

Gender Isn't Binary: Do Universities Recognize This?

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Overview

- Definitions and Manifestations
- Strategies for Creating More Inclusion
- Case: Admissions at Simmons College

Definitions (vary with historical and cultural context)

- **Transgender** – Umbrella term – gender identity and assigned gender are incongruent
 - *Transsexual* – persons who often seek surgical or chemical modification to live as the sex with which they identify
 - *Gender non-conforming/non-binary* – persons who identify as neither women nor men, a mixture of the two, or something else entirely
 - *Trans** - shortened version of transgender – adjective that references entire transgender community, including non-binary individuals
- *Note* – social identities intersect and these intersections influence how identity is experienced and understood. A trans* person's race, documentation status, social class, sexual orientation, ability status (and more) all impact how they are treated and understand themselves

Common Experiences for Transgender Faculty, Staff, and Students

- National Perspective (Higher Ed Focus)
 - 1 in 4 experienced sexual assault (AAU Campus Climate)
 - Abuse, including harassment, bullying and/or physical assault (Injustice at Every Turn)
 - Denial of
 - campus housing
 - gender appropriate housing
 - appropriate bathroom facilities
 - Microaggressive treatment, including misgendering (Nadal, Skolnik, & Wong)
 - Active and passive resistance to transitioning

Micro-aggressions: Bias in Action

- Interruptions
- Talked over
- Translations
- Called the wrong name or have your name repeatedly mis-pronounced
- Excluded by others
- Ideas discounted
- Target of staring
- Ignored

Typical Microaggressive Behaviors

○ **Statements:**

- Why don't you ever wear dresses?
- Are you a woman or a man?
- Shemale, tranny, he-she.
- I just don't understand why you'd want to mutilate your body.
- When referring to a person who identifies as transgender saying things like "She, he, it. Whatever."
- Have you had THE surgery?

○ **Behaviors:**

- Misgendering
- Hostility in restrooms ("predator" or "easy target")
- Staring or glaring
- Accusing trans* identified persons of being defensive or unjustifiably angry for addressing microaggressions
- Overt physical scrutiny coupled with comments such as: "Look at her face and she has breasts. That's not a man."

UW-L Work for Trans* Inclusivity

- Fall 2013 Task Force (Provost and VC of Student Affairs) – Overall evaluation
- Fall 2014 – Trans* Task Force Steering Committee formation with sub-task forces
 - Athletics
 - Education, Training, and Printed Materials
 - Health Care and Counseling
 - Name Usage/Inclusive Pronouns
 - Residence Life
 - Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Trans* Inclusive Policies Generated

- Gender Inclusive Housing
 - Returning students (1 Hall)
 - First years have to make special request and halls = more \$\$
- Restrooms
 - 1 gender neutral restroom per building, minimum
 - Consistent wording for gender neutral restrooms – All Gender Restroom
 - REC center provides gender neutral shower space in former “Family Changing Room”

Trans* Inclusive Policies Generated, cont.

- Admissions
 - Gender identity included on applications
- Preferred Names & Pronouns
 - Names – include preferred names in PeopleSoft
 - Pronouns – Student Affairs regularly state or ask PGPs (They/Them; She/Her, etc.)
- Medical Services
 - University Health Center administers pre-prescribed hormones
 - Counseling and Testing can provide students with a letter to begin hormone treatment, name change or surgery
 - Training with gender-inclusive medical professionals for Counseling and Testing staff

Resources (cited and/or for future)

- Association of American Universities (AAU) https://www.aau.edu/registration/public/PAdocs/Survey_Communication_9-18/Final_Report_9-18-15.pdf
- Campus Pride: Trans Policy Clearinghouse: <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/>
- Colleges and Universities that Allow Students to Change the Name and Gender on Campus Records: <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/records/>
- Colleges and Universities that Cover Transition-Related Medical Expenses Under Student Health Insurance: <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/student-health-insurance/>
- Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey: http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/NTDS_Report.pdf
- Lambda Legal Defense Fund: <http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/transgender/in-college-faq> and <http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/transgender/supporting-trans-students>
- Nadal, K.L., Skolnik, A., & Wong, Y. (2012). Interpersonal and systemic microaggressions toward transgender people: Implications for counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 6, 55-82.
- National Transgender Discrimination Survey: <http://www.transequality.org/issues/resources/national-transgender-discrimination-survey-full-report>