Creating and Holding Space for LGBTQ+ Students: A Conversation

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Overview

As some of the first individuals a student engages with, primary-role and faculty advisors are central to influencing a student’s perception of campus climate and sense of belonging. Acknowledging how a student’s race, sexuality, and gender identity can implicate and exacerbate a student’s sense of belonging, and ability to embrace their intersecting identities is critical. In this webinar, authors and editors of the new NACADA/Stylus book, “Advising LGBTQ+ Students,” discuss the critical role that advisors, administrators, and all campus personnel play in validating LGBTQ+ student experience, particularly Queer and Trans Students of Color (QTPOC). But what exactly can advisors do to see and hold space for LGBTQ+ students? How exactly do advisors validate LGBTQ+ Students of Color, work to maintain student privacy, acknowledge the advising climate on a campus, and remain knowledgeable about campus and community resources? These questions, and many others, are important and worth our time in discussion. This webinar highlights the critical work in this text as well as practical strategies that faculty and primary-role advisors need to ask new questions and develop informed responses for advising LGBTQ+ students.

Pre-Webinar Activity Suggestions

Attendees may wish to view these past Webinars, which are available on the NACADA YouTube Channel:

LGBTQ+ Ally Development and Advocacy Empowerment for Academic Advisors  https://youtu.be/dBMcjuruIqI

Intersectionality: Understanding Our Students’ Multifaceted Identities  https://youtu.be/GVMZnOENXv4

Suggested Activity for Post-Webinar Discussion

The following vignette, developed by Fabiola Mora and Mary Ann Lucero (2021), is from Chapter 15, Advising Queer and Trans Students of Color (p. 255), Advising Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer College Students
In the last year, your institution has been working towards a new policy which will allow students to identify a chosen name and pronouns. As addressed earlier in this chapter, providing students the opportunity to identify with chosen names and pronouns is critical to QTPOC student support and success. While the policy is near implementation, it has not yet been finalized. You have also heard from your supervisor that institutional leadership has concerns regarding the drafted policy and does not see the purpose.

During open office advising hours, a student walks in upset and wanting to drop a course. They share an experience they just had in one of their general education classes. Given your experience, you are familiar with the instructor and the numerous concerns from students, specifically Latinx students. The student explains that the professor insists on referring to the student by their legal name, which is listed on the attendance sheet, even after the student expressed they be called by their chosen name and pronouns.

1. What issues or patterns are occurring?
2. Do you believe the institution should implement the chosen name and pronouns policy? Within your capacity and agency, how do you advocate?
3. What implications do you foresee for other queer and trans students? If you do not foresee any implications, how do you support future students who share similar identities who may enroll in the class discussed in this vignette?
4. Given the complaints you have received on the instructors, how do you respond?
5. Acknowledging the patterns you have tracked with the instructor, how do you support the student?

References and Recommended Resources


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Agenda for Today

• Introduce Intersectionality
• Explore the experiences of Queer and Trans Students of Color at higher ed institutions
• Examine systems of power, privilege, and oppression in higher education
• Review the 5-Tenet Model of Allyhood
• Consider our responsibilities as advisors to learn and acknowledge our students’ stories

Intersectionality Pioneers

Kimberlé Crenshaw
Patricia Hill Collins
Audre Lorde

Intersectionality Multifaceted Identities

Race
Gender
Sexual Orientation
Ability Status
Age/Generation
Ethnicity
Sex Assigned at Birth
Religious Beliefs
Native Language

Intersectionality Web of Oppression

Intersectionality Requires A Holistic View
Challenges faced by QTSOC

Campus Climate and Mental Health
- Climate directly impacts QTSOC mental health
- University-wide climate
- Academic department climate

Racism
- Hypervisible racialization
- Experiences within White queer and trans communities

Challenges faced by QTSOC

Homophobia and Transphobia
- Experiences within communities of color
- Internalized transphobia and cisgender privilege

Identity Disclosure
- Contextual influences
- Impacts of misgendering

Disrupting White Supremacy and Heteronormativity

Examining Racial Contexts

Disrupting Heteronormative Views

Recognizing Assets

Allyhood – A 5 Tenet Model

1: Become Informed About LGBTQA+ Affairs and Concerns

2: Advocate for LGBTQA+ Students

Malala Yousafzai, Youth advocate for Education, in New York by Global Partnership for Education - GPE is licensed with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Malala Yousafzai, Youth advocate for Education, in New York by Global Partnership for Education - GPE is licensed with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
3: Embrace Discomfort

4: Educate Others

5: Keep Learning

Bridging Allyship with QTSOC Support

- Validation
- Maintain Student Privacy
- Examine Advising Climate
- Know Your Resources
- Consider Campus Culture/Silos
- Explore Your Identities/Biases

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