

Inclusivity in Tertiary Institutions for Gender, Sex, and Sexuality diverse (GSSD) Staff and Students

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Outline

- Background to the research
- Research methods
- Strategies in the university space (based on the research results)

So what does gender, sex, and sexuality diversity mean?

- Gender: how you identify, e.g. as a woman, as non-binary
- Sex: biological characteristics of one's sex, e.g. vagina, ovaries, chromosomes
- Sexuality: who you are physically, spiritually and/or emotionally attracted to.
- Diversity: a state of being different, or a range of different things.
- What is considered “different” or “diverse” in society?
 - Variations of gender, sex characteristics, and sexualities that disrupt ‘normative’ categories and binaries, e.g. cisgender woman/man, heterosexuality

Background

- “The big thing is...providing [non-heterosexual people] with an environment they feel comfortable in. And if that [environment] is comfortable to come out and whatever. But that’s a very big ask isn’t it? Being able to provide that...”
(Residential Informant)
- A campus climate survey conducted at the University of Otago showed that most student participants in their survey thought the University of Otago was friendly and welcoming, however GSSD students highlighted a number of issues that needed addressing (Treharne et al., 2016).

Research Topic

- What is the current University of Waikato campus climate in relation to gender, sex, and sexuality diversity?
- If the campus climate needs improvement, how is this best achieved?
 - How can this be done in a way that upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, and best supports takatāpui and other groups that are minorities within the gender and sexuality diverse minority on campus?

Research Methods

	Stages		
	Focus Groups	Survey	Intervention
Purpose	To understand the campus climate as experienced by GSSD participants	To get an overarching understanding of the campus climate	To respond to issues highlighted in the focus groups and survey
Purpose #2	To inform the survey To inform the intervention	To inform the intervention	To inform staff and students about GSSD experiences on campus
Timeframe	A Semester 2018	B Semester 2018	2019
Participant criteria	GSSD staff member or student	Any staff member or student over 16 years	Staff members or students
Participants	FG = 5, n = 19 (students) FG = 2, n = 6 (staff)	N = 343	Yet to be confirmed

Ethnicity		Age		Sexuality	
Thai	1	18	4	Pansexual	3
Chinese	1	19	2	Gay	7
Asian	1	20	1	Asexual	5
Kiwi/Tongan	1	21	1	Bisexual	8
Indian	1	22	2	Lesbian	4
Māori	2	23	1	Queer	2
European	2	24	3	Fluid	1
NZ European/Pākehā	3	25	2	Homoromantic	1
English	3	31	1	Poly	1
Pākehā	5	35	1		
NZ European	7	38	1	Faculty	
		39	1	Arts and Social Sciences	14
		45	1	Science and Engineering	3
		47	1	Law	3
		48	1	Māori and Indigenous Studies	2
		54	1	Management School	1
		Blank	1	Education	1
				Other	4
Gender		Gender Pronouns		Assigned Sex at Birth	
Transgender	1	She, her	16	Male	9
Male	6	He, his	7	Female	18
Female	12	They, their	4	Intersex	1
Gender Questioning	1	Ze, hir	1		
Non-binary	3				
Feminine	1				
Takatāpui	1				
Gender Queer	1				
Woman	1				
Gender Diverse	2				

So how do the focus group results impact on the survey?

Due to the results, we included questions in the survey which focussed on points such as:

- How 'out' GSSD participants are in different spaces (e.g. the university, with friends, at work etc)
- How welcoming participants had found different services that the university provides
- Welcoming and unwelcoming experiences that participants had had on campus

Survey Demographics

- 343 participants
- The youngest person to complete the survey was 17 years old, and the oldest participant was 66 years old.
- The majority of participants, 76% (n=260) were students. 9% (n=32), selected that they were both a staff member and a student, and 12% (n=42) of participants were staff members only.
- Of the student participants, 89% were domestic students and 11% were international students.
- Broad range of ethnicities, with the larger groups being; Pākehā/NZ European (61%), Māori and Pākehā (10%), Pākehā and other identities (4%), Māori (3%), Chinese (3%), and other European (3%)

unsure (but not heterosexual)
prefer not to answer
polyamorous or non-monogamous
asexual heteroromantic
pansexual fluid
heterosexual/straight grey asexual
bisexual bicurious
lesbian gay homoromantic
demisexual queer takatāpui
bi/panromantic

transgender woman
takatāpui
gender questioning
non-binary femmeboi unsure
man/boy/tane woman of color
woman/girl/wahine intersex
agender feminine Pacific identity
masculine
Prefer not to answer
genderqueer
transgender man

So what can you do?

Based on the focus group and survey results.

Suggested Individual Strategies

“I think that being treated like a person like anyone else would improve my experience.” (SP)

“Teach and discuss respect and open-mindedness.” (SP)

“I have felt supported when people have asked openly about my relationship, and have actually asked whether I have a partner, rather than just asking if I have a husband.” (SP)

“I do find it very hard to always use the right pronouns and sometimes get it wrong. It takes time to relearn how to address students, but I think we all need to be much more conscious of who our discourses might exclude.” (SP)

Suggested Strategies in Classroom Spaces

"I had a class and we were told to separate by gender, and make two groups. And it was awkward for me because I didn't know what to do, and just had to pick." (Non-binary, takatāpui student)

"Had a class recently where there was [an ice breaker related to dating] and it's like, should I say- do I want to have the 'ohhh you're gay' thing. So it's kind of like that choice that you make, like do you want to deal with that today? Are you in that kind of mood?"

"Just being able to talk about my [same-sex partner] without fear of being judged feels good. Also learning about topics such as gender and sexuality in classes makes me feel heard and seen."

"[The lecturer] introduced herself by pointing out all the intersections in her life, which I thought was a really cool thing. I don't expect it of lecturers, but it was nice." (Student)

Suggested Cultural Strategies

“There are some staff who have no idea that they are engaging in discriminating behaviour or that their behaviour is offensive and upsetting to other staff and students...”

Although the university itself feels safe, [a colleague] doesn't feel comfortable being out or sharing their identity in [their department], and they are quite careful who they talk about it with.”

“Universities are inherently heteronormative as I believe most public spaces in New Zealand are reflective of the relative culture. My experiences with my sexuality are limited, but I have never found spaces to be unwelcoming, only heteronormative.”

“Develop a culture of acceptance and celebrate diversity.”

Questions?

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