, though most likely relatively minor, of straight applicants falsely identifying as LGBT in order to seem more "desirable" to admissions committees (Johnson, 2013, p. 2). More importantly, there are ethical considerations in asking students to self-identify in the first place. Johnson (2013) points out that there must be a justifiable reason for asking, and that that reason should determine how applicants are asked. If the information is intended for recruitment efforts, then asking on application materials would most likely provide information too late in the process. Additionally, Johnson (2013) notes that even if interested students or applicants do self-identify, there is no way to verify the information. This is a problem that is not unique to this topic, though: much survey-driven data hinges on participant disclosure. For research purposes, however, even unreliable self-identification would provide some baseline for longitudinal research.

There are a handful of institutions attempting to collect data about LGBQ students while keeping in mind the purpose of the collection and potential negative consequences,

including inadvertent "outing". In 2011, Elmhurst College became the first higher education institution to include orientation and gender identity boxes for students on their application (Hoover, 2011). The University of Pennsylvania is interested in reaching out to and recruiting LGBQ applicants while also showcasing their campus climate. Though there is not a box for students to check on the Pennsylvania application, applicants might mention their involvement in a GSA in high school. If that happens, the admissions reviewers flag it and initiate an outreach process through which members of the LGBT student organization contact the student and offer information and personal perspectives (Jaschik, 2010). Still other institutions, such as the University of California system, collect LGBT data in undergraduate surveys to inform policy (Angeli, 2009).

Visibility and Identity of LGBQ People

In the context of LGBQ research, Renn (2010) notes that the first step in the field was to increase the visibility of LGBQ people, to identify just who we are talking about. Because of the difficulty of identifying LGBQ people to study, compounded by the social and historical de-valuing of this part of the population, many of these "visibility" studies, as noted, were qualitative in form, most often case studies limited to a certain institution or geographic location, that attempted to primarily locate and understand LGBQ students (Evans & Herriott, 2004). However, as this area has developed, there have been broader, quantitative approaches that shed light on the identities of LGBQ people.

Higher education administrators' practical experiences highlight some unique situations that arise around students' sexual orientation and identity when navigating the

administrative side of higher education. In his presentation of four university case studies, Baum (2012) highlights barriers that LGBT students face in admissions, including in recruitment and applications, in financial aid, and in record-keeping. He importantly notes that LGBT status is, unlike other demographic characteristics, not typically something that students share with parents, and thus presents unique challenges.

A combination of greater social acceptance and increasingly large data collection pools shed some light on the educational, social, economic, and geographic differences and similarities between LGBQ individuals and their straight counterparts (Gates & Newport, 2012). The Gallup poll discussed earlier informs our understanding of these issues and helps guide and shape further inquiry, as do the studies previously discussed regarding the mental health and negative social experiences of LGBQ youth. In a 2007 comparative analysis between LGB and heterosexual students on 34 college campuses, Longerbeam, et al., found significant similarities and differences regarding college experiences. Their work indicates that college experiences tend to be much more formative and important for LGB students, that loneliness is a significant problem, and that many tie their identities to college experiences, possibly demonstrative of a chasm between an unaccepting past and a new freedom or liberation experienced in college (Longerbeam, et al., 2007). The study also confirms the increased rates of mental health and substance abuse problems that LGB students face, carried over from LGB youth studies.

Many visibility studies, as mentioned, focus on the different experiences and needs that LGBQ students bring to college and also the lens through which they view

their college experiences. While firmly planted in the visibility studies category, they also bridge to the next category of campus climate studies.

Campus Climate

Campus climate research, as noted, is the broadest category, covering everything from straight perceptions of LGBQ students to admissions marketing materials analysis to residential life studies. According to Rankin (2005), "Campus climate is defined here as the cumulative attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential" (p. 17). The category is necessarily broad, and climate can be assessed through the lenses of LGBQ individuals as well as their heterosexual counterparts.

In a recommendation of factors that high school counselors can look for in connecting LGBQ high school students with LGBQ-friendly campuses, Cook (2002), former director of enrollment at California State University, Hayward, has provided some helpful search criteria:

- Inclusion of sexual orientation in nondiscrimination statement

- Presence of gay student organizations

- University-supported LGBQ resource centers

- Gay studies programs

- Employee domestic partner benefits

- Feel or climate of university's city or town

- Discrimination/assault complaint investigation processes and crime statistic tracking

- Presence of safe space programs

- Academic resources, such as library collections, that deal with LGBQ issues

- Career resources

- Topics discussed in school media such as newspapers   (pp. 10-12)

Cook's recommendations somewhat mirror broader criteria set forth by Campus Pride, a national LGBT organization dedicated to improving college campus conditions for LGBT individuals. Campus Pride manages the Campus Climate Index, an annual star-based evaluation of campuses based on the following eight criteria:

1. LGBT Policy Inclusion

2. LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment

3. LGBT Academic Life

4. LGBT Student Life

5. LGBT Housing

6. LGBT Campus Safety

7. LGBT Counseling & Health

8. LGBT Recruitment and Retention Effort (Campus Pride Campus Climate Index, 2014)

Colleges also have the opportunity to communicate information to potential LGBQ students about campus climate through application materials or other information-delivery content such as websites and brochures (Hrabe, 2006). A 2002 analysis of 52 doctoral psychology program application material packets, which looked for both racial and LGB references, by Bidell, Casas, and Turner, found "...that the programs rarely use application packets to convey LGB affirmative information" (p. 100). They also found that LGB topics were addressed much less frequently than racial topics.

In a study of over 1,600 LGBQ students on 14 campuses, Rankin (2005) found that college students' perceptions of climate and conditions on campuses somewhat mirrored the negative experiences reported earlier by LGBQ youth. 36% of LGBT undergraduates, and 23% of graduate students, experienced harassment on campus, including negative remarks, threats, and assaults. The majority (no group measured below 73%) of students, faculty, staff, and administrators felt that their campuses were "homophobic" (p. 19). Rankin noted that even on identified LGBT-proactive campuses, students still feared for their safety and concealed their identities to avoid harm.

It should be highlighted that the Rankin study dates to 2005. Though not entirely outdated, public opinion towards the LGBQ communities is rapidly changing, and this undoubtedly has an effect on LGB students' perception of campus climate. In a study of 980 LGB students on 52 campuses, Dugan and Yurman (2011) found high (positive)

perceptions of campus climate by LGB students, though the assessment question used to measure that was broad in scope.

Using the concept of the "contact hypothesis," the idea that increased authentic exposure to LGB students by heterosexual students results, in time, in increased positive regard, Alimo and Liang (2005) found that positive opinions did increase over time with contact (p. 245). Interestingly, they also found a pre-measure overall positive attitude towards LGB students, another indication that social views are changing. They recommend structuring campus activities, varying from social to pedagogical, that increase and encourage intergroup contact, thus improving overall campus climate for LGB students. The presence of LGBQ campus centers, as well, can help foster that contact (Fine, 2012). Other findings support the idea that increased contact, as well as higher levels of educational achievement, result in increased LGB tolerance and support (Holland, Matthews, & Schott-Ceccacci, 2009).

As can be seen, LGBQ students face many unique obstacles on the path to higher education. Many of these challenges are different from those experienced by their heterosexual counterparts. Barriers, ranging from lack of acceptance in families and high school cultures to unwelcoming linguistic symbolism in college marketing materials, inhibit their full acceptance and participation in the higher education experience. More needs to be done to help increase access to higher educational opportunities for LGBQ students.

Methods

This study used a cross-sectional survey with simple random sampling. All participants had equal opportunities to respond. Participants were selected based on the geographical location of their associated institutions and position in their respective admissions department.

Participants

Target participants in this study were currently-employed admissions department leaders from Upper Midwest four-year, public or private and not-for-profit universities awarding a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The term *admissions leader* was defined as those having supervisory or policy-shaping authority within the admissions department.

Participants were selected in several steps. First, three Wikipedia lists of colleges and universities in the Upper Midwest (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) were consulted:

- Michigan colleges and universities:

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

- Minnesota colleges and universities:

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

- Wisconsin colleges and universities:

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

The lists were then narrowed to only those universities with the following characteristics:

- Four-year university with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree offered

- Public or private with not-for-profit status

Each school's website was manually searched to locate the E-mail addresses of admissions or enrollment department leaders. Leaders were defined as having the following roles or positions:

- President

- Dean

- Vice President

- Director

- Associate/Assistant Director

- Recruitment/Enrollment Coordinator

Specifically excluded in the search and subsequent E-mail list were non-leaders in admissions or enrollment departments, such as recruiters or territory managers. This yielded 497 unique E-mail addresses.

Measures

A standard self-reported cross-sectional voluntary survey and simple random sampling was utilized. No incentives were offered. Participants first provided demographic data about themselves and the institution for which they work. Section two asked participants to self-report data about current practices of the institution and admissions department in which they work. The third section asked for their professional opinions about a number of issues related to the role of universities and admissions departments in general in increasing sexual identity minority presence on college campuses.

The demographic questions in section one were all multiple choice. Respondents had the option for text entry if the provided choices were not appropriate. Sections two and three utilized a matrix-table multiple choice format. Respondents had the option of not answering any question.

Procedures

The online Qualtrics survey suite was used to create and distribute surveys. Survey responses were anonymous. Participants received an E-mail invitation with a link to participate in the survey. A reminder E-mail was sent four days later. A final reminder invitation E-mail was sent six days later. The survey was closed to responses six days after the final reminder E-mail.

Analysis

Analysis of the survey responses was done with percentage calculations. Response data was then sorted based on the responses from the demographic data from section one to determine any variance in responses based on respondent or university attribute.

There were four broad categories of questions (specific questions within each category included in appendix):

- Obligation of institutions, in general, to LGB students
- Obligation of admissions departments, in general, to LGB students
- Specific institution's concern with LGB issues
- Specific admissions office's concern with LGB issues

These responses were then filtered and sorted by the demographic characteristics of both the individual university or associated city or community and the responding admissions official. All of the questions asked within each of the four categories were averaged by "yes" responses. "Not sure" or "no" responses were excluded from the calculations in order to gauge an overall positive, welcoming LGB climate. This provided the opportunity to make correlations between:

- Demographics of institution/city and LGB campus climate/policies

- Demographics of institution/city and LGB admissions office-specific climate/policies

- Demographics of admissions officials and institutional responsibility to LGB students

- Demographics of admissions officials and admissions office-specific responsibility to LGB students

Limitations

There were several limitations to the study. The sample size might not be sufficient to draw statistically meaningful or representative conclusions. Of the 497 survey invitations sent, only 56 completed the survey, for a total response rate of just over 11%.

The subject matter of the survey might also have been responsible for another limitation of a non-response bias. Because some of the universities selected could have had employee policies in place that restrict sexuality topics in the workplace, the survey results could lack their perspective altogether. Conversely, the subject matter of the

study might have interested or engaged those respondents who did not have any restrictions imposed by their work environments, possibly skewing the results towards more LGB-positive responses.

The way in which the schools and corresponding E-mails were collected could also have limited the significance of the results. Particularly, there is a bias against the perspectives of those admissions officials working at larger institutions. Typically, the larger institutions did not publicly list the E-mail addresses of their admissions staff members. Smaller universities tended to have E-mail addresses publicly available more often than their larger counterparts. Additionally, there was no way to verify which E-mails were still valid other than bounce-back notifications through the Qualtrics program.

There was another limitation related to job titles. Though there was some consistency between public universities, the job titles tended to vary from institution to institution. The roles and responsibilities of similarly-titled jobs might also have varied significantly. This made it difficult to determine whether or not a listed employee had any supervisory responsibilities or policy-shaping power. The only check used in E-mail collection was to exclude any recruiter, representative, or territory manager positions. However, there was no way to verify that people with the positions previously described for inclusion actually had any supervisory authority or admissions policy influence.

Results

Respondent Demographic Characteristics and General Admissions Department Responsibility to LGB Students (see Figure 1)

Admissions leaders with the most and least experience were less likely to feel that admissions departments, in general, had any responsibility to LGB students. Correspondingly, respondents with 5-14 years of experience felt an increased responsibility. Differences in this area are correlative only, and could be caused by other factors such as respondent age.

Non-heterosexual (defined in this study as homosexual, bisexual, or other) respondents were more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to express a general responsibility of admissions department leaders to LGB students. Additionally, male respondents were more likely than female (there were no respondents outside of that gender binary) to report an increased responsibility, as well.

Non-white respondents were more likely than white respondents to indicate increased admissions department responsibility to LGB students.

Respondents tended to be similar in their view that admissions departments in general had any responsibility to LGB students, with all age groups averaging "yes" responses between 49% and 51%.

Those with higher levels of education (master's versus bachelor's) and those in higher admissions roles (Director and Assistant/Associate Director) reported higher

levels of responsibility to LGB students than their counterparts with lower levels of

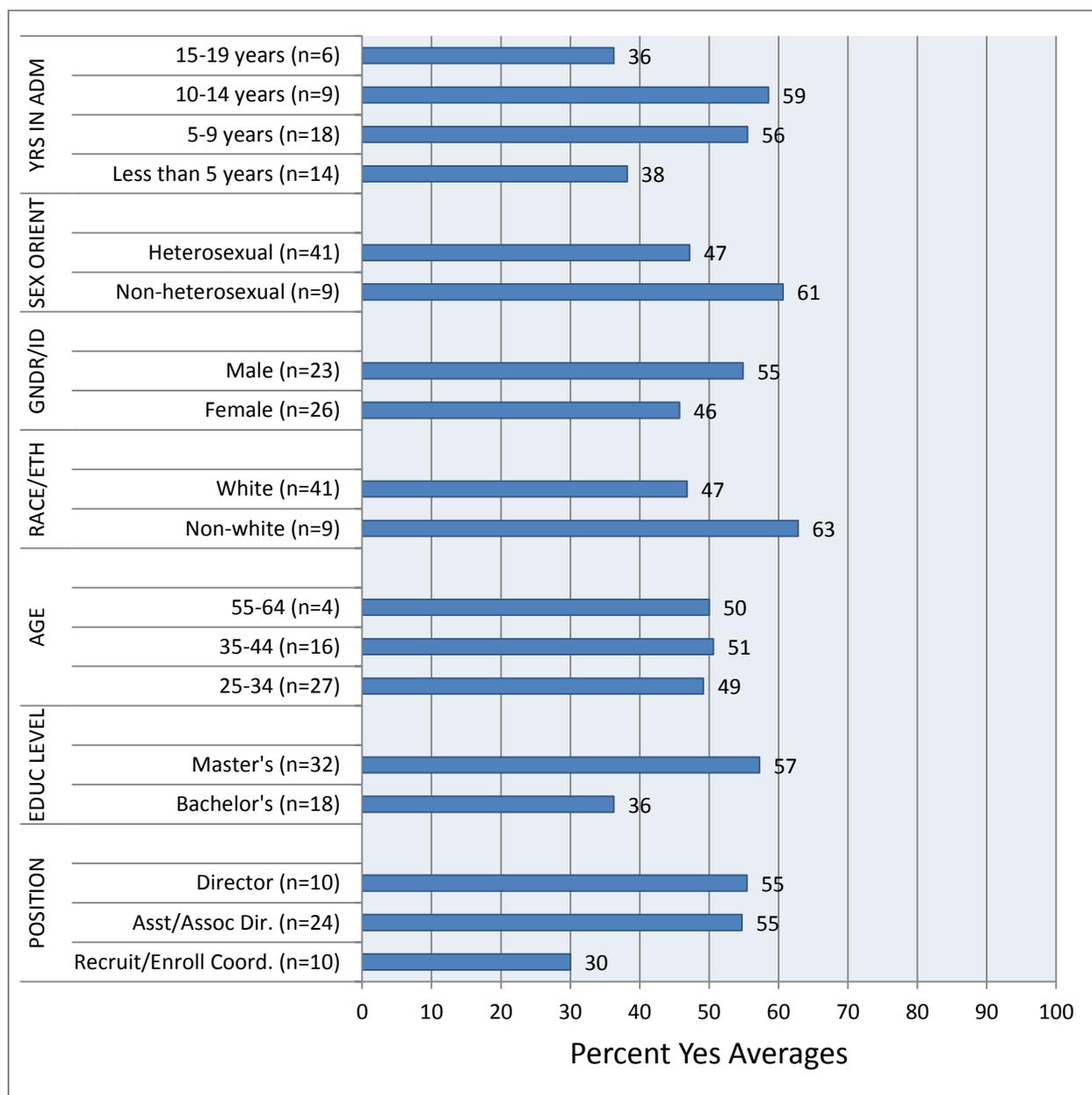education and lower levels of admissions department responsibilities.

Figure 1. Admissions department responsibility to LGB students sorted by admissions

department leader characteristics.

Respondent Demographic Characteristics and Responsibility of Higher Education

Institutions in General to LGB Students (see Figure 2)

Responses in this section focused on the responsibility of the educational institutions in general, as opposed to admissions departments in general, to LGB students. Overall percentages were higher across all demographic categories, indicating that admissions department leaders felt that it should be the responsibility of the institution as a whole, rather than specifically the responsibility of admissions departments, to foster LGB-friendly and inclusive campus climates.

The demographic breakdown patterns of admissions leaders here largely mirrored the breakdown of the previous section. The respondents who more often felt that educational institutions in general had a responsibility to LGB students were:

- Those with the most and least admissions experience

- Non-heterosexual

- Male (though only one percentage point separated male and female respondents)

- Non-white

- Those with master's degrees versus bachelor's degrees

- Those in higher admissions office roles

Older respondents also indicated an increased institutional responsibility to LGB students. However, the sample size of only four responses in the oldest bracket limits the significance of that difference.
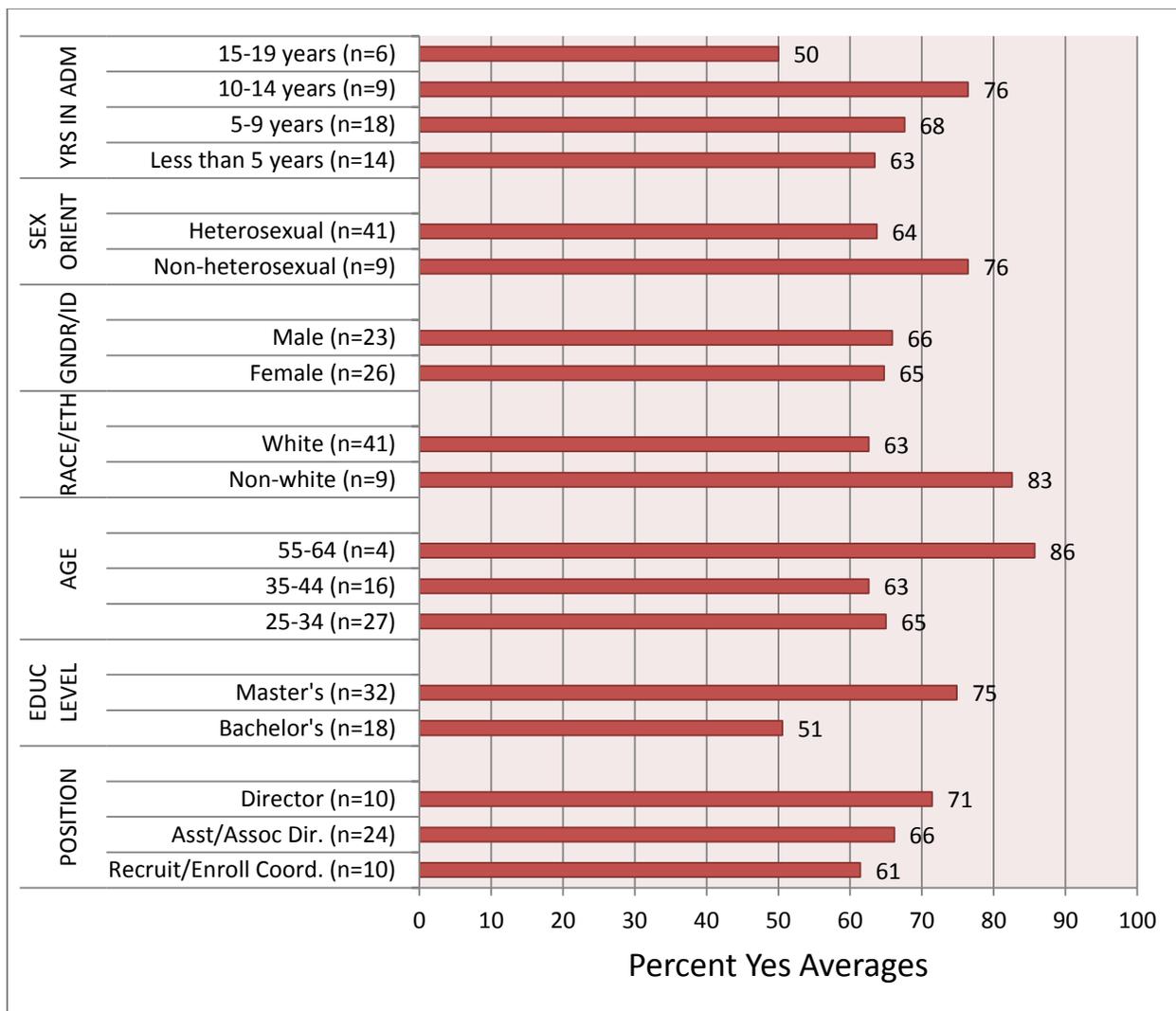
Figure 2. Institutional responsibility to LGB students sorted by admissions department leader characteristics.

Institution and City Demographics and Respondents' LGB Campus Climate (see Figure 3)

This section correlated the specific institution's and/or associated or nearest city's demographic information with respondents' answers regarding current policies and practices of the institution at which they work.

Respondents in medium to large cities (populations 10,000 to 199,999) in which the institution was situated or nearest to indicated that overall, the institution is addressing LGB student-related issues. Those in the smallest (populations 1,000-9,999) and largest (populations 200,000+) reported lower levels overall LGB inclusive policies and practices. It is important to note, though, the small sample size in this breakdown.

Respondents at institutions with larger student populations generally reported more LGB inclusive policies and practices. The largest student population category reported here (20,000-49,999 students) had only two respondents, thus limiting the significance of the upper end of this category.

Respondents from institutions not religiously affiliated were 30% more likely than their religiously affiliated counterparts to indicate that their institutions cultivated LGB-inclusive policies and practices. Related to this, respondents from public universities also indicated higher levels of LGB-inclusive policies and practices.

Respondents from institutions at which the highest degree offered was a master's degree, as opposed to a doctorate or bachelor's degree, were less likely to indicate that their institution had LGB-inclusive policies and procedures in place.
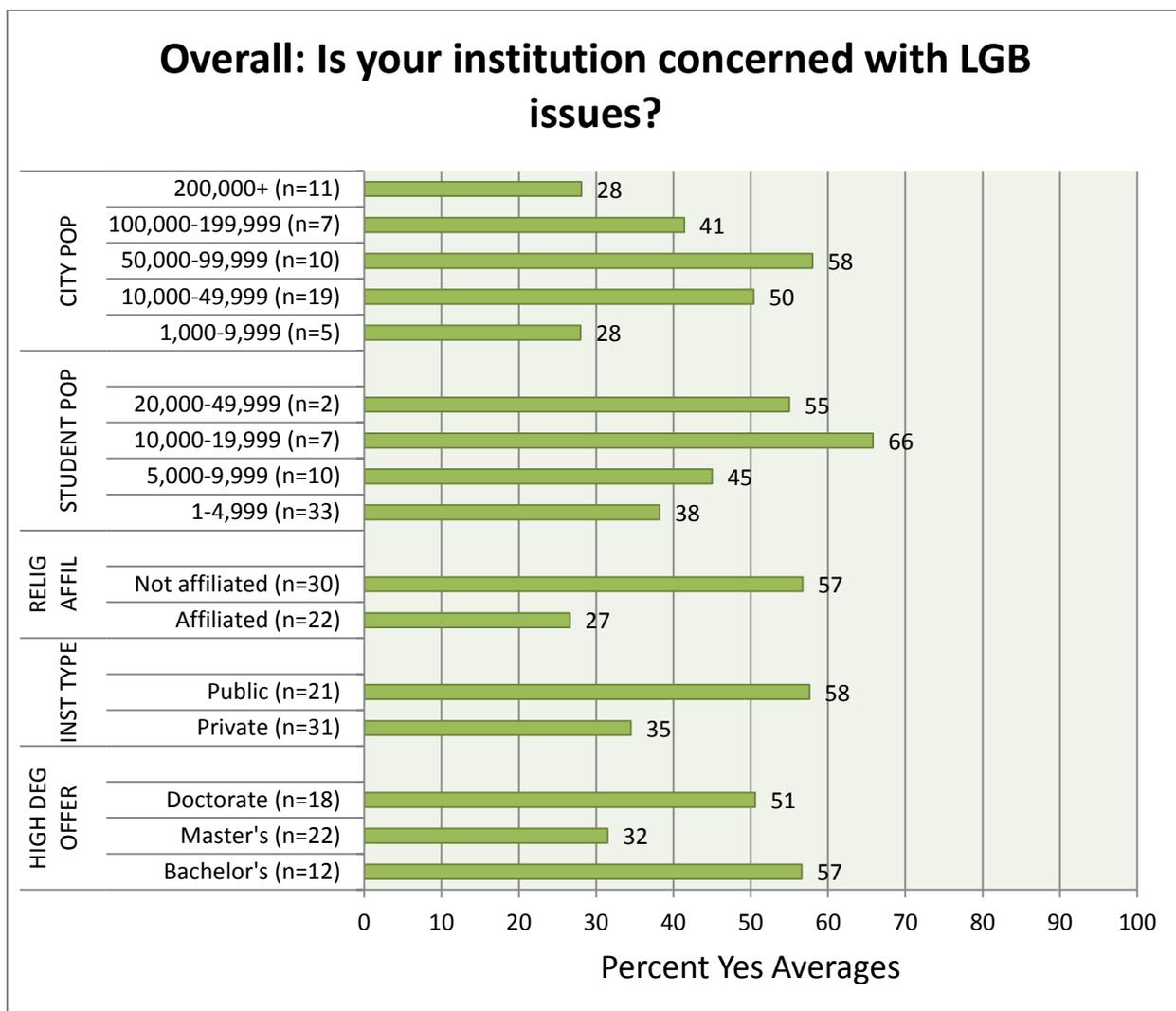
Overall: Is your institution concerned with LGB issues?

CITY POP
- 200,000+ (n=11): 28
- 100,000-199,999 (n=7): 41
- 50,000-99,999 (n=10): 58
- 10,000-49,999 (n=19): 50
- 1,000-9,999 (n=5): 28

STUDENT POP
- 20,000-49,999 (n=2): 55
- 10,000-19,999 (n=7): 66
- 5,000-9,999 (n=10): 45
- 1-4,999 (n=33): 38

RELIG AFFIL
- Not affiliated (n=30): 57
- Affiliated (n=22): 27

INST TYPE
- Public (n=21): 58
- Private (n=31): 35

HIGH DEG OFFER
- Doctorate (n=18): 51
- Master's (n=22): 32
- Bachelor's (n=12): 57

Percent Yes Averages

Figure 3. Institutional responsibility to LGB students sorted by institution type.

Institution and City Demographics and Respondents' Admissions Department-Specific LGB Climate (see Figure 4)

Admissions leaders were asked about the level of inclusion of LGB student topics and policies within their own admissions department. Their responses were then broken down by the institution's or nearest associated city's demographic information.

Respondents who more often indicated that their specific admissions office is concerned about LGB student issues and have policies or practices currently implemented were more often from institutions:

- With associated city populations between 50,000 and 99,999

- With student body populations between 10,000 and 19,999

- Not religiously affiliated

- That were public
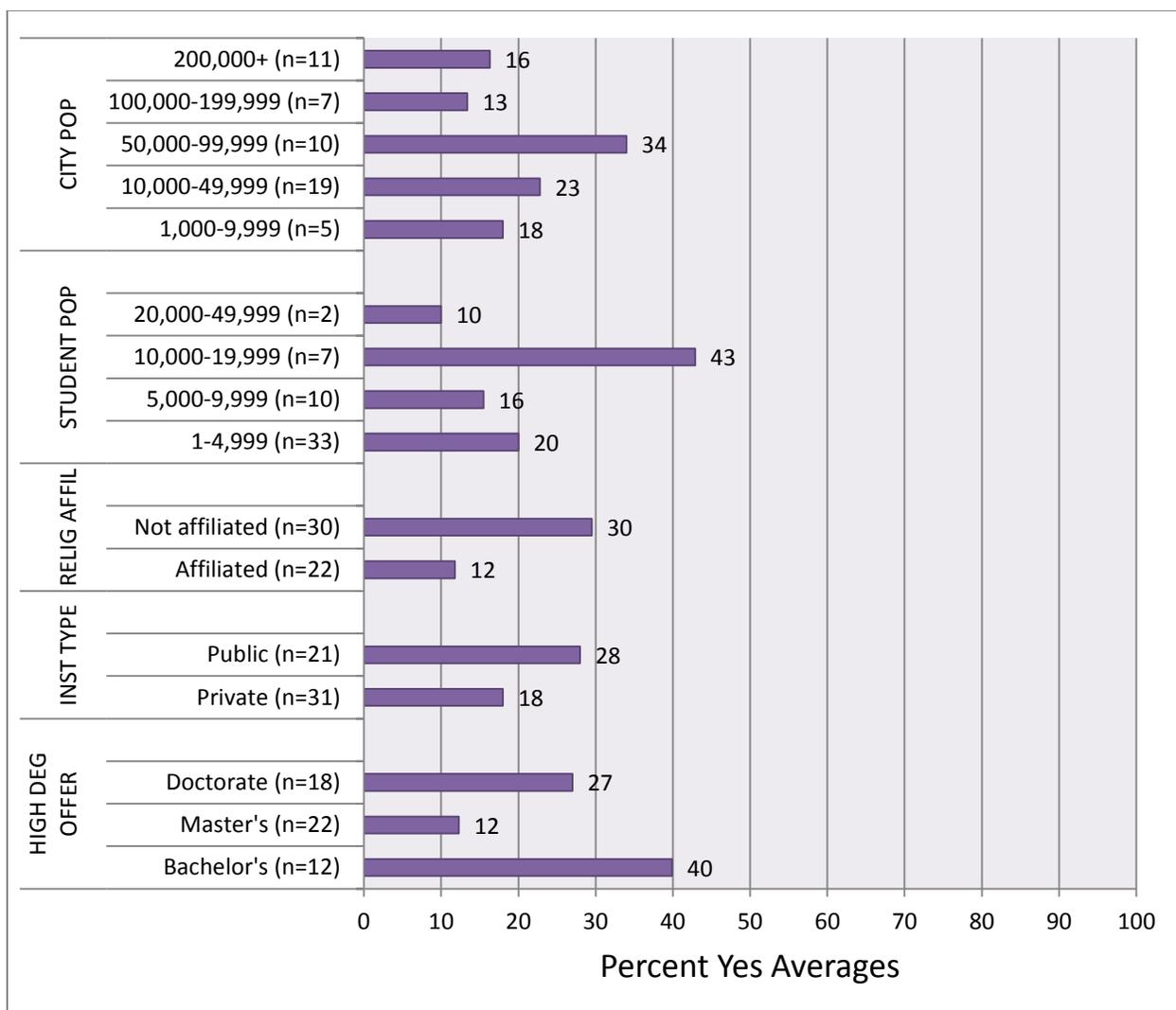
- That offered bachelor's or master's degrees

Figure 4. Admissions department responsibility to LGB students sorted by institution

type.

Discussion and Recommendations

This study is, at the core, a campus climate assessment through the lens of admissions department leaders. It is an assessment of the roles that both universities and their admissions offices play in cultivating LGB-inclusive programs and policies. The results reveal a complicated grappling on the part of admissions leaders with the issue of LGB inclusion. The aggregate survey results show a general consensus among admissions department leaders that LGB students, especially potential students making the transition from high school to college, do indeed face unique challenges and obstacles that their heterosexual peers do not. There is also a general consensus that LGB students should be welcomed into and protected in higher education. There seems to be some disagreement, however, in exactly what should be done to facilitate that. The more specific demographic data breakdowns (see Figures 1-4) also provide helpful information for both practitioners of diversity initiatives and, importantly, for LGB students exploring their higher education options.

Aggregate Survey

When the survey responses are viewed as a whole, as a pulse of the admissions leaders and their associated institutions in the Upper Midwest, there seems to be an attitude of preference of written policy over action policy. For example, most leaders surveyed indicated that their institutions had diversity statements, included LGB students in their diversity statements, and had LGB-specific campus groups or support centers. When asked about policies specifically targeting LGB students (for example, tracking the number of LGB students, offering LGB-specific scholarships, or LGB-specific housing

options), the numbers shifted in the opposite direction. This trend continued when asked about their respective admissions departments specifically: though respondents indicated that LGB issues were discussed in their staff meetings, relatively few actually had policies in place to specifically reach out to or recruit LGB students, such as LGB college fairs or reaching out to high school Gay-Straight Alliances. Also supporting this trend is the fact that though a majority of admissions leaders indicated that LGB students faced obstacles to higher education, faced obstacles while in college, and that admissions leaders should play a role in creating a LGB-welcoming campus, a minority felt that application materials should not provide a way for students to communicate identity, that admissions departments should not track LGB enrollment data, or that LGB-affirmative symbols should be included in print materials.

The overarching theme, here, is that campuses seem to be welcoming and accepting of LGB students and potential students. Admissions leaders do feel that LGB students face more challenges than their straight counterparts. However, when presented with actual campus climate options that have been shown to be effective, the consensus deteriorated. This is important for college campuses that authentically seek to be more LGB-inclusive and welcoming. While LGB students indicate that actual actions, such as including LGB symbols and imagery in the fabric of university marketing materials or including questions about sexual identity on application materials, positively influence their perception of the institution and increase feelings of safety and inclusion, it seems that admissions leaders are hesitant to move beyond diversity statements and non-discrimination policies. Though the statements and policies are certainly helpful and

positive, the lack of proactive targeting measures means that the statements could remain just that: statements.

Sorted Survey

When addressing questions in the category of whether or not institutions or admissions departments in general should play any role in fostering and actively creating LGB-inclusive campuses, there seemed to be a bell-curve in responses based on years of admissions experience: those with 5-9 and 10-14 years of admissions experience agreed in higher percentages than those with less than 5 years or those with 15-19 years. Interestingly, this pattern was not seen when broken down by just age: agreement was relatively similar across ages 25-64, with the exception being that those 55-64 indicated at a higher percentage that institutions in general should be specifically LGB-inclusive (it should be noted, though, that there were only 4 responses in the 55-64 category). The experience curve, at first glance, could be due to generational and social issues linked to age. Those at the higher end of experience, and thus older, may have experienced the concepts of LGB rights through a different historical-social frame, and thus might not be as likely to feel that institutions or admissions departments have any responsibility to LGB students. Conversely, those at the lower end of experience, who are younger, grew up in a time of increased LGB visibility and social acceptance. Because of this contact and comfort with LGB topics, specifically in electronic and social media, those in that experience bracket might not see LGB inclusion as necessary. Those in the middle brackets, though, could have their feet in both worlds: they remember the struggles of LGB individuals, but have seen the tide rather rapidly shifting. However, the results of this particular survey do not adequately address these underpinnings, and more focused

research is needed. This would be very helpful, though, for leaders in admissions and higher education, in general, to more fully explore to create effective staff training initiatives.

Those admissions department leaders with both higher levels of education earned and increasing levels of departmental responsibility reported at higher percentages that both universities and their admissions departments have a responsibility to actively include and reach out to LGB students. This could be due to any number of factors, from increased contact (via the contact theory previously discussed) in the profession to increased contact of topics and related research in university settings. Though further study would be needed to validate the link, there seems to be a correlative relationship between increased contact or knowledge and increased feelings of responsibility to LGB students. This insight supports the idea of contact theory, but also offers admissions leaders practical information to be used when designing recruitment measures or even planning meetings. An increased visibility of LGB issues seems to heighten the sense of institutional responsibility to LGB students.

Another interesting result of this study is the fact that non-white and non-heterosexual admissions department leaders reported at higher percentages that institutions and admissions departments do have a responsibility to create LGB-welcoming campuses and admissions departments and should pursue policies that specifically target or recruit LGB students. Non-white and non-heterosexual admissions leaders, due to their life experiences connected to being a member of a minority community, most likely are more sympathetic to LGB issues in higher education. This points to the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives in crafting everything from

diversity statements to action policies. Those who are not members of a minority group might not be sensitive to or even aware of actual problems that the communities face. It also underscores the importance of equity policy, as opposed to equality policy, in hiring at admissions departments. Diverse perspectives are needed to help connect with diverse populations. More research in equity policy and hiring in admissions departments would be especially helpful to explore links between departmental composition and diversity recruiting results.

Considered in isolation, each of the demographic categories of the admissions officials is of limited use. The results here do not imply causation. However, combining demographic characteristics reveals opportunities to identify problematic diversity areas and focus training efforts. For example, results here suggest that those in lower admissions department positions who have been in an admissions role for less than five years and whose highest degree is a bachelor's degree are less likely to feel that institutions and admissions departments should have a responsibility to reach out to and welcome LGB students. Ironically, these are often the individuals who have the most contact with potential LGB students, and they could have the greatest opportunity to shape perceptions of LGB inclusion. The multi-category sorting of this study's results provides an opportunity, or at least a starting point, for those admissions department leaders in higher roles to shape training for those with less experience who have had fewer educational opportunities or LGB contact.

Survey respondents also addressed questions of current policies in place at their respective universities and associated admissions departments. There overall themes of the question groupings centered on two strands: the university's concern with LGB

issues/climate and the admissions department's concern with LGB issues/climate. These responses were broken down by the characteristics of the university or city. Results here could potentially help state government organizations, such as state-wide departments of higher education, focus diversity initiative resources on the types of institutions that need them most. This information could also be immensely helpful to LGB students, particularly LGB high school students looking for institutions that are inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

There seemed to be a bell-curve pattern with both the population of the city or nearest city and the student population in terms of concern with LGB issues. Cities with populations between 10,000 and 199,999, and student populations between 10,000 and 99,999, indicated a greater concern at the institutional and admissions department levels of LGB issues. Those at the lower and higher ends of both indicated a reduced percentage concern. The cause of this trend is not known, and additional focused research is needed.

Both public and religiously unaffiliated institutions reported higher percentages of concern for LGB issues both at the institutional and admissions department levels. Many of the schools included in the survey were religiously affiliated, and thus private. Additionally, some had explicit policies prohibiting LGB activities at their campuses, so the differences were not unexpected. These results certainly point to the need for a robust academic analysis of the boundaries of religious expression within institutions that receive public subsidies in the form of non-profit status, which each private surveyed institution here qualified as. For the LGB high school student, it provides more information to help select the most appropriate college or university.

The highest degree offered at the institution also provided an interesting pattern. Those officials surveyed with doctorate or bachelor's degrees being the highest awarded indicated that their institutions and admissions departments were more concerned with LGB issues. Those at institutions where a master's degree was the highest awarded indicated less LGB concern. As with any of the categories, it is important to remember that the results are correlative, and not causal. This relationship could possibly be more closely linked to other attributes. For example, private and religiously-affiliated institutions, due to scarcer resources, might only be able to offer master's-level degrees. Thus, the discrepancy would be more closely linked to institutional religious affiliation than to degree offered.

A final helpful tool in analyzing the institutional and city demographic breakdown, similarly noted in the admissions officer demographic breakdown, is in combining characteristics to get a more focused perspective of the type of campus that is or is not concerned with LGB issues. For example, both administrators and students could find it helpful, in either crafting policy or searching for welcoming institutions, that public, religiously unaffiliated schools with a medium-sized student population in medium to large metropolitan areas are generally more concerned with LGB issues. Conversely, state government agencies could find it helpful to focus or allocate resources, or identify or flag certain institutions, by identifying that public, religiously unaffiliated institutions in smaller communities might need a greater focus on LGB diversity than their counterparts in larger cities.

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Appendix

Survey Copy

LGB admissions survey

Part 1 - Administrator and institution information

At which type of institution do you work?

❍ Public school
❍ Private school

What is the highest degree that your institution awards?

❍ Bachelor's degree
❍ Master's degree
❍ Doctorate degree

Is your school religiously affiliated?

❍ Yes
❍ No

What is the population of the community in which your institution is located or nearest?

❍ 1 - 999 people
❍ 1,000 - 9,999 people
❍ 10,000 - 49,999 people
❍ 50,000 - 99,999 people
❍ 100,000 - 199,999 people
❍ 200,000 + people

What is the size of the student population of your institution?

❍ 1 - 4,999 students
❍ 5,000 - 9,999 students
❍ 10,000 - 19,999 students
❍ 20,000 - 49,999 students
❍ 50,000 - 99,999 students
❍ Over 100,000 students

What is your current position?

❍ President
❍ Dean
❍ Vice President
❍ Director
❍ Assistant/Associate Director
❍ Recruitment/Enrollment Coordinator
❍ Other - please specify: _____

What is your age?

❍ 18 - 24 years
❍ 25 - 34 years
❍ 35 - 44 years
❍ 45 - 54 years
❍ 55 - 64 years
❍ Over 65 years
❍ Prefer not to say

What is your race or ethnic background?

❍ American Indian or Alaska Native
❍ Hispanic or Latino
❍ Asian
❍ Black or African American
❍ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
❍ White
❍ Other - please specify: _____
❍ Prefer not to say

What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?

❍ High school degree
❍ Associate's degree
❍ Bachelor's degree
❍ Master's degree
❍ Doctorate degree
❍ Other degree - please specify: _____
❍ Prefer not to say

How long have you worked in an admissions role?

❍ Less than 5 years
❍ 5 - 9 years
❍ 10 - 14 years
❍ 15 - 19 years
❍ 20 - 24 years
❍ 25 - 29 years
❍ 30 + years

What is your gender or gender identity?

❍ Male
❍ Female
❍ Other - please specify: _____
❍ Prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation?

❍ Heterosexual
❍ Homosexual
❍ Bisexual
❍ Other - please specify: _____
❍ Prefer not to say

Section II - Campus climate. PLEASE NOTE: In the following sections, LGB stands for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual

Does your college or university:

	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Have a diversity statement?	○	○	○	○
Include sexual orientation in diversity statement?	○	○	○	○
Have a non-discrimination statement that includes LGB students?	○	○	○	○
Have a LGB student group?	○	○	○	○
Have a LGB campus or support center?	○	○	○	○
Have LGB-specific campus housing options?	○	○	○	○
Track the number of enrolled LGB students?	○	○	○	○
Track, in any way, any data related to LGB students?	○	○	○	○
Offer any scholarships specifically for LGB students?	○	○	○	○
Offer a LGB studies program or offer any courses on LGB identity?	○	○	○	○

If your institution collects LGB-related student data, what data does it collect, and for what purpose?

Section III – Admissions

Please answer the following regarding the admissions department in which you work:

	Yes	No	Not sure
Are LGB topics or issues related to admissions discussed during your staff meetings?	○	○	○
Does your admissions department specifically recruit, target, or reach out to potential LGB students?	○	○	○
Do your admissions recruiters reach out to high school LGB-supportive groups, such as GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances)?	○	○	○
Does your university host LGB-specific college fairs?	○	○	○
Do your admissions recruiters attend LGB-specific college fairs?	○	○	○
Does your admissions department actively work, in any way, to make the larger university more welcoming of LGB students?	○	○	○
Do any of your application materials provide a way for LGB students to state their sexual identity, such as boxes to check or essay prompts?	○	○	○
Does an applicant's sexual orientation factor into admissions decisions?	○	○	○
Are LGB-related topics, images, or symbols included on your admissions website?	○	○	○
Are LGB-related topics, images, or symbols included on your admissions print materials?	○	○	○

In your professional opinion, should all colleges and universities offer or support:

	Yes	No	Not sure
LGB-inclusive diversity statements?	○	○	○
LGB-inclusive non-discrimination policies?	○	○	○
LGB campus resource or support centers?	○	○	○
LGB student groups or organizations?	○	○	○
LGB studies programs or courses?	○	○	○
LGB-specific housing/floors/residences?	○	○	○
LGB-specific scholarships?	○	○	○

In your professional opinion:

	Yes	No	Not sure
Do LGB students face any barriers to higher education?	○	○	○
Do LGB students face any unique obstacles while in college?	○	○	○
Do admissions department officials have a professional or ethical obligation or responsibility to increase LGB representation in college?	○	○	○
Should admissions departments play any role in increasing LGB student campus representation?	○	○	○
Should admissions departments play any role in fostering a welcoming climate for LGB students?	○	○	○
Should application materials provide ways for LGB students to communicate their sexual identity?	○	○	○
Should admissions departments track LGB	○	○	○

student data?			
Should LGB status affect admissions decisions?	○	○	○
Should admissions officials hold or attend LGB-specific events such as college fairs or visit days?	○	○	○
Should admissions websites, or print materials such as brochures, include information for potential LGB students, such as campus LGB student group information?	○	○	○
Should admissions websites, or print materials such as brochures, include LGB images or symbols, such as a same-sex couple holding hands or a rainbow flag in the background?	○	○	○

Please use space below to provide any additional information or insight.