

# Faculty and Staff Members' Awareness of Inclusive Policies At Higher Educational Institutions

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FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS' AWARENESS OF INCLUSIVE POLICIES AT  
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

by  
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ABSTRACT

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Marquette University, 2019

The identity of a person has many different layers from one's sexual orientation to race, their morals and values, to even their gender. As times progress, many individuals are finding that their identities are not easily defined; making their gender unable to be categorized into the current boxes that society has. This forces many to struggle with discerning who they really are and where they fit into societal structures. As more people explain how one may not subscribe to all of the gender expectations of one identity, some have decided to identify as non-binary. Non-binary means that a person does not completely identify as either male or female. In fact, some may subscribe to different aspects of the different types of gender. By not identifying as a part of the two major gender identities, many non-binary individuals struggle to know where they fit in within organizational structures and cultures. This study looks more closely at how some institutions of higher education do not have systems and policies in place to support the experiences of these individuals. When institutions do have specific inclusive or diversity policies, that highlight non-binary identities, the policies tend to be not well known. Often times the policies lack clarity and are not understood by various campus community members including students, faculty and staff alike. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how faculty and staff understand and respond inclusive policies regarding non-binary identities. Through in-depth interviews that occurred through snowball sampling, the study examined inclusive policies and how those policies affected faculty and staff as well as their perceptions of the university and its culture.

*Keywords: non-binary identity, faculty and staff awareness, higher education, inclusive policy.*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

“I’m not male or female. I think I float somewhere in between” (Aviles, 2019, p.1) were the words that Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Sam Smith spoke on a new Instagram show “I Weigh Interviews.” This was the first time that he identified as non-binary but did acknowledge how “his gender identity lacked a label” (Aviles, 2019 p.1) for many years prior. Non-binary is when someone doesn’t identify with society’s binary gender options: male or female, rather a combination of the two genders (Papisova, 2018). Sam Smith isn’t the first or the last person to fall outside of the gender binary that society has created. Others include actors, Jayden Smith, Ruby Rose from *Orange is the New Black*, and even actress and singer, Miley Cyrus (Back, 2019). In fact, many individuals live their entire lives as one gender that they may not identify as. This is due to the societal pressure that is placed on individuals to present themselves as either masculine or feminine, depending how they were anatomically born. In contrast, those with non-binary identities may feel as though they identify as another gender or possibly identify as a combination of the two.

The change in society’s gender structures push us to have more dialogues about our societal understanding of gender: such as reevaluating what makes up one’s gender and how to adjust the current structures and how-to best support those who fall outside of the current gender binary. This requires members of society to take the time and have deeper conversation to get to know more about another individual, rather than judging and categorizing them based on societal expectations and norms. These conversations would have to occur everywhere: one’s school and college, the classroom and office



environment, church or mosque, to the family dinner table and even the dating scene. Many have yet to even experience or been challenged to think that someone is different than how they present themselves. By creating a culture that is more inclusive and more considerate to how people identify, it will help to create a more thoughtful community and greater sense of belonging. This change could occur with having an increase in more policies, that would bring non-binary identities to the forefront, and challenge people to have the deeper conversations with others they interact with, daily.

While conversations help spur a deeper understanding, there is still more that needs to occur to aid in better supporting and changing the binary gender stigmas. The work that has yet to be done needs to work in tandem with daily conversations, including researching more about the gender identities, non-binary identities and educating the masses. There is a need to create spaces and educate people on the different identities that currently exist. Living in a world where one is not accepted or welcomed for how they identify is an excruciatingly difficult, painful and potentially dangerous situation. This can occur especially when communities do not create spaces of inclusion or foster policies that promote tolerance and acceptance. There has been several debates and conversations regarding how those who identify outside of the gender binary are not accepted or welcomed (Doran & Specht, 2018; Drew, 2018; Fausset, 2017). The Trump administration has gone so far to work to eliminate the term “transgender,” which has greatly endangered and harmed the civil rights and well-being of those who fall outside of the norm (Wald, 2019; Green, Benner & Pear, 2018; National Center for Transgender Equality, 2018). As individuals across the world wrestle to find where they belong and how one may identify it is crucial to find ways to best support all identities as

individuals' sense of self develops. Often times these conversations and realizations tend to occur in their late teens and early twenties. For some, this means that they're in college and or on their own for the first time when they're exploring and finding their true self. The importance of these conversations truly takes center stage to best support as individuals in this age range require some additional resources and support. This means that colleges and universities need to be prepared to support their students' self-exploration and all individuals as well as how institutions must have various resources to foster understanding of all identities. Recognizing this developmental period for their students pushes the need for faculty and staff to have the tools, training, and resources to support all individuals, no matter how one may identify. Diane Richler, past president of Inclusion International and advocate for inclusive education, said it best how "inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone." This study is salient to consider with knowing what faculty and staff members awareness of inclusive policies and issues of diversity on their college campuses is as well as their understanding of how crucial their support is for helping to create inclusive and welcoming environments.

The identity of a person has many different layers: morals, race, sexual orientation and gender. Many individuals are finding that their identities are not easily defined or fit into the specific categories, especially as more research continues develop in the field of gender studies. This forces many to struggle to discern who they really are. With more people explaining how they may not subscribe to all of the expectations of the gender binary; some have decided to identify their gender as non-binary. Non-binary means that

a person doesn't identify as either male or female and may subscribe to different aspects of the different types of gender.

By not identifying as a part of the two major gender identities, many non-binary members of organizations and society struggle to know where they fit within organizational structures and cultures. In many cases, organizations do not have systems and policies in place to support the experience of these individuals in public areas, such as counseling centers or all gender bathrooms.

Having specific policies and resources to support the marginalized communities makes an organization more inclusive and allows all members to not feel forced to subscribe to their biological assignment, should they identify differently. For example, one option is to better address issues more openly in a variety of settings and create more inclusive spaces, such as having pronouns listed in one's email signature. Another option is to have all gender bathrooms or non-gender specific language in spousal benefits in healthcare policies, eliminates the burden of ensuring one is meeting the binary gender expectations and norms that society sets. Creating environments to be more inclusive forces colleges and universities to change its healthcare, life insurance offerings, as well as its classroom curriculum for non-binary members and others who fall outside of the societal norm. The research presented here in this qualitative study will look into what faculty and staff at higher educational institutions know about inclusive policies and how they view their role in implementing inclusive policies. In-depth interviews with various faculty and staff members at various institutions were conducted to hone in on their understanding of inclusive policies, how these policies came to fruition and presented to faculty and staff members and eventually implemented, as well

as how non-binary amenities, as well as even the topic of gender identity was discussed (or not) are affected or incorporated into the overall mission, values and goals of the organization through the support and role of faculty and other staff members.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to look closer into what faculty and staff members awareness is with inclusive policies and how they interpret their role involved with implementing such policies. With more individuals not being able to identify as either male or female, it is important for institutions to be more intentionally inclusive. Colleges that have more inclusive policies have a positive impact on students (Smith, 1997). If colleges focus on creating their campus to be more inclusive and ensuring that “underrepresented students feel a greater sense of belonging... [then the] majority of students show greater support for the university’s diversity efforts” (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). This demonstrates how schools’ need to be intentional with inclusive policies that offer greater support for more welcoming policies which will help all students to feel more a part of the campus community.

Faculty support of diversity and inclusion initiatives is a huge component for ensuring that students will support the policies of inclusion (Ryder, Reason, Mitchell, Gillon, Hemmer, 2015). How students perceive the climate of a college campus, is strongly influenced by faculty members actions , words and ways one implements inclusive policies, whether it be through curriculum structure, classroom protocols and how faculty facilitated institution policies in their classes (Ryder, et. al., 2015). Classroom faculty and staff members are actually the “most important socialization agents on a college campus” (Ryder, et. al., 2015 p. 10) since they are the ones with the

most interactions with students on a weekly basis. Faculty support is vital to inclusive policies and warrants soliciting their feedback and support for inclusive policies on campus as they have a direct and strong influence over the students whom are affected by these policies (Ryder, et. al., 2015). While students are a key stakeholder, faculty and staff are a huge group within the university or college that can help an institution to become more inclusive through their support, hence requiring faculty to be aware and ready to sift through the issues of inclusive policies. With the direct interaction and often weekly contact that faculty has with students, is an example of how crucial it is for faculty to be on board with implementing and executing inclusive policies. The continuous, direct interaction that faculty and staff have with students requires them to not only be aware of inclusive policies, but also know how to best engage in the relative topics with students and working through issues that may arise that may hinder the implementation of the policy. Research suggests that LGBTQ+ students and their supporters felt an increase sense of “comfort and improved perceptions of campus” after being exposed to “Safe Space” trainings which work to create inclusive environments on campus (Evans, 2002; Poytner & Lewis, 2003). As more institutions work to introduce more inclusive policies, more data can be gathered in the future to see if diversity and inclusive policies can pave the way for greater acceptance. Potentially, if colleges and its faculty members refuse to promote or support resources that aid inclusion and diversity initiatives, it can be inferred that an institution’s retention will suffer greatly and thereby harming its overall success and future. This study will offer more insight and help other institutions consider the various levels that should be considered when working to create a more inclusive campus. Specifically, it will focus on faculty and staff members’

perceptions of the institution and culture, its diversity and inclusion issues throughout campus and how such issues addressed through policies or other forms of implementation to create more welcoming campus environments.

### **Significance of the Study**

Research indicates that the current political climate has forced schools to take a stand and consider how it can support and ensure that all students are being heard and protected, regardless of how one may identify (Doran & Specht, 2018; Drew, 2018; Fausset, 2017; Ryder, Reason, Mitchell, Gillon, Hemmer, 2015) . This study will help offer more insight into faculty and staff members knowledge about inclusive policies and what they consider their role to be in the implementation process. The study will also stress and consider how the faculty and other staffs' responses to the change are crucial to the process. By considering how others respond to the policy change, future policies can be considered when making changes that aim to be more inclusive and go against societal norms.

## **CHAPTER 2:** **Literature Review & Theoretical Framework**

We must recognize the importance of having faculty and staff support inclusive identities and by considering multiple considerations. The concept of gender identity and non-binary identities specifically are crucial to recognizing the need for inclusive policies. By recognizing these policies, as well as the historical events and current culture that affects non-binary individuals, more research can be gathered and a deeper understanding for the issues surrounding gender and acceptance of all gender identities may occur. From there, it is crucial to understand how faculty and university staff play into ensuring all students have a sense of community on a college campus. Their awareness of inclusive policies for non-binary individuals is salient to ensuring colleges succeed in retaining marginalized students, but also with assisting with spreading the mission of their institutions and, potentially changing the world for the better.

### **Review of Literature**

To successfully incorporate inclusive policies in any organization, specifically in higher educational institutions, there are a variety of considerations to keep in mind. From understanding how gender identity forms and is currently defined, to diving deeper into non-binary identities, its history and current culture of those who identify as non-binary. One's understanding of the use of pronouns is also salient to creating more open and inclusive spaces is also of great relevance to the non-binary community for the fight for deeper conversations to happen. From there it is salient to remember how structures influence members of an organization's role, more specifically being how faculty and

staff aid or hinder students' success and support directly, including their personal understanding.

### **Gender identity.**

As times evolve, the various attributes of gender identity changes, making it vital to understand how one makes decisions, sees themselves and how others' perceptions of themselves and others around the community. Wood and Eagly (2015), break apart the two words to offer a more encompassing definition of the phrase, gender identity. According to Wood and Eagly (2015), gender "consist of the meanings ascribed to male and female social categories within a culture" (Wood & Eagly, 2015, p. 461). When individuals begin to subscribe and internalize cultural meanings into who they are and how they identify, "individuals [begin] to understand themselves in relation to the culturally feminine and masculine meanings attached to men and women and may think and act according to those gendered aspects of themselves" (Wood et. al., 2015, p. 461), which creates one's gender identity. The problem with this definition is that it does not consider those who do not subscribe to all of the male or female gender expectations and forces them to categorize themselves in a way in which is different than how they view themselves.

Others consider how there are those who fit outside of the standard norms or expectations of gender, rather than being forced to identify as either solely male or female (Nicolazzo, 2016; Wood and Eagly, 2015; Butler, 2006;). For example, looking at how there is an expectation for transgenders to completely change from one gender to another (Nicolazzo, 2016). Nicolazzo (2016) notes "trans-normativity suggests all trans people should transition from one socially knowable sex to another (e.g. male-to-



female)” (p. 1175) which is what many have come to assume based on the media coverage of those who have transitioned from one gender to another, such as Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox. However, this idea, according to Judith Butler (2006) is a “false assumption [because] there are [more than] only two identifiable sexes (i.e. male/female), which are then linked to only two genders (e.g. man/woman), which are discrete, natural, and immutable” (p. 1175), as we have come to learn more about, specifically with non-binary or gender non-conforming. Thus a “trans person’s transitioning from one sex to another is connected to that person transitioning from one gender to another, as sex and gender are entailed in specific ways that make only certain people and positionalities culturally intelligible” (Butler, 2006, p. 1175). This shows how gender is not binary or switchable between the being male or female; rather it is much more personal and subjective depending on the individual. This makes it much more challenging to define and categorize. Other definitions of gender identity focus on how one’s looks. Specifically, with how “a person’s identification as male, female, both, neither or somewhere in between... is independent of their sexual orientation” (Macgillivray, 2007, p. 4). Wood and Eagley (2015) then added how gender identification does not have a “uniform, unvarying meaning” (p. 465) but are embedded in other social categories and is much more individualized in how one may identify in various contexts. Again, showing how gender is more than just what is seen on the surface, but should be based more on what is personally interpreted by both society and the individual themselves. This tug-of-war is one that seems to be creating the tension between understanding how one identifies and how others understand them.

It is crucial to have more specific measures of gender identity in order to help better develop a deeper and more encompassing understanding of gender identity (Mehta, 2015). With many different definitions of gender identity and none being widely accepted (Andrews, Martin & Gallagher, 2016; Mehta, 2015) it is often difficult know exactly what both scholars and everyday members of society consider to be and make up a person's gender identity. The traits between those who subscribe to the main two identities, male and female, and those who subscribe outside them, displays key differences. Distinguishing these traits as solely and completely male or female gender identities causes great discomfort and issues for anyone at any age, especially if they do not align or meet all the characteristics of one gender or identify with different characteristics of each gender.

An examination of physical aggressive traits between children who are gender-normative versus children who are non-gender-normative have less aggressive tendencies (Andrews et. al., 2016). Research indicates that children need to have more freedom in expressing themselves and ensuring that there are environments that allow them to be open with various parts of their identity, rather than forcing them to subscribe to a certain identity and the expectations that go along with a binary identity. By eliminating the pressure to meet specific gender expectations, a sense of freedom and acceptance is created for all, regardless of how one identifies.

Acceptance and freedom from societal labels are both goals that many minorities strive to attain. For LGBTQ+ individuals, many work to distinguish how one's identity is not solely defined as who one has sexual relations with but includes identification and association with others who claim the same sexual orientation (Macgillivray, 2007),

which is not something that is the sole aspect of their identity. This is because it is “more important [to consider] other aspects of themselves” (Macgillivray, 2007 p. 3) such as race, religion, ability (Savin and Williams, 2005). Recognizing the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation is crucial, as it is one piece of many aspects that craft and sculpt who an individual is and what values one may hold. By creating spaces that eliminate need for people to focus one part of their identity is crucial to creating more inclusive and accepting environments. The salience of creating more accepting environments and allow anyone to identify however they choose, without being worried about meeting all the characteristics of the heteronormative genders.

In order to create more open and inclusive atmospheres, it is necessary to look at how one’s gender identify forms and evolves. Gender identity proceeds in stages, including comparing gender standards to one’s personal behavior as well as people’s responses to how one’s behavior is based on the gender that one is assumed to be based on their physical characteristics. One’s own self-esteem is at play too. It is greatly affected by how one is internally discerning their gender identity, which is based on society’s standards and expectations, but as well as people’s emotional responses to how one may behave when following the gender norms or expectations for their external gender (Wood, et. al., 2015). The psychological consideration of how one categorizes themselves through the process of identifying with societal expectations, while also internalizing aspects of one’s own identity demonstrates how complex gender identity is for individuals who don’t fully identify as either male or female. This emphasizes the importance of how more open policies can help individuals feel welcome and not feel forced to make a decision on what societal expectations one should follow based on their

physical or anatomical characteristics. There must be a greater awareness of how messages are sent by both members of society who identify as either male or female and those who don't subscribe to societal expectations of gender. Research and policies can better look at how to promote acceptance and tolerance among groups and consider what characteristics are used as defining someone as a male or female or a combination of the two main genders, male and female.

### **Non-binary identity.**

To create more open environments, it is vital to consider those who fall outside of the margins of the binary genders or those who identify as non-binary. It is salient to understand the different levels of gender since the current gender structures are no longer all-encompassing of the different identities that exist. It is one area that requires more research are those who identify as non-binary individuals, their experiences and the various ways to support them. The term non-binary is not only ambiguous with various meanings but is connected to the argument for more open and inclusive policies at any organization. It is important to note that while the concept and specifics of non-binary and trans identities are still being studied, there has been a long historical interest in the terms (Lang, 1999; MacKenzie, 1994; MacKenzie, 1999; Macgillivray, 2007). Non-binary individuals have been around for hundreds of years. The first observations and documented research were on men and women who cross-lived or cross-dressed occurred in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in several different newspapers, legal records, and medical journals (MacKenzie, 1994). First-hand accounts of white explorers and missionaries stumbled upon “women-men” and “men-women” in Native American cultures (Lang, 1999). These instances continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> century with many cases involving individuals who

considered themselves to be in the “opposite” gender and/or live as members of the “opposite” gender (MacKenzie, 1999). However, the first American to undergo a sex change operation was Christine Jorgensen and took place in 1952 (Serlin, 1995). The surgery gained a great deal of media coverage, even though there had already been several gender reassignment surgeries in Europe prior to Jorgensen (Serlin, 1995).

While many forget or do not always recognize those who identify as non-binary, under the Fourteenth Amendment individuals may “define their own identify to give non-binary citizens the tools to successfully challenge sex-based discrimination under Title VII and the anti-discrimination laws” (Reinck, K., 2017, p. 322). As times continue to evolve, laws, organizational policies will have to change and progress. These changes and considerations demonstrate how including people of different genders can create a better sense of unity despite gender differences. This could be elevated even more to include members who do not identify as either of the two, to promote more inclusion and a better sense of comradery that can be felt by members of an organization and society.

A fundamental consideration is how the term non-binary is different than transgender. Transgender focuses on the changing process and the transition from one gender to the other. According to Dr. Meredith R. Chapman, a psychiatrist at Children’s Health GENECIS Program in Dallas, recently explained the difference in *Teen Vogue*, (Papisova, 2018) saying how:

The non-binary gender is any gender that isn’t exclusively male or female. Non-binary people may feel some mix of both male and female, somewhere in between, or something completely different. Other terms that are similar to 'non-binary' are gender-queer, gender expansive, gender nonconforming (p.1).

In his book, *Gay-Straight Alliances: A handbook for students, educators, and parents*, Dr. Ian Macgillivray (2007) addresses the specifics of word and meaning of

transgender. “The term ‘transgender’ includes a broad spectrum of people, from those who privately do not identify as their birth sex but do nothing about it to those who cross-dress sometimes, to always to those who change their body to match their identify with hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery” (p. 4). Others have defined the identity to be considered more holistically. Dr. Beemyn, an expert in the field of non-binary and transgender research (2003) offers a broader interpretation:

The word transgender is considered an umbrella term for those who identify or express cross or transgress established gender categories, including but not limited to transsexuals (individuals who identify with a gender different from their biological gender), crossdressers (the preferred term over ‘transvestites’), drag kings and queens (p. 36).

This distinction is crucial to ensuring that the different identities are being considered and allows society to better understand them based on the identity that one may hold.

Furthering the research and education of the various gender identities differences between the growing number of possible identities will help to ensure individuals feel heard and recognized by their community.

There are other words that are associated with the term non-binary. Another term that is related to non-binary is intersex. Intersex individuals are “those who were born with a genetic, hormonal or physical anatomy that is not regarded as completely male or female” (Macgillivray, 2007, p. 4) and includes individuals who, according to the Intersex Society of North America, “range of anatomical conditions in which individual’s anatomy mixes key masculine anatomy with key feminine anatomy” (Intersex Society of North America, 1993). This can occur through incomplete chromosomes, syndromes that alter the body’s production of or reaction to hormones, reproductive organs and genitals that are not fully formed as male or female and several others (Macgillivray, 2007). There are various treatments and surgeries that individuals can have to normalize or define who

one is, which is why many intersex individuals do not know they are intersex or choose to keep information private.

It is clear that gender identity is multifaceted and complex. With the various terms and identities that exist it is difficult to fully grasp what these implications mean for society and the socially constructed identities that are forced onto people. There is a difference between one's gender identity: which will be defined as how one perceives themselves; and gender expression: defined as how one presents themselves, such as "how a person dresses, how they style their hair, their behaviors/mannerisms, and even their voice" (Papisova, 2018, p.1). Some other things to consider is that how one may dress or present themselves, may be different one how they identify. This makes identifying as non-binary more complex and difficult to understand and requires careful thought and compassion. Many individuals who identify as non-binary are against "the whole system of gender" (Weiss, 2018, p. 1). There are those who want to stress to others that (Weiss, 2018):

There's no non-binary card people have to get validated via distress about their bodies... Dysphoria can be common and is sometimes influenced by the ways in which society (at large and even LGBTQ-specific spaces) often pushes people to gender binaries of male or female gender and leaves non-binary people feeling broken, confused, and unsettled, like they're doing something wrong for 'not picking a side already (p.1).

This furthers the need for inclusive policies to ensure all feel welcomed to identify as they would like to freely, without any discomfort.

Considering how gender has a broad spectrum and requires open and safe spaces for people to feel welcomed and accepted, the need for all-gender bathrooms and other practical inclusive methods, such as support group and safe spaces, are crucial to taking away the burden that is felt by those who don't identify as fully male or female genders

(Macgillivray, 2007; Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer, 2004; Sampson, 2000). Studies show inclusive policies and spaces that are designated to be more inclusive have helped LGBTQ+ students. In *Gay-Straight Alliances: a handbook for students, educators and parents*, Macgillivray (2007), looked at the roots and effects that gay-straight alliance (GSA) clubs have had on students, parents and educators. Students who do not identify as heterosexual tend to experience more fear of rejection, abandonment for being LGBTQ+, with most of instances of these feelings being experienced at schools, which in turn makes schools the most frequent places where LGBTQ+ students seek and require support (Macgillivray, 2007). Thus, furthering the need to create more open and safe spaces for all, regardless of their gender identity. A 1997 survey of five high schools was conducted in Massachusetts that focused on youth risk behavior found that gay, lesbian and bisexual students who endured social isolation and bullying at school were more likely to engage in risky behavior when compared to their heterosexual peers (Sampson, 2000). This information is crucial because these students are already susceptible to being unaccepted and unsure of their place based on the social contracts that are created in a binary world. These risky behaviors include, but are not limited to, having multiple sexual partners, increased drug use and alcohol consumption, increased likelihood of carrying a weapon and fighting in school and attempting suicide (Sampson, 2000). Those who experienced those risky behaviors, found that having a GSA organization helped students “engage in fewer risky behaviors in almost every category measured than in previous studies that were conducted” (Sampson, 2000, p. 73). Sampson (2000) concluded:

The challenges faced by gay and lesbian youth are formidable, but the results of this survey indicate that there may be hope for constructing effective school



support systems... All [students surveyed] expressed the need for their GSAs to become visible and active agents for change in their own schools... while continuing to provide support on a personal level. GSA's provide a place where students can relax and regroup their energy to face another day or another week at school (p. 76).

It is salient to further the need for schools and universities alike to create more spaces that help students to feel more accepted and freer to express themselves openly and freely.

While this study focused on having an inclusive space for LGBTQ+ students, it is important that there is more than just one single place for students and staff who identify outside of the hetero-norm have other places to feel safe and not fear rejection or harassment.

A survey of 634 high school and middle school students, with 46 percent identifying as LGBTQ+, asked respondents about their perceptions of safety and experiences of harassment (Sampson, 2000). The results of the survey found that students wanted schools to respond to these issues of harassment motivated by identity and sexual orientation by: establishing policies that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, train teachers and staff to stop slurs and harassment, support the establishment of GSA's and similar student clubs, ensure students know whom to approach for support and information related to one's sexual orientation and gender identity and finally, introduce curriculum that includes LGBTQ+ people and information about sexual orientation and gender identity (Sampson, 2000). It is clear that as students age, holistic and open options are required for all members of their communities to help others and individuals better understand themselves. This stresses the important consideration of the effects that having all-gendered bathrooms, which will assist with helping others better understand their own identity and feel more welcomed in various organizations, such as schools and colleges.

Schools that had a GSA or other LGBTQ+ resource groups have “helped individual students work through identify issues, accompanying stresses, meet peers with similar values, overcome persistent isolation and victimization at schools” (Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer, 2004). A survey of 22 high schools found that GSAs help make “more substantial institutional changes [through] a broad ongoing effort to make schools safe and welcoming for all students, staff, and families” (Griffin, et. al, 2004, p. 20). This demonstrates how inclusive changes can occur through providing clubs and supportive resources, such as GSAs and all-gendered bathrooms, can create more inclusive and welcoming spaces for all members of a school and campus community.

By being considerate and open to with non-binary members of a community, a deeper understanding can occur and allow others to learn to be more accepting and change the standards to be more inclusive and open to others’ identities rather than focusing on the labels that our society sets on its members.

### **Violence from fear & lack of understanding.**

While the non-binary gender identity is growing in popularity, it is important to be considerate of the various issues that currently affect this group. Inclusive spaces help members of the community or organization feel more valued and supported to themselves. However, not every area is as supportive or safe for non-binary identities. This freedom to be oneself has a large effect on their everyday choices, such as the clothes they wear to the bathroom one may choose to use. There are those who chose to be brave and express themselves freely, but often at a huge cost for their safety to both their personal and professional lives. Most of the issues can be addressed with helping to educate people of the non-binary identities and minimize the fear that binary members

feel due to not understanding the non-binary identity. Often times this group experiences greater amounts of harassment and physical violence due to being different than the norm. The most common place where this violence and harassment occurs is in public bathrooms.

Bathrooms are a way for the majority of society to enact power over others who don't identify as one of the two gender options in bathrooms (Bender-Baird, 2016). The bathroom is a place "where people feel vulnerable... [due to their] own bodily functions" (Bender-Baird, 2016, p. 985; Brown, 2006) and seeing those who aren't the same gender in the bathroom often causes people to be "less shy about speaking up" (Bender-Baird, 2016, p. 985) to those violating their expectations for who should be in the bathroom, hence making the place be more policed and less inclusive.

Many transgender and non-conforming people often experience harassment, threats and or violence in public areas (Brown, 2006; Bender-Baird, 2016). These dangerous instances tend to occur in bathrooms of social settings, such as at bars, nightclubs, and restaurants (Brown, 2006) but also in places where social interactions are not forced to occur such as gas stations or grocery stores (Brown, 2006). More than 2000 incidents of anti-LGBT hate violence were reported to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs in 2013, with trans people being six times more likely to experience discrimination than non-trans people (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014). The largest national study of trans discrimination found similar results with 53% of respondents reporting verbal assault and 8% of physical assault occurring in public spaces (Grant, Mottet, Tanis Harrison, Herman & Keisling, 2011). The experiences of trans and gender non-conforming people in public restrooms confirms that public spaces

are not a neutral space, rather it is the place where power is enacted (Gardner 1989). The lack of understanding of the non-binary and transgender identities may be part of the fear that causes violence on these individuals; however, it is clear that non-binary individuals need more assistance with creating more inclusive spaces in the larger society setting in order to prevent violence from occurring.

Most instances of violence and harassment towards non-binary identities tends to be in bathrooms. Bathrooms are a part of everyone's bodily functions (Bender-Baird, 2016), which makes it vital for all, while forcing people to identify in a way that may not be conducive to their true self. When a trans or non-binary person is questioned or "found out" in the bathroom, the reaction is typically not to reassess the policy issue or social construct of the binary segregation bathrooms, but to violently eject the trans or non-binary person (Bender-Baird, 2016). Entering a public restroom is not easy and can evoke a lot of emotional and fearful experiences for trans and gender non-conforming people. In several cases, trans and non-binary gender people must alter their appearance to correspond to the gender or identity that is closest to their anatomical or birth identity (Bender-Baird, 2016) though that is not how they identify. Many transgender individuals feel as though they are reprimanded for using the bathroom that they identify as, rather than the bathroom of their anatomy assigned them to use. This is because of the violence that ensues, should one enter the other bathroom. It also begs the question, what causes these violent outbursts from, often times cisgender and heterosexual individuals who are upset with someone using the bathroom?

Using Foucault's analysis of docile bodies to gender and the division of space, found that bathrooms are indeed "a technology of disciplinary power" (Bender-Baird,

2016, p. 984). Transgender individuals are often disciplined and reprimanded in various ways by using the bathroom, from “surveilling gazes... to verbal attacks” (Bender-Baird, 2016, p. 985-6) and potentially much worse. Many of their experiences include instances of how if they did not fit in the expectations of the cisgender individuals, discipline and exclusion would occur almost instantly, which “forced [transgender participants] into compliance with the gender norms operating in the sex segregation of these spaces or face possible violence” (Bender-Baird, 2016, p. 986). Several participants have come to expect the surveillance from others in the bathroom, so they have used a variety of techniques to avoid or minimize attacks. Some techniques are adjusting their clothing to accentuate their male or female aspects of their identity, by showing more cleavage of their breasts, carrying a purse, or asking a friend to accompany them to the bathroom (Devor, 1989; Lucal 1999; Browne, 2006; Cavanagh, 2011). Some non-binary individuals have shared how they avoid using a bathroom all together to completely avoid the confrontation or violence (Bender-Baird, 2016). A participant, who identifies as a trans man, shared how at his place of work (Bender Baird, 2011) he was threatened by a co-worker in the bathroom, which led to him completely changing his daily routine:

As a transsexual man who only sometimes ‘passed’ as male, the troubles I had in using the men’s washroom started shortly after I began [a new job] ... I entered the men’s staff washroom the same time as another man ... As I locked the stall door behind me to pee, the other man in the bathroom began expressing concern about why I was using the men’s facility ... For 15 min, he berated and screamed at me from outside the stall ... I huddled silently in the corner of the stall, fearful for my safety, as the man tried to peer inside the stall through the crack and even over the door. Eventually, he left the bathroom, but not before yelling that I was ‘disgusting’ and that I was ‘doing something wrong in there’ ... Over the next three years, I went all the way home during the day to pee (p. 2).

It is clear that the type of harassment and violence that occurs in various public bathroom spaces is used as a punishment to re-establish the norms as “power passes through

individuals (Foucault, 1997, p. 29) towards those who fall outside of the gender binary. The hate violence towards trans and gender non-conforming people is a form of punishment to reaffirm gender norms as binary (Jauk, 2013; Lynch, 2005). Several researchers (Bender-Baird, 2016; Bettcher 2007; Cavanaugh, 2010; Juang, 2006) affirm that gender is policed in bathrooms because

People believe that there is always a correlation between genitals and gender presentation and that the gender segregation of bathrooms is based on one's anatomical configuration. [Surveillance or judging of] a trans woman in the women's restroom [by other biological women often occurs to check to see if one is] as 'really' a man in feminine attire is therefore very threatening to this belief structure (Bender-Baird, 2016, p. 987).

According to Foucault (1977), power is everywhere and always recreating itself. They key thing to note is that there are opportunities for a change in the power dynamics to help create more safe and inclusive environments. An option is to reconsider the structure of public bathrooms, such as changing the bathroom sign to be a mixed-gender or gender-neutral option for bathrooms, but also having more policies, mandatory courses or even fostering conversations around gender identity to help others to be aware and respectful of all gender identities and differences that exist.

### **Pronouns.**

Some salient things to consider when interacting or discussing non-binary identities is to consider one's pronouns, as these will vary to person to person. From a language perspective, pronouns "are words used to refer to people by replacing proper nouns, like names" (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). They can also reference either the subject doing an action (like *I* or *you*) or someone or something that is being discussed (such as *she*, *he*, *it*, *them*) (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019). Common pronouns that exist in the English

language include *they/them/theirs*, *she/her/hers*, *he/him/his* (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). Pronouns can also be used to tell what gender that one identifies as, such as *he* refers to the male gender and *she* refers to female gender. While some may identify as a male gender and use the male pronouns of, he, his, him, one person may dress in the traditional masculine attire, while another may feel more comfortable wearing more traditional feminine clothing and still identify as male and use traditionally male pronouns. Taking into account how some may appear differently than their gender identity, it is important to have structures and appropriate language for any and all identities, especially those that go against the gender binary. This will help everyone, in particular those who identify as non-binary, to feel respected and create a better sense of community and inclusion as a culture and society.

The use of having a gender-neutral term for the subject of a sentence has helped to make other languages and cultures more inclusive and considerate of all identities that exist. While there are other languages that have gender neutral pronouns, such as French, German, Italian, Hebrew, Spanish and many others (Siewierska, 2013), the English language does *not* have a gender-neutral third-person pronoun. The English language has grammar rules that tends to favor the gender binary that currently exists. Dennis Barron (Barron, 1981), a scholar of the American-English language, explains how

It's certainly useful to have a gender-neutral pronoun but it's even more useful if speakers of the language actually make use of these pronouns. Studies on French and Arabic and Hebrew speakers have shown how speakers make use of existing linguistic approaches to convey gender neutral cases. Amalia Sa'ar's 2007 study discusses how women in Israel are subconsciously using masculine pronouns to refer to themselves, regarding them as gender neutral. "In Hebrew and Arabic, for example, it is very common to hear expressions as intimate and feminine as "when you♂ become♂ a mother" (Hebrew *Keshe'ata nihya 'ima*) ... (the symbols

♀ and ♂ are used to designate feminine and masculine grammatical gender, respectively) uttered in masculine form by women (p. 88).

The English language almost followed other languages, until government officials got involved. Historically, the pronoun of *they* used to be used by many literary geniuses, such as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare and Jane Austen (Luu, 2015). The Oxford British Dictionary's first citation for a gender-neutral, indefinite *they* first occurred in 1375 from the romance of William of Palerne, as well as how *they* was used to refer to people in general has been used prior to the book being published (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). The pronoun *they* also appeared in 1382 Wycliffe's translation of the Bible and in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* in the line "To strange sores, strangely they straine the cure" (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). This changed, when the British government made the pronoun, *he* legally inclusive of all genders in the mid nineteenth century. Barron explains (Barron, 1981) how the

generic he was actually given the force of law when, in 1850, the English Parliament passed 'An Act for shortening the language used in acts of Parliament,' which ordered 'that in all acts words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, and the singular to include the plural, and the plural the singular, unless the contrary as to gender and number is expressly provided (p. 92).

With the historical considerations, many academics still struggle to accept *they* and other new pronouns that are gender-neutral. In a *New York Times* article, when the University of Vermont was overhauling its policies and procedures to be more inclusive, faculty and staff were adamantly against having *they/them* pronouns allowed as students pronouns. "Students proposed 'they/them' pronouns, but the faculty vetoed the idea because they



said it is grammatically incorrect... claiming how, ‘You don’t put a plural pronoun with a single individual’” (Scelfo, 2015, p. 2). The school compromised by using a term that was being used in various trans communities, was “ze” (pronounced ZEE), a riff on the German pronoun “sie,” with “hir” replacing “his/her” (Scelfo, 2015). Bowing to the faculty, the task force selected “ze” and revised its information system, becoming the first school in the nation at which students could select their pronoun (Scelfo, 2015). They could also leave the field blank, or opt for “name only,” indicating a preference for being referred to by name instead of by pronoun (Scelfo, 2015). Since 2009, 1,891 University of Vermont students have specified a preferred pronoun, with 14 opting for “ze,” 10 for “they” and another 228 for name only (Scelfo, 2015) which shows how the trend for new pronouns that fall outside of the gender binary are extremely necessary to not only offer in database to address people as they’d prefer to be called.

While the need for more incorporations of new pronouns is necessary to create a more inclusive environment, there are those who still stand behind the gender binary options. Prestigious journals and publishers still stress having traditional, binary grammar and focus more on historical grammar guidelines (Enago Academy, 2018). To maintain inclusive language and still follow national guidelines, journal reviewers and publishers will push authors to revise their works. Many recommend trying to avoid gendering subjects by “changing sentences to the plural or eliminating the pronoun altogether” (Enago Academy, 2018, p. 6) or use the binary *he or she*, however some researchers may intentionally use singular *they* as a reflection of their stance on gendered language or to push further the long-standing colloquial usage, since the acceptance of *they* has been increasing (Enago Academy, 2018). It is of the utmost salience to remember to *never*

refer to someone who doesn't subscribe to the gender binary as *it* or *he-she*, as it is extremely disrespectful and often considered to be an offensive slur against trans and gender non-conforming individuals (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019). As times continue to be more considerate, the debate over the proper grammar rules will surely change to be more inclusive as more education and conversations occur around the topic of non-binary identities.

In recent years, the return to a singular *they* has been making a comeback – one that is being recognized by a variety of English language organizations, such as the Associated Press and the Chicago Manual of Style (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). In fact, the two organizations announced that it is acceptable to use *they/them/their* as an example of a singular and/or gender-neutral pronoun (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). The American Dialect Society awarded singular *they* as its word of the year in 2015 (Purdue Writing Lab, 2019). The Oxford Dictionaries website added the honorific Mx, defining it as "a title used before a person's surname or full name by those who wish to avoid specifying their gender or by those who prefer not to identify themselves as male or female" ("They, pron., adj., adv., and n.", 2017). Linguists have affirmed that *they* as a pronoun is a third person singular form widely used in colloquial English when a person's gender is unknown or unspecified, and has been around for centuries (Grey, 2015). The reason for this is that more grammar experts are recognizing that the singular use of *they* has been around for hundreds of years and feel that grammar must often change and shift with the times. With national organizations assisting with the shift in grammar rules, gender-neutral pronouns are being able to be better understood and discussed by society at large.

*They* is not the only gender-neutral pronoun that is an option. In 1884, the phrase *that one* was combined to create *thon* as an option for a gender-neutral pronoun (Barron, 1981) and actually appeared in the Funk and Wagnalls *Standard Dictionary* in 1898 (Luu, 2015). Though, that pronoun did not catch on. Other options include *xe* and *ze*. In hopes of raising consciousness of the biases built into social structures and into the language we use to discuss them, students are organizing identity conferences and inventing new vocabularies, which include pronouns like “ze” and “xe,” and pressing administrations to make changes that validate, in language, the existence of a gender outside the binary (Scelfo, 2015). To create greater equality for those who fall outside the gender-binary, there are more options for pronouns that one may identify as. Below are some pronouns that do not have a gender associated with them, but serve as alternatives to *he/she*, *him/her*, *his/her(s)*, *himself/herself* include: *e/ey/em/eir/eirs/eirself*, *per/pers/perself*, *ve/ver/vis/verself*, *xe/xem/xyr/xyrs/xemself*, *zi/zie/hir/hirs/hirself* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019).

These considerations, of individualizing pronouns and not associating them with binary genders, male or female, forces society to change the way it looks at others as a whole. Should these kinds of conversations or policies not occur, marginalized identities will not be able to contribute to improving or supporting society to function and flourish, all because these individuals may feel fear or unaccepted by their peers and fellow community members. From having these kinds of conversions, more inclusive policies and amenities will begin to be renovated and incorporated into everyday life. By adding more inclusive policies and amenities into daily life will strengthen the sense of

belonging and acceptance of all in our society. These policies are important in their own right, but more to the point of how policy communicates to organizational members where they fit and how they belong in a culture. These policies are a part of the broader conversation on how organizations can function as safe spaces for all individuals.

### **Workplace & higher educational institutions policies.**

Considering how violence and harassment occur towards non-binary individuals in public bathrooms, it is crucial to consider how society can better create inclusive spaces. There must also be ways to prepare everyone to be more accepting and understanding of others who fall outside of the cisgender, heteronormative societal constructs. An opportune time to expose individuals to various identities is when one is attending college, since this tends to be the same time that people explore who they are as an individual. With faculty and staff being key influencers due to their weekly, if not more often, interactions with students, it is important for faculty and staff to understand how to support marginalized individuals and promote diversity. Through being exposed to different identities, students can help promote positive change in their places of work by helping to advocate for marginalized communities and helping to ensure that all members of any workplace or university community may receive the same benefits and respect across from others.

Being aware of identities that fall outside of the gender binary is extremely beneficial to all members of a community. Whether it is conversations, policy changes or specific changes to building amenities, these considerations to promote inclusive spaces should extend to every workplace and school. To create a positive and accepting work culture that allows its members to express themselves freely, great changes must occur to

prevent and eliminate the dangers that occur in both communal bathrooms and other common spaces. Places of work and education should offer resources and amenities that are open for all members, regardless of their gender. This includes bathrooms and support services such as counseling centers, diversity councils, etc., which would promote inclusion and acceptance. A case study (van Wijk & Finchilescu, 2008) looked at the rituals and integrating women and men into the organizational culture of the United States navy. The symbols and rituals that occurred specifically in regards to having the same initiation for both females and males, promoted equality and a sense of unison (van Wijk & Finchilescu, 2008) but also required a change in the language use and phrase, such as being more considerate of female shipmates, such as not referring to the ship as a “love boat” or “man’s world” or including more women in the on-deck sports to create a greater sense of comradery (van Wijk & Finchilescu, 2008). Other changes to how the ships run include changing the set up the ship to offer more privacy between genders (Brown, 2006; van Wijk & Finchilescu, 2008), but also creating that sense of unity. These changes to atmosphere and corporate culture helped to demonstrate how inclusive measures, which demonstrates how society is ever-evolving, can be successful both on the shore and out at sea. Some other aspects that influence a corporate culture are the objects that convey meaning, such as the dress code of the organization, which demonstrates one’s rank in the military. Many females expressed how they felt that since their dress code was explicitly feminine and felt it was a sign of oppression (van Wijk, et. al., 2008), however it has then since evolved to be more inclusive. This demonstrates how important language is in assisting with policy changes to help create and promote more acceptance and unity among group members.

Over the past several decades, higher educational institutional leaders and scholars alike have challenged the field to reinvigorate its civic mission (Boyer, 1987; Thomas & Levine, 2011) to better prepare students to join and be a part of an active citizenship within a diverse society (Dey & Associates, 2010; Gutmann, 1987; Hamrick, 1998; Hurtado, 2007). Although diversity remains an ongoing quest, at each individual institution of higher education (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003), a culturally diverse society awaits all college graduates. Many identities are diverse and often intersect with social, economic, and political issues each having an innumerable values and points of view (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). A key part of helping students understanding these different identities are interactions with faculty and staff members. Faculty members have long been considered primary socializing agents in higher education (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), as they embark to deliver the curriculum, advance knowledge through research, and engage the campus and community through service. Through this intellect and leadership, faculty members influence student learning and development in various ways, including students' openness to diversity and challenge (Pascarella et al., 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason, Cox, McIntosh, & Terenzini, 2010; Whitt et al., 2001). This means that faculty and staff need to be aware of their institutions' policies of diversity and inclusion and be prepared to have these kinds of conversations with students and colleagues alike to help them better understand, respect and potentially accept marginalized individuals both inside and outside of the classroom.

The learning climate that is created in classrooms, across campus, and how students perceive their campus climate are a critical component to students' success.

Faculty members influence inclusive ideas not only through the content of their courses, but their pedagogies too. Three types of diversity have been identified in higher education: structural diversity, interactions with diverse others, and curricular or classroom diversity (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Petersen, & Allen, 1999). Studies of diversity and related educational outcomes within higher education typically focus on one or a combination of these three categories. Each category of diversity has been linked to outcomes related to overall student learning (Bowman, 2010; Gurin et al., 2002; Nelson Laird, 2005), commitment to tolerance and understanding of difference (Antonio, 2001; Chang, 2002; Denson, 2009; Zuniga, Williams, & Berger, 2005), and democratic outcomes of college, which include the ability to work in and contribute to a diverse community (Engberg, 2007; Gurin et al., 2002; Jayakumar, 2008).

Structural diversity is defined as the presence of diversity on campus as indicated by student demographic data (Hurtado et al., 1999) and includes socioeconomic factors to consider within the courses and real-world application (Park, Denson, & Bowman, 2013). Studies of structural diversity focus on the benefits of the presence of diversity on college campuses, since it emphasizes interactions with diverse others (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Reason, Cox, Quaye, & Terenzini, 2010). Structural diversity often leads to interactional diversity which spurs an increase in students' self-reported growth in acceptance of people of different races and cultures, tolerance of different beliefs, overall leadership abilities, and long-term cultural competencies for majority students (Chang, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, 2006; Hurtado, 2001; Jayakumar, 2008).

The second category is interactions with diverse others which includes both formal and informal associations, for example being part of friendship groups, on residence hall floors or within the classroom. Positive interactions with diverse peers, in both social and intellectually related settings studying, discussing issues of race, were demonstrated to contribute to the sense of belonging on campus for both students of color and white students (Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, & Oseguera, 2008). Interactions with diverse others have been demonstrated to positively affect students' gains in cultural awareness and commitment to racial understanding (Antonio, 2001), challenge their own prejudice, advocate more for inclusion and social justice (Zuniga et al., 2005), and contribute to increased levels of self-reported academic self-confidence, social agency, and critical thinking (Nelson Laird, 2005). One meta-analysis that compared 17 diversity studies found that Bowman's (2010) students' interactions with diverse peers were related to increased cognitive growth. Sustained cross-racial interactions, such as diverse friendships or friendship groups, demonstrated the greatest significant cognitive benefits and openness to diversity (Bowman, 2012; Chang et al., 2006).

The third category is curricular diversity, which are formal opportunities to expose students to different people, perspectives, and ideas (Denson, 2009; Hurtado et al., 1999). Denson defines curricular diversity as "intentionally structured and purposeful programmatic efforts to help students engage in diversity in the form of both ideas and people" (p. 806) and involves service learning, required diversity courses, and other pedagogical practices that introduce diverse perspectives and explore controversial issues. Curricular diversity prepares students for the diverse people and ideas that comprise the U.S. democracy and the global community by reducing prejudice and



increasing intergroup racial understanding (Antony, 1993; Chang, 2002). Specifically, participation in required or optional diversity-related courses motivated students to advocate for inclusion and social justice (Zuniga et al., 2005), increased students' pluralistic orientation through the exploration of diverse identity groups (Engberg, 2007), and enhanced their academic self-confidence, critical thinking, and sense of social agency (Nelson Laird, 2005). Students' interest in diversity after taking a diversity-related course, upon the completion of their first year of college and have an increased interest in diversity (Bowman, 2009) after taking the initial course, hence furthering the argument for students to be required to be exposed to diverse experiences in college.

While diversity courses do help students in their first year in college, it is the faculty members who are vital to helping students to foster more growth and diverse development in the following years (Ryder et al., 2015). A survey of students from 15 different institutions, with questions focusing on topics such as student behaviors and perceptions of institutional climate, found there to be specific courses that impacted students' understanding of diversity and inclusion. Some areas included how schools strive for excellence, cultivate academic integrity, contribute to a larger community, considering the perspectives of others seriously and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action. Looking at variables pertaining to a school's climate for learning, students' perceptions and considerations of diversity and inclusivity drastically increased when the faculty members specifically mentioned or tied in social justice issues into the learning objectives and outcomes (Ryder et al., 2015). Courses where it resonated most with students were their capstone courses, senior thesis, or culminating project or participation in diversity-related courses. Faculty members who use strategies of

inclusion their teaching was more successful in promoting and exposing students to think about diversity and inclusion used methods such as, collaborative and discussion- based learning, community service and service- learning, reflection (Ryder et al., 2015). With faculty and staff encouragement, partnered with different diverse experiences, students are able to better see the value in diverse identities and learn more about themselves at the same time.

Similarly, active teaching and assessment practices, such as student presentations and in-class discussions as well as community service activities, were found to be more likely to encourage student encounters with differences (Reason, Cox, McIntosh, et al., 2010). Faculty members almost exclusively determined whether and how to pursue these sorts of educational practices, given their primary responsibility for institutional academic policies, curricula, and what occurs in classrooms. When faculty members have students engage with intellectual topics and disciplinary values, provide formal feedback on academic work, and interact informally with students, faculty members communicate preferred behaviors and dispositions are incorporated (Bragg, 1976) and held considerable sway over students' intellectual and personal development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Such influence has established faculty members as the primary socializing agents for student learning and development (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason, Cox, Quaye, et al., 2010). Again, proving the salience of faculty and staff members need to be aware, ready and supportive of their institutions policies on inclusion and diversity in order to assist with the helping students to reflect and process their diverse experiences.

With this influential role that faculty and staff have over students, it is important to have them consider ways to better support marginalized students who fall outside of the binary gender categories. Ensuring there are support systems is helpful and offers a sense of security, but it doesn't completely solve the problem, hence calling for more policies and resources to support non-binary students. Various LGBTQ+ resource center directors and supervisors shed light on more ways to better support minority students (Beemyn, Domingue, Pettitt, Smith, 2005). All-gendered bathrooms must be not only on a campus, but all across it and the locations need to be publicized so that everyone is aware of where they can go if needed. Other findings were categorized based on the level of difficulty it would be to accomplish for an institution. On the beginning, lowest, easiest level, it would be easy for colleges to have information available for non-binary students on the location of the unisex, all-gender bathrooms across campus, educate faculty and staff on the importance of having all-gender bathrooms and establish temporary unisex facilities where LGBTQ+ events are held (Beemyn et al., 2005). An intermediate step would be to have single-occupancy men's and women's restrooms converted into gender-neutral bathrooms by installing locks and changing signs, while the most advanced method would be to completely renovate academic buildings to include gender neutral bathrooms (Beemyn et al., 2005), which creates more inclusive spaces for all identities of a community.

In residence halls, an easy solution would be to identify names of individuals within the department who can help trans or non-binary members of the community because they have been trained and are knowledgeable in the areas of concern and issues in the trans community (Beemyn et al., 2005). Other step would be to offer single rooms

to LGBTQ+ students to allow them privacy and freedom to express their gender identity freely, to even having gender-neutral bathrooms and private showers in existing and newly constructed residence halls and establishing a LGBTQ+ and Allies Living-Learning Community or program as an option for living (Beemyn et al., 2005).

Ultimately, if schools are wanting to “begin the process of creating a better campus climate and safe environment for crossdressers, transsexuals and other gender variant people... which would then create a more positive college experience... it must be an institution wide effort” (Beeyman, 2005) meaning it should be supported across campus by all institution members, but especially spear headed and supported by central administration, faculty and staff members to transform the culture of the institution to be more accepting and diverse with all identities.

Moving forward with researching, faculty and staff members awareness of inclusive policies, it is salient that they play a crucial role in helping students process new ideas and policies that directly and indirectly affect the classroom. Schools of all levels need to have specific policies that address issues of diversity and inclusion in order to truly promote and support all identities that exist. With gender identity still being a new research area, educating the masses and having open dialogues is crucial to helping students and others alike better understand the different identities that exist in our society. By educating faculty and staff members in universities about the different ways to support any gender identity, from providing counseling resources, normalizing pronoun usage, etc. and ways to promote inclusion inside and outside of the classroom, their students will be able to make more changes that positively affect the other industries to be more inclusive and welcoming of all gender identities.

## **Theoretical Perspectives**

The two theories that will be used to help understand the implementation process and awareness of inclusive policies, such as all-gender bathrooms are the structuration theory and sensemaking theory. Structuration theory is used to see how inclusive policies, such as having all-gender bathrooms came to fruition, how it was presented and to see if there were any issues, both positive and negative, with creating the spaces. Sensemaking is used to help gain more insight into how faculty and staff members view their role and rationalize their opinions on the issue.

### **Structuration theory.**

To understand the implications of this policy one needs to understand how communication (such as policies) structures our experiences. Giddens' (1976) structuration theory is a theory of social action, stating that "human action is a process of producing and reproducing various social systems through the appropriation of rules and resources in ordinary practice" (Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel, 2017, p. 282), otherwise known as structuration. Giddens defines systems as observable patterns of relationships ranging from large social and cultural institutions to smaller groups (as cited in Littlejohn et. al., 2017) and that structures are the policies and resources people use in their work that give the system its pattern (Littlejohn et. al., 2017) such as relational expectations, group roles and norms, networks. These policies are considered structures and guide one's actions, which in turn create new rules and reproduce old ones, which Giddens calls the duality of structure (Littlejohn et. al., 2017). Structures and interactions that occur

because of them, are what Donald Ellis says are “braided entities” (Littlejohn et. al., 2017, p. 307) which help one to accomplish an action or task, while also establishing more structures that affect future occurrences.

The theory includes various layers that can be complex, including the duality of structure, practical and discursive consciousness, reclusiveness, temporality and contextuality of action (Heracleous, 2013). Structuration theory offers importance guidelines to empirical work through the various concepts to help frame research, analyze data and interpret results. While this can be challenging to interpret into more “concrete and operational terms... [the goal of the theory is] to offer scope for viewing persistent conceptual challenges in new ways and approaching data in a way that can offer insights to these challenges” (Heracleous, 2013, p. 600). This demonstrates how the theory can help policy makers at any level to reevaluate the current inclusive policy and whether they need to be reevaluated to be broadened and ultimately more inclusive of all identities.

Structuration theory has three dimensions: interpretation or understanding, sense of morality or proper conduct and a sense of power in action. Policies and procedures guide actions and help clarify what should be understood (interpretation), what should be done (morality) and how to get things accomplished (power) (Littlejohn et. al., 2017). Within these dimensions there are other factors, such as discursive consciousness, which is an awareness and knowledgeability about social conditions and the conditions of their own actions that agents can express in a discursive form (Heracleous, 2013). Another example is how ideology is viewed as a discourse, “amenable to manipulation by the dominant classes to further their own ends” (Heracleous, 2013, p. 600). Other factors

include ways and methods of sharing and presenting knowledge, which are constitutive of social life, operating through agents' discursive and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). For example, when it comes to non-binary students or staff having to select which bathroom to use, should the bathroom be labeled the gender that was assigned at birth, the interpretation is that one must revert back to what gender one was assigned at birth, the morality is that one should subscribe to that narrative and fit those stigmas and expectations, such as dressing or behaving in that particular manner of one's assigned gender and the power is taken away from the individual and given to those who believe that there are only two genders and that members of that community must follow according to their own beliefs that are a part of the rules and regulations that are imposed on members of that community.

Another key factor in this theory is the power of language, not only being a "functional tool but as constitutive of social life due to its role as a medium of social interaction and it's social medium of characterization and typification, making it an example of duality of structure" (Heracleous, 2013, p. 600). Language rules are enforced and reaffirm daily communicative actions, and the structures that are enforced (Heracleous, 2013). This demonstrates the power that language has on reinforcing gender norms and negative effects that having binary bathrooms labels on transgender individuals, especially when it forces them to have to decide which gender to identify with: either the one they identify with or the one that they were born as. Structures can change or remain constant based on various interactions and individuals who are a part of the organization that implements the structure (Littlejohn et. al., 2017). For example, structures can mediate proper protocols and procedures, such as traffic flow, protocol for

various occurrences such as filing a complaint or changing a policy etc. The other contradicts a current structure, which in turn forces a new one to be created in order to improve systems or processes within an organization. This theory helps to demonstrate the various considerations that organizations and its members experience when creating and implementing new policies and/or procedures. Structuration theory has been used in various fields such as information systems, accounting or strategic management but it has not been extensively used in empirical studies of organizational discourse, communication (Heracleous, 2013) or education. This study offers an opportunity to reevaluate inclusive policies of schools to further them to be more inclusive throughout the structuration framework.

It is imperative for organizations to be holistic and consider all aspects that are affected within an organization when changing policies, especially the language and other processes or protocols to better support the new policy. Suchan (2006) found that when structures and policies must be supported by change agents, its workers and staff members, which means being transparent with making sure all are aware of the factors and processes, which will help the new policy to become a habit and routine. Some key things to help ensure an organization is on track with successfully changing a policy or to detract from reverting to old processes, is to change the way that the policy or related situations are talked about through rebranding and renaming the policy and similar situations (Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., & Gruber, T., 2011; Suchan, 2006). This helps to distinguish the new policies from the old ones and minimize confusion. Another trick is to realign systems and structures to ensure “support [of] the change effort” (Edvardsson et. al., 2011; Suchan, 2006, p. 20), which depending on the depth or



intensity and the context of the situation, may vary. Other important considerations when rolling out a new policy to members of an organization is to be transparent and offer clear and honest rationale for the change, which will assist with the onboarding process (Suchan, 2006). By considering changing linguistic and other processes that pertain to the changed policy, it will improve the transitional process and onboarding of workers and organizational members with understanding the new policy and how it aids the institution and its members.

It is also necessary to recognize how organizations may already have policies implemented that focus on inclusion and acceptance, but the individual members of the organization will have their own interpretation to how to best execute the policies. Edvardsson, Tronvoll, and Gruber (2011) looked at the social constructs and factors that affect how policies are executed based on others social interactions. Each individuals' "norms, values and ethical standards that guide what is acceptable and unacceptable during interactions between interactions, has implications for" (Edvardsson et. al., 2011, p. 336) both current and future policies. It is important to have systems in place to ensure that the policy change is working properly and that those affected by the change are properly supported.

Kirby and Krone (2002) used the structuration theory to look at how work and family was discussed and the various policies that were implemented in various organizations. The structuration theory looks into how the policies are implemented and communicated by both coworkers and supervisors, which can be directly applied to how having inclusive policies implemented, however there is no research applying this theory to this specific situation.

This theory has never been applied to considering how higher educational institutions implement policies. Structuration theory has not considered how all gendered bathroom policies have been implemented at those types of organizations. By using this theory, the study will be able to better understand staff and faculty members at higher educational institutions experiences with these policy implementations, how they come about and what effects they have on college campuses, its stakeholders, policy implementations and communities. The study will dive into just how faculty and staff members are aware and understand the current policies which then, through analysis, that how policies should be changed to be more inclusive and how to better implement them.

### **Sensemaking theory.**

Sensemaking is another theory that is crucial in understanding how faculty and staff process and think of inclusive policies and their experiences with issues surrounding trans and non-binary individuals as well as other amenities of inclusion. It has been widely recognized as a key process for effective organizing (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). There are many different definitions that exist for sensemaking as a theory. In one study that worked to integrate various definitions of the theory, defined sensemaking as “a process, promoted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cures can be drawn” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). There are still those who challenge this definition. The theory first came to fruition in 1972 (Weick, 1995) by Karl Weick and assists with an approach to considering and implementing communication research and

practice and the design of communication-based systems and activities (Weick, 1995).

Weick defined sensemaking as having a set of core principles or properties characterizing its attendant processes, in terms of being retrospective, ongoing, social and linked to identity, cue extraction and environmental enactment (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005).

While the theory has seven aspects that help make up the process of understanding a certain occurrence, it has three key themes that are a part of communication practice. The themes include one may create and implement a communication system and practice that is responsive to human needs; it is possible for humans to enhance their communication repertoires to pursue this vision; achieving these outcomes requires the development of communication-based methodological approaches (Weick, 1995). Some key aspects of sensemaking theory are that each individual has a lot of identities, which all play a role in how one may interpret or perceive an issue or instance of communication (Weick, 1995).

As interviews occurred, analyze of responses and notes following interviews demonstrated how participants were rationalizing their role and understanding of the policies and where the two intercede.

This can be seen by how a staff or faculty member is aware of their role, whether it be as an advocate, educator, mentor, community member, etc. The theory is also retrospective, meaning that after the communication process or event occurs, one reflects on it and tends to search for (and eventually finding) clarity to assist with future interactions and decisions regarding future instances (Weick, 1995). With the implementation process of inclusive policies, faculty and staff may wonder how they can incorporate this idea into their learning objectives, homework assignments, papers, or ways of service to the institution, etc. It recognizes how individuals cannot control every

instance or communication interaction, since there are always unpredictable and unexpected aspects that may occur (Weick, 1995). The theory is a social process, meaning that human thinking and social functioning are essential aspects of another (Weick, 1995) and one must recognize cues that may lead to similar events or outcomes, such as prototypes, stereotypes, and roles. By posing deep questions regarding identities, faculty and staff members roles and responsibilities, are then forced to better consider their own personal identity, their role as an educator and how the two intersect when it comes to how they can better support all students. This pushes them to think more critically causing them to consider their interactions with all students and the specific policies as well as where there is a connection between their roles, identities and policies.

The process of sensemaking is ongoing and continuous, which shows that individuals will be forever processing and reflecting on instances of communication. With organizational issues, sensemaking requires individuals to seek explanations and answers in terms of how people see things rather than structures or systems. Sensemaking suggests that organizational issues, such as 'strategies', 'breakdowns', 'change', 'goals', 'plans', 'tasks', 'teams', etc. are not things that one can find out in the world or that exist in the organization (Weick, 1995). Rather, their source is people's way of thinking and rationalizing broader topics and experiences into everyday life and potential changes for the future.

Sensemaking has been used to consider inclusive policies, but not non-binary identities. It is often used in situations that organizational issues or ideas. The same can be applied to the field of academia. As an organization, academia is filled with "values, norms, routines and ideas which significantly impact how it is possible to act and think

within it” (Degn, 2016, p. 304). As society has evolved, academia has had to adjust and change with the times, though often at a much slower pace. External pressure on organizations, institutions of higher education included, tend to spur sensemaking processes, as this pressure disrupts existing meaning structures and established practices, and that this sensemaking is ‘central because it is the primary site where meanings materialize that inform and constrain identity and action’ (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005, p. 409). Thanks to external events or influences, such as celebrities like Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner being open with their non-binary identities, organizations must now process how non-binary individuals play a role in their business decisions, personal lives, etc. These external pressures have helped companies and schools to make sense of how to be more inclusive and potentially more accepting.

According to the sensemaking framework, individuals and organizations will, when faced with unexpected, ambiguous or uncertain circumstances, engage in sensemaking processes, attempting to create order in these circumstances in a way that enables further action (Weick 1995; Mills 2003; Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005; Mills, Thurlow, and Mills 2010). Sensemaking thus describes the on-going processes wherein individuals and organizations construct a plausible story of ‘what is going on’ by picking out cues (events, ideas, issues, etc.), which are deemed salient in relation to existing frames (mental modes, cultural scripts, etc.) (Degn, 2016). The stories, that are constructed in such processes, act as organizing tools which allows certain elements of the past, present and future to emerge and others to wither away (perhaps only to be brought forth in future sensemaking processes) (Degn, 2016). Sensemaking (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) thereby:

Unfolds as a sequence in which people concerned with identity in the social context of other actors engage ongoing circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively, while enacting more or less order into those ongoing circumstances. (p. 409)

By looking at sensemaking processes, much insight should be gained into how academics pick out problems, events, ideas, etc. that they deem relevant, and therefore worthy to act upon (Degn, 2016). As the definition above indicates a key element of sensemaking is identity construction and maintenance – both to the individual and to the organization (Degn, 2016). When new ideas emerge about what a university is and should be, or when HEIs are reformed as a consequence of these ideas, organization members are forced to address questions of identity – both their personal and professional sense of self as well as their perception of the organization they work for (Degn, 2016). Hence, showing the process of sensemaking in effect as the various communities and their stakeholders comprehend their roles and pieces of identities and values that make up these roles and their greater sense of self.

This means that in a sensemaking perspective, an organization's identity – classically defined as that which is central, enduring and distinctive about an organization's character (Albert & Whetten 1985) – is seen to be a contestable and dynamic construct, which is negotiated and reformed in the ongoing sensemaking processes that takes place inside and organization (Dutton and Dukerich 1991; Gioia, Schultz, and Corley 2000; Ravasi and Schultz 2006). The labels we use to describe the elements of an identity might give the impression of a stable, enduring entity, but in fact these elements are 'subject to multiple and variable interpretations' (Gioia, Schultz, and Corley 2000, 75), as organization members are faced with changing environments and impulses. As Mills, Thurolow and Mills, (2010) pointed out:

Change within organizations may cause individuals to ask questions such as ‘who are we?’ or ‘how we do things?’ The way in which individuals make sense of these questions impacts their understandings of their own identities and that of the organization (188).

The way academics make sense of their changing circumstances, and how this affects their perceptions of their organization, their leaders and of themselves. These perceptions are assumed to affect the motivation, sense of belonging, and ultimately the performance and actions of organizational members (Dutton & Dukerich 1991; Gioia & Thomas 1996; Hatch & Schultz 2002; Henkel 2004; Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley 2008). With inclusive policies being implemented, it pushes faculty and staff to find better ways to connect with marginalized backgrounds and foster their pedagogies to potentially support the policy too. However, some may need more assistance with facilitating this connection and conversations with fellow faculty and staff members and students alike, thereby encouraging them to rationalize the policy and how to best support those members of the institution.

Researchers use a sensemaking framework to better understand minority college students, but mainly looking at those who are in the racial minority. For example, scholars at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of San Diego, conducted interviews with 219 Black undergraduate men focusing on their academic transition during their first year of college and how they navigated academic challenges. The subjects who were interviewed must have been highly involved in their campus community and be high achieving academically. With students from 42 different campus participating in the study, it found that this population had many different identities that contributed to their first-year difficulties in college (Harper & Newman, 2016). Black male undergraduates often experienced academic challenges, especially when it came to

their academic preparation. Many explained how they felt “ready for college, but the workload and differences between high school and [the college] workload totally surprised me” (Harper & Newman, 2016, p. 12). While some students came from schools that offered Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, many students didn’t take advantage of those classes in high school (Harper & Newman, 2016), which they felt contributed to their difficulty transitioning to the college workload. Specifically, they felt the amount of papers, fast-paced environment of the courses, and time commitment necessary to study and successfully complete assignments (Harper & Newman, 2016). Another disparity was how many felt that they were putting in more effort than what they were getting out their courses, and their grades weren’t reflecting their hard work (Harper & Newman, 2016). Other difficulties were when participants felt that they were the only person with their identities in their classes, which assisted with them struggling to be understood or not “knowing where [they] fit in sometimes” (Harper & Newman, 2016, p. 15) which lead to them feeling a sense of culture shock. What made all the difference in improving their adjustment to college and their academic performance was getting more involved on campus (Harper & Newman, 2016). The study found how the specific population has multiple factors that influenced their academic transition and their overall success as they continued through their studies (Harper & Newman, 2016) which demonstrates how students and individuals continually evolve and reflect on what could be changed and improved as they process and make sense of prior experiences.

Another study done by the Pennsylvania State University, used sensemaking in understanding how successful a strategic change effort at a large, public university. The



study was a case study done on the university to demonstrate how a change in leadership and being transparent with their processing for implementing strategic change can be implemented at other institutions. The new, incoming president of the university strived to have it shift gears from being an average all-encompassing institution to a “top 10 public university” which required a “strategic change” (Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994, p. 366). The president explained how the school simply, “cannot continue to be all things to all people... We need to identify pockets of excellence and re-allocate our resources towards development of those pockets” (Gioia et al., 1994, p. 366). To identify those key pockets, he created a Strategic Planning Task Force that was charged with designing a strategic planning process that would make the university competitive in the future academic and economic environments, as well as identifying and change changing the university's values, philosophy and mindset (Gioia et al., 1994). The team used the emergent stages of strategic change to help identify its progress and its longevity. The stages began with interpretation, followed by the definition and legitimization phases and ending with institutionalization (Gioia et. al., 1994). The categories were broken down by the description and quotes of each stage to help all members of the team better understand its progress. For example, in the interpretation phase, under the description category, the team had to answer the questions, “who are we?” and “what is our chance?”, etc. (Gioia et. al., 1994, p. 371). These are types of questions are related those posed to participants of the study and causes several of them to reevaluate their understanding.

The study demonstrated how having checkpoints and following a set structure for progress when it comes to implementing and brainstorming change, organizations can be

more effective and intentional with their goals. This study serves as an example how universities could implement changes in policies and visions, but doesn't consider the specific focus of inclusive policies, non-binary identities or trans individuals.

Sensemaking will help consider how faculty and staff members feel and what they knew about inclusive policies and how they rationalize their role in the implementation process. This in turn, will be used to help rationalize and better understand the reactions to the change in policies and the language surrounding its inclusivity for non-binary members.

Using both theories as guides in the research, it is important to recognize how there has not been much, if any, research on specific policies regarding the non-binary identity. The research study works to gain key insight into what faculty and staff members in the college setting currently understand in regards to, if any, specific policies regarding the non-binary gender and how those individuals are supported or not. The research hopes to look deeper into seeing if a policy addressing specific issues of identity are necessary and considered important by faculty and staff members as well. The salience of having higher educational professionals more prepared to have conversations regarding various identities is crucial as many colleges have individuals in the late teens to early twenties, which is the age range for when people come to terms with their true sense of self.

### **Research Questions & Considerations**

This topic will require scholars to consider how organizations implement policies, the mission of the organization and the role or effect that the faculty and staff have on the change in policy formation and implementation. Since most progressive and inclusive

changes tend to be found on college campuses, the study used in-depth interviews with members of campuses who have opinions and strong ties to inclusive policies. These interviews offered more insight into how inclusive policies are affecting organizations and potentially highlight how they were formed and implemented. Some other considerations would be to look at the various trends of violence that has occurred against both non-binary and transgender members of higher education institutions to see if the inclusive policies came in responses to the violence or triggered the violence. Another component to look at would be to see what the demographic of members of the institution identify non-binary or transgender. With these considerations the following research questions will be studied:

***Research Question #1:*** How do faculty and staff make sense of their organization's inclusive policies (bathrooms, healthcare, etc.)?

***Research Question #2:*** How do faculty and staff believe that inclusive policies impact the culture of the institution?

### **CHAPTER 3:** **Methodology**

The goal of the study was to gain more insight into what faculty and staff members knew about inclusive policies and how they view or feel about their role in the implementation process. This study may then allow for other institutions to consider the various levels and factors when implementing inclusive policies and amenities at various higher educational institutions.

#### **Type of Research**

This is a qualitative constant-comparative analysis. The focus will be on the process of creating more inclusive college campuses and faculty and staff members awareness of inclusive policies, such as all-gender bathrooms a higher education institution through in-depth interviews. This form of analysis allows categories to develop through an ongoing process of comparing units of data with each other (a process) (Ketyon, 2015). This style of analysis is perfect for the study because it allows for the data to be honed and categorized in more precise categories as more data is collected.

#### **Methods**

Knowing that transgender and non-binary members are a part of many different organizations, it is crucial to see how the frontline members and it became increasingly salient to push for higher educational institutions to be at the forefront with helping to create inclusive policies and experiences for their students. In order for society to become more inclusive and accepting of those who are marginalized, not only by the gender that

is outside of the societal binary, but in other identities, colleges and universities must expose and promote these policies to help others see the importance and power that inclusion can hold and provide for the future.

### **Ethics.**

The quest to remain ethical in the realm of research is of the utmost importance to the researchers. Qualitative research in particular can pose a variety of different challenges throughout the various phases of research. From anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, researchers' potential impact on participants and vice versa (Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. A., 2014, p. 106). An article done by Tehran University of Medical Sciences, considered how difficult it is for qualitative researchers to maintain objectivity and privacy of participants to help not violate any legal or protective laws, such as HIPAA or FERPA (Sanjari, et. al., 2014, p. 107). This all depends on the style of qualitative research that is being conducted, which determines the role and best ethical practices for the research. For example, in phenomenology, researchers are to aid in the "transformation of data to live the experience... bring[ing] individual experiences into words in data collection and then attempt to understand those experiences based on the statements and categorized the themes" (Sanjari, et. al., 2014, p. 108), or with ground theory, researchers must "act as a component of daily events and must therefore be completely aware of their values... and prejudices... and potential influence on the study" (Sanjari, et. al., 2014, p. 108). The study also looked at the various strategies that researchers can use to maintain ethical data collecting such as using pseudonyms, secure data storage, removal of identifier components, etc. (Sanjari, et. al., 2014, p. 108). In qualitative data, researchers must serve

as a “mediator between experiences of respondents and the community of concerned people” (Sanjari, et. al., 2014, p. 109) and may want some sort of follow up or post interview survey or reflection to help participants add more to their feelings or thoughts about the topic that is discussed.

### **Trustworthiness.**

One key consideration when conducting a qualitative study ensuring that the researcher is finding themes ethically and in a trustworthy manner, which is why the two concepts will play a key role in conducting this research. An article called, “Ensuring the Qualities of Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking Trustworthiness Criteria” by Vicent Naano Anney defines trustworthiness as “methodological (research design, data gathering, data analysis) accuracy (soundness) and adequacy of the research inquiry” (Anney, 2014, p.2). The article outlines specific criteria that researchers must uphold when conducting qualitative research. The four criteria that must be followed to ensure trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, which are based on years of work of other qualitative researchers making it “agreed in the literature in relation to existing research approaches such as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research” (p. 2). To be considered trustworthy, there are five additional concerns that must be met such as the truth value concern, applicability concern, consistency concern, neutrality concern and integrity concern (p. 6). There are various ways to check these concerns such as to extend engagement with the research, use fellow researchers and or peers to ensure the process and findings are meeting all the criteria, triangulation, member checks, negative case analysis persistent observation and a variety of others.

There are five trustworthy concerns: truth value concern, applicability concern, consistency concern, neutrality concern, and integrity concern. To check these concerns, mean to run a variety of different tests or interactions with the data or to reach out to other researchers for various input and perspectives (Anney, 2014, p. 6). For example, one way to check the credibility (Truth Value Concern) is to prolonged engagement in field or research site, use of peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, negative case analysis, persistent observation (Anney, 2014, p. 6). A couple ways to check the transferability (Applicability Concern) are to provide thick descriptions and do theoretical/purposive sampling (Anney, 2014, p. 7). For the dependability (Consistency Concern) one may use an audit trail, stepwise replication, code-recode strategy, triangulation, and peer examination/peer debriefing (Anney, 2014, p. 8). And for the confirmability (Neutrality Concern) is to use a practice reflexivity/reflexive journal (Anney, 2014, p. 9). Anney continues with stressing that it's impossible "to expect researchers to adopt all of these practices [as it would] be a long process. It is important for the researcher to start with at least two and continue to improve from there" (Anney, 2014, p. 17). The findings of this article, the main findings being the trustworthiness criteria, helps and has been proven to aid in the accuracy and ethicality in research, especially in qualitative research.

Another article looked at the various types of qualitative content analysis that help ensure that are currently out there in the field and had a variety of different considerations for what was required to remain ethical while conducting this type of research. It's important to note that qualitative content analysis "focuses on the characteristics of language by focusing on the contextual meaning of the text... [and that] all styles of

content analysis share a requirement of coding the data to analyze it (Hsieh, H., & Shannon, S., 2005, p. 1285). The first option is the Conventional Content Analysis which is best used when describing a phenomenon that is being studied and is best used when there isn't a lot of previous research on the topic (Hsieh, et. al., 2005). With this category, the article recommended using preexisted code categories should be avoided, in favor for new categories that accurately represent the data (Hsieh, et. al., 2005). For a study that is considered a Directed Content Analysis, which is when research already exists on a topic, but would still benefit from further analysis, researchers should develop their codes from previous research and use through to help predict relationships within their new data (Hsieh, et. al., 2005). Finally, Summative Content Analysis examines particular words in the data and analyzed the significance of their usage which requires researchers to possibly calculate the frequency of such words and make note of when words are used more often or for figuratively or literally (Hsieh, et. al., 2005). Each style is may vary based on the topic that is being researched as well as what the researcher must decide what they want to know about the topic and what is already known about the topic.

For conducting interviews, it is important to consider the face-to-face method that will be used when conducting interviews. Some studies stress how interviews are “seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.663), which requires researchers to consider context of the interview and force them to adjust the research design and implementation (Oltmann, 2016). In the study that was conducted at the University of Kentucky, it stressed how important it is for researchers to be transparent in their decision to conduct research and interviews in the method that was



selected so that the participants feel that the researcher is being honest and transparent with them, (Oltmann, 2016) which in turn will help to get more true and honest data, while also keeping the researcher and their team more ethical.

With these criteria in mind, the study focusing on inclusive policy changes will utilize the thesis chair advisor to bounce ideas and to debrief concerns after interviews are conducted and to look at the suggestions of others to speak with regarding the policy change. This will help researchers and the gathering of the data to be focused on the topic of bathrooms, while also inclusive of the various areas that are affected of the change. In the study, it will also use a reflective journal to help the researchers write down the initial takeaways and thoughts after each interview to help keep the thoughts fresh and honest after each interview.

### **Participants**

Eighteen various faculty and staff members were interviewed across the United States, at six different institutions, including three institutions from Wisconsin, one from Indiana, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. Of those interviewed, three institutions were private institutions, with two having some sort of religious connection and the other two universities being public institutions. Six were staff members at their institution and twelve were faculty members.

### **Procedures**

The data of this qualitative study was gathered through snowball sampling and have semi-structured interview as the primary research approach. All interviews will be tape-recorded to assist with the analysis portion of the study to help look for themes and

key considerations when implementing inclusive policies. The study occurred through snowball sampling and interviewing various members at higher education institutions. Through the interviews and referrals, more interviews occurred, and more data was then gathered. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to aid with the analysis. Additional questions were added as the conversation progresses naturally, which helped to gain additional information. No follow up interviews occurred but was offered to all participants if any clarification or additional information was needed. There was no necessary amount or specific number of interviews that was required as well as no time limit as the conversation was to flow as naturally as possible to help gain more insight into the rational, obstacles and resolutions throughout the faculty and staff awareness of inclusive policies, such as all gender bathrooms. Interviews generally lasted around 20 to 90 minutes but varied depending on the conversation. Following the interview, a summary of the content will be written down, including various vocal and nonverbal aspects that were noticed in the interview. The structuration theory was used to guide the discussion questions and analysis of the data. Each interviewee has been given a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality. The data that was gathered was analyzed and placed into different themes to see what categories or considerations institutions need to consider when working to implement more inclusive policies and factors to consider at the institution.

### **Data Analysis**

The data that was gathered was analyzed and placed into different themes to see what categories or considerations institutions need to consider when working to implement more inclusive policies and factors to consider at the institution. Working with

both the structuration and sense making theories together provides the opportunity to consider both inclusive policies as a whole, being open and truly including others in them, and understanding how faculty and staff process and understand the policies, as well as what effects it has on their role as an educator.

## **CHAPTER 4:** **Results**

A lack of awareness and a sense of a gap between the inclusive policies and tangible actions for faculty and staff is the major takeaway from the research. While all participants recognized that there were some sort of policies pertaining to inclusion and diversity, many struggled with how to bring it into their classes. Participants mentioned how they struggled with knowing what the specific inclusive policies meant to them, especially in their role as an educator. What many longed for was the gap between the inclusive structures and goals proposed to be closed or at least better supported through basic education, resources and tangible suggestions to support said policies.

To answer the two research questions, one major theme to occurred and seemed to answer both research questions. The theme had some sub contexts and considerations that were involved, but the major theme of all the interviews had to with one's sense of self and their relative position within or connection to any inclusive or diversity policy. The sub themes and considerations include, educating both the external and internal stakeholders on a college campus, rationale for policies, and how inclusion is a multifaceted issue as well as considering the generational differences that affect the implementation process.

As faculty and staff were interviewed about issues on campus and their role with assisting those with diverse identities, the wheels in their brains were clearly working to better comprehend what the heart of the issue was, as well as how it affected them. The lack of clear understanding to how inclusive policies affect their role, shows how faculty and staff are still processing what the policy means to them. All participants felt and

agreed that inclusive policies were and continue to be important. However, they're needing more resources, support and clear ways to implement policies into their classrooms. This includes how their role of a faculty or staff member at a higher educational institution would be/was affected, but it also pushed participants to think about any personal connections or values that they personally hold. It also pushes them in to thinking of how they influence one's understanding and purpose of inclusive policies. Many participants seemed to struggle with understanding how policies can take form and the implementation process of these policies, specifically in their classes. There seemed to be a struggle that many did not fully comprehend what the issue was and how it affects their role as an educator and how to confront or address the topic of inclusion.

Participants shared how they were not aware of any policy that specifically spoke to non-binary identities. This shows how institutions as a whole are not talking about these identities and their issues, hence not being inclusive of all identities that exist. This is where the gap lies, the conflicted state that faculty and staff members are in when faced with issues of inclusion and diversity and what is expected of them because of their role. Whether they witness these issues in the classroom, hallways or other places across campus, faculty and staff seem to be processing these issues as it relates to their different aspects of their own personal identities, in addition to their role as an educator.

### **Theoretical Implementation**

While looking at the various practical themes that emerged, it is crucial to remember how theories play a role in how faculty and staff process or work through these issues of diversity and inclusion. From the theoretical perspective, there is much to consider. Starting with sensemaking, a theory that helps people become aware and

process their role and a particular situation that one may experience. This theory is clearly played out in this study, especially as faculty and staff process what their role as an educator means to helping their students of all backgrounds and identities. These kinds of policies that focus on inclusion and diversity push faculty and staff to think outside of the normal expectations of grading papers and lecturing in front of a class; rather helping them to think more holistically about their courses, its content and how it applies to individuals at a variety of different levels. Faculty and staff are then also pushed to better reflect and understand how their personal identities and how their various identities may relate or does not relate to marginalized identities. It pushes them to be grapple with not only being an expert in their field, but also being keen to what their content means for marginalized communities and how it affects their daily lives. Thinking more strategically and how one's discipline and interactions with students and colleagues can greatly impact others calls faculty and staff to be more cognizant of social issues, the barriers that are in place preventing change and how those barriers can be changed by such leaders in the classroom.

The structuration theory was also crucial to helping consider the importance of the research. Structures or policies that are in place at organizations and various higher educational institutions can help or hinder individuals from being totally included. This theory is clearly seen with how institutions have or do not have policies that support policies focusing on inclusion and diversity. Thinking about how one identifies usually does not enter one's mind until a situation or challenge to the status quo occurs, such having a student requesting to be called a different name than is listed on a roster or not being able to self-identify on an application, are all barriers that can help or hinder one's

acceptance. By not thinking about what systems or barricades that are hurdles for individuals to be accepted or themselves, does not support higher educational institutions missions of furthering education for all and spurring others to create a more just world. Sometimes, institutions need to be aware of their own barriers that it has created, thereby challenging the members of the organization to push back and reflect on how to better reach out and connect in ways that are more inclusive, such as having more gender inclusive amenities, such as all gender bathrooms, gender inclusive options in database systems and more.

With both the structuration theory and sense-making theory, the two theories in tandem helped to balance faculty and staff members' processing and understanding of themselves as well as how they understand the policies in regards to their role as an educator. Inclusive policies are the specific structure that is being considered which is crucial for helping maintain and create order within any organization, schools and colleges included. However, should the structure focus on acceptance and specific behavior regarding tolerance and encouraging dialogues around inclusion, sensemaking must work along with the structuration theory because one must rationalize and understand themselves with how to they as an individual relate or connect with the policy. Some things that faculty and staff must consider is how does the policy affect them as a person, as well as an educator. What does the policy mean in regards to changing their pedagogy and role with students who may be struggling to understand their own or others' identities? How does an educator implement or discuss issues of inclusion and/or diversity and what do those conversations look like and where do they take place? Also, some may ponder what are the benefits or drawbacks to having such

policies in place? Faculty and staff could question if the policy is necessary and what the potential negative or positive ramifications? Specifically, many make struggle to understand what the tangible changes are that one must do with a new policy, such as changes to their teaching style, topics covered, etc. These things are all part of the processing that occurred with participants as they were interviewed.

### **Answering the Research Questions (R1)**

To answer the first research question, how do faculty and staff make sense of their organization's inclusive policies (bathrooms, healthcare, etc.)? Responses varied based on the faculty and staff member's understanding of themselves and how one may connect or see the value or importance of such policies. Two main takeaways were: inclusive policies are important, but there is a lack of a basic understanding of the issues and ways to implement inclusive policies.

#### **Inclusive policies are important.**

First, all eighteen participants unanimously agreed that having inclusive policies at their institutions were and continue to be important. By having inclusive policies on their campuses, they became safer and welcoming to everyone of any identity. Adam, a faculty member at a private, religious organization shared how:

It starts with [faculty and staff] learning. Learning how to talk about this and then being more inclusive and more aware. It's the idea that nobody talks about this but that just means that that that that is the problem, right? Are there people who are you know secretly wish they could be more open and about themselves? The traditional kind of stuffy climate prevents that. The education piece is the lack of awareness. What is it? What does it mean? What are the definitions of the various terms of those various groups, especially the newer terms that that I'm not aware of? The definitions of understanding what it means how to identify [outside of the



binary, hetero norms, etc.] It needs to address and work with [these kinds of issues of inclusion] and not make it awkward for all parties. Also make it [help others to] understand how another person is feeling not just that I'm paying them lip service... not just doing it to check a box but [to help with faculty and staff have a better] understanding that [they're] not making [students] feel either ostracized or singled out. Assuming others aren't aware of the same terms, but also how do we get faculty and staff to feel comfortable talking about this topic (Adam).

Adam's honesty about not knowing the updated terminology and un-comfortability with the topic demonstrates how important it is for staff and faculty to be offered more clear and practical trainings. By giving faculty and staff the resources and the ideas for incorporating inclusive policies into their curriculum will help the to be able to think of the long-term benefits and practical importance that lies outside of the university setting. Once a discussion among higher level administration and faculty members occur, educators can ensure that students' identity concerns can be met and discussed openly and honestly and being partnered with understanding and support through previous trainings and exposure to the new identities.

### **Lacking understanding & implementation.**

The second part to answering the first research question is how there is a lack of understanding of the issues and ways to implement such policies. To fix this issue requires there to be more resources and support systems where students, faculty, staff and other college stakeholders may go to ask questions and learn more about the issues.

Maddie, a staff member a private university, shared how she appreciated the transparency at her institution, but felt that more could still be done.

I have such a limited scope on like how to meet you like this is all really new and it's all really great and I see a lot of transparency and a lot of like effort to work on diversity and inclusion to work on like having real honest conversations. And the fact that it comes up so often in different trainings that I see being offered to

students and student staff. I think that's a wonderful. I do see like there's a little bit of a gap for like faculty and staff (Maddie).

Maddie's lack of awareness demonstrates how faculty and staff need to be given the same exposure to inclusive and diverse identities as much as students, while she is clearly aware of the policy, the lack of follow up into how to better implement the inclusive policies into everyday work life. At her institution it appears that some staff and student staff members receive more training on such topics, but the school seems to be lacking a pulse or supporting those who want to be better advocates for inclusive structures. If institutions are really offering trainings to certain groups, there must be more transparency as to what trainings are being offered and why they're being exclusive. It is crucial for students to be exposed to different identities and experiences; however, faculty and staff still need similar exposure to diverse issues to help reiterate and remind others of the importance of having inclusive and diverse conversations with everyone. By giving equal opportunities for exposure to inclusive and diverse ideas, all campus members can better make sense of the ideas, consider ways to implement them into their practices, and have a deeper understanding for what may be facing students and other campus community members.

However, without giving all members the chance to be educated or offering spaces to ask questions or learn more about the issues. Many struggled with understanding the implementation and policies can be enacted, which demonstrates how, since faculty and staff already struggle with understanding the topic of identity and as they process inclusive policies, there needs to be more explanation by the implementers and administration for how faculty and staff can support these policies and be supported when enacting them. Since there is still more research to be done on how to best

implement such policies, considering supporting all stakeholders of a campus community is crucial as more diversity and inclusive policies are enacted in the future.

### **Answering the Research Questions (R2)**

For the second research question, how do faculty and staff believe that inclusive policies impact the culture of the institution? There are three areas that emerged from the participants: (1) faculty and staff are still making sense of both inclusive policies and how these structures affect their role as an educator (2) if one has a connection to the inclusive policy or not and (3) that inclusive issues are not being openly discussed.

#### **Making sense of one's role and the policy.**

With more new identities emerging and requiring more research, it is no surprise that faculty and staff members are still struggling to make sense of both the new gender identities and the policies (or lack thereof) that support them. As new identities emerge, it is vital to learn more about them, but also to look at how the role as an educator is affected by it. As mentioned previously, faculty and staff members have frequent interactions with students on a weekly, if not daily, basis, which forces them to be knowledgeable on topics outside of their subject areas. Participants did share how they need to be ready to have any kind of conversation that may arise in their classroom, even if it is not related to the course content. Allie, a faculty member, explained how in her classes, everything is open to conversation.

I've never stopped a student from wanting to talk about something. If someone said to me 'I want to talk about this character's gender, sexuality, whatever...' I would say, 'Great, let's go.' But I don't know if I would bring anything up like that because I'm not an expert in it. It's not something that I personally grapple

with. It's just something that I [should] take some time to understand a little more about as a professor who wants to be accepting of all my students (Allie). Her lack of an understanding of the various identities shows how difficult it can be for educators to feel comfortable discussing issues that are on their students' minds. This may cause faculty and staff to not feel qualified to talk about such topics openly in their classroom or during their office hours, which does not help students feel welcomed or recognized in the college classroom setting. By having no personal or human connection to these kinds of policies lack a basic understanding of what it means to fall outside of the norm and do not even know where to begin or start with having conversations centering around inclusion. Allie did share how she empathizes with faculty and staff who may feel unequipped or unqualified to immerse oneself into these kinds of conversations, but that it has evolved into a part of the territory within the realm of higher education:

I mean, I agree that it's not our job. But also, when I signed up to be a professor, I didn't think that students were going to come into my office and talk to me about... sexual assault and counseling and things. So, it's kind of become our job... [that faculty and staff role is] all encompassing...with how we kind of do everything. I mean if people don't want to be that I don't think they have to... But I think they there should at least be a sense [of support] that a [faculty or staff member should respond with] saying, 'You know look, I'm not the right person to talk about this with you, but here is someone you can go talk to.' I think that the students just need to feel heard (Allie.)

Allie demonstrates how she understands that the role of educators have had evolve to be more than just an expert in a research area. With faculty and staff being sought for support as students are processing their identities and finding their sense of self, educators must be prepared to discuss these issues and offer support or referrals to best assist students. Allie shows how she is still processing what her role as educator means to both herself and to other community members too. Her statement also displays how there needs to be more structures or guidelines in place to offer clarity into what exactly faculty

and staff members should be trained or educated about to better serve their students. By having more structures in place to guide faculty and staff members, it will be able to elevate the confusion of what their role is and how-to best support students in and outside of the classroom.

**Strong connection vs. no connection to policies.**

The second part to answering the second research question has to do with one's connection to the inclusive policy. Depending on the participant's personal experience with marginalized communities, affected with their understanding and their interpretation of inclusive policies. For example, some faculty and staff members identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, which demonstrates how several members had a direct and personal connection to having inclusive policies. "As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I face these issues daily and hope that others can see how not being included or considered in these conversations of identity [or valued, recognized member at the institution] is damaging, not only for myself, but especially for those who have many different marginalized identities" (Carter). Others may know or knew family, friends or colleagues, which humanized the issue for those participants, hence getting them on board and thinking critically about how to support such initiatives as well as serving as allies and support systems for those members. "With my cousin being open with identifying as gay when we were younger, and now my daughter having a bisexual friend, I truly see myself as an ally and work to ensure people of all identities feel supported and recognized in all aspects" (Debbie). Being more inclusive and having an awareness of the different genders is not just something that may affect a classroom environment but as well as even larger societal events, such as graduations, scholarship

competitions, etc. Amy, a faculty member at a public institution shared how she faced the issue of non-binary individual when planning and orchestrating a scholarship competition. She quickly became aware and sensitive to these students and others' needs of calling all by the proper pronouns.

We learn just through association or [students] talk to us about sort of what we should be doing, how we should be doing it, how we [can best] support students and what sort of issues we might run into. Specifically, I had a student up in the scholarship competition who was non binary and they were changing their name continually. During the course of the competition, to when they were actually awarded a scholarship, their name had changed twice. And so, we weren't able to find the students and I mistakenly referred to them by a gender. I was told that 'that was incorrect' and corrected [on what pronoun that student preferred. For many of us who aren't aware of these issues, we don't know unless we're instructed on how we should [address or] speak with the student. I think it happens on a one to one basis and that there should be more resources for [faculty and staff and students alike] to go and talk to someone [so we know how to best address students and coworkers] (Amy).

Amy sharing her own experience of not being aware of one's gender identity is a clear demonstration of why faculty and staff members need to be further educated on topics of gender identity. With faculty and staff often asked to take on more responsibilities that require student, as well as parents and donors, it is necessary for them to be aware of how to best handle issues of gender identity and how to maintain an open and welcoming environment. Had there been more training on how to be aware and inclusive of all gender identities, faculty and staff would be able to help more students learn course material, but also continue to foster learning and scholarship outside the classroom.

### **Issues are not openly discussed.**

However, sometimes participants with a personal investment or connection felt as though they were in limbo with inclusive policies and discussing them because many

times these types of policies are not discussed openly and are not given the space to have these kinds of conversations. For example, Katie, an administrator, shared how, “It’s an ever-changing process and requires institutions to push all members of the campus community to think about how to have these kinds of conversations as a community and how to best facilitate and support these kinds of initiatives” (Katie). It is clear that when faced with the topic of inclusion and addressing issues of identity, faculty and staff need more support and opportunities to better understand the issues and ways to support these kinds of policies. Faculty and staff are on the forefront of the conversation with students, it is their responsibility to make their classroom as inclusive as possible. Some suggested “using more inclusive examples of things, giving people ways to self-identify without putting them on the spot. Making it normal for there to be somebody in the classroom who is they and not him or her. Let them be who they want to be” (Kathy). This can be enhanced and supported, if colleges and various disciplines of the institutions can come together to discuss the issues of inclusivity.

Every individual is going to have different preferences... [on how they’d like to identify and to best prepare and consider ways to have more inclusive classrooms] full faculty brainstorming [sessions] would probably go a long way to make people more sensitive to the fact that we don't judge a book by its cover. You have no idea what's going on with anybody (Kathy).

With making faculty and staff aware of these kinds of policies, some stressed the frustration for why inclusive policies didn’t exist or why it was not always clearly communicated. Debbie, a staff member at a private university, explained her frustrations

with how universities need to continue to push the envelope to be more inclusive and continually work on creating more spaces for all marginalized groups on campuses.

I just feel like it's common sense things that we should have been doing all along. And it's because it's a large organization. Change doesn't happen quickly. And I have been sensitive to especially the gender roles for a long time and it was like, 'What do you mean that doesn't already happen here.' And I guess I had never considered it. It sounds strange but I always assumed [gender and other issues of diversity and inclusion] was accounted for and it was horrifying to me to find out that it was me. I feel like it's just something that is human decency to do and we shouldn't have to discuss it. I mean it should be ingrained naturally. It's just strange for me to have to watch the university learn at the same time I'm excited that it finally is (Debbie).

Debbie's recognition that change takes time to occur, is crucial for institutions to remember when implementing and creating policies. Campus stakeholders at various levels need to be looped in and a part of the full policy creating process to help support it as it takes effect. Not only educating faculty and staff members on the topic of inclusion but helping all members of campus to be looped in on general policies that across campus. This would help for all faculty and staff members to be on the same page on what the correct steps and best ways to support all students of all different types of identities. For example, one faculty member shared how if there were issues with a student in their residence hall, faculty and staff on the academic side should know what policies and protocols are in place to know how to best help those students or direct them to the proper channels. With colleges being an interconnected web of experiences, it is crucial for all faculty and staff to know what resources or process are available to support the students. Kelsey, a faculty member at a private institution, explained how:



So much in college, whether it is Res Life, athletics tutoring, if you're having disability accommodations, it [all] moves into the classroom. I feel like faculty should be aware of those issues [outside of the classroom setting]. Plus, a lot of times, students really only feel comfortable talking to faculty. [And if a student is having issues in another area across campus outside of a class], I wouldn't know how to answer those questions. If a student came and said, 'You know here's what's going on in my residence hall.' I don't know what to do. I wouldn't know what to do. I mean I know who to call but we don't have an actual policy stating what would happen to students. I wouldn't know what to do (Kelsey).

This reiterates the salience of ensuring clear communication with all stakeholders on a college campus to ensure that everyone is aware of policies and procedures for the various issues that may arise. Whether it be related to an academic procedure to a residence hall policy, making faculty and staff members aware of the different policies across campus or informing them of where they can find this information is crucial to helping them better address and support students no matter the instance or issue. This sort of transparency and visibility for knowing where to look and what resources are available for all campus stakeholders, allows the institution to be more transparent and supportive of those needing support and to those looking to support marginalized communities and its members.

## **CHAPTER 5:** **Recommendations & Implementations**

While answering the research questions, sub themes emerged from the participants to better the implementation process as institutions continue to work to be more inclusive. The sub themes and considerations include, educating both the external and internal stakeholders on a college campus, training as a solution and aspects to incorporate in training sessions, rational for policies, hiring practices within an institution and how inclusion is a multifaceted issue as well as considering the generational differences that affect the implementation process. Each sub theme demonstrates areas that participants felt should be considered or areas that should be addressed when faced with considering themes of inclusion and diversity. The themes emerged through analyzes of the transcribed interviews as participants grappled with their personal identities and connections to these sorts of policies. The subthemes for educating all college stakeholders include inclusion in the classroom and donor involvement.

### **Educating all college stakeholders**

While having a policy that supports or encourages inclusion of all identities, it is not enough. There must be more ways that are clear and offer suggestions for a variety of different situations in order to be successful. The solution that many participants felt would suffice would be educate all of the various stakeholders of the college community from faculty and staff, to students and even donors and administration. By making all members of the organization aware of the rational and the importance of having inclusive policies and amenities, will help all members to be on the same page as to why having

these kinds of policies are important as well as offering a more supportive environment for all members of the campus community. Through educating all members, instances of exclusion and issues of identity can become less common and more support, inclusive environments can become a reality. Below are some specific instances that participants shared for why educating all college staff members is a crucial and simple solution to creating more inclusive spaces on campus, such as in the classroom setting and a university's hiring practices.

### **Inclusion in the classroom.**

Applying inclusive policies at any size or type institution is crucial to helping students feel a greater sense of support from faculty and belonging on campus. All participants shared how it wasn't one specific department or individual's responsibility to being open to having discussion around identity, but rather everyone needed to have more training or support for how to best have these conversations. Kathy, a faculty member, explained how everyone needs to be ready to have these kinds of conversations with their students, because "students will find that the faculty member they click with and talk to them about things..." which then will require all faculty and staff to make "inclusivity a habit of the classroom." It is clear that of those interviewed, classrooms should be a place that is open and equipped to handle these kinds of conversations surrounding identity, belonging and any other issues that students are facing. This in turn, may concern some

faculty and staff members, who may not feel prepared to handle these kinds of conversations. Skylar, a staff member, shared how there need to resource available to students to share the issues or biases that occur in the classroom in order to teach everyone the importance of inclusion and why these kinds of topics matter.

We're thankfully having a lot more students report to us incidents of faculty bias. We don't think that's because they're happening more often. We just think that our visibility is a pride center in our institution's processes have become more visible and have been seen as more of a resource for people. And I think students just aren't putting up with that as much as they may have in the past. One example that is faculty members dividing classrooms by gender. So, for example just this past semester we had a calculus professor say, 'All right, the women are going to answer this part of the question and the men are going to answer this part of the calculation.' And while that might seem like a pretty simple way to like to have a pedagogical approach like switching [how] things operate, what it does for non-binary people especially, is it erases them for being able to participate fully in that class and that sort of work separating people by gender also promotes the gender binary in a way that is antithesis to how we want to work at our institution (Skylar).

Skylar's take on how gender identity is addressed or brought up in a classroom setting is a clear example of how faculty and staff need to be educated and made aware of the other identities that exist besides female and male identities. He demonstrates how simply educating educators on the other identities, the exclusion of other identities could have been completely prevented. There are countless other ways to break into groups besides making groups exclusive based on one's identity. With educating faculty and staff members on the various types of gender identities, as well as offering practical solutions and supportive resources to help them implement inclusive and diverse policies fully, while also helping students to feel more welcomed and ready to learn the material of the course.

Gretchen stressed how the role of a professor is to teach the topic of the course and how it can be difficult for inclusive policies to be incorporated into classroom conversations, since there are so many different viewpoints and perspectives to consider.

I don't want to make this [inclusive policies] a big deal or issue. Sometimes when [faculty or staff] mentioned it [inclusive policies or initiatives] in class, it could be interpreted that this is a big issue for [the lecturer]. Why would [the lecturer] have to say that to them when you think they're normal like anybody else. Everybody's welcome. It might make them feel comfortable maybe that we have a welcoming the classroom and an instructor is not going to be against them. Some students might have some fears that [college] instructors may be conservative. [And that their views] maybe different. Everybody's equal but every is different. We have differences and it's not a bad thing. [The key thing for lecturers to remember is] to withhold their own personal biases and so everybody has biases anybody and they have to make sure that they don't allow their own biases and prejudices in and into the class and into their teaching (Gretchen).

Gretchen continued how she focuses on the content of the courses. She allows the topic to guide conversations to help make these kinds of topics relevant to the course, but does not intentionally address these issues, unless students bring them up in class. "My subject matter is the content of my courses, sometimes talking about the sexist language and gender stereotypes sometimes. So, I would put a name in general in terms of the general guidelines and principle that...everybody's equal." Her words demonstrate how inclusion and diversity need to be considered, but in a welcoming and holistic way that allows all members of the classroom environment to be welcomed, while not being put on the spot to share their identity. This kind of learning would help bring the topics of inclusion and identities that are marginalized to the forefront of both faculty and students' minds in a meaningful and practical application to why it's important to consider how people identify. The lack of awareness of how to welcome and acknowledge these identities is one that is complex and multifaceted but is crucial for creating spaces that allow all students to be free to express themselves as they identify and still learn in a safe

environment. This task tends to fall to educators in the classroom, who, as participants shared, don't feel comfortable or know how to address or manage these topics of gender identity.

Gretchen shared how a faculty or educator's impact can extend past the learning concepts of the classroom and into various disciplines and life changing lessons. "As a teacher I try to help my students learn, not only the subject matter, but also in terms of social and cultural beliefs. I try to put my thoughts and my advice in my classes sometimes but as a teacher I'm trying to help them learn and succeed in life... beyond classes and into their career."

Some faculty shared how these policies can be brought to life in the classroom by making them a part of the curriculum. While some suggested having week-long events with guest speakers or independent modules for faculty, staff and students to take and learn about these policies or ideas, Adam suggested "bringing in some of these [ideas or policies or identities] into school projects that would be another way to really kind of learning and doing." He continued with how, as a business professor, one way to incorporate that into the classroom would be to have students identify "who the market segments are, the people in the groups and then what are they interested in. Then finding out products that they want to buy." It's clear that a way to better implement inclusive policies is to have them implemented into the curriculum, which in turn helps faculty and staff to better understand the importance of having such policies and how being inclusive

and having diverse perspectives can be applied or is salient to their course material, industry or field of research.

### **Donor involvement.**

A key stakeholder group that can help to address more inclusive resources and support are the institutions' donors and benefactors. Often times, university donors supply a lot of the financial support for universities, which can in turn allow the institution to be able to create more inclusive spaces and possibly provide more resources to students and staff alike. Having these vital group of stakeholders being on the same page with an institution's rationale for inclusive policies is crucial for inclusive policies to not only be implemented but to also receive more support from other various stakeholders, such as outside organizations, faculty and staff and even current or prospective students. Many participants expressed how if the institution wanted to become more inclusive, a key stakeholder to think about are the donors. With many schools depending on funds from donors, the vast majority of their donations come with stipulations or specific terms that donor wants the money to go towards and may be more prescriptive with where the funds can be allocated. "If donors aren't on board or don't support the policies, then the process will slow down or put on the back burner" (Dora). This is a clear example of just how powerful of a group of stakeholders that university

donors are to higher educational institutions and the role that they as a whole play. Bert elaborated how

We must think about the perspective what is going on financially for the institution. On one hand we have the commitment to inclusivity and on the other hand we have the commitment to our donors [who support institutions financially]. If we do [inclusive] changes too fast in such a way that our donors get upset, the entire support of the university would crash and there would be no [institution] anymore. On the other hand, if the changes are not made fast enough, we might lose the students, which would also make the [institution] not exist anymore. I think one of the difficulties for institutions is this kind of dance between those two needs for change and not change. I believe as I have observed there can be more done which means are [it may be] necessary to educate our donors and supporters as to the needs of why [inclusive policies] need to happen. There was a discussion about for example having gender inclusive bathrooms. I think they exist in just the handful of buildings that, after all of that discussion and still, it's not enough. If somebody that has the need for such an amenity, they will not be able to just find that easily. It's like when are we actually going to make accommodations (Bert).

The dance or the balance of satisfying both the needs and wants of all the different stakeholders from donors to faculty and staff to students and parents is a tricky for institutional administrators to balance. With many more things being decided on based on the bottom line, those who provide the funding often get the final say, even if it is not aligned with the school's mission or values and at the expense of the marginalized community members. Skylar added that,

We have to be willing to put up the money and put up the cost and also ask ourselves 'what are we willing to lose?' Because as an institution we have a very conservative alumni base. I think some of that is holding us back because we're not really ready to lose that because money talks, money is powerful and I think higher ed in general is going more towards a business model, which is unfortunate to me, as opposed to like a service model that I think can help us meet our aspirational goals (Skylar).



It is crucial for institution's administration and staff to relay the necessity for inclusive spaces and policies to the donors so that institution is living out its commitment to educate others, while also making the campus a place that welcomes everyone. To create more inclusive spaces and offering resources to create inclusive environments, while also getting donor buy-in or support is a tricky but necessary task, which may push administrators to better communicate the importance of creating more inclusive spaces, but also educating donors on the need and the benefits of having such inclusive amenities, trainings, etc.

### **Training**

The overarching theme for both donors and faculty and staff members means that all require some sort of training on the topic of inclusion and diversity. To make those stakeholder groups more aware of the issues, the inclusive policies can be better implemented by the faculty and staff, while also receiving the financial support from university donors. All of those who were interviewed shared how they desired some more training and ideas on how to best prepare and support students in the classroom and across campus. Many shared how they craved some sort of training for how to best approach these conversations with students and colleagues and ensure that they do not offend or cause harm to the individual who identifies this way. Debbie and Skylar, who work at the same private institution, praised how their equitable community council always offers events around campus that are open to all faculty, staff and students to learn more and to be aware of more ways to inclusive of diverse identities. For example, they

both shared how the Equitable Community Council offers Vision Training, which offers students, faculty and staff alike the opportunity to think more critically about topics of diversity and inclusion. Debbie explained how Vision Training is a team of university members who “come in and talk about all the different ‘isms’ and how people identify and how to make sure everyone's included.” From there, she shared how her institution has had people from Cornell who “do an acting and role roleplaying on diversity and ways discrimination is manifest. So, it was an interesting perspective to see things that I hadn't considered.” This kind of training was incredibly helpful for her because it opened her eyes to all different stakeholders and groups that are affected by these topics.

I've always gone in with [the idea that] everybody should be inclusive and there should be no discrimination. And one of the skits that [the Cornell group] had done was ‘I don't understand why I'm being forced into this diversity inclusion. I don't care. I don't want to be diverse. I don't want to be inclusive.’ I was like Holy crap. I hadn't considered that perspective. I'm still mortified by it, but I realized that not everybody has that same approach and does not want to be involved. And so, it was just interesting for me to go in there with the appreciation of inclusion and then to be told and reminded that we need to help those people who don't want to be. So, it was, and it is cool. They make it available to the whole university it's not just this little pocket of people are going (Debbie).

Debbie's experience is a clear example of how beneficial inclusive trainings are for all staff and faculty members to be exposed to, even if they already support inclusive and diverse ideas. Presentations from outside organizations or trainings should be for all different faculty and staff members, not just focused in one area of a university. This is because the role of gender and how one may identify occurs in multiple different areas besides the classroom or a residence hall. For example, the online class rosters or school database systems that have one's gender associated with them. IT departments and

technological services should be aware of how they can help bring issues of inclusion to the forefront of all stakeholders' minds. Some things to consider is to have online database systems, preferred names as an option or giving individuals the ability to change their names or gender identification in school databases systems in order to give them the freedom to identify as they feel they should. By having this option, it will also help all students and faculty and staff, who may identify with the gender norms of society to “present thought about those who are not the gender minority” (Skylar). Several participants stressed how changing applications to be more inclusive to have people select more gender options would help institutions to be more inclusive and better live out their inclusive values to prospective students, while also transferring them into other data collection systems. One participant shared, “whether it is on an application to the institution to surveys that faculty are researching, email signatures, it’s all little things that can add up to make a positive, welcoming environment, which only stresses or pushes these policies and the need for them forward” (Debbie). Debbie, especially stressed, how

I think it's every human's responsibility or should be. But unfortunately, some of them are going to have the wrong views but I think as an organization, the best we can do is to make sure it's constant. We're constantly reinforcing we're constantly talking we're constantly educating. We have a constant turnover of bodies. You know these you know the students who came in eight years ago or only sort of touched by it for the last season. But we have that obligation to continue to make sure everybody is on the same page and everybody is included and welcomed (Debbie).

Debbie’s ownership of being an advocate shows how crucial it is for stakeholder buy-in when creating a new policy. Faculty and staff must be given the chance to be exposed to a new identity that they did not consider before or allow them to be reminded of how important it is to be considerate of those who may be different from themselves. Whether

it be a student in their classroom, a colleague in their department meeting, a potential connection or collaborator on a research project, being aware of different identities that exist is crucial for faculty and staff to be aware as they need to be able to have conversations about inclusion with not just students of any age, but anyone they encounter.

Once faculty and staff become aware of different identities, proper training or topics to be aware of is the next logical steps. Whether it be ideas or steps to implement in their classroom or department meetings, some sort of follow up needs to occur to help faculty and staff better be aware or know how to use the knowledge that was just acquired. Almost all participants wanted to learn more about the pronouns that an individual may now identify with as well as how to best have these conversations in the classroom. One faculty member, Allie asked if it would be possible for her institution to have an inclusivity statement for all faculty and staff to put into their syllabi, which would let all students know that they're welcomed and accepted regardless of how they identify.

It is important to realize that members of the campus community crave for more ways to better serve the students and the mission of the institution. Maddie, a staff member at a private university, shared how as a new staff member she craves more training for herself to better serve the students she works with and supervises. While often times the student affairs and department of residence life have their students go

through these kinds of trainings, all faculty and staff should be included on them, because all members may need to address or be faced with these kinds of situations.

I'm hungry for that knowledge myself. And I think that there's... all these amazing programs happening for like Hall Directors and Resident Assistants and for other student staff members and the general student body, but not for faculty. I think that sometimes we get to be "adulty" and we decide that 'we don't need to have that kind of education.' [However,] I think it's really important for us to keep learning keep growing... faculty and staff should have the same accessibility to programming and conversation to help them be exposed to more inclusive ideas and policies (Maddie).

Yes, training sessions about identities must be given to those who may be on the frontlines, such as faculty or student affairs staff members, but it is critical to remember those who can serve as advocates in unlikely places too, such as front desk receptionists, IT services, etc. Their support is equally as an important of inclusive policies too and can help fellow colleagues and students alike see the larger impact of having inclusive and diverse efforts.

Following up with training topics that relate to the issue is not the only way to measure the success or adjust future trainings. Universities must still provide resources to help all campus community members as these topics of gender identity and other inclusive and diverse policies are new and still being researched. Amy, a faculty member of a large public institution, stressed how when training faculty and staff on inclusive policies, that all stakeholders are aware of the proper channels to ensure students are supported from all angles. She reiterated how all institutions should offer

Mental health services and [make all faculty, staff, students and] administration aware of how to best be supporting students. In particular ones that are transitioning sometimes they need extra support, emotional support and so being able to come to them and offer that emotional support but also have a place for

them to go on campus would be really good. [All institutions] can always expand LGBTQ center. I think that there's no reason that they couldn't kind of make that larger and make that a more visible part of [all college] campus[es]. [Typically] there's not this huge push for students to become involved in it. It's sort of left to the students and the faculty to come to it on their own (Amy).

This needs to be changed in order to help all members of the campus community better serve these individuals who fall outside of the norm. Amy's story helps to demonstrate the demand for more resources in order for inclusive policies to be successfully implemented. Providing resources, such as counseling services, an LGBTQ+ resource center, support groups for both students and staff members who may fall outside of the gender binary, even ally or advocate groups to help spread awareness of the importance of how to better be inclusive and support marginalized communities.

Part of making these kinds of conversations can occur through simple, nonverbal changes too. For example, Debbie shared how at her institution, "faculty and staff are starting to add the pronouns that we prefer to refer to be referred to by on our email" which helps to normalize and inform others of how to they prefer to identify, but also allows all individuals and members of the organization to share who they are and informally share how they identify.

In addition to having more inclusive and practical trainings that relate to faculty and staff who may be faced to have these kinds of discussions, there must be a human element to the training sessions. Humanizing the rationale for training is crucial for faculty and staff buy-in to occur. One staff member at a private, religious institution, who identifies as gay, shared how by personalizing the reasoning or creating some sort of

recognition of members of the campus community who are openly LGBTQ+ will help them to feel heard and a valued part of the campus. He shared how “I don't know if we're doing nearly enough to reach out to those people and to make them feel welcome and loved and included and protected.” He continued sharing how a place, similar to student LGBTQ+ resources, should be in place for faculty and staff members alike.

There's not an equivalent resource for faculty and staff. I mean we do have the employee resource group but to have some type of like institutionalized person or office that advocates for LGBTQ+ staff members would be really great. And then they could organize [things together] in addition to doing like advocacy. They could organize events and they could organize communications and trainings (Brad).

Brad mentioned some specific tactics could be done by the administration and campus government could do too. “Maybe there’s a day that is like LGBTQ plus and non-binary gender Appreciation Day where it's a day at [any institution] where we celebrate those people. Or maybe it's a press release by our leadership to say ‘Hey, we haven't really talked about these people but [we as an administration] want to issue a statement on how important these people are and what we're gonna do to support them.’” This suggestion could easily be done, by simply stating how these individuals are making a difference or helping the campus environment. or shared on the university’s social media pages, will help “highlight the diversity and inclusiveness of the campus” (Brad) which would help prospective students and employees alike feel seen and welcomed on campus, regardless of how they identify. Brad’s ideas demonstrate the importance of not only advocating for inclusive policies, but also how universities and colleges need to take pride in the diverse

identities of their campus community. Skylar added, how posters and social media posts of inclusive events that focus on these kinds of topics will help to normalize the identities and help people feel a part of the community and recognized in a positive way.

Should universities not know how to best address an inclusive or diversity topic, many participants suggested reaching out to experts or professional organizations who study the topic heavily and have a group from the organization lead a training session to help bring expertise and relevance to the campus. Several participants shared how having an outside organization come in and share information, it will “show the relevance of the topic” (Kathleen) and that there is academic and scientific research that supports the ideas, as well as “offering additional resources or perspectives that should be considered” (Debbie) to help faculty and staff gain a deeper and richer understanding of the issue. Outside organizations may help to offer a network of other resources to help those individuals affected by the topic or give them more insight and support too. Hence strengthening a greater sense of community and acceptance of all identities on campus, while also allowing an institution to show their appreciation, recognition and the importance of diversity.

### **Rationale for inclusive policies.**

All of the institutions, whether it was public or private or had any religious connection, all had themes that pushed for the institution to be more inclusive and



accepting of all different types of forms of diversity. That said, many felt that some institutions didn't always practice what was preached. For instance, a faculty member at a religious institution shared how they felt that by not informing faculty and staff of inclusive policies was wrong. She felt that all colleges and universities should not only have some policies, but continually push for them to become more inclusive, especially since these policies tend to follow or reflect the mission of the institution.

Honestly having [a] policy is being clear about what they are. Having the discussion when you're onboarding new faculty about here's. We believe it. But for goodness sakes you call yourselves Catholic. You talk about the whole person. Step up man. [Tell faculty and staff that] 'We want everyone to feel welcome here and here's what we mean by that and you're some strategies for you to make sure that happens' (Kathy).

Kathy demonstrates the importance of open and clear communication with stakeholder groups and what the greater purpose of the policy is. Through being more transparent and honest about the rationale and the importance of having policies, stakeholders across the board will know what behavior and actions are expected and why those expectations exist. Participants felt that institutions needed to be transparent with their faculty and staff about their shortcomings.

While transparency is something that most participants craved, part of being transparent means that the rationale or past discretions need to be offered for why a specific policy or change is being made. Some staff members wanted to have their institutions share more about how their institution had made mistakes or took a while to enact more inclusive policies. In addition to still not having more open gender options for their residence hall selections (Debbie), some shared how women are given certain

privileges that men or other members don't receive. For example, two staff members from the same institutions shared how their institution didn't accept women into their colleges until 1971. Skylar elaborated how the university should be transparent with all of its historical and current shortcomings, in order to address the rationale for changes to be more inclusive and diverse.

We didn't admit women to this institution until the 1970's, right? We didn't have a black graduate from this institution until 1960. Those are two very historical realities that I don't think we account much for in terms of how that impacts our culture today. So, we also have very gendered systems that hold a lot of power in our institution so nearly 40 percent of our student bodies is engaged in Greek life. Our Greek culture at our institution is very normative. It's very hard to be different and by different, I mean it's hard to be bigger [in terms of one's body weight]. It's hard to be a person of color. It's hard to be a queer person, any marker of difference. That's not like a cisgender, white, thin, or mass masculine person like whatever it might be that's normative. It's hard to not be that. In our Greek community not that we're not getting to a place that's better but because of that history. It definitely means that there's a certain culture here at the institution and there's still more men than women as students here, which is pretty rare in a higher ed context. We're seeing a lot more women go to college than we ever have before. And here, it is still majority male which is like very interesting and I think speaks to that cultural dynamic from the 1970's that we still haven't reckoned as well. And we're also signed where we are a very STEM heavy field institution. So, when people ask like what is [this university] known for its oftentimes the engineering program or I business department which are two historically like very male dominated spaces right. And so that's also I think a history and culture that we're working on (Skylar).

Skylar shared a strong desire that shows faculty and staff are craving more rationale for having policies in place. The transparency factor and the reasoning for implementing and the importance of having inclusive and diversity focused policies is just as crucial for helping all stakeholders understand are key things to have when implementing a new policy. Being open and honest with all the necessary parties, more stakeholder buy-in and

understanding can occur and ensure a more successful policy implementation in the long run, should the reasoning and research for having the policy be clear and transparent with campus community members.

### **Gender discrepancies in current & future policies.**

Transparency of issues and rational is key for policy implementation, but visibility of supportive staff and faculty is a huge consideration, especially when it comes to helping to create more inclusive spaces and educating students. Often times, when a student can see themselves in a professor or can identify with them on a more personal level, they are more likely to retain the information and learn from the educator, as they can see the value in the material and course content. Many students and experts call for higher education to better diversify and have their staff and faculty become as diverse as their student populations. If schools want to retain more diverse students, then their hiring practices of faculty and staff should reflect their student body. This requires a huge consideration to occur in all college's hiring practices. Several participants shared how hiring practices need to be considered and adjusted when hiring new faculty and staff. Brad, a staff member at a private, religious institution shared how, "I don't know if we're doing nearly enough to reach out to those people [who fall outside of the societal norms] and to make them feel welcome and loved and included and protected." By having faculty and staff who have similar identities to marginalized communities, it helps to give

more support and respect for those marginalized members, while also helping to expand others mindset and exposure to diverse populations.

At other institutions, many feel that while jobs and employment opportunities are being shared with diverse populations, members of those groups simply aren't applying.

Debbie elaborate that on her team, there were thirty members, with only two females total, including herself.

We asked our upper management in our organization how they justify that all of our new hires have been white males... and there was no good answer. They were aware that was an issue. They didn't have a lot of diverse candidates in the pools. So, they picked the best person for the job. It was definitely not as diverse as it should have been. HR has been super helpful in making sure that we are advertising our positions in diverse vocation magazines newspapers publications for that particular field. The effort is there. It's not producing at a rate that I would. I personally feel it's acceptable. We don't have enough women. We don't have enough diversity in race. We definitely don't have enough diversity in LGBTQ+, people in our organization now that could be for a variety of reasons and it could just be that people have not identified in public (Debbie).

Debbie's drive to help improve her campus community's diversity shows how it takes a village to enforce and promote change. Human resource departments should focus more on having diverse identities at the front of the mindset of hiring committees, to help push them to think more creatively and address areas of improvement that the team needs to be more open and considerate of marginalized communities. The many benefits that having a diverse and inclusive team can offer to a campus community.

That said, it's crucial to remember how hiring practices are and should remain a holistic approach. Gretchen stressed how when hiring new faculty and staff members, it's crucial

To prioritize inclusion policy [but] not supersede other criteria. Race is important. Inclusion is important. But you do not make that as the only, and as a primary contingency to hire somebody. I always say to people that [we need to] increase the racial diversity and cultural diversity. We could embrace that. We all should embrace everyone: white, black, Asian, Hispanic (Gretchen).

Gretchen's concern demonstrates how hiring practices need to be holistic in nature and consider both one's experience and diverse identities and ideas that the job and organization culture require. Some have worked with their Human Resources department to remove the names of the candidates to help solely look at the criteria rather than letting gender or race influence the hiring decision. The department at Debbie's institution is open to that suggestion and is currently working with her department to see if that is possible, but this is not an institutional change and appears to not happen across other institutions, as others didn't mention this practice.

Changing an institutional hiring practice, may require a change in the overall tenure system as well. Traditionally those who receive tenure are older, white, cisgender males (Dora), while other aspects that are vital to the university, such as advising student organizations or serving on university councils and committees or teaching reviews, aren't as valued or considered when it came time to promoting faculty.

Another key consideration is the transparency of pay and the factors that influence one's salary and benefits based on how one may identify. At several institutions, participants shared how they were aware of the pay differences that male faculty members received versus female faculty members of the same caliber. This information, being at private institutions, was not publicized by the institution, but rather was discovered through word of mouth amongst coworkers. They were unaware of how this occurred or the rationale behind it, but regardless they felt that it was unfair. When asked what they would do to fix the problem, they suggested policy changes, but didn't know who to contact or where to start.

Other gender discrepancies had to do with how some policies favor women over men, especially when it came to parental leave. Both Skylar and Debbie, who are at the same private institution, shared how those who identify as male, cannot take parental leave as the policy states how "parental leave requires the individual who birthed the child" which then does not allow individuals who adopted a child or father figures to take leaves to spend time with the new child. Debbie explained "I understand [women] are the ones actually bearing the children but there's no reason that paternal leave is not compatible" (Debbie). Should those individuals want to take time with their new addition, they must take sick days or unpaid leave. Both participants were unaware for the rationale of the policy and were uncertain of the progress that was being made to adjust it to be more inclusive. Hence demonstrating the previous theme of there needing to be more

transparency as a hole for why policies are in place and how it affects the various stakeholders of an institution.

Another issue in terms of the gender discrepancy in terms of personal leave had to do with the gender of one's partner or spouse. For example, Dora shared how many years ago, a staff member was unable to take personal leave from work following the death of their long-term partner. The policy, at the religious institution, at the time, did not recognize same sex partners, thereby not granting this individual a grief leaf. This staff member felt as though the institution was not living up to its values and worked with the HR department and other members of the administration to get the policies to be more inclusive. As Dora put it, "until someone bring up an issue with a policy, it's not going to get changed. Policies need to be pushed or humanized in order for people to want to proactively change them." (Dora). This can be seen at another institution as well. Another participant, Kathleen, a faculty member and administrator at a public institution, shared how the university changed their binary policies and bathrooms to be all gender bathrooms, only after a non-binary faculty member suggested the policy change and pushed them to help them to feel more included. "By giving individuals, who identify outside of the gender binary, a platform and opportunity to share their concerns and ideas, [institutions] are then able to create more inclusive environments and better support their mission and instill acceptance and open-mindedness into future leaders of society" (Kathleen). Thereby showing how crucial it is to not only have inclusive policies, but also

ensure that all members of the campus community, in particularly marginalized members, will help to personalize the issues and force people to face their biases that they may have towards marginalized members of the community. By humanizing these identities and facing individuals who have the identity, it will help to create a more unified campus that will be more considerate and understanding of those with non-binary or other outliers' identity.

It is apparent that hiring practices involving more diverse candidates is a multifaceted issue, while also considering how to best ensure all faculty and staff are receiving the same benefits regardless of how one may identify. Colleges and other organizations alike should be more considerate of all identities and re-examine their policies in terms of personal leave, payment and promotional opportunities as well as benefits packages to ensure that they are offering them holistically to all stakeholders regardless of their identity, to better ensure fairness and equality for all community members.

**Inclusion is a multifaceted issue.**

Tying in with having faculty and staff better understand their role in how inclusive policies affect them, requires them to be transparent with themselves and others with how one may identify. Transparency was a huge aspect when presenting rationale for introducing any policy, but with inclusivity, it is crucial to recognize how it's tied into



other issues as well. Gender only makes up one part of someone's identity. When asked about the topic of inclusive policies, many felt that gender was a part of a huge plethora of other issues that needed to be addressed on college campuses. Gretchen, a senior faculty member at private, religious institution, shared how "I don't think gender is a big factor, no more of a factor than race and ethnicity and religion." She expressed how she had "heard that if [students or faculty alike] are a double minority such as female and African-American then it's harder for you two to be acclimated on campus. Some people who are in the minority, feel like they're an outsider." One key consideration is how if one minority or marginalized group to being highlighted or supported more than others, then there may be bigger issues or a greater disconnect by other marginalized groups.

Bert, a staff member from a religious, private institution, shared how:

If [students] see and hear all this talk about in this particular one [group or identity] and not about the others, it's like yeah you're trying to [increase] visibility because [an institution] wants to get a certain status that has a certain benefit from the government or whatever, that's fine. But make the effort also with the other [minority groups on campus]. [Think about the] black students, Asian students, Arabic students. How are [institutions] supporting those ethnicities too? [Schools] need to be very careful and ensure that they're doing similar efforts for all these other ethnicities that have representation at [any institution]. Because when do, we begin focusing a lot in one view and the other ones get relegated. And whether that is happening in reality or not that's how they are going to feel (Bert).

Bert's considerations of assisting all minority groups is not an easy task. While supporting specific marginalized groups is important to ensuring all are being heard, it is crucial for institutions to also consider groups who aren't as vocal or are not as visible on

campus. Faculty, staff and administrators alike need to come together and better work towards ensuring all students, no matter how one may identify, feel supported and recognized in the campus community. While some policies or events on campuses may focus on a specific group and celebrate a specific part of one's identity, institutions need to better think of ways to support and recognized all types of identities to help them to feel supported and a part of the campus community.

Being intentionally inclusive is something that requires lot of thought and careful planning to implement successfully to ensure accidental exclusion occurs. Colleges need to be cautious and cognizant of what obstacles could occur with the inclusive policies that it is trying to implement. Another consideration is to whether the mission or identity of the institution is religiously affiliated. Lizzie, a staff member in the department of residential housing at a religious, private institution, stressed how it is a balancing act.

The gender piece is tricky especially for students who fall outside of the gender binary. Students who are don't identify as heterosexual or straight like students who are queer students essentially, I think that's always going to be a tricky piece. I think grappling with kind of the Catholic-Jesuit identity that talks about like very hetero normative policies and practices but also reconciling that with the gender or with the Jesuit ethos about care for the whole person and inclusion in kind of Catholic social teaching. So those are kind of always at odds which has been really interesting to observe. But I think it's tough because some of our policies I just think are inherently anti queer and anti LGBTQ in terms of our some of our housing policies. But I don't know that those can ever change. I think they're just kind of a complicated thing going on there. I think that's always a challenge (Lizzie).

Lizzie offers a key insight into how some policies and stances are extremely outdated. To modernize them to be more inclusive may require a change in rhetoric or force a complete change if the policies are to be completely inclusive. Many institutions may

have a religious association that is interconnected to its own mission or identity, it may need to be reevaluated when working with students who may not subscribe to that religion or zoom out on the specifics of the religion to think of how to make their mission or policies associated with the mission to work more inclusively for all. An example of this how one participant wanted their institution to focus more on the broader meaning of being a religious institution. Bert shared how if someone, whether it be a faculty, staff or student who wasn't on board with inclusive policies at a Jesuit institution, that "the entire point of being part of Catholic Jesuit institution is precisely that you are not just center on yourself in your own field but that you are reaching out to the larger community you know part of reaching out to the larger community is addressing those issues." He emphasized how being a religious institution adds more pressure on to all members of the institution, saying how:

The fact that we are in the Ignatian spirituality and having [that framework] as a foundation, in the Roman Catholic tradition in the Jesuit system of values... this demands that our focus is not just to give [students] information and give them a degree, but rather teach them how to put that degree to the service of the larger community. And that is specifically has doing that to address issues of inclusion (Bert).

Schools need to focus on the individual, especially those who are a part of marginalized communities. As Bert points out, the mission of the institution may need to be considered in a broader scale to better support and address the needs of all students. Keeping the mission in mind forces stakeholders to continuously push for more ways to how to best support and consider how the mission impacts marginalized groups on campus. This requires faculty, staff and administrators to push themselves to reevaluate what their

institution mission means and how they can better support them. This may require different interpretations of an institution's mission to occur, thereby requiring a change in thinking or deeper conversations with other key stakeholders, donors, administrators, student support staff, etc. to really focus on the rationale for the shift in thinking and considering more ways to better aid students development in finding their true identity.

### **Generational Differences**

A second aspect to remember is how higher educational institutions need to think of all of their stakeholders and the generational differences and values that all may hold, which will impact the implementation process of any policy, especially those that focus on inclusion. Generational differences between members of any organization is a salient consideration when working to incorporate inclusive policies. Higher education is a field that isn't any different. One's values and beliefs are strongly connected and "relative to generations and when you were raised" (Adam). "My generation and generations younger than me, so y and z, are more tolerant and understanding and how do I learn and how do I interact better than perhaps elders but that's more anecdotal evidence. We could all use more or help with [various identities]" (Adam). These are key considerations when training and promoting a policy change. Kathy shared how

It's going to be a generational difference. My instinct is that the kids won't care. At the worst and the kids won't care and at the best end they'll be kids who will be helped. At the over 40's group, I've never seen any issues with that. So that one, I would hope, would also not have issues with anything else. But generationally I think they would have they would be the more likely group to have issues and issues to be had (Kathy).

How one was raised and their values that they may hold affect their greater beliefs and outlook, it's salient for inclusive policies and the committees that drafted them to consider how to best address the various stakeholders' beliefs and values, not only how the policy will affect their role. This is not an easy task as the age ranges of faculty and staff members is very wide and ever changing. Amy shared how, as a whole, faculty can be resistant to change because it occurs rapidly and constantly.

I don't want to say we're behind the times [as faculty]. We're still struggling to sort of keep up with how quickly our students are moving through things. [For me] it was really difficult [to refer to a singular student with] the 'they.' It really bothered me because it's a plural [tense]. It sounds really silly, but it took me forever to get to the point where I could refer to the student [as they] because that was their preferred address. I did actually speak to someone in the LGBTQ center [for guidance and support for how to best understand this change] but [now] I do know that it's mostly used by students [who are non-binary] (Amy).

This resistance to change is one that is simply because it is outside the cultural norms that were taught as they were growing up. Being faced with the nuances or adjustments may be difficult for the older generations, when they first encounter these situations, but as they process and make sense of how they must change their thinking and reconsider how to be more inclusive in how their everyday lives. Hence furthering the need for there to be more support systems and resources for faculty and staff of all ages to ensure their understanding and processing the changes that need to occur to be more inclusive. Alli explained how generational differences between faculty members is important when addressing issues of inclusion. "I've heard things from older faculty that they are not interested in having these conversations..." that are centered around identity and students feeling a sense of belonging. When asked why older faculty or staff members tend to not want to have these kinds of conversations around identity, she elaborated:

It's just new. We get very set on our ways... and the whole stuff about like the pronouns, I try to be incredibly respectful of that because it's really new to me. This is not something people talked about when I was twenty-one years old. I think the first time I heard a discussion about that I was maybe like thirty-five years old... People just get used to being a certain way and claim, 'it was fine that way' and 'I don't know why we have to change things.' But the people who tend to say that are older, white guys and things have always been fine for them. So as a not older white guy, I think that it's a little easier to see like changes and go with the change as change happens... it's a thing that we have to constantly be dealing with (Allie).

With the adjustments, it must be clear on how faculty and staff should be more inclusive, but also pushed to be more considerate of marginalized backgrounds. By being more considerate of others who may identify differently, they'll be able to better address their own biases and improve themselves at the same to be more inclusive. Skylar, who helps address issues of bias at his institution, shared how conversations around the importance of inclusion are crucial for all faculty members, whether they support the policies or ideas or not.

I would say majority are absolutely open to it. The times we have had to respond to an incident of bias in the classroom, we often times work with the associate deans, the deans or the department chairs to help to address [the situation] as opposed to going directly to that person out of the student's safety concerns. And we have never had a negative interaction with those people, it's always been swift. It's always been a quick response. I will say, 'do we have professors here that believe what we're doing is like not needed?' Absolutely. Like we have had people say 'well, why do I need to treat people differently?' And so, we're working alongside those people to say, 'here's why there is a different treatment that's needed because the safety and the needs of that students are different.' And that's OK. Just because we're treating them differently doesn't mean that we're treating them better than other people. Having those very entry level discussions around diversity inclusion still happen. But I would say the vast majority of us of our campus population are at least willing to engage in the conversation. But it's not always followed up with inclusive practices or inclusive policy (Skylar) [which would be more of a long-term solution.]

It seems that faculties' old-school ways and thinking should be strongly challenged to help them prevent any issues or concerns of calling students by the wrong pronoun. This

should be included in any sort of training and offer a chance for faculty and staff to ask questions, such as how some identities challenge grammar rules so that faculty and staff can better understand what needs to occur and why a student may choose to identify that way. This would help faculty and staff better support their students and fellow colleagues, without calling out an individual or feel fearful of offending someone.

From this study it is clear that when an institution is working to help make the organization more inclusive, faculty and staff need to be made aware of the specific policies regarding inclusion and diversity. It is important for all stakeholders of a college to be educated on the policy, especially donors, faculty and staff alike. Participants crave for more information on how to bring those policies into the classroom and would like to have more training to better assist with implementing the inclusive policies. For policies to be more supported, it is necessary for hiring practices and promotional opportunities to also be inclusive too, to help be more holistic with welcoming and promoting all identities. It is necessary for the rationale for policies to be shared and how the policy is incorporated or living out the mission of the institution as well, which will help with getting more buy-in from campus stakeholders. To get more buy-in and support of such policies, it is important to be aware of the generation that various members come from, which influence their values and beliefs. By being aware of various groups values and beliefs, policies can be marketed and targeted as ways to satisfy or support their personal ideas and community standards of inclusion. These themes help to demonstrate how policies are created and what needs to be considered when certain structures are put in place and the struggle and effects they have on members of an organization. Additionally, this study shows how faculty and staff are still struggling to make sense of their role as an

educator and how their role must evolve to help further their students' education holistically. With college being the time where students' process their identity, it is important for faculty and staff to not only be aware of inclusive policies at their university, but also being prepared to talk about these issues in supportive and practical ways both inside and outside of the classroom.



## **CHAPTER 6:** **Discussion**

Faculty and staff are aware of some inclusive policies, but not all of them and struggle to know how to best support them. All faculty and staff members who participated in the study were open to having these kinds of conversations but felt that there needed to be more trainings in order to best prepare them to be successful and ensure they were aware of the multifaceted issues of inclusion and diversity. While more engaging sessions on inclusion were desired, participants wanted to ensure that the lessons were practical and could be used in their classrooms and everyday interactions with students, faculty and staff alike. When presenting the rationale for such policies or changes and working on getting faculty and staff buy-in, it is crucial for the age and generations of the faculty members, which will help address or appeal to their values.

A key consideration or suggestion would be to have personal stories, or a guest speaker present the importance of these topics to help personify issues and humanize these experiences and bring the statistics to life. For example, prepping faculty and staff to work into their classes of asking what people's preferred pronouns are, which allows students to share how they identify, but also helping instructors to create a welcoming environment in their class (see appendix for suggestions). It is crucial to remember how these policies or ideas of inclusion can be both large scale and small scale. Large scale items would be to create all-gender bathrooms in every building on campus and to publicize them. Small scale items would be to have faculty and staff members include their preferred genders on their email signatures, just to help normalize the topic of gender and pronoun usage, while also to help people to be more informed on how people

identify. Another key thing is to have staff and faculty have the chance to share and think critically about how these issues of inclusion affect their subject areas and industries. Thinking about these issues outside the classroom proves the salience of the issues and challenges students and instructors alike to be aware of these problems.

Some trainings need to be also given to staff and administration who work with donors. As the go-betweens or connectors of the institution and donors, it is crucial that those stakeholders have inclusive trainings that they can relay to donors, which will help them understand the importance of these kinds of topics and why funding and changes are necessary, even if they are on the more progressive side of the political spectrum. The key thing to remember is how the policies are associated with and tied into the institution's mission and values, which should drive all campus members, including alumni, to be thinking more creatively in how the mission and values are lived out and expressed. It was also mentioned how issues of inclusion and diversity are multifaceted, so it's important to strive to offer support, resources, and trainings for a variety of different identities that exist. This will help to ensure that no one issue is only acknowledged and to make anyone feel isolated or unrecognized. Some suggestions or considerations is incorporating all gender bathrooms into all buildings across campus to allow anyone the option to use the facilities without fear of ridicule or judgement, as well as ensuring all buildings are ADA accessible, etc. Having university administrators and planning teams think creatively and critically about how to make their campus open and welcoming to everyone of all identities can help them to live out the mission and bring aspects of it to life.

### **Nature and Limitations of the Study**

This study considers how faculty and staff at higher education institutions' awareness of inclusive policies on their campus and how they see and interpret their role in supporting or not supporting these policies. Specifically, the non-binary identities were considered, but there are many different identities that could have been considered or studied, from different races, religions, sexual orientations, etc. The organizations that were discussed had a wide variety of differences, such as location, type of school, enrollment size, etc. Not all schools, whose staff members were interviewed, have a similar setting or the same amount of funds to make these changes as the other institutions that will be analyzed. It's important to note that the members of the institutions involved had various impressions on how progressive its policies were, which will cause a greater wealth of considerations and responses. The processes for policy changes at each institution may vary, which may hinder or accelerate the process for having all-gender bathrooms and other inclusive policies at an institution. Another consideration is that various donors of an institution may have a strong influence over the various policies that are aimed to be more inclusive. Some schools allow donors to have a larger role in policy decisions, which may affect the timeline for implementation of inclusive policies.

An area to consider is how there are some who consider the term "transgender" is more of a white term and is not inclusive of racial minorities. It is possible that this could be an area of a future study, but it can be off-putting or not inclusive of those who identify as non-binary and non-white, which is important for the researchers to ensure that they are working to ask more in-depth follow-up questions that are inclusive of any

other influences of the inclusive policies that may play a factor in the policy implementation.

It is possible for an additional limitation with this study to be how it is geared towards the faculty and staff members at a higher educational institution. While the methodology for getting interviews were through snowball sampling and referrals, other stakeholders may not be asked or interviewed unless referred by another informant, in order to keep the study focused on the specific question of whether faculty and staff support is necessary for all gender bathroom policy implementation. One area for future research would be to see how students perceive the inclusive policies and the role that students play in the process.

### **Conclusion**

Faculty and staff are aware of some inclusive aspects and want to help create the college campus to be a space for everyone to feel accepted. They need and want more practical, humanized training to help assist with making the institution more mission-driven and a place for all identities. These issues of inclusion are multifaceted and greatly affect almost everyone on some level, hence the salience of providing faculty and staff trainings to help them support and best serve their students. (See Appendix for ideas for classroom and department discussions regarding these issues.) To truly live out the missions that higher educational institutions create, the organization must seek more ways to demonstrate how the mission is being lived out, such as all gender bathrooms in buildings, addressing and fixing diversity and inclusive issues and offer more resources and trainings for all stakeholders.

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## APPENDIX

**Tactics to Create More Welcoming and Inclusive Spaces:**Pronouns in Email Signatures:

*Have faculty and staff include their pronouns underneath their preferred name. This will help to start the conversation of how one may identify and give a passive way for individuals to share how they identify in a non-threatening way and without fear of seeing a negative reaction from someone.*

For example:

Joseph “Joe” Smith, PhD

He/His/Him

Department of Physics - Chair & Associate Professor

Office #: 303-987-2321

National Organizations of Inclusion and Diversity:

*Below is a list of national organizations who may be contacted for resources or trainings regarding the specific topics of inclusion and diversity. This list is only a sample of some organizations that exist and can be used to help find more resources to help institutions find the right training or resources for their campus culture and needs when addressing these topic areas.*

1. American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (<https://www.aaed.org/aaed/about.asp>)
2. Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power and Privilege (<https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/>)
3. E-Cornell University ([E-Cornell University](#))
4. EDIT Media (<https://www.editmedia.org>)
5. GLAAD (<https://www.glaad.org/resources>)
6. National Diversity Council (<http://www.nationaldiversitycouncil.org>)
7. National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (<https://www.nadohe.org>)
8. Race Equity Tools (<http://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/organizational-change-processes>)
9. Race Forward (<https://www.raceforward.org>)
10. Unconscious Bias Training ([http://www.knowledgestart.com/?gclid=CjwKCAjwm-fkBRBBEiwA966fZI\\_mxJ9iaVSVz5GiDSa1WT\\_xsBG4t51vtVIVRrDcS0dGE\\_sTnKirdhoCfJ4QAvD\\_BwE](http://www.knowledgestart.com/?gclid=CjwKCAjwm-fkBRBBEiwA966fZI_mxJ9iaVSVz5GiDSa1WT_xsBG4t51vtVIVRrDcS0dGE_sTnKirdhoCfJ4QAvD_BwE))
11. Vision Training (mentioned by one of the participants in the study) (<https://www.visions-inc.org/workshops-training.html>)



**Inclusive Statement in Syllabi:**

*Below is a sample of a statement that could be put into instructors' syllabi to inform their students of their support of all identities.*

***Stance on Inclusion of All Identities:***

*It is a class expectation that every student in this course is treated with respect and dignity, no matter how they identify. This includes gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. We are all valued and respected members of this class, but also members of the campus community. As an instructor, I am a resource and here to offer support to all identities. Please contact me if you are struggling or needing additional support. I am one of many campus resources and can connect you with other resources to ensure your needs and identity are recognized and supported. Such resources include: (add institution's resources that exist).*

**Class Introductions - Incorporating Pronouns:**

*On the first day of the semester or quarter, have all students go around and share their name, the pronouns they prefer to be called by, hometown, major, etc. Prior to starting, list out the various pronoun options that are available, to offer suggestions (he/his/him, she/hers/her, they/them/their/theirs/themself, sie/hir/hir/hirs/hirself, zie/zir/zirs/zirself) and explain These examples came from the LGBT Resource Center at University of Southern California (<https://lgbtrc.usc.edu/trans/transgender/pronouns/>). Check with your school's diversity and inclusion or gender resource centers for updates or changes.*

*After writing the pronouns on the board, share how important it is to be aware of how people identify and how it is a sign of respect:*

**Instructor:** Part of the mission of our college is to ensure everyone feels a sense of belonging and recognized on campus, regardless of how they identify. On the board, there are a variety of different pronouns that anyone may identify with. Being aware of what pronouns one may prefer is crucial to helping us all be a part of making this an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment. As we go around the room, please tell me your name, your preferred pronouns, hometown, and major. (*Continue by first answering the questions that were asked for students, then have students share.*)

*Share how the role of identity of individuals affects your course topics/content. Discuss with students (or colleagues prior to first class).*

**Faculty and Staff Discussion on Inclusion and Diverse Identities:****Questions to Pose to Faculty and Staff at Department/College Meetings:**

1. What do we know about our institution's stance on inclusion and diversity?

1. How do we see it being lived out by our students, fellow colleagues, across campus, etc.?
2. What inclusive policies or diversity issues are affecting our students the most?
  1. What issues or events in the world or on campus have greatly impacted our students?
    1. What identities are most vulnerable or should be considered when discussing these issues?
    2. How can we help them manage these issues?
    3. How do these issues affect our classroom environment?
3. What resources does the institution offer help students who are struggling with identity?
4. Recognizing how identity affects all aspects of the world, what issues or injustices are not discussed in the classroom that should be considered? For example, ADA compliance when constructing a new residence hall or office building or awareness of pronouns and identity in an Advertising agency or PR campaign?
5. What do we need to be aware of when discussing these issues with our students?
6. What topics of diversity and inclusion can be discussed in the classroom? How can we start those conversations?
7. How can instructors support marginalized students and colleagues?
8. What topics or initiatives that focus on around diversity and inclusion do I (a faculty/staff member) struggle with or not fully understand? Why?
9. How can I (a faculty or staff member) create a welcoming environment here on campus? What does that look like, both tangible and intangible examples?
10. How are we seeing diversity and inclusion promoted on our campus? Where is it lacking? How can we change that to be more encompassing of all members of different identities?