Author: Dana Ahern
Title: The University of Illinois's LGBT Community - A Look at Organizations
About the Author: I have been a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign since Fall of 2008, and I have identified as queer since early 2010, and have since worked to become more active in the LGBT community. I am pursuing a double major in Anthropology and Gender and Women's Studies, giving me experience in ethnographic research as well as a thorough background in feminist and queer theory. As a queer identified person, I've had to find my own place in the LGBT community on campus and was interested in the experiences of other LGBT identified people and what finding an LGBT community for themselves has been like.
Keywords: LGBT, community, RSO, gay, lesbian

Abstract: LGBT, community, RSO, gay, lesbian

Question: Initial Question: Do the queer RSO's and other student-run organizations work together on campus to create an activist network that is ultimately effective and useful and in what ways do they succeed/fail?
First Revision: How do LGBT people on campus decide in what groups they participate? What goals and motivators encourage/discourage participation and who are the people who feel encouraged versus discouraged?
Second Revision: How do LGBT people on campus decide in what groups they participate? What goals and motivators encourage/discourage participation and who are the people who feel encouraged versus discouraged? Who does the campus LGBT community serve and what kind of climate does it foster?

Plan: I conducted interviews with LGBT identified individuals who have been active in the campus LGBT community in some way, or who have, for whatever reason, been relatively inactive. I asked questions surrounding their experiences with campus registered student organizations and their experiences with the campus LGBT community overall. My plan focused on first gaining a solid background in pre-existing research, gaining a better idea of the direction that needed to be further pursued, and finally conducting interviews with 5-10 interview subjects.
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.]*
Anthony, Kathryn H. "Designing for Diversity: Implications for Architectural Education in the Twenty-first Century." 2002. 1
Batts, Jacqui. "Separate but not Equal: A Closer Look at Code Switching." 2011. 1
Britton, Kari. "Educating Our Youth in Queer Topics: Is UIUC Truly a Community Leader?" 2011. 2
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Leduc, Bridget. "Undergraduate Student Opinions of and University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign's Involvement in Homosexual Rights." 2010. 2
Marchese, Michelle. "Linguistic + Cultural Histories + Their influence on UIUC Students Lives." 2011. 1
Rauch, Jacalyn. "Researching Gay Speech Patterns at the University of Illinois." 2011. 2
Romero, Jason C. "The Facebook Effect: Social Network Sites and Changing Experiences of LGBT Students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign." 2008. 1

Reflect: This project was incredibly useful to gain a better understanding of how ethnographic research like this works, but more than that, this project was useful for me to understand how to do good research like this. I have learned the importance of ethnographies, as well as the importance of the project I actually worked on. The fact that this paper will be published in IDEALS is really beneficial, I

think, to the University in terms of providing archival information of where our queer culture is at in its development. I have come to appreciate the importance of ethnographies as well as the importance of putting this information out there to potentially inspire change.

Recommendations: My project illustrates the lack of inclusion of identity and individuals throughout the campus LGBT community. While this is problematic enough, something that is extremely important to address is the negativity and bullying that is perpetuated, not just by those outside of this community, but by those within it. My recommendation for change would be to do some kind of diversity training that stresses the importance of working with other people to understand each other and bring acceptance to one another. Promoting a safe space environment for LGBT students is important, and while the LGBTRC does work as that safe space, it seems to taken over by an elite crowd and it is vital that either a new space is created, or something is done to increase accessibility to other LGBT community members.