

**2015 Report on Research Findings and Recommendations
for the Improvement of Visibility, Inclusivity,
and Retention of Queer Students of Color
at the University of California Santa Cruz**



Artwork by A. Aragundi for poster advertisement

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Summary

Experiences of Queer Students of Color (QSOC)

Top Experiences of
Positive Support

- The six Resource Centers are key sources of support
 - QSOC are high utilizers of resources, especially the Cantú Queer Center
 - A majority of QSOC (68%) know at least 6 other QSOC on campus
-

Top Experiences of
Lacking Support

- Having a mentor is important to almost all QSOC but only a third had a mentor and 18% said they think they may have a mentor
 - Low visibility of Queer People of Color (QPOC) in leadership roles
 - Low knowledge of QPOC resources and networks for new students
 - Lack of campus-wide LGBTQ training about QPOC histories, struggles, lives, and language
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Overall 10 Top
Critical Actions

- Increase staff and funding for the six Resource Centers
 - Establish a committee to develop campus-wide QSOC resources
 - Increase networking for QSOC by staff, faculty and graduate students
 - Create a welcoming environment at the OPERS/gym for QSOC
 - Create a visibility campaign for QPOC on campus
 - Create a campus-wide QPOC Convocation event
 - Develop LGBTQ and POC intersectional Campus-wide trainings
 - Increase education about how to report Hate-Bias incidents
 - Regularly disseminate campus survey results on QSOC experiences
 - Increase transparency and accountability for institutional responsibility
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Demographics

- 1 in 8 students (13%) identify as LGBQ (2014 UCUES)
 - 3 in 5 students (62%) identify as people of color (2014/15 enrollment)
-

The present study was conducted in Spring 2013 and included a comprehensive survey (470 respondents) and focus groups. This report, the survey questions, and a full set of the survey results are posted here: <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/surveysQSOC.asp>.

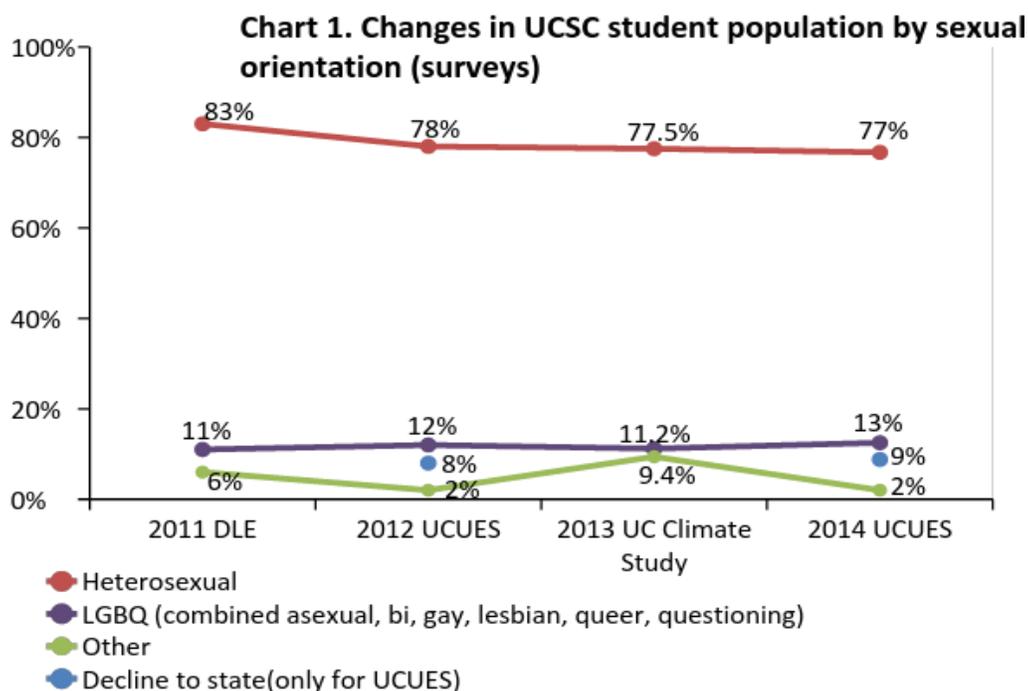
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for the Successful Retention of Queer Students of Color
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1.0 Introduction

Diversity of students admitted to UCSC continues to increase. According to the enrollment statistics for the 2014-2015 academic year, the majority of undergraduate students (61.8%) identified as people of color. White, non-Hispanic students constituted only 34.4% of the student population.¹ Campus-wide student surveys provide evidence of a substantial proportion of students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer (LGBQ). The most recent four surveys (2011-2014) indicate that at least 11-13% of the undergraduate student population identify as LGBQ, 2-9% as other, and 8-9% decline to state (Chart 1). These surveys allow us to estimate that approximately a quarter of the student population did not check the heterosexual box. About 2% of undergraduate students identified as genderqueer or transgender in *The 2013 UC Campus Climate Assessment Project* (Rankin & Associates, 2013: 25).²



¹ Three quarter average, reported here: <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/studentCharacteristics.asp>

² The campus will have more comprehensive data in the coming years. Starting in Fall 2015, the UC application has included a question on students' sexual orientation. The upcoming spring 2016 UCUES survey will also include a question about self-identifying as transgender and genderqueer.

While increasing diversity of the student body is being documented by regular campus-wide surveys since 2011, more comprehensive data capture is required to assess the effectiveness of campus resources, specifically student services in supporting the influx of LGBTQI, students of color and students with multiple identities through their successful completion of a degree at UCSC.

In 2013, UCSC Retention Services charged a small research group of students and professional staff to investigate the campus climate and levels of support available for queer students of color (QSOC). The research group adopted a definition of a queer student of color (QSOC) as a person who holds **an intersectional identity** as a student, as a person of color, as well as a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI) community. In this study, the term QSOC refers to students who selected this identity and the critical intersectionality of these multiple identities.

The intersection of the multiple identities held by QSOC can be a symbol of pride and a source of motivation. However, as prominent research indicates, for individuals whose identities are a part of marginalized communities, the intersection of their identities can heighten the various forms of oppression (sexism, racism, classism, homophobia etc.) they face, and increase the occurrences of experiences of discrimination and harassment from these oppressions (Rankin, 2003, 2010). This harsh reality experienced by QSOC can make navigating an institution of higher education, such as UCSC, extremely distressing academically, socially, mentally, and physically.

Over the last decade the University of California system has been focusing on campus climate and educational equity. In its approach, the UC defines “campus climate’ as a measure, real or perceived, of the campus environment as reflected in personal, academic, and professional interactions. In a healthy campus climate, groups feel welcomed, respected, and valued... .” For our purposes, we extend the definition of the campus climate to include a measure of accessibility, real or perceived, to resources that aid in the retention of students, specifically QSOC and the development of institutional structures that are welcoming and promote the social, academic, and professional success of QSOC.

It is with this understanding and a commitment to improving the success of QSOC at UCSC for which we sought to investigate and evaluate the current campus climate and the effectiveness of student retention services, specifically the services and resources for QSOC.

UCSC Research Team

This project was carried out by a research team that included:

Lead Investigator: Tam Welch, M.F.A., Specialist, Resource Centers, Retention Services;

Lead Student Investigators: Faaizah Patail, Jessica Loya;

Student Advisory Committee: Abraham A. Aragundi, Dylan Cureton, Anum Qadir;

Analytical Support (survey administration, analysis, and reporting): Anna Sher, Ph.D., Assistant Director for Assessment, and Rose Grose and Erin Toolis, GSRs, Institutional Research, Assessment & Policy Studies (IRAPS);

Research Project Advisor: Deb Abbott, MFT, Director, Cantú Queer Center.

We would like to thank Pablo Reguerin, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success; and the staff at the UCSC six Resource Centers: African American Resource and Cultural Center, Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center, Chicano/Latino Resource Center, American Indian Resource Center and the Women's Center.

2.0 Research Background

Analyses of campus climate for LGBTQ communities at institutions of higher education have been conducted nationally, within the UC system, and specifically at UCSC. These studies have examined student experiences and the challenges of the LGBTQ community. A prominent study titled *Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People: A National Perspective* conducted by Dr. Rankin in 2003, noted that "college campuses are often stereotyped as liberal meccas of progressive ideals. But lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) students, staff and faculty are not immune to harassment and discrimination." The study found that differences in comfort levels for LGBTQ respondents of color and LGBTQ white respondents emerged when both racial identity and sexual identity were considered. Specifically, "Nearly 60% of student respondents conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid intimidation"; moreover, LGBTQ respondents of color concealed their sexual identities at least at a 10% higher rate than white respondents (Rankin, 2003).

A follow-up national study titled *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People* concluded that multiple marginalized identities (e.g., racial identity and sexual identity; racial identity and gender identity) lead to encounters of multiple forms of oppression. The study found that:

- LGBQ respondents of color were 10 times more likely than their LGBQ White counterparts to indicate racial profiling as a form of harassment and were more likely to indicate race as the basis for harassment. However, sexual identity was "the primary risk factor for harassment for both groups" (Rankin, 2010, p.11); and
- Although 60% of LGBQ Respondents of Color reported feeling comfortable or very comfortable in their classes, as a group they were significantly less likely to feel this way than LGBQ White respondents, 65% of whom felt comfortable (Rankin, 2010, p.13).

The 2010 study documented that even eight years later (since 2003) the intersections of racism, heterosexism, and genderism on college campuses were still at the root of increase in bias crimes against LGBTQ people of color as well as continued to create negative campus climate. The 2010 study revealed that efforts to improve campus climate and safety for LGBTQ people of color have not been adequate thus far and require more intentionality and responsibility from the campus leadership.

The 2010 national study strongly recommended that campus officials improve the climate for the LGBTQ community on their respective campuses by taking actions that included:

- Recruiting and retaining GLBT individuals;
- Demonstrating institutional commitment to GLBT issues/concerns;
- Responding to LGBTQ Bias Incidents
- Integrating GLBT issues/concerns into co-curriculum and pedagogy;
- Providing educational programming/trainings on GLBT issues/concerns;
- Creating safe spaces for dialogue, interaction and safety nets (Rankin, 2010, p. 168-174).

In sum, the existing research calls for immediate action to address the campus climate for LGBTQ people of color who suffer disproportionately from the intersections of racism, heterosexism, and genderism on college campuses and the oppression felt by these forms of discrimination (Rankin, 2001; 2003; 2010).

At UCSC, several studies have examined the campus climate for LGBTQ students and their findings were consistent with the national surveys. On request of the UCSC Chancellor, the 1988 study was a collaboration between the LGBT Chancellor's Concerns Committee and the Office of Analysis and Planning (Baker & Nelson, 1990). In 2001 the UCSC Campus Climate Assessment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons was conducted by Dr. Rankin who surveyed LGBTQ people. The survey respondents included 148 students, 58 staff, and 5 faculty members; 80% identified as White and 18% as people of color. Most recently, two campus climate surveys at UCSC included undergraduate and graduate students: they were surveyed in 2011 by a campus survey and then were part of the 2013 UC Campus Climate study based on a system-wide survey.

The 2013 UC Campus Climate Assessment Project found significant differences in perceptions of campus climate at UCSC related to race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity (Rankin & Associates).³ People of color were less comfortable than White, non-Hispanic respondents with the climate in their classes (71-75% vs. 83% respectively) (p.vi). LGBTQ respondents were less comfortable with the climate in general and with the climate in their classes, academic departments and units than heterosexual respondents (p.55-56). LGBTQ respondents were more likely to report having experienced exclusionary, offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct and attributed it to their sexual orientation (p.74).

These findings suggest that we need to better understand the climate and resources for the queer students of color on this campus by asking more specific questions via regular surveys and focus groups.

³ The survey was conducted with undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, staff and faculty. The full report for the UCSC campus is posted here: <http://campusclimate.ucop.edu/results/index.html>.

3.0 Major Findings

3.1. Study Description

In an effort to better understand and investigate how to best serve and retain queer students of Color (QSOC) at UCSC, highly dedicated and involved undergraduate students and staff from Resource Centers together with staff and graduate student researchers in Institutional Research, Assessment and Policy Studies (IRAPS) formed a research group (members are listed on p.5 of this report). The research group investigated and documented (1) how knowledgeable students were of resources available to them, (2) how they utilized these resources, and (3) how comfortable they were when utilizing these resources. The research group also sought to understand reasons why students hold a perception of lack of visibility and inclusivity of QSOC in academic, social, and living spaces.

One of the first initiatives of this project aimed at investigating and documenting the sentiments surrounding QSOC campus climate. To this end, we needed a space where QSOC could meet to build social, academic and professional connections. In fall 2012, the now annual event “Where My People At!: Queer People of Color Mixer” was created. Student Union Assembly, Commissioner of Diversity and the six Resource Centers collaborated in developing this event. This mixer was coordinated as a response to student sentiment that other single identity spaces were not inclusive of self-identified QSOC. Following the success of this event, efforts affirmed the need and importance of analyzing the unique needs of QSOC. The mixer was also beneficial for learning how to build more permanent visible spaces for QSOC, and provide networking opportunities and overall inclusive set of resources and positive environment to retain queer students of color successfully.

Following the information collected at this event, the research group planned and carried out a research project that consisted of two data collection components. The first component was a comprehensive campus-wide online survey of undergraduate students. The second component of this study consisted of voluntary student focus groups, which served to collect qualitative data surrounding respondents’ sentiments concerning the existing campus climate for the QSOC community at UCSC.

An **online survey** was administered as the first component of data collection in Spring 2013. It included multiple sections that asked students about comfort on campus, utilization of resource centers such as the Cantú Queer Center, Women’s Center and Ethnic Resource Centers along with EOP, CAPS and their services, events and programs, mentorship on campus, and student organizations. For students who self-identified as QSOC, there was an additional section inquiring about their QSOC experience (See Appendix A for more information).

Upon completion of the survey, participants who self-identified as QSOC were asked if they would voluntarily participate in a **focus group**. Students who indicated an interest were contacted by email, and three focus groups were held during the following month of the release of the survey. Each group consisted of 4-5 participants, and was facilitated by a student and staff researcher. Focus group participants were ensured that their identities would be kept confidential. During the group discussion, they shared their perceptions of the existing campus climate focusing on the issues of visibility, resources and inclusivity of the QSOC community. Students were also asked about their perceived levels of access, engagement/utilization, and comfort with campus resources and the support that such resources aided in their successful retention thus far in their individual UCSC careers. These group discussions were recorded and analyzed to determine key themes, insights, and overall contribution to this project (see Appendix C for more information). The detailed experiences and stories from the focus groups were essential for explaining and reinforcing the survey results and recommendations.

In this report we compared responses of four groups of students who had participated in the online survey. Based on a total of 470 students who answered questions about their race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity, we formed four groups of students who **self-identified** as follows: “Queer Students of Color” (QSOC), heterosexual students of color (SOC), queer white students, and heterosexual white students. Specifically,

1. **QSOC** included all students who answered, “yes” when asked if they self-identified as a queer person of color.
2. **Straight students of color** category included all students who selected “heterosexual” and *at least one* of the following categories: African/African American, Asian/Asian American, Chicana/o Latina/o, Middle Eastern, Multi-ethnic, Native American, Pacific Islander. POC students may have also checked White along with one of these minority ethnic group categories. They did not select “unknown ethnicity,” “lesbian/gay,” “queer,” “bisexual,” “questioning,” “genderqueer,” or “transgender.” They did not self-identify as a QSOC.
3. **Queer, white** included all students who selected “Caucasian” and did not also select a minority ethnic group or an “unknown” ethnic group. They did not select “heterosexual” or “questioning” as their sexual orientation. They selected either “lesbian/gay,” “queer,” “bisexual,” “other sexual orientation” (including “asexual”), “genderqueer,” “transgender,” or “other gender” (including “other gender,” “nothing,” “agender,” “masculine feminine”). They did not self-identify as a QSOC.
4. **Straight, white** category included all students who selected “Caucasian,” and who did not indicate belonging to a minority ethnic group or an “unknown” ethnic group. They selected “heterosexual” as their sexual orientation or “questioning” and did not identify as “genderqueer,” “transgender,” or “other gender”. They also did not self-identify as a QSOC.

Table 1 below describes respondents in each group: their gender identities, the type of entry (transfer or frosh), and class level at the time of the survey. It is important to note that the majority

(over 86%) started at UCSC as frosh. Upper-division students comprised about 60% of students in each group except Straight SOC, 41% of whom were juniors and seniors. Thus most students have spent more than a year at UCSC at the time they were surveyed in spring 2013.

Table 1. Comparison Groups of Survey Respondents

	QSOC	Straight SOC	Queer, White	Straight, White
Female	56%	67%	59%	64%
Male	29%	33%	30%	36%
Genderqueer	11%	0%	8%	0%
Trans-identified	5%	0%	6%	0%
Transfer student	13%	8%	14%	13%
Started as frosh	87%	92%	86%	87%
Frosh	26%	36%	19%	24%
Sophomore	15%	23%	17%	16%
Junior	22%	16%	27%	24%
Senior	37%	25%	37%	36%
18-22 years old	87%	91%	84%	88%
23-25 years old	8%	7%	10%	6%
26 years old or older	5%	2%	6%	5%
Veteran	1%	1%	5%	1%
Primary caregiver for children under 18 years of age	4%	3%	3%	2%
Number of respondents	100	195	63	112

Group statistics may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

In this report we summarized the key findings from the survey and the focus groups. You can find the tables with all student survey responses posted here as “Full Report from IRAPS”: <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/surveysQSOC.asp>.

3.2 Themes

Four major themes were found in the analysis of the survey data and a content analysis of the focus group discussions. The four themes include: 1) complexities of holding a queer student of color identity and campus climate (this theme permeates the other themes as well), 2) comfort with, utilization and improvement of six Resource Centers and facilities, 3) staff and faculty's support and mentorship, and 4) campus events and student organizations. A synopsis of the results for each theme is presented below. Please see Appendices A and B for more information about the survey questions and results, and Appendices C and D for the focus groups' description and content analysis.

Theme 1. Complexities of Holding a Queer Student of Color Identity and Campus Climate

- Focus group participants stated that queer perception on campus is very white centralized. QSOC felt the need to come out twice at UCSC, once as a person of color and again as a member of the queer community. Specifically, students noted,
 - “There is this white gay male prototype that exists that people are expected to live up to. I have always taken it you know being queer in some ways is a part of my identity, but not the whole thing. um in some ways I fit it, in some ways I don't, and I don't feel the need to completely fit it cuz it isn't just who I am.”
 - “I find that many times there is a very "white" idea of queerness on this campus. Being a queer student of color, I have found that I have to face more social discrimination on this campus, firstly as a student of color and then secondly being queer.”
 - “Queer people of color is a minority within a minority so it's more of a burden, it seems hard to feel (that) freedom exist.”
 - “I think there is privilege when it comes to the queer majority of white individual because they don't have to deal with this racial minority aspect.”
- Focus group participants noted a lack of space to speak openly about their struggles. As one student explained, “it's difficult as a queer student of color to feel like there is an available space for me to speak my mind on the struggles that I am currently facing ... in my case its opposing to my family and traditional cultural views. I find that there is not a space to openly speak about these specific and important issues.”
- Focus group discussions showed that there is lack of queer visibility in educational spaces and a lack of inclusive language for QSOC in academic and professional spaces. Students emphasized the importance of educating the campus of QSOC struggles, lifestyles, and language (how to interact i.e., inclusive terms, gender pronouns, language barriers) and integrate them into core classes. Visibility of staff and faculty who are out and QPOC is another important statement of support. For example, students spoke about their classroom experiences:

“I do know that when students realize that I’m queer it’s like they shift and it’s like the classroom shifts...they’re (referring to students who identify within the LGBT spectrum) likeable to be out and they’re able to say things that I don’t think they would have said if they didn’t realize that.”

“The fact that they [instructors] are able to talk about it [being queer] and not make it an ‘other’” was very critical to the student’s feeling safe in the classroom.

Theme 2. Six Resource Centers and Other Facilities

At UCSC and in this report, we refer by “resource centers” to one or all of the on-campus centers that seek to provide assistance and promote retention and achievement among students during their time at UCSC. Students were asked questions regarding their knowledge, use, and comfort in regards to campus resources/services including the “six Resource Centers”: the Cantú Queer Center, African American Resource and Cultural Center, Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center, Chicano/Latino Resource Center, American Indian Resource Center, and Women’s Center; as well as Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Educational Opportunities Programs Office (EOP), and the Office of Physical Education, Recreation, and Sports (OPERS).

a. Resource Centers are Spaces of Comfort on Campus

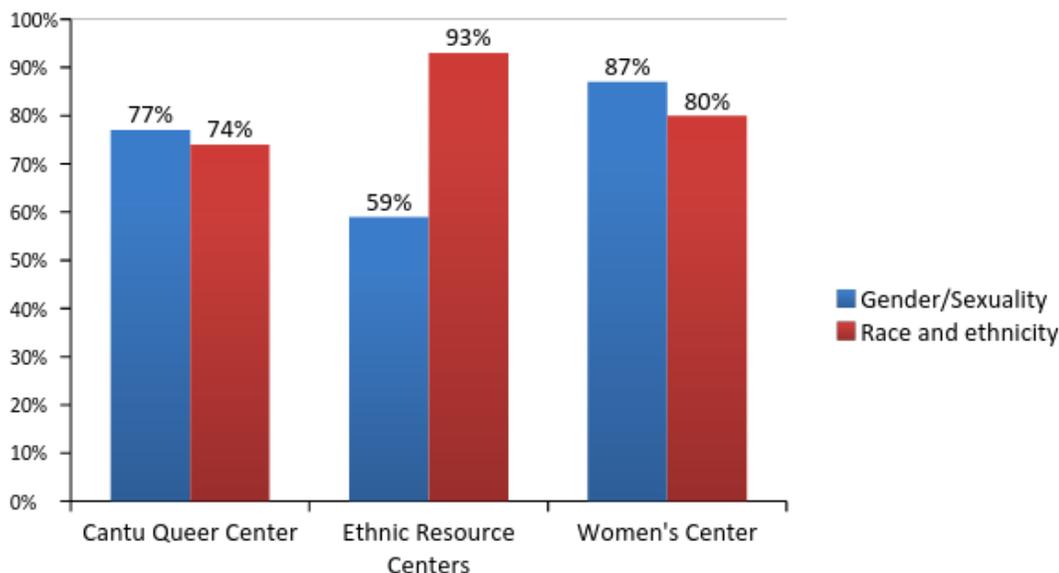
- The six Resource Centers were QSOC respondents’ most popular choice for a comfortable place on campus. QSOC were significantly more likely to report feeling comfortable being themselves in the six Resource Centers than other students.
- Top four places where QSOC said they felt comfortable on campus: the six Resource Centers (57%), on-campus living space (47%), class (42%), and library (40%).
- For QSOC, the six Resource Centers and student organizations were the second most popular sources of support and resources after their friends.
- About half (49%) of QSOC respondents would go to a resource center when seeking support and resources on campus.
- Most (81%) QSOC would refer a friend to the Cantú Queer Center compared to 66% of queer white students.
- QSOC are highly likely to refer friends to resource centers in general. Only 8% of QSOC would not refer a friend compared to 61% of straight white students.
- Focus group participants noted, “The resource centers are a space where commonalities between me and others can be together,” as well as that “the Educational Opportunity Programs Office is very accepting and understand of an individual and does their best to make all students feel comfortable and welcome.”

- Focus group participants noted the following when asked about improvements at the Ethnic Resource Centers: “Create a queer/trans space [...] catering to the needs of different QPOC. Shout out to El Centro, ya’ll do a pretty good job of making noobs like myself feel welcome in a foreign space.” Another student noted, “While there is a need to have more discussions about sexuality with folks, I do believe the Ethnic Resource Centers foster the ability for the discussions to happen.”

b. Utilization of the Six Resource Centers

- The Cantú Queer Center was most visited by QSOC: 40% reported visiting it on at least a monthly basis since starting at UCSC, followed by the Ethnic Resource Centers (17% visited at least monthly) and the Women’s Center (7%).
- QSOC visited the Cantú Queer Center significantly more often than all three other comparison groups. Overall, 73% of QSOC and 50% queer white students visited the Cantú Queer Center at least a couple times since starting at UCSC. Moreover, 40% of QSOC and 28% of queer white students visited at least once a month. Only 12% of QSOC never visited the Cantú Queer Center.
- One-third of QSOC, 20% of straight SOC, 14% of queer white students, and 2% of straight white students visited one of the Ethnic Resource Centers at least a couple of times since being a student at UCSC. At the same time, 21% of QSOC visited only once and 44% never visited the one or more of the Ethnic Resource Centers.
- QSOC also visited the Women's Center significantly more often than the other 3 comparison groups. Specifically, 21% of QSOC visited at least a couple of times and 34% used services and resources at least once since starting at UCSC. Note: Majority of respondents of all groups (over 55%) identified as females.
- Some focus group respondents noted feelings of discomfort when visiting the Women’s Center by stating, “It feels like a space for women and as a male, I don't feel 100% accepted there because I know deep down everyone judges everyone for something, and I feel like there could be some bias amongst the people there, even when it goes unspoken.”

Chart 2. QSOC comfort discussing issues at campus resource centers (% comfortable/very comfortable)



c. Needed Improvement

- The majority (74%) of QSOC reported having used OPERS/gym facilities. They were significantly less likely to feel comfortable in the gym than straight SOC and straight white students. For example, focus group participants talked about “... anxieties about queerness at the gym. I would not wear a ‘Queer bomb’ at the gym cuz I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing so.”
- Of those who reported visiting the Cantú Queer Center, when asked about their experiences QSOC were *less* comfortable than their Queer, White counterparts (20% versus 4% were only “somewhat comfortable”). A focus group participant stated, “I feel like it is a very white cis queer experience. I wish that there was a more active presence of trans and POC students at the Cantú.”
- Focus group participants pointed out that the Cantú Queer Center needs to improve: “If the Cantú Center is supposed to be a resource center, I think they need to do a better job of outreaching, create a welcoming environment and nurturing personal connections with folks.” Another student said, “I really feel like the space has a big potential, but it needs to be further funded and expanded, internally, and externally; in order to succeed.”

- Of those who reported visiting the Ethnic Resource Centers, when asked about their experiences 22% QSOC and 6% of Straight SOC reported being only “somewhat comfortable.”
- When asked in which space respondents felt most comfortable speaking about issues of race and ethnicity, QSOC felt to some extent more comfortable at the Ethnic Resource Centers than at the Cantú Queer Center (93% and 74% were comfortable and very comfortable, respectively, see Chart 2).
- Focus group participants talked about the six Resource Centers not being inclusive of the struggles or needs of students of multiple identities, in particular of QSOC. The perceived notion is of leaving part of your identity at the door if it did not fit with that of the identity associated with the resource center. This is mostly felt around the Ethnic Resource Centers and the Cantú Queer Center.
- When asked about areas needing improvement at the Ethnic Resource Centers, a focus group participant stated, “I don't believe there is a clear knowledge or understanding of LGBTQ issues. I have found that many people do not know what it means to identify with other sexuality identities outside of the more ‘popular’ gay and lesbian identities.”
- In open-ended survey questions, students wrote about how the University could be more effective in providing and removing barriers to access services and educational opportunities for QSOC. For example,

”PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A CRASH COURSE ON RACE, CLASS, GENDER, RELIGIOUS, QUEER, DISABILITY-RELATED ISSUES AND HOW TO BE A GOOD ALLY! Spark that conversation and continue it! Provide open spaces to talk about this shit and have some sort of system for CHECKING PROFESSORS and other faculty/staff for the fucked up privileged shit they say. Also, DON'T CUT MONEY FROM OUR RESOURCE CENTERS! You TALK about a ‘commitment’ to diversity then propose cutting our budget? Actions speak louder than words, so what are YOUR actions telling us?”

“I do not believe that UCSC has enough knowledge about people of color nor much knowledge about queer issues. I believe that UCSC should make an effort to support us either directly or indirectly through our resource centers. UCSC does not know anything about the issues of queer people of color especially first generation students. I do not feel that UCSC is making an effort to help us succeed.”

Theme 3. Staff and Faculty's Support and Mentorship

- Having a mentor was important to the vast majority (88%) of QSOC.
- Only about a third of QSOC had a mentor and 18% said that they may have a mentor.
- The majority (76-77%) of QSOC knew no or 1-2 faculty, staff members, and /or graduate students who identify as queer people of color.
- QSOC rated the importance of a mentor of the same race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation significantly higher than all other groups. Having a mentor of the same field of study was also important or very important to all students. As one of the focus group participants put it, "Finding professors who were queer was really difficult..., cuz that's kind of what I needed....someone who could guide me."
- Only 13% of QSOC agreed that their mentor affirms their identity, compared to about a third of other students.
- Focus group discussions revealed that students respond better to professional staff who are "more than just being open with their words, but being open with their person as well."
- When seeking support and resources at UCSC, only about 30% of QSOC said they would ask their professors and/or TAs.
- About half of QSOC (45-60%) feel comfortable or very comfortable initiating conversations about race, gender, sexuality topics while 25-33% feel "somewhat comfortable." Similar levels of comfort were reported for initiating conversations on these topics while with students outside of class, attending events/programs, in class, with staff/advisers or faculty.

Theme 4. Campus Events and Student Organizations

- QSOC and queer white students reported high attendance at GLBT events (71% and 57%), while straight students did not.
- Most of QSOC (90%) have attended a GLBT event at least once, with about half attending once and 21% attending monthly or more.
- A majority of QSOC (61%) are members of student organizations or clubs.
- While the majority of QSOC (67%) were comfortable/very comfortable at GLBT events, about a third were only somewhat comfortable or uncomfortable.
- Focus group participants talked about Cantú Queer Center events having a reputation of being neither inclusive nor representative of people of color within the queer community (i.e., Annual Cantú Queer Center Mixer). As one student put it, "I feel like it is a very white cis queer experience. I wish that there was a more active presence of trans and POC students at the Cantú."
- Focus group participants noted that advertisements of queer events using "glitter and rainbows" do not include symbolism that is identifiable for people of color,

“when we do flyers, advertisements of events” . . . “oh let's throw sparkles and rainbows and make it fabulous” . . . “It rubs me a little bit in the wrong way because you are trying to fit into that (‘gay white male prototype’) oh, it’s sparkles and rainbows in a flamboyant nature.”

- Focus group participants noted some feelings of discomfort at queer events, “Majority of the events are very comfortable and welcoming, although sometimes events that are open to all students tend to lean more towards heterosexuality which to me makes a queer event uncomfortable.”
- When asked about their comfort attending events related to race and ethnicity, a QSOC responded, “I didn’t feel like I had a voice, and sometimes I felt that sexuality and gender were misrepresented or underrepresented.”
- On the other hand, the survey showed that at race and ethnicity events queer students were less comfortable than straight students (higher percentages of QSOC and queer, white students were only “somewhat comfortable”).

4.0 Critical Actions Based on the Survey and Focus Groups

4.1 *It is essential that UCSC continues to support the six Resource Centers on campus by increasing their funding and providing adequate staffing.* The study clearly shows that more than half QSOC respondents find the six Resource Centers as a key source of support at UCSC and . The following steps are recommended based on the survey data on utilization and on students’ suggestions about how to make the centers more welcoming:

- a. Increase the number of full-time professional staff at the six resource centers, especially the Cantú Queer Center and Women’s Center.
- b. Increase the quality of culturally competent programming and events at the Cantú Queer Center and funding for their publicity.
- c. Increase the quality of LGB-Trans competent programming and events at the Ethnic Resource Centers and Women’s Center, as well as funding for their publicity.
- d. Increase the promotion and visibility of the resource centers to new students.

4.2 Establishing collaboration and communication among the different on-campus resource centers will expand their comprehensive safety response resources and services to help include the needs of all identities. The study found that for students with multiple, intersecting identities, these multiple parts of their identity are not fully addressed when they seek a single identity-based resource.

- a. *Promote the inclusion of diversity at the resource centers* through dialogues and events that directly address intersecting identities. Our data suggest that these conversations have happened for students “at least a couple of times”, but that there is room for improvement. Collaboration between center leadership would help facilitate this.
 - At the Cantú Queer Center this means including specific intersecting identities of age, race/ethnicity, sexuality and religion (based on an open-ended question about what would make the centers more welcoming and one about additional comments).
 - At the Ethnic Resource Center this means increasing visibility, awareness and sensitivity about how gender and sexuality intersect with race and ethnicity. The survey data showed that compared to the other centers, students were generally less comfortable talking about gender and sexuality at the ethnic resource centers.
- b. *Create a multi-avenue response* to support understanding the intersectionalities that are experienced by those who have multiple identities, thus creating a more actively inclusive campus climate.
 - Create a list of all service providers to be accessible and updated online frequently for all centers.
 - Establish a common universal programming tool such as the ProgDB database which is designed towards helping facilitate collaboration between units, build connections and resources needed to implement successful collaboration efforts, disseminate best practices for LGBT Programming, Archiving/Assessing event learning outcomes.
 - Increase access of ProgDB to include all service and event providing faculty, staff, and student leaders/staff.
 - Provide a tool to assess and organize previous and proposed programming collaborations to share best practices at UCSC.
- c. *Require Resource Center interns to attend an open house tour and training of all identity based Resource Centers services, resources and events especially the LGBT center.*
 - Educate students about different identities (ex: learning about non-binary gender identities at the Cantú Queer Center Open House Tour).
 - Provide knowledge of available resources for students at all centers
 - Assign an intern at each center to be responsible for constant communication and cross-center collaboration.

4.3 It is essential that steps are taken to increase support and mentorship for QSOC provided by staff, faculty and graduate students.

- a. QPOC faculty, students and staff community development (i.e., Annual Queer Students of Color Mixer, mentorship program)
- b. A resource guide and information of staff and faculty interested in being visible and a mentor
- c. Annual QPOC visibility campaign (i.e., 'QPOC Awareness Week' - events and programs focus on QPOC identities, struggles, education and community building.
- d. Annual QSOC Convocation Event to highlight leading activists of intersectional identities highlighting LGBTQ issues.

4.4 Steps should be taken to create a more comfortable environment at the gym for QSOC.

Physical health is important to academic and social well-being of students, but the data suggest there may be barriers to utilizing the gym for QSOC.

- a. Set aside a time to welcome QSOC to the gym. This could mean special classes, targeted outreach and visibility, media material representing QSOC or specific resources available to give out. Privacy and the presence of friends were both mentioned as important qualities of welcoming spaces by QSOC.
- b. Educate gym professional staff and student staff about issues of diversity and inclusion and the importance of maintaining a safe space for all. According to QSOC in our study, a welcoming space is one in which students do not feel judged and in which folks are educated about systems of oppression. This could mean a visible community statement or a mechanism for students to offer suggestions or comments to improve the gym environment. As well as equipping the facility to include all gender restrooms and locker rooms.

4.5 Campus-wide Trainings

a. Incoming Student Inclusivity Education

- Require that all new incoming students complete a comprehensive online course dedicated to learning about diverse communities prior to entering the university in the Fall. This sends a message that students will be living in an inclusive and diverse community, and must actively participate and are responsible in sustaining such an environment among peers. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion or Admissions could be potential units to coordinate such educational training.
- Following up with an at least 3 hour in-person LGBT training completed by the end of their first year as a student and a list of continual educational events throughout the year for which they will be required to attend a certain amount.

Sample learning outcomes for students would include:

- Demonstrating an understanding of the Principles of Community and the community values of UCSC for zero tolerance for hate bias incidents and hate crimes;
- Having basic knowledge of working and living in a diverse community and peer to peer spaces;
- Having basic knowledge of important key terms or phrases relevant to the LGBTQ community;
- Having knowledge of how and where to submit hate/bias/harassment incident reports, as well as basic understanding of what happens when an incident of hate occurs on campus; and
- Having knowledge of programs and resources on campus that provide opportunities for students to get involved, engaged, and participate in LGBTIAQQ mentorship opportunities.

b. Diversity Trainings for Faculty (Academic and Professional), Staff, and Student Staff

Require all faculty, staff and student staff in leadership, supervision or public roles representing the University to complete a comprehensive, three-hour LGBTQ diversity and inclusion training dedicated to learning about how to work with diverse communities as part of employment and Title IX requirements. This training would be conducted on the same training schedule as other Human Resources (HR) training policies and would be required by all employees including faculty, staff and students. The goal of this training would be to assist employees of UCSC in taking active responsibility for maintaining an inclusive campus community. This training would be in similar to the current requirements for new incoming students to attend the Student Health Outreach and Promotion and Sexual Assault Prevention and Education (SAFE) workshops.

Sample learning outcomes for participants would include demonstrating the following knowledge and skills:

- Understanding the diverse backgrounds and issues of the LGBT student population;
- Using multicultural and LGBT competency skills in the workplace;
- Having basic knowledge and usage of important key terms or phrases in the LGBTQ community;
- Understanding the importance of language inclusivity in the working and learning spaces;
- Understanding the importance of gender identity and transgender related issues including use of gender pronouns;
- Using tools to help create and implement inclusive academic curriculum and teaching practices; and
- Being able to design evaluation questions to analyze climate of learning for LGBT students in their class environments.

4.6 Campus-wide Programming

- Create and implement a diversity checklist or scorecard for all programming and events produced for UCSC community to be used in the pre- and post- planning of events and programming (for example, ProgDB Event Database, see Appendix).
- Provide funds to organize projects such as an annual visibility campaign with a notable LGBTQ speaker (similar to the MLK Convocation) and annual events that highlight UCSC faculty, students, and staff achievements in intersectional QPOC research, scholarship, creative expression, and community development.

4.7 Accountability for Institution's Responsibility of Inclusion

- Initiate outreach into the UCSC community creating greater access and resources for *all* students including on- and off-campus residents.
- Create ongoing campus commitments to support visibility of and networking for QPOC staff and faculty mentors.
- Actively recruit and retain LGB-Trans People of color staff and faculty.
- Disseminate the results of annual and periodic surveys that describe LGBTQ student experiences and campus climate with a special attention given to queer students of color, transgender and gender nonconforming students.
- Establish a permanent committee with members of various units who will monitor the effectiveness of the campus initiatives, resources, policy and processes to increase their cultural sensitivity regarding queer students of color, transgender and gender nonconforming students.

5.0 Conclusion

For the purposes of this study, we extended the definition of the campus climate to include a measure of accessibility, real or perceived, to resources that aid in the retention of students, specifically QSOC and the development of institutional structures that are welcoming, and promote the social, academic, and professional success of QSOC. Based on the survey and focus group discussions, we found that QSOC are active members of the UCSC community: they participate in student organizations, attend campus events, and utilize the existing campus resources. They also reported their feelings of discomfort and concerns with the lack of inclusivity, resources, mentorship, programming and training.

There is a recurring theme of concern with lack of queer people of color visibility among students, staff, and faculty members, which is accompanied by the perception of the queer identity as being white. Second, most students feel that the six Resource Centers are spaces of comfort and support; however, there is a need for more POC LGBTQ-Trans visibility in the centers' leadership as well as increased culturally competent programming, events, and the use of inclusive language within these spaces. Third, the learning environment also lacks sensitivity to and knowledge about LGBTQ/QSOC histories, struggles, and lives. Students reported feeling more comfortable in the classroom setting where instructors were open about their queer identity, and/or used language that was inclusive to the queer people of color community.

Finally, the most important contribution of the study is that it describes how current undergraduate students experience the complexity of holding the identity of a QSOC as they navigate this campus. This study clearly shows that it is important to increase accessibility, quality, and visibility of existing and new resources that facilitate these students' academic success and social support through networking within the QPOC community including other faculty, staff, and students, as well as QSOC active participation in the UCSC community broadly defined.

In this report we identified a number of efforts needed to improve the campus climate and access to resources. In sum, our recommendations include the following critical actions that must be a priority for the university and its units:

- a) Increase staff and funding for the six Resource Centers
- b) Establish a committee to develop campus-wide QSOC resources
- c) Increase networking for QSOC by staff, faculty and graduate students
- d) Create a welcoming environment at the OPERS/gym for QSOC
- e) Create a visibility campaign for QPOC on campus
- f) Create a campus-wide QPOC Convocation event
- g) Develop LGBTQ and POC intersectional Campus-wide trainings

- h) Increase education about how to report Hate-Bias incidents
- i) Regularly disseminate campus survey results on QSOC experiences
- j) Increase transparency and accountability for institutional responsibility

The unique greatness of the University of California Santa Cruz is a result of the continuous achievements in scholarship and community development of its students, staff, and faculty. This study provides critical evidence that we need to do more to support our student population, including students from historically marginalized groups such as queer students of color. We need to create a positive campus climate, where QPOC students, staff, and faculty feel welcomed, respected, and valued and have access to resources to develop and maintain academic and psychosocial well-being. In the words of Chancellor George Blumenthal, we must all work together towards making UCSC “a place that fosters a culture of excellence, inquiry, creativity, diversity, and public service while developing solutions to the world’s most critical challenges.”

6.0 References

Baker, H., & Nelson, R. (1990). *The educational climate for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students*. Santa Cruz, California: University of California Santa Cruz.

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7.0 Appendix

A. Survey Questions and Publicity

An online survey was administered as the first component of data collection in Spring 2013. It consisted of several sections about comfort on campus, utilization of resource centers such as the Cantú Queer Center, Women's and Ethnic Resource Centers along with EOP, CAPS and their services, mentorship on campus, and student organizations. For students who self-identified as QSOC, there was an additional section inquiring about the QSOC experience.

This survey was open and promoted to all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. There were also targeted announcements to collect the opinions of QSOC. Outreach for this survey was done through various avenues as to best reach diverse areas and communities within UCSC, while focusing on QSOC. All participating resource centers (i.e., EOP, ERCs, Cantú) outreached to their communities via distributing fliers, electronic weekly newsletters, and word-of-mouth. Student organizations on campus (i.e., Queer Student Union, Filipino Student Association, Student Union Assembly etc.) were also involved in the advertisement of this survey to their student members. College residential spaces were outreached for student participants. The survey was available for approximately six weeks during the Spring Quarter of 2013 and collected responses from 470 undergraduate students.

The survey instrument is posted <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/surveysQSOC.asp>.

B. Full Report with the survey results from IRAPS

is posted here: <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/surveysQSOC.asp>.

C. Focus Groups

Upon completion of the survey, participants who self-identified as QSOC were asked if they would voluntarily participate in a **focus group**. Volunteers were then contacted by email, and three focus groups were held during the following month of the release of the survey. Each group consisted of 4-5 participants, and was facilitated by a student and staff researcher.

At the start of each focus group, students received a brief summary of the study's intentions and were told that their responses would be a part of the analysis of campus climate for the QSOC: Visibility and Inclusivity at UCSC project. Participants were ensured that their identities would be kept confidential. Participants were asked about their perceptions of the existing campus climate focusing on the issues of visibility, resources and inclusivity of the QSOC community. Students were also asked about their perceived levels of access, engagement/utilization, and comfort with campus

resources and the support that such resources aided in their successful retention thus far in their individual UCSC careers. These group discussions were recorded and analyzed.

Here are the main subject questions ask at each focus group. Some groups discussed certain questions more than other questions, and sometimes diverted without really answering the question fully.

Question 1: From the perspective of your different identities, please talk about your feelings of inclusion and comfortability at any of the resource centers. We recognize that each resource center represents a different identity and how that can be challenging for people with multiple marginalized identities.

Question 2: Sometimes when accessing resources created for a certain community, it is hard not to feel like you have to “check” your other identities at the door. How do you think this pressure can be avoided?

Question 3: What will make you more/less inclined to attend queer people of color events here at UCSC?

D. Summary of Themes - Focus Groups

1. Organizing Around Interest:

Throughout the focus groups, there was a lot of discussion about wanting to be around others who they have common interests with, rather than just simply a common identity. There is was a desire to go beyond essentializing identity when being a person of color or being a queer person, and creating more depth for connections during events and programs for QSOC.

2. Curriculum/Classroom Climate:

Experiences were shared regarding people’s discomfort in the classroom setting. It was articulated that folks felt more comfortable if the instructor was openly queer, or used language that was inclusive to the queer people of color community. There was also talk of how incorporating sexuality studies into the academic climate on campus gave people a sense of authenticity and legitimacy.

3. Inclusive Language:

It was shared that people felt more welcome and comfortable in spaces where everyone (especially those that held authority in the room) used inclusive language. This opinion was held within all spaces, especially in the six Resource Centers. In some cases inclusive language could be as simple as using Preferred Gender Pronouns during introductions.

4. Being Unapologetic:

There was a shared feeling in several of the focus groups about not wanting to feel guilty or apologetic about intersecting/multiple identities. People expressed having difficulties bringing all parts of their identity into spaces that were focused on highlighting a single identity. This was especially expressed in spaces focused around an ethnic identity.

5. Digital World:

There was a bit of debate over connecting and organizing socially online. The group agreed that it was comforting to see and be a part of groups about being queer people of color. However, some participants felt a stronger need to have contact with people face to face/in person. This stemmed from concerns about the lack of visible QPOC community in Santa Cruz, and QPOC staff and faculty being retained in leadership.

6. Understanding Being QPOC:

QPOC identity is complicated and should be understood in a complex method. QPOC individuals strategize when approaching different spaces when accessing resources and community connections. Having multiple identities while being queer disrupts the flow of norms which causes a formation of “new set” of privileges for QPOC, but it also limits the ones that their non-queer identities offer.

7. Lack of Queer Visibility in Education:

There were many discussions about how to increase educating the campus of QPOC struggles, lifestyles, and language (how to interact I.E. PGPs) and integrate them to core classes, campus wide trainings and new student welcome events.

8. Queer Publicity & Whiteness:

Participants talked about how most LGBTI and queer events use gay symbolisms (glitter and rainbows) to advertise events indicating how this could either influence QSOC to attend or not because they do not all identify with these types of imagery. Discussions continued about whiteness within the Cantú and others LGBT spaces. The way the Cantú advertises, to even the people working there made some students feel unwelcome because they cannot relate to what they represent and the lifestyle they practice.

9. QPOC Staff/ Faculty Visibility:

Another theme was having more QPOC identified staff and faculty members visible so they can share their experiences and resources as a QPOC in their professions. In reaching out to similar identified students, this networking could connect students, staff and faculty around interests while self affirming each other by identity. Also the way the QPOC staff and faculty members present themselves physically (if they smile, if they are inviting) plays a big role to how QSOC decide to approach them or not. There was a suggestion to formalize an event to connect students with staff/faculty.

10. Connections:

There is minimal collaboration between all the resource centers and student orgs in relations to QPOC issues and communities. There isn't much conversations of different groups collaborating around QPOC visibility and queer events.

11. Acceptances Verse Inclusion:

There was a discussion about inclusions vs acceptance. Seeing difference is important and many centers (EOP/Cantu) and other spaces reach out to people who are different. But being verbally affirmed and making connections in these spaces is still missing. Validation from peers, mentors, staff and faculty is key.

E. ProgDB Event Database (sample)

Screen shot of ProgDB Event Database which is a **collaborative co-curricular program tracking software for universities and colleges**. It tracks, accesses and archives program outcomes, learning outcomes, attendance and other event planning logistics. This database could be used as a tool to disseminate best practices and ideas across campus about event planning for QSOC as well as other identities and communities.

Example: Program sample

E2W Be an Ally 5/28/15
 bisexual Diversity Gay Lesbian support Transsexual
 Thu, May 28, 2015 8:00 PM
 Purpose of this program is to discuss ways in which residents can be supportive of members of the LGBT community. The LGBT Center will be contacted for information and whether a presenter can come to the hall to further help with the program. Topics that will be discussed in the program are ways to help a friend who is "coming out", terminology addressing different sexualities, and the role of ...

Cowell/Stevenson Pre-Pride Event
 movie pride Snacks
 Fri, May 29, 2015 8:00 PM
 Move night watching "Stonewall Uprising" and giving out LGBTQIAA resources and doing other pre-pride activities



Jessica Loya | [Home](#) | [Logout](#) | [Help](#)

E2W Be an Ally 5/28/15



Purpose of this program is to discuss ways in which residents can be supportive of members of the LGBT community. The LGBT Center will be contacted for information and whether a presenter can come to the hall to further help with the program. Topics that will be discussed in the program are ways to help a friend who is "coming out", terminology addressing different sexualities, and the role of the LGBT center on campus. Residents that attend the program will be provided with pizza and drinks.

When: Thu, May 28, 2015 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM PDT
Where: A&I – Floor Lounge

Goals and Outcomes Goals for this program are for residents to learn about the different issues that arise when someone is a member of the LGBT community and discuss ways in which they can help a loved one accept who they are and "come out".

Programming Model Social Justice – Awareness and Appreciation

Attendance 15

Advertising posters, word of mouth

Estimated Cost \$64

Type of Funding Request Recharge

Purchasing Spinelli's
 Pepperoni pizza @ \$14.99 each x 3 = \$44.97
 Cheese pizza @ \$12.99 each x 1 = \$12.99
 Pepsi 2 liter @ \$2.79 each x 1 = \$2.79
 Sierra Mist 2 liter @ \$2.79 each x 1 = \$2.79
 Total = \$63.54

FAU Information A01997 70001 76 ZRPAI ZRE2W

Funding Requests 5/22/15

Request/Vendor Information Housing, Dining, and Residential Services
 3595 Canyon Crest Dr.
 Riverside, CA 92507

Actual Cost \$63.29

Actual Attendance 21

Tags

[bisexual](#)
[Diversity](#)
[Gay](#)
[Lesbian](#)
[support](#)
[Transsexual](#)

Add tags to describe this program. Comma-separate distinct tags.

People



Groups

[A-I D-E 2014-2015](#)

Meta Information

Created on Wed, Mar 18, 2015 1:54 PM PDT by [ivera001](#).
 Updated on Sat, May 30, 2015 12:24 AM PDT by [ivera001](#).
 Program form: [Program Proposal 2.0](#).
<http://progdb.com/p/UUj>

Email
 Tweet
 Like
 Share

Sample of immediate cross-campus communication and publicity through a weekly newsletter.

The Memo: Dispatched Weekly!

1 message

ProgDB <noreply@progdb.com>
To: Jessica Loya <jmloya@ucsc.edu>

Tue, Aug 11, 2015 at 1:07 AM

The Memo

The Stats

Numbers don't lie.

27 Programs
36 Collaborators

Group Program Totals
UC Santa Cruz: 5461
UCSC Oakes College: 824

Did you get The Memo? Here it is:

Upcoming Programs

- [Summer Video Games Night](#) (08/12 @ 6:00 PM PDT)
- [700/ 800 loop BBQ](#) (08/15 @ 12:00 PM PDT)
- [Upper Campus Hike](#) (08/16 @ 10:00 AM PDT)
- [Breakfast and the Rest of the World](#) (08/16 @ 11:00 AM PDT)
- [Skills and Scrimmage](#) (08/20 @ 5:30 PM PDT)
- [Civic Engagement BBQ {UNDER CONSTRUCTION}](#) (08/21 @ 2:57 PM PDT)
- [Kid's movie night](#) (08/21 @ 6:00 PM PDT)
- [International Movie Night](#) (08/21 @ 7:00 PM PDT)

New Programs

Just added to your favorite groups.

- [Morning Hike!](#) (09/20 @ 9:30 AM PDT)
- [Building Meeting - MANDATORY for Buildings: 9, 10, 12, 14](#) (09/19 @ 8:30 PM PDT)
- [Building Meeting - MANDATORY for Buildings: 1, 2, 6, 7](#) (09/19 @ 8:00 PM PDT)
- [House Meetings - MANDATORY for Maxwell, Galen, Gauss & Galileo Residents](#) (09/19 @ 5:30 PM)