LGBT - Campus Climate and Curriculum Inclusion

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Project Aims

- To examine the LGBT campus climate at Glasgow University
- To explore LGBT experiences on campus
- To examine the extent of perceived inclusion of LGBT issues in GU
- To examine both staff and student perceptions of these issues
Method

Online Survey – completed by students and staff on SurveyMonkey

- **Background information** - age, gender identity, sexual orientation, academic subjects, year of study
- **LGBT Campus Experiences** completed LGBT student only
- **Perceived Campus Climate**
- **Experiences of LGBT inclusion in the curriculum**
  (all three adapted from Ellis, 2008 & Rankin, 2003)
- **The LGBT Social Attitudes scale** (adapted from Silverschanz et al 2012)
Participants

- 239 student participants completed an online survey (an additional 57 were removed because they were incomplete)

- Recruited from GU’s LGBTQ+ society and the Psychology subject pool
- Mean age = 20.3

- 77.2% female / 18.9% male / 3% other / 0.8% did not disclose

- 95% gender identity matched their gender assigned at birth
- 4% gender identity did not match gender assigned at birth (1% did not disclose)
Participants

- 43% non-heterosexual / 57% heterosexual
- 51% first year students / 12% second year / 14% third year / 20% fourth year / 3% PG

- 61% people-based subjects (psychology, education, medicine, social science)
- 39% non-people based subjects (business, art, humanities, science)

STAFF
- 11 Psychology lecturers completed the form (2 excluded due to incomplete responses)
- Mean age = 39.9
- 55% female / 45% male
- All identified with their birth gender
- 73% heterosexual / 27% bisexual or other.
Results – Campus Climate

- 8 questions assessed the perceived acceptance of LGBT+ people at University. Response: 1 = Never, 5 = Frequently
  - Q 1 – 3 How often have you heard lecturers / friends / students making negative remarks about LGBT+ persons?
  - Q 4 – 6 How often do you think students might experience
    - having their personal property damaged or vandalised because they were thought/known to be LGBT?
    - direct verbal harassment because they were thought/known to be LGBT?
    - physical assault because they were thought/known to be LGBT?
  - Q 7 How often do you think posters advertising LGBT activities/events at your campus might be damaged, destroyed or otherwise vandalised?
  - Q 8 How often do you think students at your campus might receive threatening or otherwise derogatory notes, messages, phone calls or emails because they were thought/known to be LGBT?
Results – Campus Climate

- We compared the mean response of LGBT & Heterosexual participants:
  - LGBT+ = 2.08 (0.56) : Heterosexual = 1.77 (0.48)
  - t(226)=4.5 p<0.001
- Conclude: More negative perception of campus by LGBT+ students

- The overall perception of the campus climate is still fairly positive for LGBT+ students:
  - “I feel that Glasgow Uni is one of the most accepting and welcoming of all cultures and of LGBTQ people and I feel that though it may not be perfect, the Uni is making a great attempt to make everyone who attends feel accepted and welcome here.”
  - “I feel our university is a very open and inclusive one and it makes me feel very comfortable and embrace my sexuality.”
Results – Campus Climate 2

- The negative perception may be due to negative experiences
- 18.1% still reported some form of harassment
  - Largely derogatory remarks or pressure to hide sexuality/identity
  - Harassment was identified as mostly from fellow students
Results – Campus Climate 3

- There were no differences in the campus climate ratings for different sexual minority groups (lesbian, gay male, bisexual, asexual, other)
- There were differences between cisgender and transgender/non-binary participants
  - Cisgender (N=231) = 1.89 (0.5), Transgender/Non-binary (N=8) = 2.31 (0.4)
  - t(224)=2.5, p<0.01
- Transgender/Non-binary report a more negative perception of the campus climate
  - “Most times when I have had fill in my gender in university paperwork there has only been male/ female options - not even a prefer not to say. This was even the case when filling out an equal opportunities form for a university job.”
  - “Interestingly, it seems like since trans people have become more visible / exciting / mocked, reactions to gay people have hugely decreased”
Results - Inclusion

- 5 questions related to LGBT inclusion in the curriculum/classroom:
  - LGBT issues are represented in the curriculum,
  - Class climate is accepting of LGBT people;
  - I feel I can raise LGBT issues in the classroom

- And inclusion in the University generally:
  - The university thoroughly addresses campus issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity.
  - The university provides visible resources on LGBT issues/concerns.

- Responses 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree
Results – Inclusion 2

- Students in later years rated LGBT+ inclusion higher than first year students
  - First year (N=117) = 3.34 (0.6), Later years (N=111) = 3.52 (0.6)
  - t(226) = 2.25 p<0.05

- We compared inclusion questions for classroom inclusion to general university provision separately
  - First year = 3.19 (0.7), Later years = 3.5 (0.7)
  - t(226) = 3.6 p<0.001

- Main difference is perception of curriculum/classroom inclusion across years

- There were NO differences for inclusion in University structures
Results – Inclusion 3

- We compared people based subjects to non-people based subjects on inclusion scores
  - People-based (N=137) = 3.50 (0.56), Non-people-based (N=89) = 3.31, (0.67).
  - t(225) = 2.21, p<0.05

- We compared inclusion questions for classroom inclusion to general university provision separately
  - People-based = 3.53 (0.61), Non-people-based = 3.07, (0.77),
  - t(225) = 5.09, p<0.001

- There were NO differences for inclusion in University structures
Results – Staff Responses

- 11 staff responded to the survey

- Positive campus climate Mean = 1.8 (0.27)
- Their perception of the classroom/curriculum inclusion fairly neutral Mean = 3.16 (0.8)
- Their perception of university inclusion slightly higher Mean = 3.32 (0.46)
Results – Staff Responses

- Asked about their own curriculum, 1=strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree
  - LGBT issues are adequately represented within the psychology curriculum  Mean = 2.5 (0.9)
  - LGBT issues are relevant to my area of teaching/lecturing Mean = 3 (1.2)
  - I have included LGBT topics or themes in my lectures/tutorials Mean = 2.5 (1.3)
  - I would be willing to review my curriculum content to make it more inclusive of LGBT issues  Mean = 3.3 (1.3)
  - I have reviewed my curriculum content to make it more inclusive of LGBT issues Mean = 2.5 (1.4)
- Psychology staff do not think that LGBT issues are adequately represented in the curriculum but are slightly positive about reviewing their curriculum to be more inclusive
Results – Staff Responses

- Staff made a number of open comments:

  - “I don't know what LGBT issues are exactly. I'd be interested to know what they are.”
  - “All equality and diversity issues should be considered within a curriculum review.”
  - “LGBT awareness is important but it is not an issue for me personally. As a woman I'm more affected by the typical gender discrimination (e.g. salary difference between males and females), so I pay more attention to that issue.”
Conclusions

- Campus Climate for LGB students is positive at GU
  - In part this may be due to there being a number of active and visible LGBT+ societies
  - Transgender/Non-binary experiences report less positive perceptions
  - Evidence of some forms of harassment, however perceptions of climate improve across years and overall attitudes to LGBT+ improves

- Inclusion of LGBT+ issues in the classroom / curriculum are perceived positively, and are higher:
  - In people-based subjects where there is presumably greater opportunity for these issues to be raised
  - In later years, presumably as students are exposed to LGBT matters within the curriculum
Conclusions 2

- Staff are neutral about LGBT inclusion in the curriculum
  - Staff are not sure what LGBT issues are and how they might relate to their curriculum
  - Some willingness to engage with including LGBT issues in the curriculum, but several would prefer to view within a wider review of protected characteristics

- Ways Forward?
  - Work with staff and students to identify relevant areas that could include LGBT issues, e.g. social relationships, development of sexual/gender identity
  - Awareness raising of examples/terminology
  - Are there factors impacting on academic success and perception of campus climate?
Thank You For Listening!