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Through the Looking Glass: A Trans Students' Internal and External Exploration of CSUMB Campus Climate

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Abstract

With transgender people coming out at younger and younger ages, and transphobia being strongly present in our society, it is important to give these individuals safe and welcoming places to learn. To find out how much of a safe, welcoming, and supportive place California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) is I interviewed several departments on campus and sent out surveys to students as well as documenting my own experience on my campus as a trans person. I used several theorists to analyze my findings and, by the end, I discovered that it was relatively safe compared to what I found in other reports, but was generally not really educated on the topic. There are several things that CSUMB can do in order to become more welcoming of transgender individuals, one of which, the increase of education on transgender issues, is already being worked on. There are many things that contribute to the transphobia that some individuals may harbor such as the perpetuation of stereotypes by mass media and religion, causing it to be increasingly difficult for these individuals to come out and be who they are.

Introduction

I got the idea for this project when I was exploring information on graduate schools. To help with my search I tried looking based on schools that were trans-friendly, though I was only able to find things that were Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) friendly. While this is certainly great, it is not very good for me as a trans person, as the acronym usage usually means they only look at LGB. Additionally, some people in the LGB community are transphobic, so a college having an LGBT center does not necessarily mean that they are trans-friendly. During my research I found many LGBT climate surveys and tried looking for transgender specific ones without finding any. So, to fill this void, I decided to make my own. With my capstone I want to explore the level of acceptance and support in measureable elements a central coast campus of the California State University system may have towards transgender students so that I can recommend in order to improve things for current and future trans-identified students.

There have been several of these attitude surveys that have been done on the basis of LGBT but they were not very transgender inclusive so you could not get a good sense of if that school was accepting of those individuals in particular. By “not transgender inclusive” I mean that they only really took into account lesbian, gay, and bisexual students so the questions did not cover anyone who was transgender. The issues are that there isn't much support for these students and, so, they feel isolated and even discriminated against. In order for these students to feel safe and welcome on college campuses there needs to be things in place to help them with their identity and even transition. This research project explores what the general attitude towards and level of support is for trans-identified students at a university in central coast California by utilizing the case of California State University, Monterey Bay. Most readers

would agree with the author that this is a very important topic that hasn't gotten much attention. I feel it is important that things to help these students should be put in place because they deserve to have the same opportunity to graduate, without the added stressors of transition and harassment from peers and faculty.

Having universities that are friendly and accepting of transgender individuals is vital because these students face discrimination and harassment in middle school, high school, and onwards. According to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) report "Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools" (2009), 90% of transgender students heard derogatory marks in school, 90% heard negative remarks about someone's gender expression. 87% of transgender students have been verbally harassed for their gender expression and over half (53%) have been physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) in school because of their gender expression. 26% of these students have been physically assaulted (e.g., kicked, punched, or injured with a weapon) because of their gender expression. 46% reported skipping a day at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Many of them had nowhere turn to in their school as only 44% said they had a student club that talked about LGBT issues. Additionally, only 46% were able to find anything related to LGBT people in their library and 31% were able to access this information on the school internet. Only 24% of students reported that their school anti-harassment policy had specific protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Due to these issues it is understandable that they did not want to go to college as 40% of those facing high levels of harassment based on their gender expression stated (Grant et al., 2011).

When they leave high school, or college if they choose to go onto higher education, they have to deal with people discriminating against them for their identity and appearance, as seen in

a report done by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey". This report had within many statistics that will be helpful for my capstone so that I can compare what I find to what is happening in the 'real world'. It also shows how important it is that colleges be trans-friendly, as a large percentage of transgender adults are in extreme poverty due to many discriminatory factors. Some statistics found in the report was that the sample was nearly four times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10,000 a year compared to the general population. 41% of respondents reported attempting suicide. This is a staggering figure next to the 1.6% of the general population. This number increased to 55% when they've lost a job due to bias, to 51% when they were harassed and bullied in school, to 61% when they were a victim of physical assault or had a low household income, and to 64% when they were a victim of sexual assault (Greytak, Kosciw, and Diaz, 2009). If these individuals had a good experience in college and were able to be who they were comfortably, they might have been able to avoid some of these issues.

Literature Review

A major thing that stood out in readings by Beemyn (2003 and 2005), McKinney (2005), Pusch (2005), and Nakamura (1998) was that many college students around the country face some of the same problems. They face peers, educators, and staff that are uneducated about the general topic of transgenderism. They also have to deal with problems with bathrooms, residence halls and locker rooms. If any of the transgender students wish to participate in sports or join a sorority or fraternity and they may face problems there as well. Staff at places such as health centers and counseling centers were also found to be uneducated, making them a scary place for transgender-

identified students to go to for help. Also, students who wish to transition during college and change their name in their school records find, more often than not, trouble trying to do so.

Transgender students feel like they do not have a place that they really fit on campus. Beemyn (2003 and 2005) finds out in her research that Campus LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) clubs, while they include them in the name, usually do not understand what being transgender is. Thus, these students feel like they do not count because they are so often overlooked. Also, transgendered students, since they are so often marginalized, tend to stay in the shadows so they cannot create any group of their own causing them to have this failed reliance on the LGB community. The transgender students who are more out with their identity find themselves educating those around them over and over again. When they have to deal with added stressors of schoolwork and family rejection – which was extremely common with these individuals – it usually became too much for them to handle.

Kogan (1997) and Nakamura (1998) have reported on attempts to fix some of the problems stated above. The more controversial topics (such as bathrooms and dorm rooms), however, may cause more problems when trying to be fixed. Some, like Kogan (1997), have proposed creating a third “other” bathroom which can cause those who use those bathrooms to be targets for harassment. Others proposed making all the bathrooms co-ed, which creates protests from females fearing for their safety from males using the same bathroom as them. Some ways that people have done it involve limiting the number of bathrooms the transgender person can use. For example, in Nakamura’s article (1998) she tells of one male-to-female individual who was told to use only the bathrooms on the first and third floor, leaving the second floor as a “safe zone” for those who were uncomfortable. Though it was a compromise that allowed her to use a bathroom, it was still largely discriminatory.

A study done on transgender portrayal in media by Joelle R. Ryan (2009) shows the possible reasons behind the negative views people may have towards transgender people. There were a number of different stereotypes frequently used, none of which were accurate. These included that they were individuals who deceive others, that they are monsters, that they exist simply to fix the problems of the more normative characters. The last category used was the new wave of documentaries and the idea of a "revolutionary" transgender person. There are very few examples of transgendered people who are like how many are in real life: normal people like anyone else with jobs and families. A study on transgender portrayal in news reports and found that there are differing ways that they are reported on, most of which are negative.

To better understand the implications of the evidence collected as I conducted this project I lean on Transgender theory, an approach that branches off of queer theory. Queer theory, on the other hand, branches off of feminist theory by rejecting the binary gender system both other theories had been based upon, stating that, instead, gender is a much more fluid reality. Nagoshi and Brzuzy (2010) explain how, while the male/female category still applies, there are shades of gray and options for either/or or even something else entirely. A paramount element of this theory is that sex and gender are two separate things. In our society, gender is traditionally binary and we are bestowed with one of two labels at birth, male or female, based on our genitalia, but some individuals reject what they have been called and feel as though they are something else. The work of Katrina Roen illuminates this issue. In her article (Roen, 2002) Roen shows a strong correlation with with Butler's theory of gender performativity, and states that people need to perform gender in order to conform to society's standards lest they be shunned by their peers. Roen has defined transgender as "seeking to challenge various aspects of the psychomedical construction of 'gender identity' and of transsexuality. Here, transgenderism may be understood as referring to a political

positioning that draws from post-modern notions of fluidity (for both bodies and genders).” What she means by that is that transsexuality is different from transgender but most people think of these two terms as equivalent. In reality the distinction is important: transsexuals are those who seek surgery because their gender identity does not match their biological sex and transgender is a broader term that can include transsexuals but generally refers to those who do not fit into our society’s binary gender distinctions. The difference is important because some people who identify as transgender may not want to change their body and have every right to be understood as who they are as anyone who is transsexual or, for that matter, cisgender, which “refers to a person who is not transgender” (Wentling, Schilt, Windsor, and Lucal, 2007) . For ease sake, in this paper I will be using the term transgender, or, sometimes the shortened “trans”, as an umbrella term for those who do not fit gender norms and may or may not wish to transition. Gender is more fluid than just male or female and those who are transgender can be somewhere in between these two, both of them simultaneously, neither of them, or something completely different. Roen discusses in her article that, even within the transgender culture, there are certain things that are and are not acceptable as far as gender presentation goes. The author refers to the case of a woman she talks to. She describes a support group meeting where all the transwomen were in dresses and trying their best to be as feminine as they can and then there was one transwoman who had a “balding head” who wasn’t fitting the “standard” the rest had set. In another interview the author found that “those who are successful at passing are seen as ‘real transsexuals,’ while anyone else may be excluded on the basis of being ‘just a cross-dresser’ who is still ‘in the closet’ and may be embarrassing to the group”. She also develops the “both/neither versus either/or debate” where both/neither means a transgender person refusing to fit within the dichotomous categories of man and woman set by our society, while either/or means a transsexual person trying to pass as either

a man or a woman. I believe both sides are valid and want different things. Though, they both seek to belong somewhere in our society

Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma is a critical theoretical component of my approach. He states that those that are out of the norm in some way often feel like others are treating them like criminals or even less than human. Understandably, people may try and hide whatever it is that makes them different which, for the transgender community, can lead to things like self-hate and internalized transphobia, which, in turn, can lead to depression and suicide. Goffman's theory explains why people on campus might not be as knowledgeable about what transgender means even if they know about what being gay or lesbian is, because transgender people are in a heavily stigmatized group in our country shown through things from television shows and movies to what rights they may or may not have in certain states. His theory helps to explain the statistics I discussed in the introduction about transgender discrimination in middle and high school as well as in the real world that show what these people have to face outside of college, making it very important for our campus to be a safe and welcoming place.

Judith Butler's (1988) theory of gender performativity explains that gender identity is only an outward expression of learned social behaviors. I will be trying to think about why I do or do not "perform" gender the way society expects me to in various examples of my own experiences and how not performing gender the "right" way has made things harder for me socially. I have learned, through reading various forum posts and such, that people are much stricter on transsexual individuals about their gender. For example, if a female-to-male identified individual enjoys some feminine things like romantic comedies or even the color pink, he is not man enough and, thus, he is not really be completely "sure" of his gender identity. Meanwhile, a cisgender male (that is, a person born male who identifies as male) can like either and still be

seen as male with no doubt. Butler uses a claim by Simone de Beauvoir which was that “one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman”, which suggests, Butler states, that gender is not a stable identity, it is an identity instilled through “a stylized repetition of acts” and is understood in how body gestures, movements, and enactments. She also talks about how feminist theory says that a woman’s social experience comes from their sex – “from some fact of their physiology”. “...feminist theorists have disputed casual explanations that assume that sex dictates or necessitates certain social meanings for women’s experience.” Butler states that gender is performative, or, “it is real only to the extent that it is preformed”. This performance is based on our biological sex, she believes. I do not agree with this statement and, I’m sure, many other transgender individuals would not agree as well, as it does not acknowledge that we even exist. Having said that, I still think I can lean on a revised version of her theory and use it alongside my autoethnography to explain why I ‘perform’ my gender the way I do. I’ll admit, some things I do are not because I actually act that way but because I want to be able to ‘pass’ as male in a situation so some of Butler’s points do make sense. However, gender is not tied into your sex organs but, rather, I believe it to be tied into my brain. This idea makes it possible for multiple genders to exist, as they do in other cultures and even our own, though those individuals are not as welcomed to be who they are in America today. A fairly believed upon definition of transgender is that it is an umbrella for multiple different terms such as transsexual, genderqueer, bigendered, third gendered intersexed, cross dresser, drag queen/king, and androgynous. One of these terms – transsexual – is what most people think of when they hear transgender. This individual is one that seeks to make their body congruous with their mental identity through surgical procedures and/or hormone treatments.

Methods

This project is aimed at representing the current culture in a central coast four year university regarding transgender students. I use largely qualitative methodology techniques in this project, including surveys, interviews and autoethnography as my main methods. I modeled my survey questions after existing ones, mostly from LGB climate surveys. I used a seven point Likert scale as well as open ended questions to try and get the most out of them. In order to get a good reflection on campus population, I wanted to use purposive stratified sampling to survey about 357 people so that I get a 5% confidence interval. The delayed approval of this project by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) committee meant that I had to use, instead, convenience sampling and ended up getting only 76 responses. I sent out the link to the survey form I created Google Documents through emails. These surveys will require me to use some quantitative methods to analyze them. There are many downsides to not being able to use the purposive stratified sampling, one of which is the possibility of not getting a good mix of people who go to CSUMB. Another problem with just sending out emails with the survey attached is that someone who is against the topic of transgender people might have just refused to take the survey, resulting in a loss of important information.

My interviews were done on departments within CSUMB that I feel are most important to know about in order to really get a good feel about what the level of safety and acceptance is at this school. I also picked them based on whether or not I interacted with them as a transgender person so I would be unable to have that part in my autoethnography as data. I interviewed one person from the athletics department, campus police, the campus health center, the personal growth and counseling center, the Otter Cross Cultural Center (here on out called the OC3), and two from the Housing Department. I asked them questions on their policies and if they have

anything in place to help a student who is transgender identified. I also ask if they have been through any trainings to be more sensitive of things such as this and any other questions I could think of related to their department. I used a semi-structured interviewing technique to do these to allow for more open ended questions and for any conversation to come up from the questions asked and answers given.

Since I am transgender, I made a methodological decision to base this project mainly on an autoethnography which is a rich method of data collection, though it is a bit controversial in the academic community. Essentially I am documenting my own experiences on this campus. This gives a more personal aspect to the project and gives more importance to the data I collect from the surveys and interviews. Since my goal is to find out the climate of the campus for future transgender students looking for a college, a good way for them to measure is by reading a personal account, though it is, by no means, what others may experience. I will be writing about things such as interactions with my peers, my professors, my experiences in the campus LGBT club, and things I did with said club, such as when we went to various classrooms to tell our stories, which caused me to interact with those outside my usual circle.

Autoethnography

I should preface this by saying that this is my own personal account. Like all other people, no transgender person is the same, and, so, no one should expect to have the same experience. I wasn't really out on campus but, at the same time, I was. That sentence does not make sense until I explain myself. In my classes I was pretty much just quiet and, while I thought about it, I didn't tell other students or my professors about my identity and wanting to be referred to by a different name and male pronouns. I did this because I did not want to risk them having something against me for that and my grades were more important to me than how comfortable I

was in my classes. On the flip side, I was very out in my club. Though there were some pronoun issues (more on that later) and I was very open about my transgender identity to those who asked. I also participated in going to various classes to share our coming out stories. I went to over twenty different classes and people seemed relatively open to listening to what I had to say. After we shared our stories we opened it up for questions and most of them were respectful, though I did get several asking about what I was going to do as far as surgery, which I felt slightly uncomfortable about answering, though I did so anyways, and another person asked for my birth name. Outside of the classroom presentations, I had one person ask me if I still had a vagina, which I felt really offended by, as that is not something people ask cisgender peers.

There is a big difference between acceptance and understanding. People, I've learned, can be blindly accepting even though they may not fully understand. This was my experience with the campus LGBT club, Out and About. When I arrived no one knew what it meant to be transgender. I even remember someone admitting to me later on that they believed it meant to be super gay. Nonetheless, the club members were willing to learn and were, for the most part, respectful of my identity. Because I wasn't very adamant about correcting people with their pronoun mistakes I got called by feminine pronouns quite often. In fact, for the first year a large majority of the club members kept referring to me with them, though new members did trickle in and didn't get the announcement I made at my first meeting. But, thanks to a couple of awesome people who were part of the club, there was a meeting held in which we discussed the topic of transgender identities and pronouns. After this there really weren't that many people who misgendered me, though there were a few slip ups. Though, I will wholeheartedly admit that, without this club, and especially a select few within it, I wouldn't have survived my last two years of college. Arriving at CSUMB fresh out of the transgender closet was a scary thing,

especially since I had spent the prior summer reading horror stories on what happens to trans youth in university. I made the mistake of focusing on telling of transphobia in the LGB community as that nearly made me chicken out in signing up for the club in the first place. I went halfway, however, and put down my birth name, fearing that, for some reason, they would “know” and I would regret it. I don’t know what it was that made me decide to be truthful and honest and come out to probably ten times the amount of people I’d come out to previously, not as huge a feat if I told you I had only come out to two other people before then, but when it was time for introductions I told everyone my chosen name and explained to them my gender identity, including my pronoun preferences. I was definitely not expecting the few nods that I got of understanding and an all around air of acceptance, but it was there and I was relieved.

However, there are still some things that they do that make me feel excluded such as when they call themselves a Gay-Straight Alliance. This, to me, excludes those who identify as transgender, bisexual, pansexual, or any other identities that are included in the LGBTQQIA etc community.

Though, for obvious reasons, I am out to my advisor and those in my capstone courses who proofread anything from this project, there was really only one instance where both lives collided. The fall semester of my senior year I came out to one of the only friends I managed to make in my classes. This was before I decided to go the autoethnographical route so, while it was strikingly obvious, there was not anything that stated my identity in my papers. I was not too worried about coming out to her. In fact, the only thing that I could think of that might sway my telling her was her reaction to Chaz Bono coming to speak to the campus when she simply said “that’s, uh.... Interesting” and I did not know if that was in a good or a bad sense. She took the news well and is now my biggest advocate, often times getting more worked up about issues than I do. She frequently tells me how it bothers her to have to refer to me by “Amanda” with our

advisor and how irritated she is with him not fixing the pronouns and name but, since I have not explicitly explained it to him about what it means to me, I am not as bothered by it.

After submitting my final draft for comments, my advisor commented on the previous paragraph, saying “Had you let me know some time ago of your chosen name I believe I would have switched pronouns” and that “even those that are respectful and supportive need a little hand no doubt”. He also added in a frowny face with “sorry” written next to it. Like I stated above, since I did not explain it to him I did not expect him, or any of my professors, to switch pronouns or names. If anything, it amused me and showed what he would do in the future if he has another transgender student. During subsequent meetings with him he stayed consistent with my chosen name and preferred pronouns and urged me to put “Finn” down as my name on my poster for the capstone festival.

I also attended the LGBT support group on campus. I did this mostly to support and offer advice to other people who attended but I did talk about my own experiences and troubles that I may have been having. I felt like I was doing a bit more educating than I should have but, overall, I think that it was helpful and is a great place to go to if one has questions. Since the group was filled with people that I knew already I felt pretty comfortable sharing things. However, there were times that I was the only person who showed up, besides the facilitators, and this made me very uncomfortable but I was not forced to use all that time and could leave if I wanted to.

I have not faced much transphobia among my peers other than the pronoun problems among some of those I have come out to. Only one instance comes to mind when I think of transphobic language and it is of something that a professor said. He was talking about his trip to a conference and how he and another scholar were discussing a book and that they let someone

submit their part late. In order to do so they had to stop the presses so he remarked that that individual owed them big time. The individual he was with said that he owed them a drink and owed my professor “a shemale” and the class laughed. He made said the word again a bit later when saying that the person gave them what he owes them “except the shemale” and the class laughs again. In the next class that I had with this professor he recounted the same story again, this time taking out the comment so I do not know if he learned his lesson or what. I talked with my interviewee at the Otter Cross Cultural Center (more explained about this individual below) after both classes and they sent him an email explaining to him that he had a student in his class that identified as transgender (not using my name) and that they found it offensive. A week or so later, he responded, stating that the comment was him just restating what someone else had said, which I knew but still think that he could have left it out, but he will try to make sure that it will not happen again and that he is glad that it was brought to his attention.

I suppose my own hesitation about coming out and correcting people stems from Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma. From a young age I had been instilled with this idea that transgender people are freaks and somehow wrong. I had friends that made fun of a transgender individual and that experience really stuck with me. Though I do not believe that concerning other transgender or transsexual individuals, I still have some internalized transphobia that is lingering aimed on myself. However, it is diminishing everyday as I become more and more comfortable with my body during my transition. Part of my reasons for believing that this campus is very accepting is due to the stark contrast to my own hometown. Where I am from is very conservative. In fact, it is sometimes called the bible-belt of Southern California as there are several churches in the area. I could tell a big difference because when I would go out in

Temecula I would get frequently glared at because I so obviously did not fit the gender norms. In Monterey County, I notice far fewer of these looks, though they are still present.

Growing up, I went against gender norms all the time. I never “performed” my birth gender correctly. While many girls are tomboys in their preteen/teenage years, I never grew out of that. In fact, it made me absolutely uncomfortable to wear any feminine clothing for as long as I can remember. If I were to do so now it would feel like cross dressing, though not in any fun way. On the other hand, I do not perform gender completely as a male either. I have pink bed sheets and love romantic comedies, which is something that a lot of males do not (or would not admit to). Having not been raised as a boy, I feel I have missed out on any socialization or teachings that would enable me to act the way many males my age do.

I have also been to a few events that have at least touched on the topic of transgender people. One big event was when Chaz Bono came to campus to tell his story and educate people and, while it was a pretty packed event, I think most people came because he is a celebrity rather than to be educated on the issue so who knows how many people took something away from it. Another one is a trans speaker that my club Out and About brought for the Transgender Day of Remembrance in November of 2011 where he shared his story and did some education, as well as a question and answer session afterwards. During the last few weeks of the Spring 2012 semester was an event talking about inclusivity of the LGBT community in Greek life. The person “hosting” the event was very knowledgeable of trans issues and was sure to keep them included in the issue, even when the event was called “Gay and Greek”. Questions were brought up about the possibility of transgender people participating in Greek life and, sadly, it seemed that there were issues there. This, however, is a problem with the Greek system in general, and not strictly CSUMB. Someone from the Activities department was there and stated that they

were willing to work with a transgender individual if they wanted to join a Greek organization to try and find a right fit. In fact, that person came up to me afterwards and said that I was welcome to talk to them whenever if I was interested in trying to join one. Unfortunately, I am graduating or else I would have definitely jumped on that offer as one of the things that I regret not doing is trying to join a fraternity. The idea of being in a male only space and being accepted as one of them is very appealing to me and I think it would have helped me a lot in my transition if I had accepting fraternity members. I definitely feel like I missed out on a once in a lifetime opportunity and I hope that anyone who is transgender and wants to attend any college does not let whatever gender they were assigned at birth dictate what they can and cannot do.

I also met with a trans professor for a meeting about advice on my transition and how to finance surgery. He was very easy to talk to and had some great advice. The reason behind me speaking with him was because I had asked someone else about fundraising on campus and it turned out there were some issues with me being able to do that so she brought him in for a meeting and we came up with some ideas about how to get around that. They both were even willing to help me after graduation, something I was very surprised about because I would no longer be a student and they would have no obligation to help me.

There's also several experiences I had in doing this capstone. When I had to set up an appointment with someone at the counseling department I decided to give them my chosen name since the person that I interviewed already knew me by that name. When they asked for a name I paused and asked them if it had to be a name that the school has me under. They laughed a bit and were a bit confused about the request but then I explained that I am transgender and that I prefer to go by another name. After that she worked with me and used Finn throughout the phone interaction and only used Amanda as saying that that will be where the reminder email will be

sent. A week or so later, when I went up and said I had an appointment, the receptionist looked at her computer and said "you are Finn?", showing me that she had some sort of written indication to my preferred name. I also sat in on a psychology class when they were on the chapter that discussed Gender Identity Disorder. The professor brought in the same guest speaker who Out and About had for the Transgender Day of Remembrance event. This was, in my opinion, an excellent decision because she brought in an expert on a very sensitive topic so that, when the students had questions, they were able to be answered accurately.

Findings

Interviews

The interviews I conducted were especially helpful to determine the level of acceptance on this campus. The athletics department, or at least the person I interviewed was pretty trans-friendly but not that well educated about anything that might happen in the department if someone who is transgender were to join a team, as they have not had yet. However, they assured me that, if that were to happen, they would work with the individual so that they can have the same experience as the other athletes in everything from what team they get to play on to locker rooms and away games. They also said they would try and educate team mates of that individual so that everyone gets along and is comfortable with the situation. They are willing to reach out to those on campus more educated about this issue if the need comes up.

The person I met at the Campus Police Department was very easy to talk to and seemed fine with the topic. They said that there were no reported transphobic incidents, but there was one homophobic incident "in which someone wrote the word 'fag' on somebody's door". They do not have any policies specific to transgender people nor have they gone through sensitivity training or education about them but they "would only benefit from... getting more information".

When asked their opinion of transgender individuals, the interviewee stated that they are “perfectly comfortable with it, yeah, I would hope that my officers are either perfectly comfortable with it or would treat somebody exactly like they treat anyone else, just being more sensitive to that issue if it were a part of why we were there.” When asked about the perceived level of acceptance, they responded that “they’re just people who are police officers. There’s varying levels of acceptance. I would hope – we try very hard, because we know where we work, to hire people who are... tend to be a little more tolerant, a little more patient, a little more understanding”. In addition to that, they said that they “would not tolerate an officer who didn’t have a high level of tolerance” which is comforting to know, as I have heard of instances where people just turn the other cheek.

Understandably, the most trans-friendly and educated about the topic was the OC3, considering it is the closest thing to an LGBT center the campus has. The person I interviewed was knowledgeable about the topic. The OC3 had not done any programming surrounding transgender issues but, considering they are still in their infancy, that is fine. I was told that they are planning “Transgender November” for the fall of 2012 where they would be focusing on transgender issues throughout the month of November. As I have personally experienced, the OC3 is a safe space where anyone can go at any time and be themselves. I could barely finish the question about how they would rate the level of acceptance in this department when they exuberantly exclaimed “ten!” out of ten. So far, no transgender students except for myself have come to the OC3 so they have not really had to deal with any situations, though they are wholeheartedly willing to handle any transgender related roommate dispute, a transphobic staff or faculty member, or just anything that student needs. As I have stated previously, the OC3 is a

new place so there are not many resources available right now in general. However, there are a few pamphlets available that talk about transgender issues.

The housing department has worked with two transgender students in the past to find what works best for that student. They did not have specific written policies about transgender students but they said they would do their best to “treat every student as equitably and fairly as we can”. There are no gender neutral housing available for students below 21 years of age. They have not addressed the gender neutral housing on the main campus, as, thus far, because they’ve only been asked about it twice in about ten years. They were involved in some professional organizations that discuss these issues so they have been exposed to information about options about transgender housing. Not mentioned in the interview was something I found on the school website. The CSUMB Student Housing and Residential Life Community Standards states that “...intimidation, discrimination, or any form of harassment based upon... sex, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation... is a violation of Student Housing & Residential Life Community Standards, and is subject to conduct action.” This makes it so that transgender students are protected, like any other minority student, in their housing area. It is very important for things like this to exist because the dorms are supposed to be the student’s home away from home and they should feel safe there. If they do not feel safe, they are much more likely to drop out, subjecting them to become one of the above statistics.

The person I interviewed at the Campus Health Center said that there was a previous transgender student that came in and got help but they were not there at that time so they did not know the details. They were very open and accepting to the topic and were somewhat knowledgeable but they didn’t “particularly have a lot of information here but I know that the counseling center next door does. So, generally what we would do is we would refer to them”.

When I gave them a scenario of someone coming identifying as male but needing feminine health care, such as a pap smear, they said they would “sit down and just discuss, you know, what they were feeling, or what they wanted and I would, you know, I would treat them to the best of my ability...”. They also explained that people in the Campus Health Center would be very accepting and that “we’ve had many conversations about it... because we never really know who’s going to walk through our door”. To further emphasize how welcome this department is, the interviewee had this to say:

I want this health center to be a place where any student feels comfortable to come no matter what their issue is because, you know, it’s – it’s scary to have something going on that you can’t feel like you can share with others or if you have questions and you don’t know who to ask I mean I’m very open. I don’t mind, I will talk about anything. Nothing much embarrasses me. Nothing much stresses me out. I grew up with all kinds of different people in my life over the years so, I mean, I just want them – people to know that we’re very open here and we can help. I mean, maybe we can’t give exactly the treatment that patients need but we can certainly work with them to try and figure out where they can go get that help.

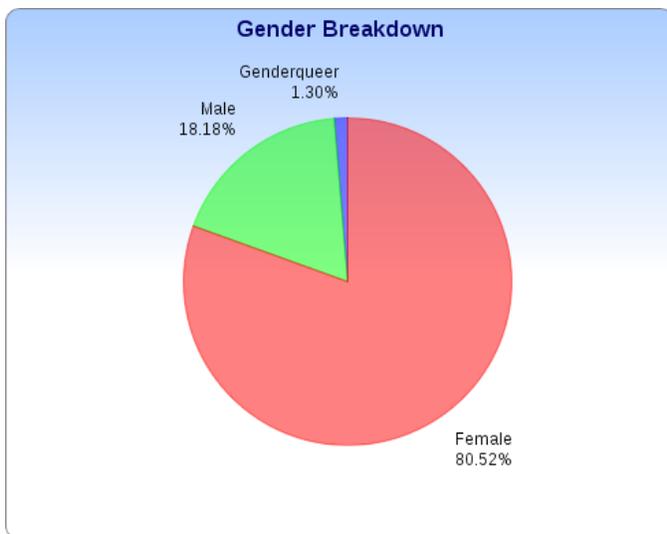
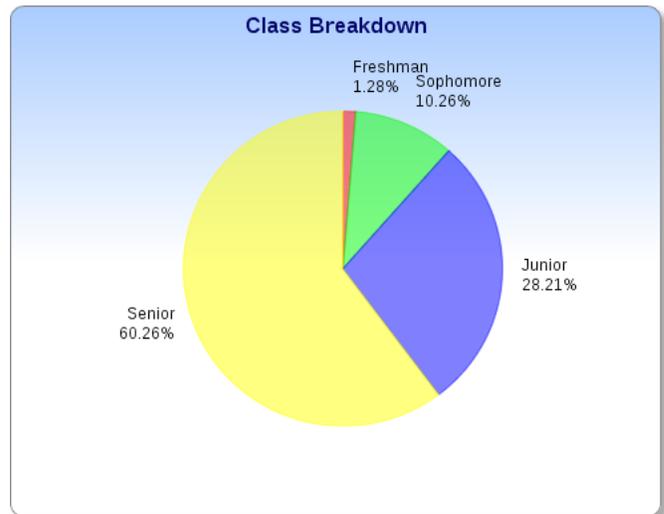
Also, though CSUMB has health insurance available to students, they were not sure if things like hormone treatments were covered under it.

The Personal Growth and Counseling Center was knowledgeable about the topic and very accepting. I know this from personal experience, as there was someone from the PGCC that facilitates the LGBT support group on campus, which I went to often. This experience is documented in the autoethnography section of this paper. When asked if they had transgender students come for help in the past, they said there were three. They were able to help them and “...referred one of the persons out and that person got services in the community...” They felt that it was “...very brave to go to ask these questions and to express yourself in a non-conformed way – with anybody who does that, regardless of why they do it and a transgender person does it because they are, you know, not in – don’t agree with the gender they are born.” They had also

taken steps to be prepared to deal with transgender students asking for help by doing “a little bit of education for myself by reading – but, you know, um, talking about this recently more has definitely motivated to get more educated.” At the end of the interview, the interviewee showed me some pamphlets and papers available about transgender including: A flyer to a transsexual support group (the one I am currently in), a paper about how to be a transgender ally, and a pamphlet about what it means to be transgender.

Surveys

Seventy-seven students responded to surveys, the results of the Likert question section can be found in Appendix B. There was no noticeable difference between ages, class ranking, or ethnicity. The females were much more accepting than males by over twelve percent, though there was an overwhelming majority of female respondents. Most of them seem



relatively positive, most of which scoring over 80% when I added their responses and divided the total by the total possible score. It appears, however, that some people are more uncomfortable with the idea of androgyny. With the short answer questions they seem at least slightly knowledgeable about what being

transgender means. A few people think that you have to have a full sex-change before being

classified as transgender while others were pretty in depth about their understanding of the term.

Only one respondent out of 77 had a wholly negative opinion that would be classified as

transphobic, saying that being transgender was “changing your natural gender” and that he

believes it is a choice because he “believe[s]

in nurture over nature”. As far as a

roommate situation with him he said that, if

his roommate were to ask him to use

different pronouns and name he would

“think that they are not thinking clearly”.

When asked about how he would feel using

the same public restroom as someone who

was transgender he stated that “that is not

OK. People are born a specific gender, or sex, for a reason. I would not consider someone who is

born a woman a man, ever. That is why I would not like them in a men’s restroom.” But this

negative response was well outweighed by the positive. Many respondents believed that it was

not a choice, saying things like “nobody would choose to be part of a marginalized community”

and that they didn’t believe it is a choice because “most of them have internal feelings that they

were meant to be the opposite sex”. I noticed a lot of answers stated something along the lines of

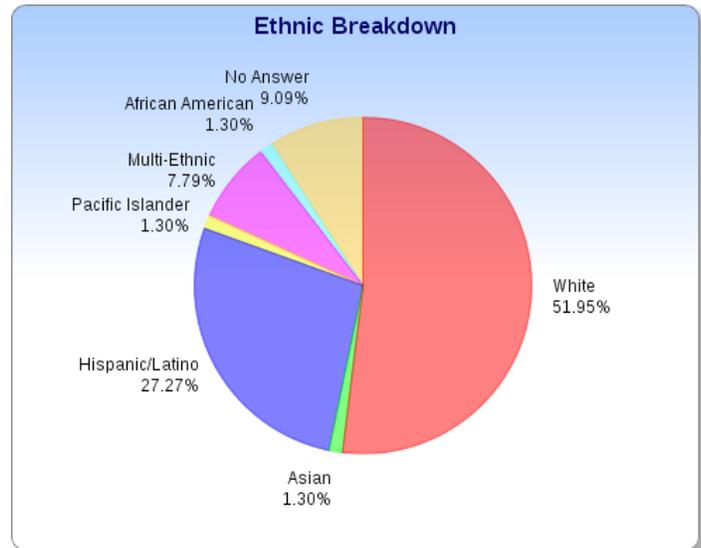
“being born in the wrong body”. This is a common way for transgender people to describe how

they feel to cisgender people because it is the easiest way to say it that makes sense.

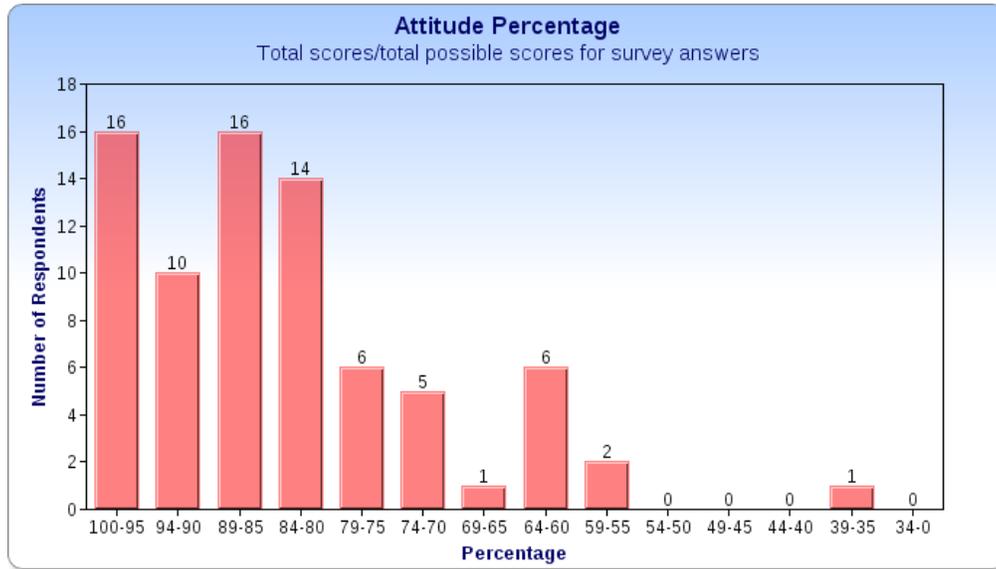
When asked how they would feel about having a roommate that was transgender one

person said that at first it would be “weird having to adopt to the change but I would respect that

decision” while another person stated that she “would feel uncomfortable being placed in a room



with a girl who identifies herself as male, because I would have expected to be roommates with someone who identifies as female”. Others said that they “would be completely fine” and that they “would say ‘awesome’ and use the pronouns that they wanted me to use”. One girl said that



“I wouldn’t be there [sic] roommate. It’s weird and it would make me uncomfortable and my home is suppose [sic] to be a place where I can be myself. However

politically correct or not I am.” While this point of view is fine because each person has their own needs and wants, especially when having to room with someone for a whole year in a small room, this would create problems if someone who was transgender were to be paired up with someone like that. This is why it is important to have certain departments on campus, such as the housing department and the cross cultural center, to be educated and willing to help sort through these kinds of situations.

As far as bathroom issues go most seemed to be fine with it, as it is something everyone needs to do and people do not seem to spend too much time in there. One person summarized this point of view rather humorously, stating that “...everyone has the right to go pee!!” Others have said that they wouldn’t mind or it “would not affect me, so long as they didn’t pee on the floor” and that “they should be allowed to use that bathroom of their choice”. Aside from the

negative view stated above, a few people have said that they would feel “uncomfortable”, “weird”, or “awkward” sharing a bathroom with someone that they knew was transgender while one female responded that “if the transgender student is a female, but preferred male and is using the woman restroom is fine, not the other way around”.

Discussion

With the interviews and short answer survey questions asked, many of the people used the definition of transsexual for transgender, as was touched on with Roen's theory. While transsexual is one thing that falls under the transgender umbrella, it is not all that is there and thinking so denies the existence of these people that do not conform to traditional gender roles that are in our society. However, I am not basing the results on how much people know about transgender people, I'm basing it on their attitudes towards them and how much they would treat them as normal or not. Basically, if a transgender student were to come to our campus and have everybody at least have a general idea of what it is, whether or not it is completely accurate, and be okay with it then at least that transperson is safe and free to be who they are, even if they have to educate those around more in depth about what it means to be someone like them.

Based on my results with interviews and student surveys I would say only a minority show evidence of there being a stigma on transgender people. This stigma can also be the cause of the lack of education. This is because the stigma makes it hard for people who are transgender to be vocal about who they are so that cuts back on the amount of visibility. With decreased visibility due to social stigma, people sometimes do not even hear the term until they reach college, if professors even bring up the topic. Stigma also plays a part in how professors approach the topic. If they have a negative viewpoint, they can influence their students' ideas about these individuals, if they had not had their own ideas really formed. On this campus,

however, it seems that staff and the faculty that I interacted with have had an accepting attitude, while maybe not wholly educated about it. There is a way to get around this, as I have seen, and have someone who is educated come and talk about it, like what happened with the one class I sat in on. This kind of sensitivity in dealing with the issue can help diminish this stigma. Even if it is only on a small campus level, this can be spread through those students who can affect change wherever they go.

There are some similarities between the things reported in the literature review and CSUMB. For example, there are few gender neutral bathrooms available on campus and the only transgender student I had contact with during this research, meaning myself, felt unsafe using gendered bathrooms on campus. Also, faculty and staff are not as educated as they could be about the topic. However, there are some very good dissimilarities. The housing office appeared very willing to work with transgender students to find a housing situation that would fit most comfortably for them, which is better than a lot of other campus would do.

Conclusion

Looking at all of the results that I have obtained, I would say that the climate of this campus is mostly accepting, especially when compared to the findings in the various literature I reviewed on the subject. However, this campus can still use education and a few different tweaks. A large majority of the scores were fairly positive and, when thinking about the population this survey was about, this is a very good turnout, compared to the rest of society's opinions on the group.

Those that I surveyed seemed to be fine with the idea of people being transgender and they don't feel as though they have a right to say what rights transgender individuals can have, but some respondents were not comfortable with the idea of someone close to them being

transgender. Given the fact that there are a several transgender students and faculty members and there has not been any incidents that I have become aware of, I would say that this campus is safe for transgender students to come, though it might not be the best place if a student is looking for a place that is educated widely about this topic. Of course, something to keep in mind is that I was not completely thorough in getting interviews from every department or even from professors so there are certain areas which were skipped. Also, the student surveys were not very fitting with the demographics of the school so I could have missed some important information based on those people.

There are many things in our society that perpetuate transphobia. People are taught by the media, religious figures, teachers, and parents that transgender individuals are somehow wrong or immoral and are to be made fun of or even hurt. Television shows such as the Jerry Springer Show and Jersey Shore cast a negative light on transgender individuals, showing them to be less than human. This is not to say, however, that there are no positive images of transgender people out there. Chaz Bono appearing on Dancing With the Stars recently helped to open up a dialogue about it, while Degrassi, a popular teen show, has a main character who is a pretty accurately portrayed female-to-male individual. There are several movies, such as Boys Don't Cry and A Girl Like Me: The Gwen Arajo Story, that show a dramatization of real life examples of transpeople who have been murdered due to transphobia. News reports are pretty fifty-fifty when it comes to this issue, however, with some being extremely transphobic while the others are fair to the transgender person or the topic in general. Some media reports of transphobic attacks have sometimes put blame on the transgender person, saying that if they were not like that, they would not have been attacked. This is the reason why I put that question in my survey and, according to students, it is an almost unanimous opinion that this is not true.

Even video games, something that is common in a college culture, plays its own part, though it is rarely positive. One of the most popular games, Grand Theft Auto IV, has some transphobic language, including the use of the word “tranny” and the perpetuation of the idea that transsexuals are not human but exist solely as sexual objects. This is an idea that is rampant in the pornography industry, something that is very popular among college-aged individuals as well.

There are a number of things that CSUMB can do to improve the overall climate of the campus for transgender students. One of the more important thing is to add more gender neutral bathrooms to the campus. Thus far I have only heard of there being two of them. Like it was discussed with the interview with the OC3, there should be a gender neutral bathroom in the Student Center. Also, I think that some classroom buildings and maybe the University Center should add some as well. Also, there are currently no gender neutral dorm options for those who cannot go into east campus. I think that the housing department should try to have at least one floor of a main campus building set aside for gender neutral dorm rooms so that those who are freshmen or those that just do not want to move to east campus, can have the option of living in gender neutral housing. They should get policies in place at each department. Though the individuals I interviewed were open and accepting and seemed to have or would in the future deal with a situation positively, it is unlikely they would stay in their position forever, so setting up trans-friendly policies now protects students in the future.

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Appendix A – Survey Questions

CSUMB Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals

Please consider being part of this survey. The purpose of this capstone project is to gauge CSUMB students' attitudes towards transgender identified people. By taking part of this survey you are giving your consent to use your responses. Please do not write your name or email, as all surveys are anonymous. All questions are optional but it is greatly appreciated if you fill out as much as you can, though you can stop taking part of the survey at any time. This survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, you can email me at ammcmillan@csumb.edu. Thank you for your responses!

How much do you agree/disagree with the following statements? Please choose your answers where 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Neutral, 5=Somewhat Disagree, 6=Disagree, 7=Strongly Disagree

1. I am uncomfortable being around transgender individuals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Transgender people should be allowed to get married

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. There is something mentally wrong with people who are transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Transgender people should be allowed to change their names.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I would feel uncomfortable if I was on the same sports team as someone who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I think it's fine if someone says they are neither a man nor a woman.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I would feel uncomfortable if there was someone in my class who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I would be comfortable having a friend who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. If someone gets killed because of transphobia (someone killed them because they are transgender) then that transgender person deserved it somehow.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Transgender people should be allowed to take hormones of the opposite sex.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I would be uncomfortable working with someone who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Transgender people should be allowed to change their gender marker.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Transgender people are morally wrong.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Transgender people should be allowed to undergo surgery to change their genitals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. When I meet someone, it is important for me to be able to identify them as a man or a woman.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Someone who is transgender identified should be allowed to teach children.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I would be comfortable dating someone who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. I would be upset if someone I'd known for a long time revealed to me that they were born another sex than I know them as.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. I would feel fine if I shared a dorm room with someone who is transgender.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. A person's genitals define what gender they are, e.g., a penis defines a person as being a man, a vagina defines a person as being a woman

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. Transgender people should be allowed to adopt children.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please write down your responses to the following questions as thoroughly as possible

What does being transgender mean?

Do you believe that these individuals are transgender by choice? Why/why not?

How would you react if you had a roommate who wanted to use different pronouns and a different name than they are signed up at school with? Please explain.

How would you feel using the same public bathroom as a transgender student? Please explain.

What is your age? _____

What is your gender identity? _____

What year are you? Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Do you live on campus? Yes No

Please state your ethnicity. _____

What is your religion? _____

What state/country are you from? _____

What political party do you affiliate with? Democrat Republican Independent Other:_____

Your parents? Democrat Republican Independent Other: _____

Approximately, what is your parent's yearly income level? Please choose one.

\$0 – \$25,000

\$25,000 – \$50,000

\$50,000 – \$75,000

\$75,000 – \$100,000

\$100,000 – \$150,000

\$150,000 – \$200,000

\$200,000 – \$250,000

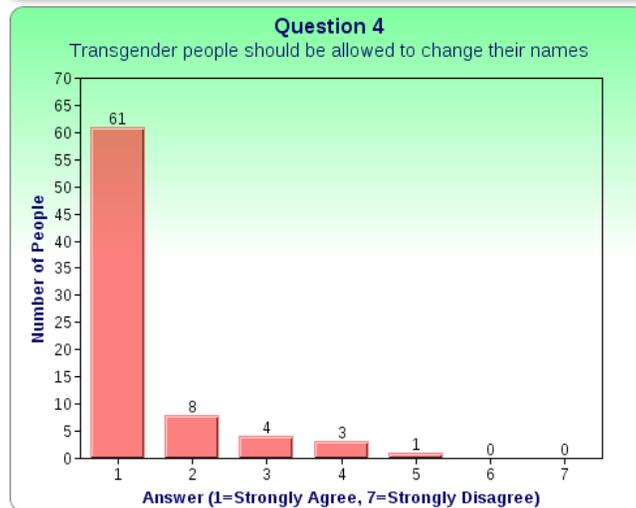
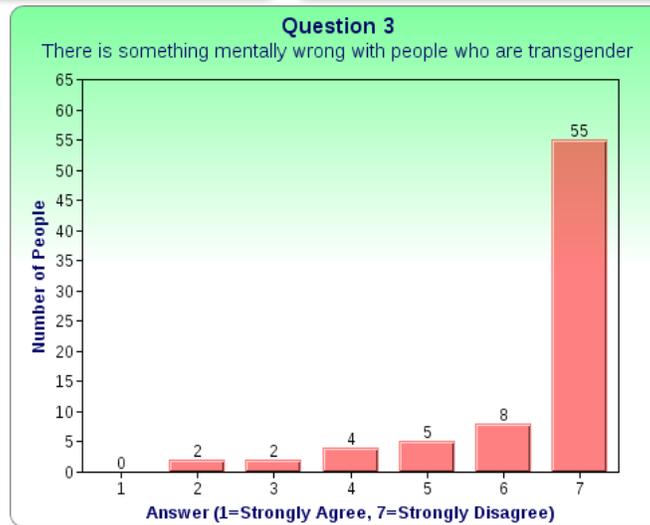
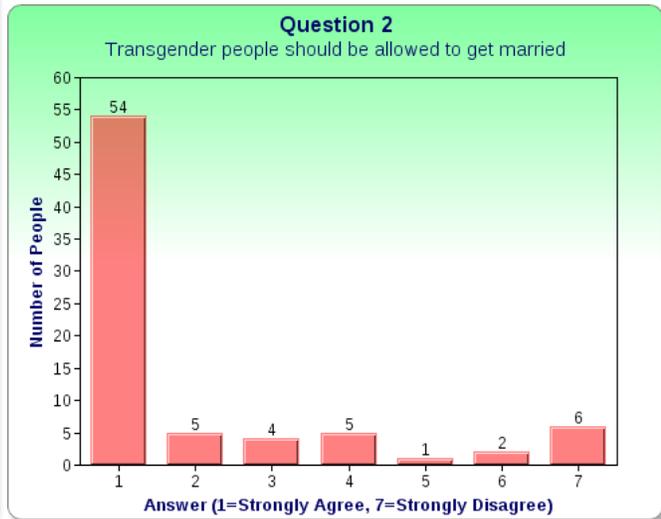
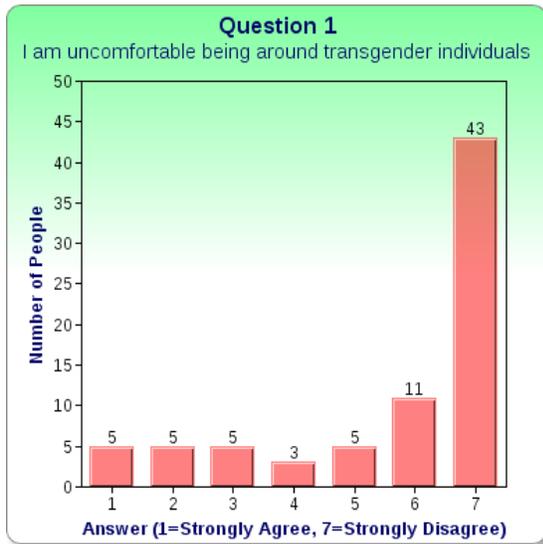
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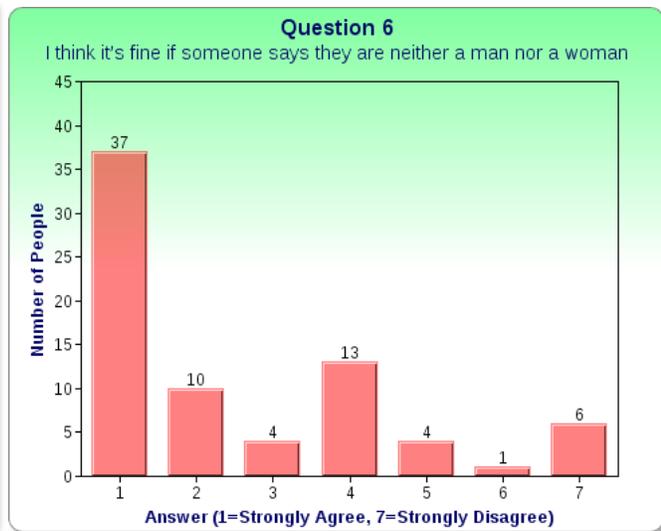
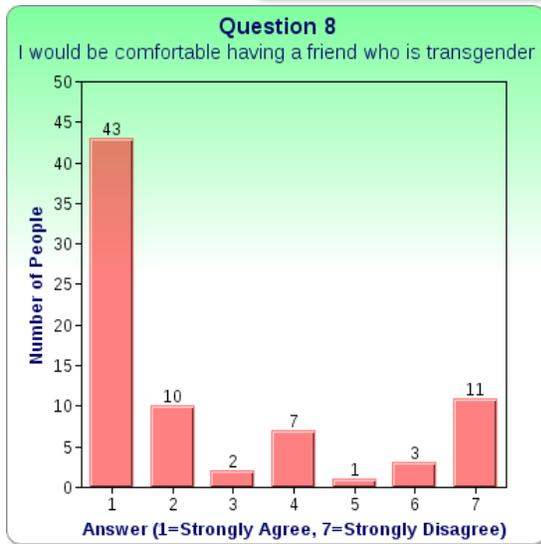
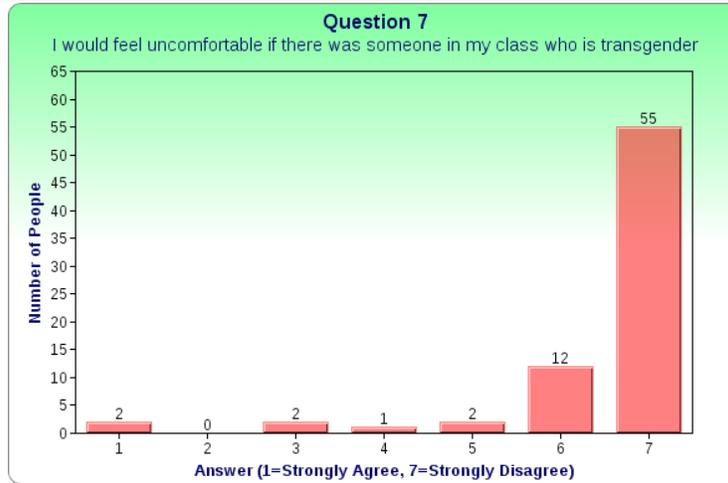
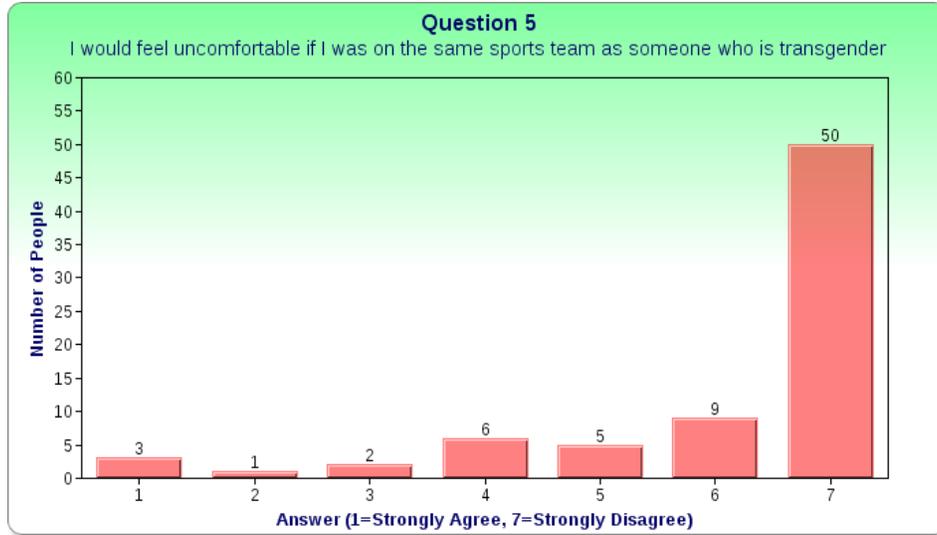
Don't know

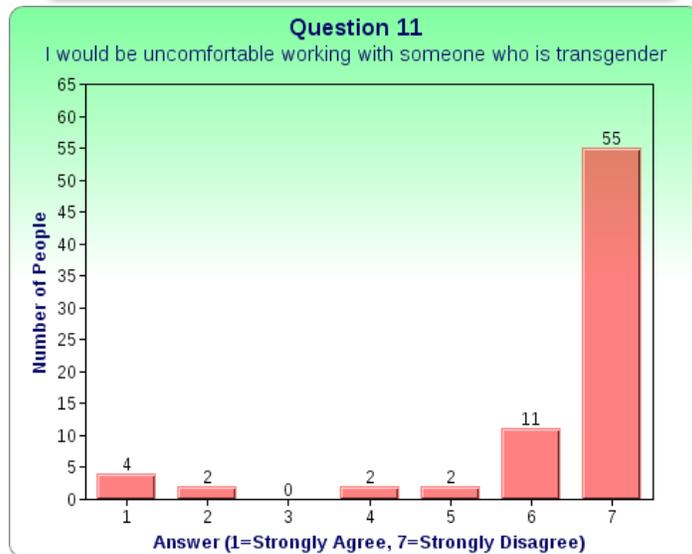
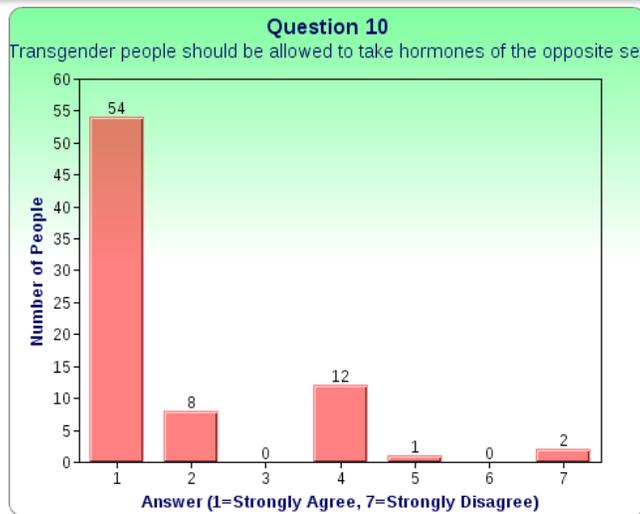
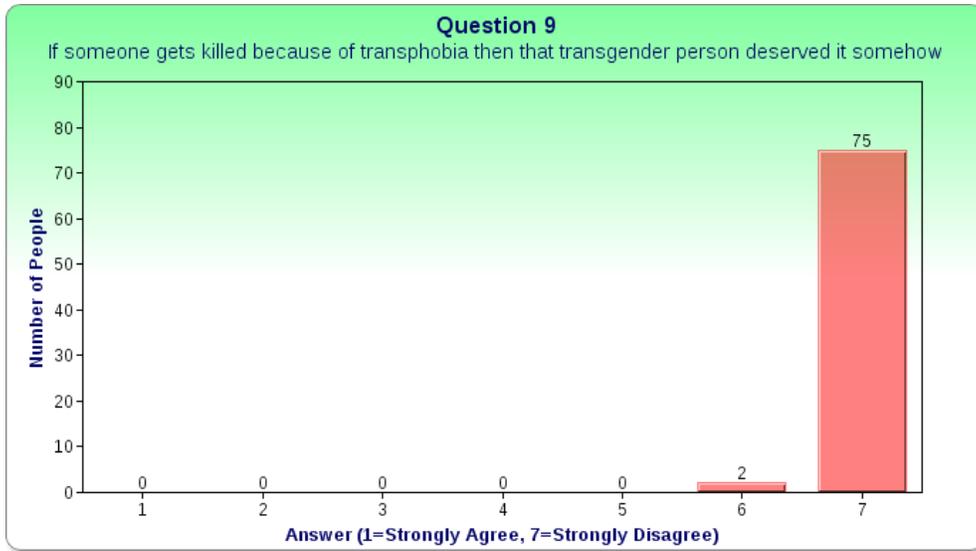
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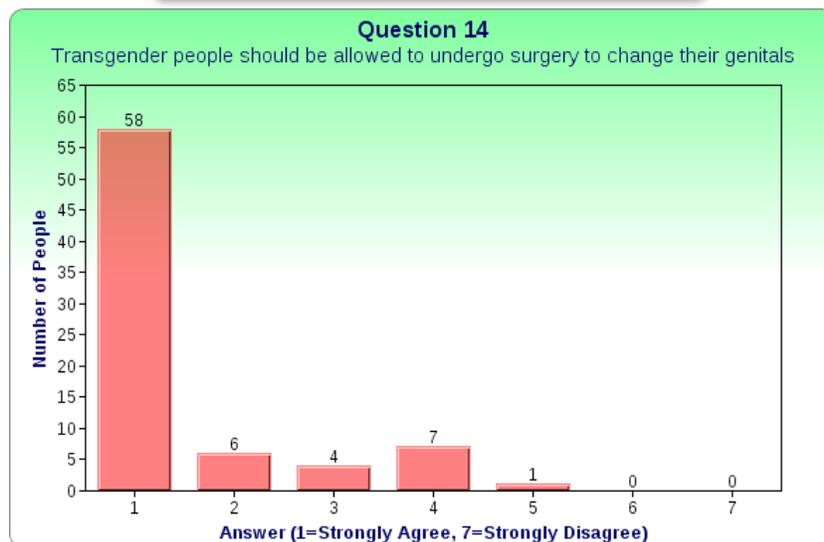
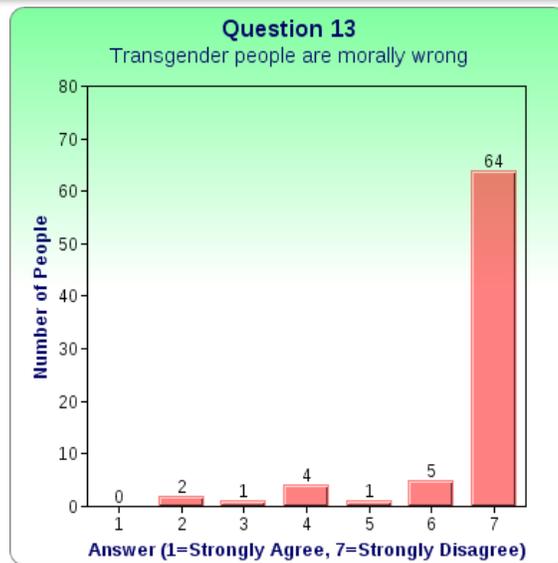
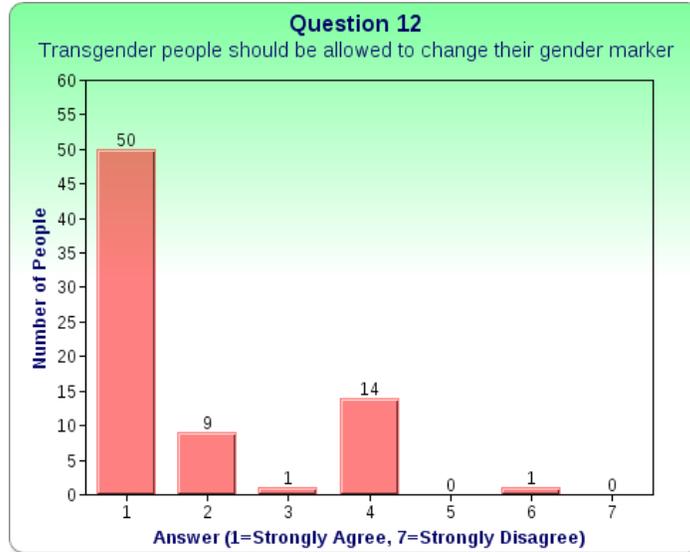
Any additional comments you would like to make or if you would like to explain your answers on the scale portion of the survey please do so here

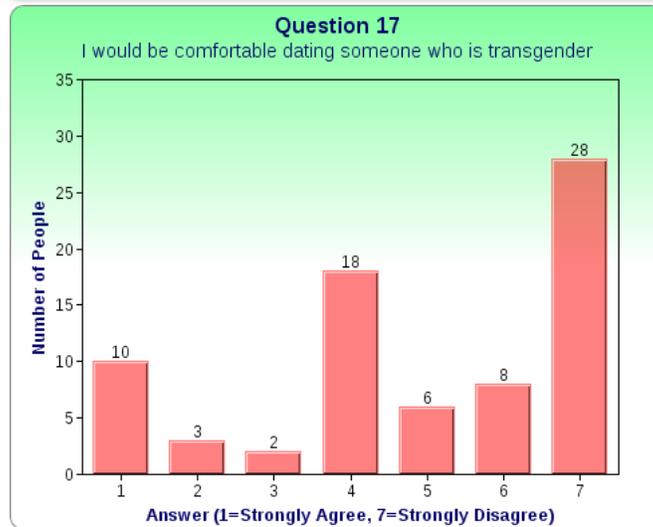
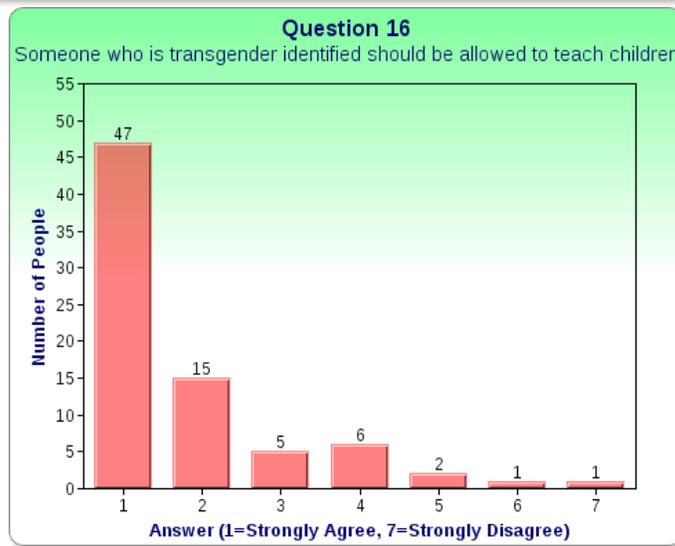
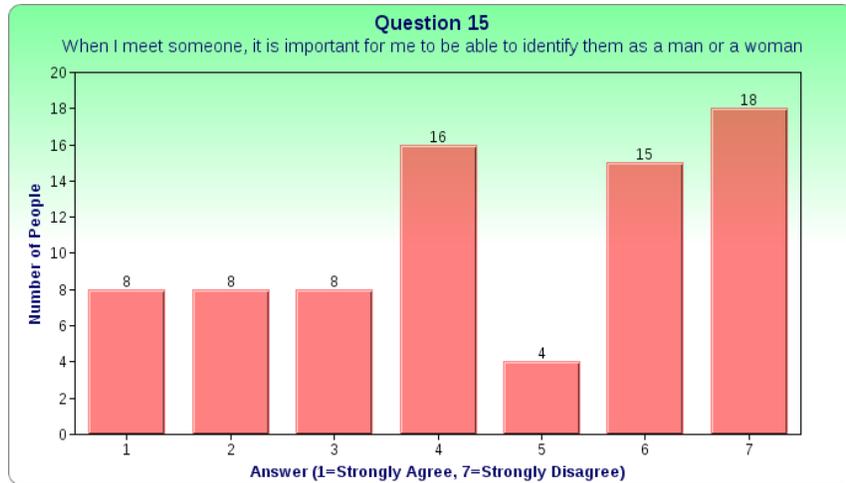
Appendix B – Likert Question Survey Responses

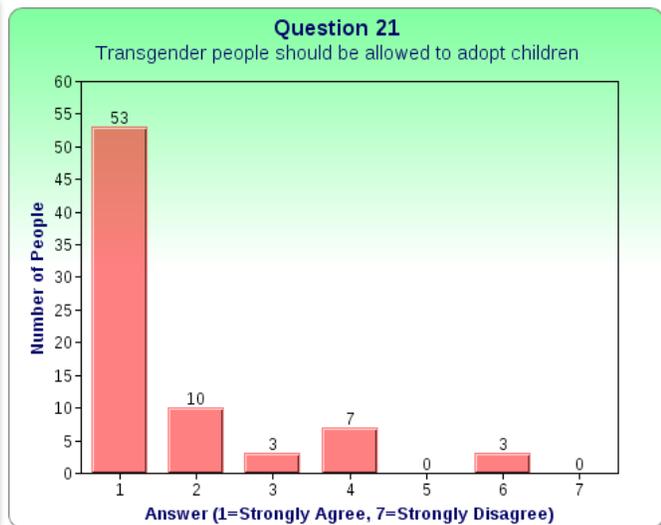
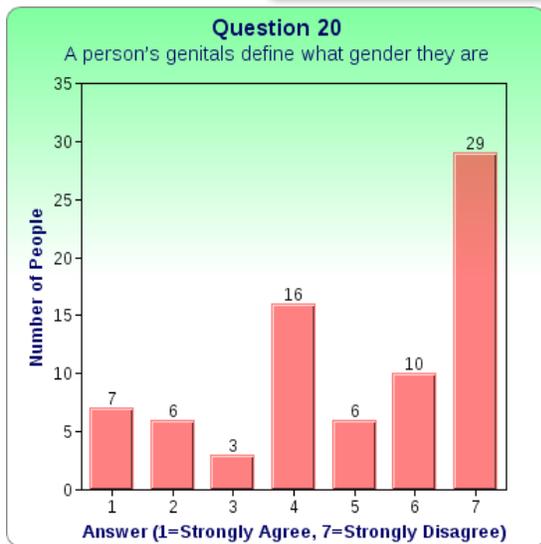
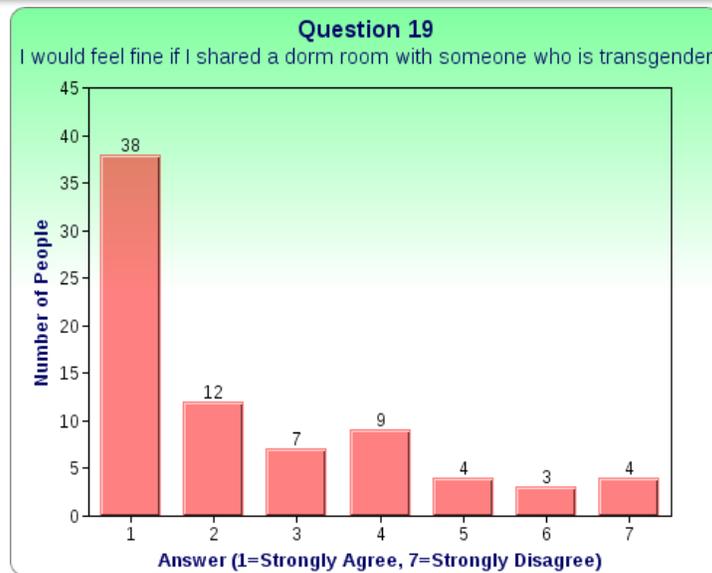
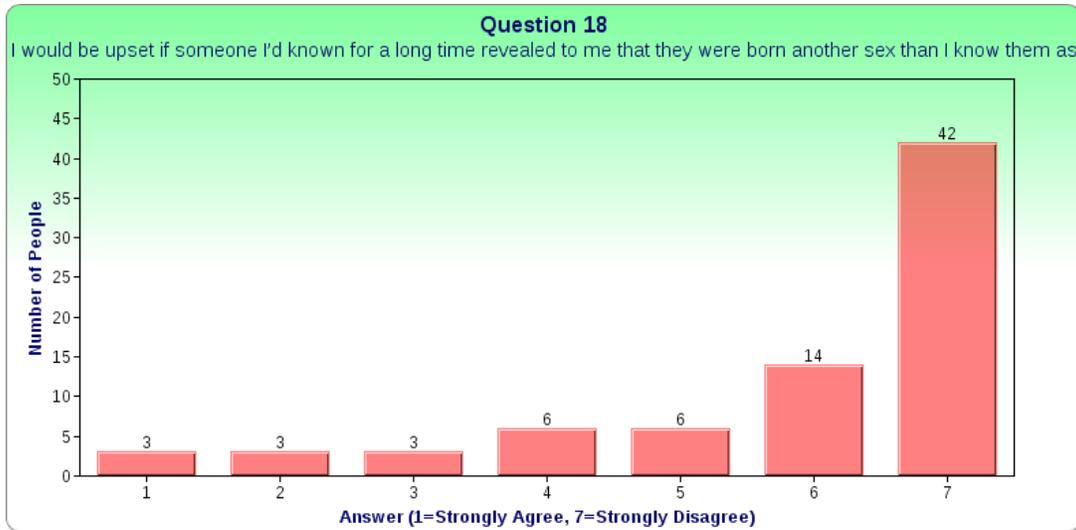












Appendix C – Interview Transcriptions

Athletics Department – Interviewed on March 26, 2012 at 1:30pm

Me: Okay, so, I guess I'll just start asking questions.

Interviewee: Very good, very good.

Me: This is my first interview with somebody so I'm a little nervous.

Interviewee: Okay, don't be nervous. You and I will work through it together.

Me: Okay. So, um, what would you do if a female born, male identified student wanted to join the men's team and they were not legally male?

Interviewee: I would do, I think we would do, as a department, what we needed to do for that student athlete. So if a kid came here, boy or girl, male or female, and wanted to participate in intercollegiate athletics, that person would get the same kind of opportunities that anybody else would get. Um, the person would need to be good enough to be on the team, so if it's a basketball player or golfer or baseball player or a softball player, whatever. As long as that person can come here and do good things for the University and for our athletic department and graduate and help us win games then that person will be a part of the team.

Me: Okay, and what about locker room situations?

Interviewee: We would do what we need to do around the locker room situations. If we needed to - we're limited anyway here with our locker room situations - for - we really only have locker rooms for our gym sports which are volleyball, two basketballs - men's and women's basketball - um, and right now, with the two locker rooms that we have - the male locker room and the female locker room - um, we have to split those anyway for our games, so, for instance, on Fridays and Saturdays when we have home games, our women's team goes into the female locker room because they go in at 5:30, but the visiting female team goes into the men's locker room to use it. So we close down the male locker room for the women's games so the female visiting team can use that. For the men's games, our men's team use our home - our locker room - the male locker room, and the visiting male team uses the female locker room for that game. So we do have the ability to close down those locker rooms, um, when we need to. Now the other thing being said, our softball players and our baseball players and our water polo players really don't - and our soccer players, soccer teams - really don't have a locker room, um, so as far as a locker room issue... they would have the same opportunities that our other student athletes have which are, unfortunately, really limited.

Me: Okay. Um, what about off-campus games? Like locker rooms there and hotel rooms. I don't know if you go far enough away to...

Interviewee: Uh-huh, yep, we do have hotel rooms so if we did, for instance if you're talking about Chico – if we have a game up in Chico, um, and the student athlete made the travel squad, we would do what we need to do to make sure that, um, number one, that student athlete had the same experience that everyone else had. So if it was a female on a male team or a male on a female team, um, they would have the same opportunities for... for, um, accommodations on the road whether that's meals or, um, hotel rooms or whatever it is. If we need to get an extra hotel room, we would do that.

Me: Okay. Um, what is your opinion of transgender individuals?

Interviewee: Um, you know that's a really good question. I guess it's the same opinion as I have as somebody who's not transgender. Um, if a – for me, personally, if it's a person – a good person and, um, I like to be around them then I'm going to do that. If the person is annoying, whether transgender or not, I won't probably be around them.

Me: Okay, um, do you know of any policies on this campus for transgender athletes?

Interviewee: No, we don't have any on this campus at this point because we haven't had that opportunity yet, but there's a big push in the NCAA right now around transgender ... um, situations. And when we do have a transgender situation, and I'm guessing that we will, we will, uh, look at what we do here as a university, we'll look at what we do in the CSU, we'll look at what the NCAA does, um, and, again, like I've said, Amanda, we'll do the best thing that we need to do for that student.

Me: Um, so do you know about any level of acceptance in this department. I don't know if any transgender students have really been...

Interviewee: We haven't been approached but, I... I'll tell you this, and this goes back to our first question, is: our coaches here like to win... and part of how we evaluate our coaches is, not only their wins and losses on their – in the field, or on the field or in their respective venue of competition, but also how they graduate their kids. So, if you come here as a student athlete and you graduate in... what's your major?

Me: SBS.

Interviewee: In SBS then... then we're doing our job as educators – as coaches and administrators. Our first job is to graduate you and our second job is to make sure that you have a good time and really enjoy your time here as a student athlete so, um, I – I just... it comes down to how we evaluate our coaches, so when we graduate you in SBS as a, I don't know, water polo player or softball player or baseball player or golfer or whatever it is, as long as you graduate and you have a good time, that's what our coaches are evaluated on. Now, if you help us win a national championship in one of those things and you become an Academic All-American in

your respective sport, then that's – that's part of it too. That's the other part that we expect from our student athletes to do and really be successful at.

Me: Okay, so I, uh, I know that you just said something about the NCAA, about how they're working but I actually saw that they created a policy last September about transgender athletes in colleges like, um, for people to follow. Are you aware of that?

Interviewee: I know that it came out but I have not read it. And, again, I haven't read it because we haven't had that situation here. Now, should that come about, we will certainly read that and pay attention to it and take it to heart and do what we need to do to make sure that we do right by the student athlete and by the team and by the policies of the university and really whatever we need to do to make it the best situation for everyone involved.

Me: So, um, so going off of that, would you take special care to ensure that the individual's accepted by their peers. Like maybe hold a special meeting to talk about pronoun issues or...

Interviewee: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely, we'd have meetings. And I'm sure there'd probably need to be some sort of educational process around that. Um, and I would – and, Amanda, I'm gonna be honest with you, I'd get someone who could speak to it smarter than I am. Um, about transgender –

Me: We have someone on campus that can...

Interviewee: So that'd be one of the first things that we would do would be to find that person on campus and enlist their help and counsel and say, you know, how do we - and, again, working with the student athlete too – to say what do you think you need? How can we help you? And then ask those same questions to the people who know – the smart people in this situation – and say: what do we need to do in the department, as a team, as a university, to make sure that we are doing these things right for the kid, for the student athlete, and for everybody who's involved.

Me: Okay. Is there anything else you want to add about this?

Interviewee: I think this is a great project. I'm glad you're doing it because this is real life stuff and this is real world stuff, and like you said, the NCAA has looked at it in September and, um, like I said we haven't had the opportunity yet and once we do get that we will, uh, look forward to making sure we're doing the things right – correctly.

Me: Okay. Thank you.

Interviewee: Is that it?

Me: Yep.

Interviewee: Okay, that was easy! Did you get less nervous as it went on?

Me: (laughs) Yeah.

Police Department – Interviewed on April 5, 2012 at 3:30pm

Me: So, how would you define the term transgender?

Interviewee: How would I define the term transgender?

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I, uh, (10-second pause) I don't really have a clinical definition for transgender.

Me: Just whatever you think it means.

Interviewee: Um... Someone who... maybe is born one gender but identifies more clearly – accurately – with another gender.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: Close – am I close?

Me: Yeah, that was good.

Interviewee: Okay (laughs) there's no right or wrong answers?

Me: No, I'm just trying to –

Interviewee: Test?

Me: Yeah, okay – so, to your knowledge, has there been any transphobic incidents on campus?

Interviewee: Um, we had an incident last – well, not transphobic – we had an incident in which someone wrote the word “fag” on somebody's door.

Me: Yeah, that's homophobic.

Interviewee: Yeah, I know but that's the closest thing that we have documented so... but, remember, we only know what people report.

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: To my knowledge, to answer your question, no. I overdisclose so you'll get everything from me (laughs).

Me: Okay, so you've never had to deal with a transgender identified student. Like, someone who's in trouble or seeking help?

Interviewee: No... I, not from the police department. We work very closely with personal growth and counseling but we haven't had anyone reach out to us.

Me: Okay, so if a transgender identified student were to come to you asking for help, how would you deal with – um – with them like –

Interviewee: I would help them. It depends on what they're asking for. I mean, I'm not a clinical psychologist so... but I have a very good working relationship with the personal growth and counseling center. Um, there are a lot of resources on campus. We tend to become a conduit to a lot of those resources mostly because we're so visible but also because we're kinda 24-hour and we tend to get called or visited when people are in crisis. Not a lot of people come in the front door, just having a good day and thought they'd pop in. So, knowing what our resources are, both here on campus and in the surrounding communities, we're doing our level best to direct folks to those resources and sometimes that's telling them about those resources and other times it's taking them by the hand and walking them to those resources and I have walked a few students to the counseling center during my time here. Not any that had to do with transgender concerns.

Me: Okay, um – do you know if there are any policies in this department about working with or dealing with trans-specific hate crimes?

Interviewee: Not – not policies specific to transgender but hate crimes yes. I mean a hate crime as a protected class, so someone's sex, sexual orientation is protected and it would – if a crime occurs if someone does so and the motivation – the apparent motivation because of someone's sexual orientation – sexual preference – um, male or female, is protected in the state of California. It's a very serious crime. We treat it very seriously. That's why I remember somebody writing the word "fag" on a door, because it's – we just don't have tolerance for – not just because we're the police but because of the community that we serve. Um, absolutely...

Me: Okay, have you or anyone in this department undergone any Safezone or educational or sensitivity training about transgender people?

Interviewee: Not specific to transgender. Now, again, we work very closely with the personal growth and counseling center, uh, no... nothing specific to transgender.

Me: Would you be willing to do so?

Interviewee: Of course. We would only benefit from hearing – from getting more information, so, yeah.

Me: Okay, um... what is your opinion of transgender individuals? Do you think they were born this way?

Interviewee: I haven't really – you know, honestly given it a lot of thought. Um, I have quite an eclectic group of friends myself, um, I know a very close friend of mine's daughter's going through a change currently, um, I don't feel any differently about somebody based on their, um, who they are – it, you know speak specifically to transgender, I see, regarding with your question, I'm perfectly comfortable with it, yeah, I would hope that my officers are either perfectly comfortable with it or would treat somebody exactly like they treat anyone else, just being more sensitive to that issue if it were a part of why we were there. If it were, say, a hate crime, or, um, somehow related to why we were in that position I would expect them to treat everyone the same and that's regardless of anything including, the one that comes up all of the time in law enforcement, is race. Judge people by their behaviors not their appearance.

Me: So, would you say that everybody in this department has the same sort of level of acceptance as you do?

Interviewee: Oh.. um, (unintelligible) they're just people who are police officers. There's varying levels of acceptance. I would hope – we try very hard, because we know where we work, to hire people who are... tend to be a little more tolerant, a little more patient, a little more understanding. Law enforcement – the law enforcement community tends to be pretty conservative. We – we serve a very – a kind of liberal campus community so, um, I think they have a very good outlet, some very good perspectives, but, um, levels of tolerance are gonna vary. But, um, we never really – it's not something that we've sat around and talked about, but, uh, I would not tolerate an officer who didn't have a high level of tolerance. I certainly wouldn't hire somebody like that.

Me: Is there anything else you wish to add on the subject?

Interviewee: No, um... not as it relates to your project.

Me: Okay. Then I guess we're done.

Interviewee: I do have a question.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: Can you – I don't want it to be part of your thing.

Me: Okay.

Otter Cross Cultural Center – Interviewed on April 6, 2012 at 2:00pm

Me: So, how would you define transgender?

Interviewee: Um, I would define transgender – first of all I think you would need to specify post-op, pre-op transgender um, but I would describe that, um, transgender individual was somebody who, um, within their psyche, believe themselves to identify as another gender other than the one they were biologically “born as”. And that was bunny ears by the way.

Me: Bunny ears?

Interviewee: (Laughs) Yeah, bunny ears.

Me: Okay, so what is your opinion of these individuals?

Interviewee: Um, I think that they're people like any other – any other person. Any other person who was born, you know, any other gender. I think, um, unfortunately, society has certainly placed a stigma in individuals who are transgender because they feel that biological, um, gender is – or biological traits speak to somebody's gender which is not true, number one, and it's just a sad situation that we're – we're still continuing to see... I mean even when we talk about the LGBT community largely, um, but when we talk about the trans community I think that they're the more marginalized population within the larger LGBTIQ community.

Me: Have you heard of any issues on campus with someone who is transgender not being treated as they should or any other form of transphobia?

Interviewee: Um, I know that the transphobia exists simply because I know that there are issues with LGBT inclusivity and openness on campus generally. Um, I've never been told by a transgender student that there is a specific issue although I know, from certain individuals, um, that there are challenges you know, there's only two gender-neutral bathrooms on campus which I wouldn't even know being the person who is responsible, you know. And as an advisor for the cross cultural center, I don't know where those bathrooms are, which is something that, now that I'm actually expressing that I need to really educate myself on. But, that's a problem. Um, it's a problem when individuals, specifically trans individuals feel like they don't have access to the things that every other person has access to. So it could sort of be a form of veiled discrimination in some way, um, although not necessarily recognized, unfortunately, so...

Me: Okay, are there any sort of policies in place or any trainings that you have gone through that touched on situations involving transgender students?

Interviewee: Absolutely. I am somebody who's been through Safezone training, um, I'm someone who – their office is a safe space and a Safezone uh, what's the second part of the question, sorry?

Me: Uh, the trainings you have gone through that touched on situations –

Interviewee: Yeah, I think you need to be able to have a conversation about first of all, being educated on the issues um, I think that's one of the things that is – that tends to be kind of

prominent. Generally on university campuses that administrators, staff members, faculty members aren't necessarily all educated on trans issues and, so, I find that to be sort of one of the biggest challenges, um, yeah... that answer your question?

Me: Yeah...

Interviewee: Okay.

Me: Um, how would you rate the level of acceptance in the OC3 towards transgender individuals?

Interviewee: Ten!

Me: Ten out of ten?

Interviewee: Is it – is it one to ten?

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: Absolutely. If – if we're talking about, wait... inclusivity and openness and –

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: – level of safety? I would say a ten. But that's, of course, my hope that it would be a ten. Um, which remind me after to ask you how you feel, you know? (Laughs). So anyway...

Me: What events have you had concerning transgender people?

Interviewee: Um, we're very cognizant of having open sort of programs just largely surrounding LGBT issues, um, I do want to have, moving into the future and I've been very vocal about this, a Transgender November series where we do a month of really awesome trans programming. I think that that's something that is largely absent but, also, it's one of those things that you have to need to be really purposeful about, um, we talk about sensitivities and we talk about – even students who want to come forward as trans, what is it going to mean to them to sort of put themselves in this sort of situation where students know that they're trans and, so, it's a lot of those political, um, issues that come into play and so I want to make sure that what we do is so purposeful and amazing and that students feel safe. So right now I feel that the OC3 is trying to be really cognizant of creating a safe space for all students and then that's when we start to go into like, okay let's talk about LGBT, let's talk about trans, let's talk – you know, um, and so I think largely, yes, we sort of cater to the LGBTIQ population in general and – and are open to those dialogues and those questions that I – but have we had specific trans programming? We, unfortunately, have not but that's where we're moving.

Me: Yeah, my next question was going to be: what future events are you planning?

Interviewee: ♪ Transgender November! ♪ No, um, again, Transgender November is gonna be amazing, um, and the scope of those programs are gonna be sort of large scale, small scale discussions, sort of maybe open forums, um, I really want to touch on inclusivity. We are doing a Gay and Greek event, which is coming up in the next two weeks, and I do want to make sure that trans is a part of that discussion and that conversation so we will be bringing that up.

Me: Yeah, actually I was planning on bringing that up so...

Interviewee: Which is fantastic and I hope you come and you bring that up, um, because I think that that needs to be discussed and so, we're gonna see these, when we talk about inclusivity we're always gonna see the inclusivity of trans within that.

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If that makes sense.

Me: Yeah. Okay, are your peer mentors prepared to help mentor someone who is transgender and possibly wanting to talk about their transition and any advice with that?

Interviewee: Absolutely, I think, you know, part of their jobs is being a support system for students and part of that is a referral process so if there's a student who comes to the mentor that, perhaps they themselves are not trans or are not so educated on a transition or the politics of the things that come along with that, uh, they're very well aware of how to refer students and where to refer students and I, of course, would be the first person that they refer to and me being somebody who's pretty – I would say fairly educated on these issues, um, certainly I have the knowledge to help counsel students through that, um, whether we're talking about, you know, hormone treatments, whether we're talking about physical transition, whether we're talking about resources as how to obtain those types of things, um, I'm certainly educated in that so with that being said, they are very aware of how to support all students regardless of identity, regardless of gender, um, regardless of situation and, um, unfortunately we've had some very serious situations we've had to address so I am a hundred percent confident in that, yes.

Me: Do you think the OC3 is a safe space where a transgender student can come be themselves as they, like, try to do homework?

Interviewee: Absolutely. I mean I would – that's what we pride ourselves in and the OC3 of being a place where every student who walks through the door is welcome, every student who walks through the door feels valued, um, every single student walking through the door feels safe. And, so, if that's not happening, to me, it's like I haven't done my job, um, and my mentors haven't done their jobs. And, so, I take something like that very seriously, um, and so absolutely, I would say yes.

Me: What kind of resources do you have readily available for transgender students who might come into the OC3?

Interviewee: Um, we have some – we have some definite literature... but on top of that, I think I'm the biggest resource and my staff is the biggest resource, um, there hasn't been a situation where students come in and they've had a question or needed additional support or, um, needed a referral to a resource or either myself or my mentors and we're fully staffed from 9 to 9pm so there are very few instances where I felt students haven't felt able to access resources. Um, as far as like tangible things, um, I'm really wanting to get some more literature in terms of doctors in this area who work with trans students, um, probably some resources on financial transition cause I know that that's a big issue as well like, I want to pay for my surgery, how do I go about doing that or I need hormone treatment, how do I go about doing that, and so, really reaching out to local entities and really figuring out where those resources are I think that that's an important piece. Um, so we're – we're certainly – that's something important to us and we're moving into looking into that – moving in that direction and looking at that stuff a to more deeply.

Me: Cause I know that the OC3 is, like, new so you don't have much of anything.

Interviewee: Exactly! I – I literally, Finn, only been here for three months.

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: Doesn't it feel like I've been here for, like, five years? (Laughs).

Me: Yeah! (Laughs).

Interviewee: So, we're – we're moving and I think that next year, specifically, you're gonna see a whole new OC3 in terms of scope, in terms of resources, in terms of what we're gonna be tackling programmatically. I mean, to have a month catering to trans programming I think is amazing. Um, and so, you know, we need to start having the conversations that people are having at other universities because this is quite a young university so when we talk about things like, you know, transgender individuals, you know, and this is a young university, do we have those mechanisms in place, well, we don't even have a – a director of Greek life in place – so people are always thinking, what are their priorities, what are their priorities. To me, our priorities are our students and being able to help them navigate the university system while being who they are. So, to me, first thing we gotta get some trans programming in. We gotta get LGBT programs together. We have to make sure we're representing ourselves in a way where students feel that there is representation based on who they are, you know – oh, I identify as trans, I'm gonna go to this program, like, next week because we're gonna be talking about trans issues – you know? And so, that's important, right? Um, so we're moving in a great direction. That was a long answer to your question... sorry.

Me: That's fine. Um, so are you able to point them in the direction of any local services that deal specifically with transgender individuals?

Interviewee: You know, I – it's so funny because I literally this was like my project last week – um, I'm looking at some service - some organizations specifically in Santa Cruz, um, a couple of – ugh, the names escape me... I wish I knew the acronyms, but a couple of them like do outreach and helping with hormone therapy for trans individuals. Also there's a couple of faculty members on campus that I know are trans so I've been wanting to sort of reach out to them as well, um, and find out what some of their resources might be because I know that, obviously, they might be more aware of what's going on in the local community than I am. Um, so yeah, I'm – I'm on that right now. I'm really really starting to learn what sort of geographically we're – where I'm at as far as – do we have trans doctors in the neighborhood? Do we not? Are we looking at more of a Santa Cruz, cause I know Santa Cruz tends to be a little bit more liberal and have a lot a lot a lot more resources and talk about LGBT issues, trans, etcetera etcetera, so we'll be looking at some neighboring communities, um, and, again, I – really reaching out to those faculty members and that's the next step I think.

Me: I know that there's a transgender support group in Monterey.

Interviewee: Oh, fantastic!

Me: So you might want to have, like, their flyer.

Interviewee: Yeah, no that would be great. That's good to know.

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: Do you know their name by chance?

Me: Stephen Braveman is the – the therapist that facilitates it.

Interviewee: Okay, Stephen Braveman?

Me: Yes.

Interviewee: Remind me to write that down.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: Cause I want to reach out to him, maybe he'll come for Transgender November.

Me: Well, yeah Nickolas McDaniel he came last semester to talk... he's part of his little, like, group thing.

Interviewee: So he's...

Me: He's like one of the facilitators.

Interviewee: Okay, awesome! He's like a speaker, presenter?

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: Awesome, awesome, we'll have to touch base on notes after this. So that I can get that information.

Me: Okay. So, um, I think you answered this before: have you had a transgender student come in asking for resources or help?

Interviewee: Um, no. I mean the only trans student that I've been able to identify, frankly, is you and I would be interested to find out what you think about OC3 in terms of: Do you feel safe? Do you feel comfortable walking into the room?

Me: So maybe you can interview me afterwards (laughs).

Interviewee: (Laughs). Yeah, exactly! Exactly!

Me: Um, are you willing to go out to other campus departments to do education about this if they asked or if the student asked?

Interviewee: I'm already doing it right now. So what I've been doing is, in my capacity because I have a background in diversity training – in LGBT training type of thing. I've already done cross-departmental training so, for example, a couple weeks back I was at CSS, Center for Student Success, and I did an LBGT training for them. So, really, what's the difference between being transgender and transsexual? What is the difference between being, you know, post-op and pre-op? And what are some of the things that we need – dialogues we need to sort of have surrounding these issues so – absolutely, um, I've been very well utilized so far, so – which makes me feel good that people feel the need around campus to really educate themselves so, um, which is fantastic so... yeah.

Me: Uh, in my interview yesterday... I interviewed the police department. So when I asked, like, if they had any trainings they said – they were very open to having one and, like, I had – they actually asked for, like, names so I gave them –

Interviewee: You can give them my name!

Me: – your name and so they might be contacting you.

Interviewee; Fantastic! (unintelligible but excited).

Me: Um, what – wait – yeah, okay... what would you do if a transgender student came in wanting help with a transphobic roommate?

Interviewee: Um, first and foremost what I would do is process with that student. Cause when you're dealing with something so personal and so emotional, those things can weigh on you, um, so my first responsibility is to the health and well being of the student and so if that that's

something that's causing mental distress, emotional duress, we need to deal with that immediately. So my first thing would be: let's talk about it. Let's talk about what's going on, you know. Um, let's – what is the word I'm looking for – deconstruct everything. Let me, you know, basically hash it out and then I would say let's get in touch with housing and let's have a very serious conversation about what's going on in the house, in the room, whatever. Um, because at the end of the day we're talking about a possible hate crimes or possible, you know, whatever, and, so, those things are certainly to – not to be taken lightly whatsoever. Um, so, for me, it would be a matter of reaching out to – the entities that have to be like housing, like the roommate in question, um, you know, etcetera, etcetera so we can really create an educational experience based on that because, at the end of the day, a lot of these issues don't come from "I hate you because you're trans" it's "I hate you because I don't understand what being trans is", right? Because I'm afraid of it, because I don't get it, right, and perhaps because I'm taught by certain individuals or by society at large or by certain media outlets or whatever that that's wrong. So not because, oh I don't like you, it's I don't like what I don't understand. And, so, a lot of times for me it's – and this is why I love doing what I do because I feel like there's a teachable moment in everything many times – um, and often times that's what it tends to be, students can be afraid and they can be put off by things that they don't understand and it's not because it's a bad thing it's because they don't understand it. You know, I've been in situations, and I've shared this with my staff, where I was working at USC where I was working in res life and I had a student come up to me and say "I can't live with this roommate, they're black" you know, and so it's not a – it's not a one population type of thing it happens no matter what identity's involved often and so it's really about creating that teachable moment of like "you don't want to live with someone who's black, why?" you know what I mean? Like what is giving you misgivings about this? You know what I mean? Or what's frightening you about this? Um, and so that would be my course of action, would be, again, talk to the student, decompress, sort of figure out what exactly going on – what the dynamic is – if there's any actions that have been taken, certainly if there's a hate crime involved it needs to be addressed swiftly and aggressively, um, and then really just, you know, bring the student and the roommate together – if that's something that's possible – because, again, that could have been like a physical thing, I don't know, um, and just really try and figure out what the issues are.

Me: Okay, what would you do if a transgender student came in wanting help with a transphobic professor?

Interviewee: Um, to me that is – I haven't had, ever had that happen but, um, I would reach out to the professor directly and let them know. Well, it depends, too, because if the student comes to you in confidence and says, you know, I really don't want the professor to know that this is something that's bothering me. What I would probably do is report that to the dean of students and say this is the situation that we're having because what we're doing is talking about is academic affairs and students which are like "ahh!" you know, and so how do we bridge that gap? And that happens often, you know, a student comes in and says I feel like a professor's

treating me this way because of this or treating me this way because of that and I think it's a matter of a conversation and really having the professor recognize what behaviors are making the student feel that way, you know, um, and really having the professor be open to hearing that feedback and, if the professor's not open to hearing that feedback, okay, then who do I need to speak to that will hear that feedback. Because, for me, there are things that are unconscionable and one of them is, specifically being a university professor or educator who discriminates based on identity period. Um, and so I would deal with it very swiftly and aggressively as well.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: Swift and aggressive. (Unintelligible) with a cane, Finn.

Me: So, uh, then what would you do if a transgender student came in wanting help with a transphobic staff member?

Interviewee: Same thing. Yeah, that co – again, a university is a place of learning so to – for me, thinking about administrators, staff members, or faculty members, who, again, discriminate against their students based on identity, to me that's completely unconscionable. We work in a – in a capacity where we're working with students with multiple identities. We're working in a capacity where the health and wellness of our students is key and vital to them being successful academically. You know, we're all here for a purpose and it's to make our students have a wonderful experience. I know that – when we think about a university you think about classes, you think about grades, you think about a piece of paper you're gonna get after four years but what people don't think about is the experience outside of the classroom. The things that happen emotionally to students as they navigate throughout the university experience, right. Which is all equally important and, so, that's where staff comes in and administrators come in, right? Because all these things affect the students' experience: programs, you know, we don't program just to program we do it because we want to give that student who maybe isn't getting a certain thing in HCOM, perhaps they haven't – or not HCOM, Business – or biology, perhaps they haven't had a chance in their classes to talk about trans issues or LGBT issues or race or ethnicity or class, right? So we're looking for all those teachable moments and it's hard to be – you can't be an educator and be somebody who does not get that. Um, so, for me, it's about being very transparent about what we're here for and if a faculty member, a staff member, or administrator is not here for that then that needs to be a larger conversation.

Me: How do you feel about the bathroom situation on campus?

Interviewee: I think it's absolutely hideous and I opened with that (laughs) because I just think – cause I was shocked when you told me that. To think that there's not a trans – excuse me, not a gender neutral bathroom in the student center? It's like ridiculous to me. Like and I'm actually gonna bring it up because I just feel like it's ridiculous, um, and I don't know. It's one of those things where you have an inclusivity that you know needs to happen but you sometimes have administrations that are a little bit more conservative or they don't prioritize certain things and

it's unfortunate that, excuse me, things like that are not prioritized because when we're talking about that we're talking about making our students feel like they belong here. If you don't feel like you belong here, you're not gonna stay.

Me: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, what are we really saying to our students then? That we don't value you. We don't care that you're uncomfortable. Uh, and that's a problem for me. You know, I pride myself on keeping OC3 an open space, a space where students can feel comfortable, uh, and it bothers me that, if one of my students in OC3 can't go to the bathroom, that pisses me off. Excuse me (laughs). But it does, you know, because I'm trying to achieve something special. People don't get that, right? So, I just – I think that there needs to be a very clear conversation about trans students on this campus and their discomfort with that. Um, and again I haven't met a lot of trans students on this campus. So... and I know they're here, like where they at? You know what I mean? So I know that they're here and I would love to speak to more of them and I would love to be able to have that opportunity that, like, get a coalition together, you know what I mean? Like let's – cause that's how we're gonna change things and really create a voice. Um, and like I told Out and About, I told Nicole, you guys should be doing petitions to get gender neutral bathrooms. You should be at Ronny Higgs' door, breaking down the door right now – VP of student affairs, right? Because people aren't going to hear you unless you're loud enough.

Me: Do you think that the gendered restrooms that we have currently are safe for transgender students to use?

Interviewee: Um, you know what, I don't know because it would depend on the individual and whether or not they feel safe on this campus largely. Would I say that students on this campus that are trans or LGBT feel safe on this campus largely? No. Um, and the reason I can say that with confidence is because I've had three months to sort of get to know the culture a bit, um, and being that we have students who are in organizations and are active leaders and are doing things but don't feel comfortable being out, to me that's a problem because it means that they don't feel safe. So, to your point, um, I don't know if there's – I think that there's a lack of a safety issue in general and, hopefully, with work and education we can get to a point where students are more safe here.

Me: If you could say anything to a prospective transgender student who might be reading the final report, what would you say?

Interviewee: Um, I would tell them that you have a support system here. You know, a university experience looks different to every single person and the reason why is because people find their support from different places. People's experiences are different in general but, you know, there is a place here for you. That's what I would say.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: There is a place here for you. There is a place where you'll be supported. There is a place where you'll be valued, um, and I know that – and I'm gonna speak for them because I work with some amazing people, and – it's not always the students and it's not always certain cultures that make up a university it's the people that you meet and the support systems that you find. Um, and there are some really amazing administrators and some amazing support systems here on campus and I think. I would always discourage people from making a decision not to come to this school because of how they feel about – of how their identity would be welcomed because what I would say to that is, you know, you'll come and you'll find your support. And you'll come and you'll – you'll find your place. Um, and – and that's not always gonna be easy. You know, sometimes – even living on a campus where you're the most – it's the most open. Like you could have rainbow flags everywhere on a campus and still feel, you know, not supported. And so it's not always about the campus as much as it is about the individuals who make up that campus and make up that community.

Me: Is there anything else you wish to add?

Interviewee: No, just that, you know, I'm a hundred percent supportive in every student in terms of their experience and their exploration of their identity. I think it's such an important conversation. I think, just as the OC3 representative, I feel as though we are getting to a place where, I think, students are recognizing us as a safe space and that makes me really really happy. Um, and as a space that is representative of all students. So I'm really happy to – to be a part of it.

Me: Okay. That's it.

Interviewee: How was that? How did I do?

Me: Good.

Interviewee: Yeah?

Housing Department – Interviewed on April 9, 2012 at 1:00pm

Me: So, um, first question. How would each of you define transgender?

Interviewee A: For me, there's a lot of different points along the journey of someone that actually, um, goes down the road of becoming transgender but, for us, we work with students that are in various stages of... the word transgender. So, for me, someone that claims transgender is done with the process. So, for us, in the area that we work in there's different stages that we try to work with students and help them along in their journey. And, for us, our goal is to give them a safe environment where they can succeed academically.

Me: Okay, and you?

Interviewee A: Wow, they're very loud in there. Sorry about that. (Laughs)

Interviewee B: (Laughs) Um, I – I pretty much agree with what she's saying. The fact that we try to recognize students who are in various stages of where they are in their own acknowledgement of who they are and so trying to help those students as best we possibly can so just recognizing the fact that everybody is unique and different and acknowledging the fact that – where each individual is within their stages.

Me: Okay, what would you do if a female-born, male-identified student wished to be roomed with a male if they were not legally male?

Interviewee B: I was just gonna say. A lot of it comes down to the fact of how our halls are set up anyway. So some of it may end up dictating just by the gender of the hall or the room itself or the floor. So some of that, you know, could be along those lines. It could be, I guess in that question there's so many different variables that could be in place. It could be age, you know, other things that come into play worrying about where we put them and where might be able to accommodate any kind of requests or needs that go on with it.

Interviewee A: I think CSUMB, as an institution, we may have a little bit more freedom to work with students based on individual needs and their unique situations. Um, CSU system as a whole I would be really curious to find out, across the board, if there's written policy that's to something that we're supposed to follow but, for us, we need to make sure that everyone is safe and comfortable in their environment. And so if a female born student who identified as male wants to live with another male, um, it depends on the bathroom share situation because, right now, we don't place students, on the main campus, different genders that share bathrooms. So, for me, working with assignments, I've had this exact situation in the past and I am comfortable with assigning this kind of relationship, meaning, two students living together in a room if the students are comfortable with it. So, for me, even though we don't have written policies that go along with every situation, I just need to make sure that the people that are entering the situation, that they understand what they're doing and that they're comfortable and safe in their environment so... I've had this exact situation. Um, a person had lived a year and a half as identifying as male, however, still had the genetic female parts and wasn't sure if they were going to go forward with surgery or not and so we were able to honor the situation and have two persons that identified as male live together even though, biologically, those parts didn't match because those two students were okay with it but we did, however, need to write down what we did as documentation.

Me: So would that be the same if you had a male-born, female-identified student wishing to be roomed with a female if they were not legally female?

Interviewee A: This semester, I have a male-born student who identifies as female and is at the very early stages of their process – just started living and identifying as female for the last, probably, six months and this situation is actually unique because I had been contacted by

student disability resources on campus and I don't perceive this as a disability, however, student disability resources sometimes reaches out and provides support to students with any sort of situation that they're going through and because this student sought medical advice, I believe that 's why it funneled through the student disabilities resource office and so I've gotten a request this year to accommodate someone, however, um, they are asking for a single room so that they can come on campus, get acclimated, and then, I'm hoping, that they meet someone that they feel comfortable with that I can then assign someone to share a room with. So I think that it's very careful that we approach each situation on a unique individual basis for now because the CSU in general doesn't have the general policies or guidelines that we are to follow, so we've been able to accommodate that by – on an individual basis.

Interviewee B: And since I didn't hear the whole question, I guess the only statement I would add to that is that it's not any different that we would do with any other student no matter what.

Interviewee A: Exactly.

Interviewee B: We're gonna take every individual situation that comes across with us –

Interviewee A: Right.

Interviewee B: – whether it's mental, psychological, emotional, whatever type of issues students or parents come forth with we're going to do the best we can.

Interviewee A: I think it's important for us that we give consistent, unique consideration to every student.

Me: So there are no policies in place that talk about transgender students?

Interviewee A: CSU wide?

Me: Or this campus.

Interviewee A: I think the policies that we follow – the general guidelines that we follow is we are to treat every student fairly and equitably and that's the guidelines that we follow for every student so based on their unique situation, then we have to get into the details and accommodate based on need. But I think that our general guidelines... is just to treat every student as equitably and fairly as we can. So I wouldn't say that our department has anything to address the transgender population because we haven't had to yet because we've been able to accommodate it under the general guidelines.

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee B: And I, even being relatively new to the campus, I haven't even seen a policy campus wide –

Interviewee A: Right.

Interviewee B: – that dictates anything so...

Interviewee A: And I think that's given us a little bit of freedom to address situations on an as-needed basis. I think, maybe we'd be under different guidelines if there was a strict policy written so it's worked for our benefit I think, and for our students.

Me: Are there gender-neutral housing options available?

Interviewee A: Right now we do have some gender neutral options in east campus.

Me: None that are open – like, those aren't available to freshmen though, right?

Interviewee A: Correct, correct. Um, and we haven't... we haven't approached the gender neutral housing idea on the main campus yet. Um, I know UC Santa Cruz has been able to address that in a couple areas – um, gender neutral bathrooms... but we have been able to accommodate in east campus for students that are either 21 or in domestic partnerships or have dependants but we haven't been able to address that on the main campus yet.

Me: Um, have you or anyone in this department gone through any education or sensitivity training about transgender issues?

Interviewee A: I have. Um, I was heavily involved with NCBI, National Coalition Building Institute, um... and general counseling, um, professional development studies. We're also a part of an international, um, group called ACUHO-I which discusses these issues because, as housing professionals, we're exposed to students and their individual needs on a daily basis. So, um, if you want to talk anymore about –

Interviewee B: I think the professional organizations that we belong to both ACUHO, which is the Association of College and University Housing Officers International, and then there's others: ACPA, which is the Association of College Personnel Administrators, NASPA, the National Association of Student Personal Administrators, all of these national organizations recognize... at their national conferences there's at least... I just came back from NASPA in March and I would say there was probably at least six or seven presentations on transgender – uh, transgender housing and/or accountability and/or accessibility in college/universities. So our national organizations recognize it and, of course, pass that information down to us. Could be in terms of magazines that they send out it could be in terms of books or webinars or roundtables, uh, there's a lot of different ways that we actually get exposed to it and get the information from it and then, of course, having access to listservs that are out there in our housing area that we can actually send out information and access or send out requests of information from other schools around the country that of course, the best thing about that is we don't have to recreate the wheel because it's already been created somewhere else. It's just getting the information here and then tweaking it so it fits the California state system more than anything else so...

Me: Okay, I know you touched on transgender students before but are there any more that you've dealt with having gender related housing issues?

Interviewee A: Um, I believe gender related housing issues can become an issue for students with various sexual orientations as well so, um, I think that young folks sometimes aren't exposed to people of any kind of differences whether it be cultural, sexual orientation, or just who knows... so I think, for us, it's a topic that always comes up, especially with freshmen on campus. And since we do, right now, assign based on gender, there can be situations where someone – two – two women, let's say, are put together who have different sexual orientations. So I think sometimes that's more of just cultural differences then really gender based differences but – but the issues I have dealt with as an assignments person with gender always come up around transgendered issues. They're not really, um – we haven't really had too many specific gender related issues that have come to us. Um, I think the only time I have had that question is when it comes to gender neutral housing, um, but I've only been asked that in my... 9 year – 10 year here twice, you know it always sort of surprises me that it hasn't been more of an issue, um, and I also see these issues come in waves. So I'll have a lot of students come for a few years that will bring up these topics that are really active in the culture and want to really talk about these issues and get policies written and become active in the community and then it will kind of die down for a couple years and now I see the topics being raised again. So, for us there's two populations of housing that you should probably be familiar with: there's a main campus housing which is res halls and north quad and then the east campus housing. So gender issues usually come up in east campus, um, because students want the options and opportunities to live with different genders and we support that if they meet the eligibility criteria. But on the main campus, really we stick to assigning gender – um, same gender because of the bathroom situations here in our halls, um, until specific issues come and then we base it on unique situations.

Me: Is there anything you want to add?

Interviewee B: It seems she's the assignments expert, I'm gonna give it to her on that one.

Me: Okay... To your knowledge have there been any transphobic incidents in the dorms?

Interviewee A: No, I – I think that our students have really not had any issues that have been brought to my – I think that that's always a concern with the parents of transgendered students when they're coming to campus, um, they're afraid – they want their students to be safe and secure and have a great experience and that's our goal so I think there's some fear when they first come to campus that that may be an issue but I have not experienced that being an issue on campus. I think that, um, of course there's a transition period and we have transition periods on every community in campus, not just with our transgendered students, um, but, you know, I think until they get used to their community and gain confidence and comfort with their community

and their peers there's gonna be a little bit of transition period but there hasn't been any specific incidents that I'm aware of that have occurred on campus.

Interviewee B: If I can address – the last nine months I haven't heard of anything that – I haven't had anybody come talk to me, I haven't heard from the dean's office that there have been students so I can't say of anything...

Me: How would you deal with a transgender student coming to you about a transphobic roommate?

Interviewee A: Well, I think that we have the structure to deal with issues in any room. You know, based on a certain set of guidelines. So with any students that are having problems we start with mediation and that occurs with our RA's and the students that are having the problems. We start with roommate agreements and, so, students clearly sit down and set out kind of some basic guidelines about respect and their relationship that they want to have and their experience they want to have living together on campus. So I think that's not different than any other set of students. I think we start from there and so if there are any issues we go through the mediation process and, of course, our main concern is safety and security of our students and, so, if a student ever feels unsafe, that's when we as administrators may jump in to speed up the process but, um, really we start with the basics and, um, every student here is challenged with mediating and challenging themselves with personal growth and development so we're not gonna just let students take the easy way out, we want them to have the dialogue and have the conversations because that's how our students grow and change and become more accepting of different people. So we promote that and that's – that's the basis of what we do. But, of course, if anyone feels uncomfortable we're gonna step in also and make sure the situation is safe. I hope that answered completely...

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee B: And along with that there is a federal law that dictates that we have to have open spaces around campus in case students feel or have some concerns about their safety about these issues they're in. I mean it does relate to any kind of sexual instances or situations that evolve so we have to have open spaces so if a situation were to happen like that and the student felt or communicated to any one of us that they felt unsafe, we have a space we can put them in temporarily so we can resolve the issue, fix it in however way it's gonna be, you know, acceptable to both students in place and then try to get that worked out from there so.

Interviewee A: We've been lucky here on this campus to have extra space, so nothing's permanent. We can always move people around and find a place that a student's really gonna be successful on campus.

Me: What is your opinion of transgender individuals?

Interviewee A: My opinion? Well, I – I don't really have a specific opinion. I think that, uh, transgender students are going to have their own set of experiences just like other students on campus. Uh, I've been lucky enough where students have trusted me with their situation and their experiences and, on a personal note, I find that what they're going through is, um, courageous and brave and sometimes they have to, um, to probably research their situation a little bit more than other students and be more prepared emotionally. So, for me, on a personal level, I feel always very lucky when students trust me with private information but I wouldn't necessarily think that I would have an opinion about transgender students. I mean, they deserve and will have a similar experience to every student that we have on campus.

Interviewee B: I – I wouldn't – yeah,

Interviewee A: (Laughs) Yeah, that's a hard one.

Interviewee B: I don't think I would say I have an opinion one way or the other because I've always been taught not to judge others in the sense of who they are or what they are. Um, I have – I haven't met any – no students have come forward to me here in a sense of who they are, um, my previous institution was a very conservative public institution back in Colorado so we didn't have students that openly indicated that they were transgender there but the third institution I worked at right – where I actually started my career in higher education was very open. They had policies in place and so, um, I have met a few students that were going through that process. I would, just basically say the same thing. I mean it takes a very strong individual to be that courageous, especially the ones that wanna – that are open coming out to us and asking for help in the systems and housing or other types of services around the campus and so I – I would have to say from a personal opinions standpoint, I would say they're probably, in some respects, when I was that age, probably a lot stronger than I would have been, so I think it takes a lot.

Interviewee A: I think sometimes, um, folks that have really identified themselves as transgender may be really ahead of the game as far as knowing who they are, uh, in the age bracket that we really serve. The population that we generally serve on the main campus is, I would say maybe 18-25, um, and a lot of people don't even know who they are or what they want out of life yet so, sometimes, people that go through different struggles in their life and, unfortunately, our transgender population has had to struggle for some of the things they have gotten in life. So I think that they may be ahead of the curve emotionally and developmentally and they sometimes succeed more than our other students here, whereas they don't necessarily – some of our students don't have any kind of population to identify with and, so, some of my transgender students that I've worked with in the past, and let me say there's only been a small handful here at CSUMB, but they are more acclimated to being involved on campus and they know how to use the resources that they've been given and more active students tend to succeed more in college because they – they have a connection to someone. So, I just wanted to add that.

Me: Okay... how would you rate the level of acceptance in this department toward transgender individuals?

Interviewee A: This department, I would say the rating – I don't know what your scale is but very high because, um, we are higher education professionals who constantly seek to develop our staff and promote diversity and, um, I think it's something that we're exposed to in our education so, I don't know what your ratings scale is so –

Interviewee B: I would say from educationally, professionally, the one area that housing departments pretty much pride themselves on is being open and very accepting to all students no matter who they are, no matter what they identify with, so I – yeah, once again without a ratings scale I would say we were probably one of the more accepting departments on campus but I can't speak for other departments either.

Interviewee A: We work really hard with providing safe spaces and being allies and spreading that knowledge to students so that they do feel safe and comfortable when they're talking to us or around us or in our office space.

Me: Is there anything else you wish to add?

Interviewee A: Um, I am really glad to talk to you and I don't think we know your involvement with this population on campus but, uh, I would just say, for your research purposes, if there's anything that we can assist you with or if we can answer any more questions, um, that you may have, please feel free and to continue the dialogue. You know, if you are doing more work on campus or getting people involved or aware about transgender issues on campus we would love to be a part of that. Um, it's an important, valid, issue that we acknowledge and accept and promote, uh, the acceptance and broaden diversity on campus so, um, at CSUMB I think it's, at best, a very small percentage of our population and, unfortunately, when you have a small population like that, you may not have, um, the representation and the, uh, connections on campus. So, I look forward to that population on campus being acknowledged on campus and we're here to provide them housing and relationships along the way.

Interviewee B: She said it better than I would (laughs).

Interviewee A: (Laughs).

Me: Okay, thank you.

Interviewee A: Yeah.

Campus Health Center – Interviewed on April 11, 2012 at 9:30am

Me: So, how would you define transgender?

Interviewee: Um, I believe transgender would be someone that's... born but they feel like they really should be opposite gender.

Me: Okay, what is your opinion of these individuals?

Interviewee: My opinion is that, you know, they're just regular people like anybody else. It's just, unfortunately, their gender that they're born with doesn't necessarily identify with what they feel inside.

Me: To your knowledge, have, uh, has the health center ever had a transgender identified student come in and request transgender related services?

Interviewee: I believe there was. Not since I've been here, but I believe maybe one or two years ago there was. Yes.

Me: Were they able to be helped, do you know?

Interviewee: Um, I'm not really sure what they were seen for so I can't really say, since I wasn't here, but I mean when they came in I know they were evaluated so...

Me: Um, what, if any, information does this department have to give transgender students if they came in looking for some?

Interviewee: I think, generally, um, what we do, um, at the health center we don't particularly have a lot of information here but I know that the counseling center next door does. So, generally what we would do is we would refer to them.

Me: Um, are you able to point them, besides the PGCC, are you able to point them in the direction of other local services that deal with transgender individuals?

Interviewee: I know that there is, it's not necessarily local local but, within this area, there is a doctor in Santa Cruz that provides services too so I know that that would be a good resource as well.

Me: If someone came in identified as male, whether or not they were legally so, and needed feminine type health care such as a pap smear, how would you go about making him comfortable in that situation?

Interviewee: Um, you know, I think we'd probably just sit down and just discuss, you know, what they were feeling, or what they wanted and I would, you know, I would treat them to the best of my ability and, you know, give that individual, you know, the dignity that they needed to get through that – what they were feeling or what they wanted, you know.

Me: Are there policies in place or any trainings that you or anybody in this department has gone through that touched on transgender issues?

Interviewee: Um, in this particular office, no. I know the other coun – the PGCC yes, they have – but here, our campus health center has not gone through specific training.

Me: Is there a school health insurance for students?

Interviewee: There is a health insurance program available for students. Now, how cost effective it is, I'm not sure but – but there is – there's brochures in the lobby.

Me: Do you know if it covers anything like hormone prescriptions?

Interviewee: I can't say, I'm not sure – I don't imagine it would though.

Me: Okay. How would you rate the level of acceptance in this department towards transgender individuals?

Interviewee: I think anyone here in our office would be very accepting. I know that we've had many conversations about it. Um, you know, just because we never really know who's going to walk through our door and I just want everyone to be, you know, respectful of anybody and what's going on in their life because, honestly, it could be anybody, you know, and we just have to be professional and work with people and whatever issues they have so I think everybody here's very open.

Me: Is there anything else you'd like to add.

Interviewee: Yeah, I just think that, I want this health center to be a place where any student feels comfortable to come no matter what their issue is because, you know, it's – it's scary to have something going on that you can't feel like you can share with others or if you have questions and you don't know who to ask I mean I'm very open. I don't mind, I will talk about anything. Nothing much embarrasses me. Nothing much stresses me out. I grew up with all kinds of different people in my life over the years so, I mean, I just want them – people to know that we're very open here and we can help. I mean, maybe we can't give exactly the treatment that patients need but we can certainly work with them to try and figure out where they can go get that help.

Me: Thank you.

Interviewee: Yeah, sure.

Personal Growth and Counseling Center – Interviewed on April 16, 2012 at 3:00pm

Me: So how would you define transgender?

Interviewee: How would I de – I would, uh, define it, um, as – I always come from people so I would define it as a person whose identity or behavior or expression does not conform with their

birth gender, basically, and I think that is pretty much congruent with the many different definitions you can read in books and I personally agree with that.

Me: What is your opinion of these individuals?

Interviewee: I found it a really interesting question because I don't really have an opinion. I mean, I um, I would say that, um, as, with almost all people, I mean... I don't have any judgments about transgender people um... so I don't really have an opinion, it always depends a little bit on the individual and I find, uh, I find it very brave to go to ask these questions and to express yourself in a non-conformed way – with anybody who does that, regardless of why they do it and a transgender person does it because they are, you know, not in – don't agree with the gender they are born. So I would say I find – that would – could be considered an opinion: that I find it very brave. And to – but, I think that's that's about it in the opinion department.

Me: Have you ever had a transgender identified student coming in and request trans related services?

Interviewee: Um, yes, I've had a few students... I would say three. All of them very much – they were kind of in – during the time, um, one was starting to transition F to M and one was not yet transitioning or, actually, both of them are still pre surgery. I mean one student just came a couple of times and, um, and was questioning at the time but I think not really ready to do any further counseling and the other, um, the other student I worked with on and off for a few years. The issues were mostly not related to them identifying as transgender – well, they were and they weren't, you know, it was not that they wanted services in the process of transitioning but, of course, the depression for example and other issues were related. Partly related to that, not all of it, but partly, yeah. I don't know if that answered your question.

Me: And were you able to help them?

Interviewee: I think I was able to help them. Um, I – if it would – if the counseling would have been more specific, um, in terms of services for, um, you know, transitioning or identity issues or so I would have – I would have definitely – I referred one of the persons out and that person then got services in the community while they were also in treatment with me for their depression. And the other person was, like many students who come here to the counseling center, the other person basically came for a couple of sessions and then didn't come anymore.

Me: Have you ever had a student come in wanting help to deal with a transphobic incident that occurred on campus?

Interviewee: Yes. More than once.

Me: Really?

Interviewee: Yes. I mean that depends on, you know, I mean how you – uh, how do you define transphobic. Yeah, I would say definitely more than once. I mean it happens in the classrooms and in the dorms all the time.

Me: Are you able to elaborate, like any examples?

Interviewee: Well, um, for example in a dorm room that the roommate of the person who came in for counseling was uncomfortable with having a gay roommate.

Me: Okay, um...

Interviewee: Or classroom situations, um, that, um, students... you know, that other students in discussions expressed with whatever the – was that, so transphobic.

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I'm sorry backtrack – because I was... I thought now LGBTQ-phobic in general. Transphobic, let me think... I have to think of... um, no. No.

Me: Okay. What, if any, information do you have to give transgender identified students who came in looking for some. Like pamphlets or...

Interviewee: Okay. Um, we have a couple of pamphlets out there. I don't know if you've seen them already or I can give them to you. They're probably the same ones as – do they have them in the campus health center?

Me: I didn't see any. I wasn't looking around.

Interviewee: Oh – okay, we'll do that afterwards. Okay, and um, so we have that and then, um, usually I refer students to Stephen Braveman to get more information. Not necessarily to be in treatment with him but to get more information and I've told you also about Maren Martin that therapist here who is in this – she practices here in Monterey but she is in this, um, network in Santa Cruz and – so those would be the referrals I made – I would make. Yeah.

Me: What other local services that deal specifically with transgender individuals are you able to point them to?

Interviewee: Besides Stephen's group and, um, certain services in Santa Cruz? Um, I think that the former Monterey AIDS project... I think that they're now called... I forgot what they're called... I would refer to them but I would have to look on the internet first.

Me: Are there any policies in place or any trainings that you have gone through that touched on how to deal with situations involving transgender students.

Interviewee: Um, officially, only the one I just told you about. This one morning with Maren Martin. Um, I have otherwise nothing formal. I have read one of the – the two books now out

there the Gender Outlaw – I have done a little bit of education for myself by reading – but, you know, um, talking about this recently more has definitely motivated to get more educated. And actually Maren Martin has just forwarded us information for therapists where we can get more educated and I definitely want to take her up on those suggestions.

Me: Are you able to give a gender identity disorder diagnosis and a letter for hormone treatment to begin?

Interviewee: Um, I am able to give the diagnosis although I would be hesitant to give the diagnosis because I don't agree with it being a disorder like it is defined in the DSM and, um, I would, um, not... I think I might be allowed to write the letter and, um, but I would, again, refer out at this point because I just don't have enough education.

Me: Uh, do you or would you provide mediation between roommates?

Interviewee: Generally, as a person, I would but we have a policy here at the counseling center that we do not do any mediation with anybody here so that has nothing to do with if... if one of the persons would be transgender or so, we just don't do that in general because then we could basically close up our – the services and just do mediation for roommates here.

Me: How would you rate the level of acceptance in this department towards transgender individuals?

Interviewee: What's your scale?

Me: One to ten.

Interviewee: One to ten... so let's say one no acceptance and ten high acceptance?

Me: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I would say, if it comes to acceptance, it would probably be a ten. If it came to education... how educated we are, I would rate it lower... I would rate it, um, in the middle. I mean a five or a six. I definitely think there would be work to be done.

Me: Okay, is there anything else you wish to add?

Interviewee: Um, no... I'm really looking forward to your project because, um, your project will really educate the CSUMB community here and we have, for example, um, at the counseling center, used students' research projects so if you would be willing to share, um, yours for trying to get more funding for things. Right now we are in the process of trying to get a grant from the state for mental health services and we were lucky enough to use two, um, two research projects of students – their findings, um, to make a case that we would get that money. So, uh, that would be great if you would be willing to do that later on... yeah, thank you.

Me: Thank you.