Substantial evidence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) supports the general claim that student leaders benefit in terms of learning and development from their involvement in campus organizations. There is also mounting evidence (Inkelas, 2004; Liang, Lee, & Ting, 2002) that involvement in a subset of student organizations – those based on psychosocial identities such as race, gender, or sexual orientation – has specific positive outcomes related to identity development. A study I conducted with my colleague Brent Bilodeau (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, in press) suggests that leaders of LGBT student organizations grew in both sexual orientation identity and leadership identity. Studies of leadership in identity-based organizations raise the question however, of whether or not there is something different about these leaders or their contexts. Are leaders of the LGBT Alliance or Black Student Organization or Women’s Caucus somehow different from other student leaders? Should advisors and leadership development staff approach these students and their experiences differently? In this article I draw from the study of LGBT student leaders to make the claim that there are both psychosocial and leadership identity outcomes of leading LGBT student groups and suggest implications for working with them and other leaders of identity-based student organizations.

**LGBT Identity Development**

Using a version of D’Augelli’s (1994) six-dimensional framework for lesbian-gay-bisexual identity development modified to include transgender identities, Renn and Bilodeau (2005) demonstrated the ways in which leading a LGBT student organization contributed to students’ LGBT identity development. The first identity process, as D’Augelli called the dimensions of his model, Exiting Heterosexual and/or Traditionally-Gendered Identity, often occurred prior to students’ participation in the LGBT student organization, but for a few, participating in leadership roles furthered this process. The second process, Developing a Personal LGBT Status, was a common area of growth for student leaders as they committed to their own LGBT identity. One said, “I didn’t realize how empowering it would be, to be involved with [the event]. … I kind of thought it would be something that I planned and helped out with, and just one more job on the list of things that I do, but I really think that I got a lot out of it personally.” Student leaders experienced substantial growth in the third process, Developing an LGBT Social Identity, as they became known in LGBT student circles and across campus as LGBT people. A student said, “I don’t think I would be as out as I am if it wasn’t for activism. Because when you’re an activist, you’re forced out of the closet by the fact that your face is on the front page of a newspaper.”

The fourth and fifth LGBT identity processes were not as central to the student
Identity and Leadership Development in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Organizations

Continued from page 1

Craig Slack

leadership experience. Becoming an LGBT Offspring is the fourth process. One student discussed his activities with his mother, who was supportive. Many students did not specifically address the nature of their campus leadership activities with their families. The fifth process, Developing LGBT Intimacy Status, intersected with students’ leadership activities when they involved other student leaders (“Oh, and there was that drama with my ex on the planning committee.”) or the toll that student leadership placed on an intimate relationship (“And it was hard to be away from [my partner] so much during the intense conference planning time.”).

Finally, the sixth process, Entering an LGBT Community, was a focus of LGBT student leadership. More than just entering a community, these students were involved in creating and sustaining that community for others. As students detailed increasing levels of involvement in LGBT student groups, from attending a first event to assuming a formal leadership role, this process formed a centerpiece of identity development. LGBT student organizations played a clear role in students’ identity development across all six processes, but especially in this one.

Leadership Identity Development

In addition to contributing to LGBT identity development, leading an LGBT student group contributes to leadership identity development. Renn and Bilodeau (in press) illustrated the ways that LGBT student leaders progressed through the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model (Komives, Casper, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, in press). LGBT student leaders interviewed by Renn and Bilodeau were already beyond the first stage of the LID, Awareness, where one recognizes leadership happening around them. Typically they were also beyond the second stage, Exploration/Engagement, though they described early involvement when they were in charge of “flyering campus” or similar support tasks for LGBT organizations.

Characteristics of LID stage three, Leader Identified were common among LGBT student leaders, either in the ways they described themselves and their current leadership or reflecting on earlier leadership experiences. A student said, “I’m kind of a control freak and I don’t like when meetings stray, so it’s generally my role to say, ‘Can we get back to the subject please?’ Which is why I like being chairperson.” Such a clear sense of individual responsibility and getting things done is a hallmark of this stage.

Stage four, Leadership Differentiated, marks a move away from position leadership, and was demonstrated by a number of experienced LGBT student leaders. Relational, participatory leadership was marked by efforts to facilitate group process and work together from non-positional roles: “Not only could I be supportive and not only could I be a figure head, but I can also get in and get stuff done, and work on a committee.” A step ahead, in the fifth stage, Generativity, LGBT leaders took responsibility for others’ development and for the sustenance of the organization. Concerned about apathy among other LGBT students, one remarked, “It just has to keep going
after we leave. It has to. There needs to be this voice on campus.” She then described outreach and leadership development efforts she was making to ensure that the organization was sustained.

Some LGBT leaders manifested characteristics of the sixth stage, Integration/Synthesis. They were committed to LGBT leadership and activism on campus and beyond; several planned careers in social justice activism and education. Moving away from “single-issue” politics, they saw connections across issues: “It wasn’t just gay rights, it wasn’t just anti-racist, it wasn’t just anti-poverty. They were all together and they were all related and that is really exciting for me.” Through leadership of LGBT organizations, students were exposed to the larger context of leadership for social change.

At the Intersection: Coming Out as a Leader

In addition to findings that LGBT student leaders gain in both psychosocial development and leadership identity, there is evidence that the two processes reinforce one another. Students said repeatedly that the more “out” they were, the more reasons they had to want to take on leadership; and the more involved in leadership of an LGBT student organization, the more “out” they had to be on campus and off. In several cases, the processes step-laddered up, with students becoming at turns more comfortable being out and more comfortable with leading and then moving into more complex ways of leading. They were called on to be spokespersons for other LGBT students, and while the practice of asking members of a targeted group to speak for others is ordinarily discouraged, in fact these students realized that as leaders of campus LGBT organizations, it was their responsibility to advocate on behalf of their membership. LGBT leadership positions also put students in contact with local and national communities of LGBT leaders, helping students to understand their role within the larger context of social justice activism. If these students had been leaders in non-LGBT specific organizations (e.g., student government), it is less likely that they would have been exposed to these particular developmental contexts.

Implications for Advisors

It is clear that LGBT student organizations can provide the venue for LGBT and leadership identity development. That they might also represent unique opportunities to engage with other LGBT students and enhance their resilience provokes additional thinking about how to leverage involvement for maximum impact. Recommendations for advising leaders of LGBT – and possibly other identity-based – organizations include:

1. Attend to the context-specific features of the leadership experience. What is going on in campus, local, and national contexts that relates to LGBT issues? How can advisors help students make connections to these issues? Do students feel safe and supported in assuming public leadership roles in LGBT groups? Are there enough openly-LGBT students in the pipeline to sustain the organization?

2. Know how students come into leadership roles in LGBT student groups. Are there adequate points of entry to the student group(s) for students from diverse LGBT experiences? What role do LGBT peers, faculty, and other staff play in mentoring students into LGBT leadership?

3. Include LGBT leaders and issues in leadership development programs. Do LGBT student leaders feel welcome and valued in “mainstream” leadership development activities? Do other student leaders understand the challenges faced by LGBT leaders?

4. Press LGBT leaders to see connections to other leaders and issues. Do LGBT leaders understand the connections among various dimensions of oppression? Are they able to place their work in the context of other movements for social change?

Of course, the responsibility to provide support and guidance to LGBT leaders extends beyond those professionals charged with supporting student organizations, but advisors and leadership development staff have a particular responsibility to use identity-based student organizations as a keystone in considering student development.

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This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.
Program Spotlight

The Power of One: LGBT Leadership Conference

By Leslie Webb

The controversy was inevitable. The first-ever tri-state lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender LGBT Leadership Conference hosted by Central Washington University was bound to generate some resistance. After all, the college is located at the politically conservative center of the state in rural Ellensburg, and makes up more than 50% of the local population. But in my third year as the Director of the Diversity Education Center, I had weathered a number of diplomatic storms associated with taking the agenda from “cultural lunches” to a well-rounded program, one that incorporated the nationally recognized Writing on the Wall Project, and keynote speakers such as Carol Moseley Braun, Winona LaDuke, and Angela Davis.

I thought I knew what to expect.

However nothing prepared me for the firestorm of opposition that resulted from a single article launched by the Associated Press newswire to major television networks and metropolitan newspapers nationwide. The a story combined two school media releases, one to the university’s external web site, the other to the press. The first announced that on March 4, 2005 the CWU Board of Trustees unanimously agreed to bar discrimination of transgender staff and students, becoming one of only 23 universities in the country to adopt the policy and honoring one of my department’s major initiatives. The second publicized our April 22-23 event, The Power of One: LGBT Leadership Conference. The result: front-page billing on Advocate.com, America’s leading LGBT news website with 4.2 million visits a year, and appearances in every major newspaper in the state. Calls from legislators, alumni, students, and local residents poured into the President and Alumni Relations offices and tied up my line in the days before the event. Of particular concern was the effect the resulting notoriety might have on the Washington State Legislature, which would be deliberating during the LGBT conference and allocating money to the state’s five public universities – including ours.

This long-simmering issue exploded against the backdrop of a string of local events that had attracted national media attention and spurred the need for the LGBT effort. CWU’s controversial 2002 production of The Laramie Project, a play based on the hate-crime murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay man attending the University of Wyoming, attracted a group of protestors from as faraway as the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, KS, and its godhatesfags.com Pastor Fred Phelps, whose placards read: “CWU ADMINISTRATORS ARE THE PIED PIPERS OF SATAN!” “GOD HATES FAGS! FAG-ENABLERS! & CWU!” The words sent a shiver down the spine of my colleague, Djordje Popovic, a former Yugoslav who had witnessed the deadly toll of such hatred in his war-torn birthplace. A counter-demonstration was launched by hundreds of local residents, who came to the picket line to celebrate tolerance under the banner, “LOVE ALL. HATE NONE.” Two years later, Phelps’s flock flew back as part of the months-long national media circus surrounding Rev. Karen Dammann, the openly gay minister at the First Methodist Church in Ellensburg who fought for her right to the pulpit.

These events and others had politicized and polarized the gay rights issue on campus. With the climate for a LGBT conference becoming white hot, student organizations, university departments and CWU personnel voiced concerns and visions of a more inclusive campus. Yet despite the passion that existed, LGBT efforts remained disjointed and limited in scope and possibility.

That’s when CWU decided to take-on the challenge.

Recognizing the need for a broad tri-state coalition and the opposition it might generate, my colleagues and I began the LGBT conference planning process a year in advance. We assessed the political climate on campus and in the region; addressed barriers internally and externally by recruiting allies; identified the need for nationally recognized speakers to diffuse potential criticism; and green-lighted the event through the offices of the president, student affairs, and police services. With all the groundwork complete, a student-led committee formed under the auspices of the University’s Diversity Education Center, the Center for Excellence in Leadership, and the Center for Student Empowerment (gender awareness) – a collaboration that drove event content.

For three inspiring days, 150 conference participants, representing more than 15 colleges and universities in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, focused on identifying important issues, building campus and community coalitions, developing political skills, and absorbing a vast array of resources and programming tips. Two keynote speakers, Shane L. Windmeyer, a nationally renowned campus bias and hate-
crime prevention specialist, and Elizabeth Birch, one of the country’s most visible gay rights activists, hit their chords perfectly and earned enthusiastic standing ovations, the former accompanied by a loud chant to “Stop the Hate.” Performances by the Seattle Women’s Chorus and singer/songwriter Magdalen Hsu-Li punctuated the event, which included 25 workshops centered around three important main tracks, Leadership, Ally Development and Gender Awareness, and one single message to get involved and take action. As a result, the participants, 30% of whom identified as non-LGBT, left each session with concrete ideas and detailed examples of programs they could implement.

The impact of the conference was immediate and, in some ways, unexpected, especially in the non-LGBT community. A week after the event, freshman Victor Ruiz, who identified himself at the event as a LGBT ally, ventured into my office and said, “I didn’t know what to expect when I signed up for the conference, but I know what I need to do, and I have a big responsibility.” This student is now using his budding leadership skills to implement an ally development workshop for the seasonal farm workers/migrant student population at Central.

As for all the pre-conference drama over the impact the LGBT conference might have on legislative budget allocations, it turned out to be, in the words of William Shakespeare, “Much Ado About Nothing.” Indeed, the timing of the conference proved serendipitous. When Keynote Speaker Elizabeth Birch, the former executive director of the Human Rights Campaign – the largest LGBT advocacy group in the world – heard Microsoft had withdrawn its support for legislation that would have outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation, she swung into action. In a very short time, the quick thinking activist rallied program participants around the issue, explained the finer points of inking letters of protest, and directed students to send their thoughts to Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and founder Bill Gates. She also mobilized her national resources, speed-dialing LGBT support groups, national news editors, and other powerful activists, and provided participants with a first-hand look at a leader at the top of her game. The result: a national outcry and a promise from Microsoft to support the legislation (which lost by one vote in the Washington State Senate) in 2006.

In the end, we accomplished so much more than anticipated, especially considering where we started. Three years ago, the CWU Diversity Education Center was an office with a desk, a chair and a straight, white, female employee who thought she could make a difference with the right support. Now I rely on three full-time staff, dozens of interns and student volunteers and a great number of organizational allies.

In a very real way, my journey, like so very many others, began with the power of one, and the LGBT Leadership Conference reflects that experience. Together, my colleagues and I established the beginning of intentional relationships between campus LGBT centers and embarked on a mission to identify and develop leaders, partnerships and internal/external allies. By taking responsibility and doing what was right, we received national recognition, earned respect within the gay community as an institution committed to supporting and recruiting LGBT students, and engaged directly in the movement to pressure Microsoft to reverse its stand. Perhaps most importantly, we created an annual event that will rotate between colleges and universities throughout the Northwest. Next year, the University of Washington’s Tacoma campus will host The Power of One: LGBT Leadership Conference – and the power of the people in attendance will expand exponentially.

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Learning by Design

Leadership and LGBT Students: Lessons Learned and Taught

By Ronni Sanlo

When I came out as a lesbian in 1979, I lost custody of my children, then ages 3 and 6, because my home state of Florida did not, and does not, allow lesbian and gay people to have children. I went from being someone’s wife and mother to becoming the executive director and lobbyist of the Florida Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Task Force in about 18 months, with no previous leadership experience. All I had going for me was a rage that fueled my passion to change the laws. I knew nothing about lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) history and nothing about leadership qualities. I had anger, I was out of the closet, and I had a mission. In short, I was perfect for the job, at least back then.

Over the years I have learned a thing or two about being a leader in the LGBT community and in higher education. I have learned from working with LGBT student leaders in both LGBT campus organizations and non-LGBT campus organizations. Here I will share some of these valuable lessons. My thoughts are likely applicable to other minority students as well since LGBT identity development (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Cass, 1979; Fassinger, 1998) and minority identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992) are very similar.

Lesson 1: Depending on where students are in their sexual identity development, they will have anger. Discourage students consumed by rage from being propelled into a positional leadership role. Their rage will only get in the way of sound judgment and not allow them to lead with love. It will demolish whatever sense of humor they had and turn others away from them. Encourage therapy.

Lesson 2: Discourage students from thinking they will get dates if they are in leadership positions. Frankly, students who are truly committed leaders have little time for a social life. Many students immerse themselves into their schoolwork, scholarship, leadership, and jobs. People may become attracted to their celebrity and strength as a leader but they become disenchanted when such leaders show their vulnerable, non-leadership selves. No one can be strong 100% of the time.

Lesson 3: If they have lost their sense of humor, make them go find it! It’s important to remember to do this work out of love, to have fun, and to laugh.

Lesson 4: Make sure your LGBT student leaders learn to LET GO. Yes, we know they can get X done quicker and better than anyone else because they know what they want and need, but organizations are many people, not just the leader. They MUST allow members of their organization to participate in order to have buy-in. Others may be slower or less perfect than the leader but they’ll have ownership, and their voices will be heard. The student leader will actually have followers.

Lesson 5: Don’t let leaders bad-mouth other LGBT leaders. Cannibalizing our own (Stevens, 1992) makes no sense and serves no purpose. It’s demoralizing and makes the leader seem whiny. On the other hand, don’t encourage your student leaders to emulate local, state, or national LGBT leaders just because of the position they hold. They may not be doing effective work.

Notice to Members:

Concepts & Connections volume 12, issue 3 introduced NCLP members to the Leadership Identity Development model (LID).

The grounded theory study that is the basis for the LID model was recently published in the Journal of College Student Development.


A PDF of Concepts & Connections 12.3 is available to members at: http://www.nclp.umd.edu/ under “publications.”
Lesson 7: Reflecting on Lesson 6, encourage your student leaders to be leaders because they love this great LGBT community of people. Help them become leaders who serve out of passion and desire for improving lives (Dreher, 1996; Kiechel, 1996; Spears, 1991), not because, as said earlier, being a leader is a great way to get dates. See Lesson 2.

Lesson 8: Most LGBT students just want an organization in which they may meet other people like themselves for socialization. Encourage your student leaders to make space for those folks as well as for those who have a desire to be more politically active on campus and in the community.

Lesson 9: Remind student leaders that their number one job on campus is to be a student. LGBT student leaders are more valuable to the movement with their degrees.

Lesson 10: Review Lessons 1-9 daily.

LGBT students go through the same developmental stages as every other student (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), but they have the added work of dealing with sexual identity development as well. LGBT students go through the same developmental stages as every other student (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), but they have the added work of dealing with sexual identity development as well.

"LGBT students go through the same developmental stages as every other student (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), but they have the added work of dealing with sexual identity development as well."

1. Develop a weekly or monthly roundtable discussion that focuses on personal issues versus organizational issues (Sanlo, 2000). Use these meetings to teach timely gems about leadership. Local LGBT community leaders are typically popular at these meetings.

2. Invite LGBT leaders who are not in LGBT organizations to the roundtable discussions. They may be dealing with sexual orientation issues also.

3. Be an active ally in your words and your actions. Always use inclusive language and remind leaders to do so as well.

4. Conduct LGBT-related training in all of your campus organizations (including the athletics department), and model the language and actions you want your students to use.

5. Finally, become familiar with LGBT resources for your students. Excellent websites are: The National Consortium of LGBT Center Directors at www.lgbtcampus.org; Campus PrideNet at www.campuspride.net; and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays at www.pflag.org.

References


Roni Sanlo is the director of the UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Campus Resource Center and author of numerous books and articles about LGBT campus students and issues. She is also a lecturer in the UCLA Graduate School of Education and a UCLA Faculty in Residence. She may be reached at sanlo@ucla.edu.
In the preface of *Gender identity and sexual orientation: Research, policy, and personal perspectives*, Ronni Sanlo points out, “Although there are many areas to be addressed in understanding LGBT work on campus, no road maps are available that clearly delineate how higher education and student affairs administrators should proceed” (p. 2). However, in this monograph, Sanlo and co-authors adeptly provide student affairs professionals, administrators, and faculty a concise yet comprehensive guide to understanding LGBT college students, staff, and faculty and the issues that often confront this population on college campuses. Sanlo and co-authors provide a great deal of information for student services professionals and faculty in 10 brief chapters that can be read easily in a short period of time.

In Chapter One, *Do Policies Matter?*, Zemsky and Sanlo present an overview of non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity. Explaining the positive impact non-discrimination policies have on improving campus climate for LGBT students, staff, and faculty, Zemsky and Sanlo note that non-discrimination policies create accountability for institutional claims of commitment to diversity and equality. The appendix to this chapter is extremely useful and practitioner-oriented, with examples from current policies of inclusion at four different types of institutions (small public, private, large public, and religiously affiliated).

In Chapter Two, Rankin describes the campus climate for sexual minorities, providing a review of the most recent and seminal research on LGBT students, staff, and faculty in the campus environment. Additionally, Rankin explains and provides results from her national study, which assessed the campus climate for LGBT students, staff, and faculty at 14 participating campuses. While some institutions have initiated programs (e.g., safe zone) and policies (e.g., domestic partner benefits) that help improve the campus climate for LGBT people, results from Rankin’s national assessment reveal the continuing need for institutional commitment and resources toward reducing the rate of harassment and violence in the university setting. In closing, Rankin offers suggestions for improving the campus climate.

Bilodeau and Renn provide an inclusive review of LGBT identity models in Chapter Three. Specifically, the authors examine and compare stage models and life-span (and other nonlinear) models on sexual orientation, and with respect to gender identity focus on diverse perspectives, medical and psychiatric perspectives, as well as feminist, postmodern, and queer theory perspectives. Strengths as well as a critique of each model for higher education practice are addressed. Additionally, the fluidity, complexity, and contradictions among the models is discussed.

In Chapter Four, Poynter and Washington examine the intersections of race, faith, and sexual orientation and the complexities that are associated with navigating development of multiple identities, particularly for those who belong to multiple minority groups. Poynter and Washington encourage an ongoing discussion, focused on developing supportive campus communities for students with multiple-minority identities. Their chapter concludes with a list of questions designed to foster dialogue on creating inclusive campus environments for multiple-minority students.

There is an increasing awareness of transgender issues on college campuses, as witnessed by the increasing number of academic institutions adding gender identity and/or gender expression to their non-discrimination policies. Awareness, however, does not result in an understanding of how to support and address the needs of transgender students, staff, and faculty. In Chapter Five, Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, and Tubbs provide what should be a “required” resource for institutions and practitioners in identifying and addressing the concerns of transgender students. Beemyn et al. discuss issues surrounding programming, educational programs, support services, inclusive policies, campus housing, bathrooms and locker rooms, counseling and health care, and college records and documents.

In Chapter Six, Ivory discusses the relative lack of research and literature focusing on sexual minorities at community colleges and highlights some of the obstacles to researching this population. Ivory identifies the transitory nature of students at community colleges as a critical obstacle to connecting with and providing services for LGBT students. Recommendations for researchers and practitioners in the unique community college environment are provided.
In Chapter Seven, Ryan provides an example of a campus community coming together to create a safe gathering space and center for the LGBT community. What started as a student-led initiative resulted in a joint venture between administrators and students. Ryan explains the evolution of this joint venture and how the **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs Services Guidelines: Self Assessment Guide** from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2001), coupled with a university wide diversity assessment, were used to demonstrate the need for the center.

Preparing future student affairs professionals who understand the complex issues and challenges for LGBT students is essential, because their leadership roles in the campus community position them to have a profound impact on the personal development of students. In Chapter Eight, Talbot and Viento address the need for including LGBT issues in student affairs graduate education. Additionally, they review a few select programs that currently include discussions of LGBT issues and close the chapter with recommendations for incorporating LGBT issues in graduate curricula.

In the final two chapters of the monograph, student affairs professionals share their experiences with the issues that LGBT students, staff, and faculty often confront in the campus environment. In Chapter Nine, Roper, a senior-level administrator with over 30 years of service in student affairs, reflects on his journey from a background with no visible exposure to LGBT issues to becoming a supportive leader and ally to the LGBT campus community. Roper inspires and challenges leaders to “… transform our leadership – by acquiring knowledge, skills, behaviors, and genuine care for LGBT students so that we put their needs at the center of our leadership” (p. 86). In Chapter Ten, Albin and Dungy share personal accounts, one from the perspective of a lesbian and one as an ally, of their respective journeys through their professional careers and how they navigated LGBT issues. Both Albin and Dungy incorporate their experiences with a national student affairs organization.

With this monograph, Sanlo and co-authors provide an excellent resource for understanding LGBT students, staff, and faculty and the issues that confront them in the campus environment. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated, “No society can long sustain itself unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills involved in caring for other human beings” (p. 53). Sanlo and co-authors echo this sentiment in their monograph and provide a number of recommendations and suggestions for higher education administrators, student affairs professionals, and faculty in addressing the needs and challenges unique to an LGBT campus community.

**References**


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Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)-focused organizations began to appear on college campuses nearly 40 years ago (D’Emilio, 1992; Mallory, 1998). Positive portrayals of developmental theory for LGBT persons began to develop over 25 years ago in the late 1970s (Cass, 1979; Troiden, 1979). It is somewhat surprising that few researchers or theorists have focused on LGBT college students’ leadership development in the following decades. As with the study of leadership tied to any specific population, this exploration requires knowledge of the needs of the population, of leadership in general, and of the population in concert with leadership issues. Only recently has the LGBT college experience been addressed in research, and attention to the particular issues of bisexuals and transgender individuals still remains virtually ignored. Yet, as Porter (1998) stated, “The higher education community has been an important arena for gay men and lesbians to begin the journey of discovering how their identity may shape both the personal and professional aspects of self” (p. 3). This article will provide an overview of select scholarship on LGBT leadership, provide some connections between LGBT identity development and its applicability to LGBT leadership, and identify resources for leadership educators.

**Lessons from LGBT Leadership Scholarship**

Research directly related to the LGBT experience is fairly slim. Quantitative methods prove challenging since random samples often do not identify enough LGBT students for analysis and campuses data bases do not typically contain sexual orientation as a descriptor. Qualitative methods may prove more useful. Sanlo (2002) provides a solid overview of LGBT issues related to leadership, but also advises that “LGBT students should not be erroneously relegated to LGBT organizations when, in fact, assimilation of LGBT students – many of whom are still closeted – into predominantly non-LGBT campus organizations is the norm” (p. 143). She also emphasizes that many LGBT students are struggling with multiple developmental issues and identities, that as “LGBT students come out on our campuses, they search first for self, then community. As their racial, ethnic, and sexual identities intersect, LGBT students must decide where to place their extra- or co-curricular time” (Sanlo, 2002, p. 141). LGBT students are as likely to be in a sorority, the Black Student Union or the Student Government Association as they are in the Pride Alliance. Leadership educators must address LGBT leadership issues in all these settings. Clearly, LGBT leadership issues cannot be solely focused on LGBT student organizations and other places we assume to find these students, although those settings may provide the best environment for leadership development.

Ohlott (2002), from the Center for Creative Leadership, reports compelling findings that individuals significantly benefit from single-identity leadership programs (she wrote about programs tailored for women and minorities) where they can freely express their points of view, take risks, discuss weaknesses, view difference as an asset, and learn coping strategies. She reports that two key lessons contributed to efficacy and validation: the student’s awareness that “I am not crazy” and “I am not alone.” Ohlott concludes, “Despite the controversy that still surrounds single-identity training, skeptical participants tend to emerge as converts” (p. 37). These findings support LGBT leadership development within the context of LGBT organizations.

**Involvement in LGBT student organizations does appear to have a positive impact on individuals both in terms of their self-identity as a leader and their self-identity as a LGBT individual.”**

Involvement in LGBT student organizations does appear to have a positive impact on individuals both in terms of their self-identity as a leader and their self-identity as a LGBT individual. Renn and Bilodeau (2005a) recently explored leadership identity development among LGBT student leaders using Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella and Osteen’s (2004) Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model. Renn and Bilodeau found that “the context of involvement with LGBT student activities provides rich opportunities for development in each of the six stages of the model” for all the students. It directly ties LGBT issues to an emerging model of student leadership. Another research study on LGBT leadership, initially presented by Renn and Bilodeau (2002), and formally published in 2005 (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005b) was a case study analysis of students engaged in the development of a LGBT conference. Their goal was to examine “the relationship between involvement in leadership of a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) student organization and student outcomes related to a) leadership development and b) LGBT identity.” Using D’Augelli’s (1994) model of identity...
development, Renn and Bilodeau tied D'Augelli’s processes of development to the activities of the students in the organization. They were able to find examples of students at different levels of development and concluded that involvement in LGBT leadership did contribute to the students’ LGBT identity development.

Writing about LGBT student organizations, Mallory (1998) recommends that any leadership development training needs to recognize the different roles that LGBT student organizations may play. These roles may be social, political, support-oriented, service-oriented, educational, or developmental (Mallory, 1998). She asserts that students in LGBT organizations can build skills in public speaking, learn to work with and organize groups of people, become familiar with campus resources, and gain self-confidence. Although these are skills that can be built in a variety of student organizations, LGBT students “may choose not to be involved in them for fear of rejection or harassment or may find the opportunity blocked by homophobia and discrimination” (Scott, 1991, p. 120).

Porter (1998b) connected leadership to LGBT issues through selected leadership theoretical frameworks, such as Burns’ transforming leadership, the Social Change Model, and the theory of Citizen-Leader, each of which is focused on change. “As LGBT students come together in a leadership development experience, they will undoubtedly begin to focus on change: change in the institution, change in their student organizations, and/or change in their local community or in the larger society” (Porter, 1998bp. 310). While Porter’s assertion may be true, it is also linked to LGBT students doing work related to LGBT issues, which isn’t always the case. Combining elements of both Sanlo and Porter might help frame LGBT leadership. It is important to recognize the presence of LGBT students in all university settings, but also to provide the necessary time and attention to LGBT students who are focused on issues most pertinent to their own community.

Porter’s (1998a) unpublished dissertation focused not only on the LGBT student experience within LGBT organizations and movements, but also sought to determine “how the process of sexual identity development may inform a lesbian or gay student’s confidence to engage in transforming leadership behaviors in the contexts of a primarily gay and/or lesbian organization as well as a primarily heterosexual organization” (p. 6). In this national study using convenience samples, Porter did not find any gender differences in his measures of transformational leadership self-efficacy, nor did he find that gay identity development played any significant predictive role in a student’s confidence to engage in transforming leadership behaviors related to primarily gay and/or lesbian organizations or primarily heterosexual organizations. That said, he did posit that “progression in identity development for gay and lesbian students might have an indirect effect on self-efficacy through the moderating variable of self-esteem” (Porter, 1998a, p. 146). It is a complicated picture (and a nuanced and complicated study) that asks that more research be done. The role of lesbian and gay development in the development of self-efficacy for leadership is still very murky.

Sanlo (2002) offered several issues to consider when planning LGBT leadership training. These include the size of the campus or group, the amount of isolation of LGBT students due to the progressive nature or location of the school, and the level of inclusion of LGBT students in larger leadership efforts. A more isolated LGBT population may require more intentional leadership development programs created specifically for them. On a campus that has many opportunities for involvement and where LGBT student leaders are well-represented in all kinds of student organizations, less direct attention may be necessary.

Leadership Theories and Models

There are a few leadership theories or models that inform the LGBT experience on campus. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development is perhaps the most applicable, with many elements that tie in nicely (HERI, 1996). The model “explicitly promotes the values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service” and “is designed to enhance the development of leadership qualities in all participants” (p. 18) regardless of whether they hold a formal leadership position or not. It is easy to see the connections to LGBT issues. The values of equity and social justice connect directly to the goals of many LGBT student organizations with advocacy and political goals. The values of self-knowledge and personal empowerment are supportive of the coming out process. The values of collaboration, citizenship, and service fit well for groups who strive to build coalitions, reach out to underserved populations, and promote an inclusive university culture.

Key Resources

There are several key resources for leadership educators interested in learning more about LGBT students. The Journal of Lesbian and Gay Issues in Education (www.jtsears.com/jgile.htm) provides an array of topics for primary, secondary, and higher education with an international focus. A new title in the Jossey-Bass series, New Directions for Student Services, entitled Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Research, Policy, and Personal Perspectives, focuses on LGBT issues in higher education, and is reviewed in this publication. The National Task for Lesbians and Gays has a comprehensive manual, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Campus Organizing, available free at www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/cam...
Scholarship and Research Updates

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pus/campusman.pdf. Other comprehensive books to consider would be Sanlo’s (1998) Working with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators and Sanlo, Rankin, and Schoenberg’s (2002) Our Place on Campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education. Finally, an issue of NCLP’s Leadership and Insights Series (Issue #8), Queer Leadership: GLBT Leaders, Leadership, and the Movement (Simpkins, 2001), focuses on LGBT leadership, connecting it to a few leadership theories and provides some practical advice for student affairs professionals.

Check out the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education (www.lgbtcampus.org), the home for materials pertaining to and support of LGBT support offices on campuses. You might also visit www.campuspride.net, a website dedicated to LGBT student leaders, and www.lambda10.com, focused on gay and lesbian issues within fraternities.

Summary

Almost any question that can be asked about leadership can be asked about LGBT students specifically. Most of our daily practice with LGBT students and leadership is based on research we have generalized to this population, with little LGBT specific research to back it up. The questions of what makes a LGBT student a good leader or what elements in an environment support or distract from leadership development for LGBT students are still largely mysteries. This does not mean that current literature, theories, and models cannot be used for this population. On the contrary, it means they must be used. There is enough known about the LGBT experience to extrapolate to good practices for leadership and enough known about leadership to extrapolate to good practice for LGBT students. There just is not a lot known about the true connection between these issues. It is our hope that future research will begin to fill in the gaps.

References


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Susan R. Komives is associate professor and program director in the College Student Personnel graduate program. She is also research and scholarship editor and co-founder of the NCLP.
New NCLP Publication Available Soon

Handbook for Student Leadership Programs

Edited by Susan Komives, John Dugan, Julie Owen and Craig Slack

Leadership educators frequently contact the NCLP for a range of information needed to guide the establishment or enhancement of their campus leadership programs. This forthcoming Handbook compiles timely information and resources in one useful book! Written by advanced graduate students and other leadership educators, the Handbook contains many practical examples, sample materials, and web resources.

Content includes:
Section 1: Developing a Campus Leadership Program
This section presents foundational material and resources useful in the design and assessment of the essential elements of campus leadership programs.

• Chapter 1: Bringing Leadership into Focus: Approaches, Lenses, and Models...includes a critical analysis of how leadership has been studied with a focus on servant leadership, the leadership challenge, the social change model, and the relational leadership model.

• Chapter 2: Leadership Learning Outcomes...includes identification of outcomes and how leadership is learned, including Kolb's experiential learning model and the leadership identity (LID) theory.

• Chapter 3: Structure, Design and Models of Student Leadership Programs...presents a new comprehensive model of program elements.

Section 2: Teaching and Developing Leadership
This section explores particular program designs and pedagogical dimensions in leadership education.

• Chapter 4: Teaching Leadership Topics...includes practical activities and lesson plans on teaching key topics such as leadership theory and the implementation of key theories like the social change model.

• Chapter 5: Experiential Leadership...explores the basis of experiential learning and reflection including activities to develop self awareness.

• Chapter 6: Leadership for Diverse Populations...provides key resources and perspectives for working with students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBT students.

• Chapter 7: Curricular Leadership Programs...presents a guide for designing a leadership course with sample course curricula, as well as information on leadership certificate programs, minors and majors.

• Chapter 8: Co-Curricular Leadership Programs...presents leadership approaches across the co-curriculum including workshops and other non-credit strategies.

Section 3: Making it all Happen
This section presents key material on implementing leadership programs.

• Chapter 9: Competencies for Leadership Educators...presents key resources for the various roles and competencies of leadership educators including mentoring, assessing, and teaching.

• Chapter 10: Funding Leadership Programs...presents resources on foundations that support leadership and case statements for use with individual donors.

• Chapter 11: Standards for Practice...overviews the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education as well as recent International Leadership Association work toward standards for leadership studies.

• Chapter 12: Assessment and Evaluation of Leadership Programs...contains an overview of numbers assessment models and instruments for individual and program assessment.

Section 4: Resources
...numerous models of practice, an annotated bibliography, and lists of associations, and conferences of interest to leadership educators.

Place your pre-publication order now: http://www.nclp.umd.edu under “Publications.”
The 2006 National Leadership Symposium is a professional development experience designed for faculty members, student affairs professionals, and other education practitioners involved with promoting college student leadership education. The National Leadership Symposium is a joint program coordinated and sponsored by the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) and the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP).

Given the intense learning environment of the Symposium (including required reading prior to attending), it is advised that participants have significant professional experience in leadership education. Registration is limited to 50 participants.

Conference Theme

In his 1990 book The Fifth Discipline, Peter Senge acknowledged that organizations can learn. An interdisciplinary perspective forms a foundation of basic principles for how organizations can learn and why leaders and members of organizations should care about learning organizations. Starting with Senge’s idea of the learning organization, but moving beyond it, the theme of the 2006 National Leadership Symposium is “Educating Tomorrow’s Leaders through Contemporary Learning Organizations.” What do today’s learning organizations look like? How are they created? How does technology influence how and if organizations learn?

Learning objectives of the 2006 symposium include:

• Understanding what contemporary learning organizations are
• Identifying barriers and avenues to creating learning organizations
• Being aware of the individual responsibilities in creating learning organizations: knowing the self, knowing members of the organization, engendering trust
• Differentiating groups, teams, and learning organizations
• Learning and practicing behaviors that encourage the creation of learning organizations

In order to fully participate in the Symposium experience, delegates are expected to read the following texts prior to the program:

• The Dance of Change, by Peter Senge
• The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By, by Carol S. Pearson, PH.D.
• The World Café, by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs
• Visual Thinking: Tools for Mapping Your Ideas, by Nancy Margulies and Christine Valenza

2006 Symposium Scholars-in-Residence

DR. MARIE A. CINI
Assistant Vice President for Academic Programs and Initiatives
City University, Vancouver British Columbia

NANCY MARGULIES
Mindscapes by Nancy
Montara, California

DR. CAROL PEARSON
Director, James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland

DR. GEORGE ROTH
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