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Title: LGBTQ Inclusion in Sexual Health Programming at UIUC

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Keywords: LGBTQ; LGBT; Sexual Health; Inclusion

Abstract: Are UIUC’s various sexual health services working to be inclusive of all sexual orientations and identities? How are students LGBTQ students obtaining information and care for their sexual health needs?

Question: Initial question: Where are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students on UIUC’s campus obtaining their sexual health information and care? Are UIUC’s services inclusive of all sexual orientations and identities?
Question developed into: Are UIUC’s various sexual health education services working to be inclusive of all sexual orientations and identities? How are students LGBTQ students obtaining information and care for their sexual health needs?
As the research process progressed, my project began to focus more on the providers of sexual health education, and their attitudes regarding LGBTQ inclusion in their programming or curriculum.

Plan: Method: I will be interviewing providers of various sexual health services on campus (such as educational outreach, sexual assault prevention, and more) to determine how they are working to create programming that is relevant and helpful to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. I will also interview LGBTQ-identified students who have taken advantage of these services and ask them about their experiences. I will also do archival research to look at the University’s history of sexual health programming for the LGBTQ community.
Participants: Staff members and faculty of the university who work in the field of sexual health, as well as students who use these services.
Schedule: Initially I would like to get the perspective of the providers of the various services, then move on to discover the impact on the students.

Data: Of all of the providers I interviewed, there was a unanimous recognition of the importance of the issue. Thus, in some way or another, all interviewees made an effort to combat heteronormativity in their practices and include as many sexual and gender identities as they knew how.
There was less of an emphasis on other social identities, such as race, class, etc.
Stronger attempts at including LGBTQ people in sexual health education seemed to result in LGBTQ students being more likely to develop an interest in the field and becoming a provider themselves.

EUI References/Tagging [1=Read, but not relevant, i.e., I took a look at this project but my own EUI project does not really have anything to do with it; 2=Somewhat Relevant, i.e., I think my project is related to this EUI project, but I do not really build specifically on any of its arguments or data in my project; 3=Very relevant, i.e., My project builds on this project; namely, my project’s arguments confirm/contradict the discussions in this project.]
Reflect: The experience of participating in the EUI research process is something I have never imagined I would ever do, nor was it something I felt like I was prepared for. I feel like being able to directly look into the subject of my interest provided me a more in-depth educational experience than one where I just sat listening to lectures. I also greatly enjoyed being able to present my research, which I have grown to be very proud of, in front of people. It was a complicated and incredibly difficult process, but I am glad I had the opportunity to do it in my college career.

Recommendations: My research shows that UIUC is doing a good job in what it is trying to accomplish, but I do think that the university could do better in terms of remaining sex positive and endorsing sexuality as a positive aspect of a college student’s life, not something that should be seen as shameful. I believe that the eradication of I-SHAG week was a mistake, and a week dedicated to promoting healthy sexuality is something that can enrich our student’s lives and provide them with perhaps a more healthy view of sexuality, sexual identity, and sex positivity.