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SUPPPORTING LGBTQ INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Supporting LGBTQ International Students Through Resource Visibility:
Examining Washington State Community Colleges

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PIM 79 IELR

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute at Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

Advisor: Dr. Sora Friedman

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Abstract

College is a time when many students begin exploring their sexual orientation and gender identity. Washington State, and Seattle in particular rank high in support for the LGBTQ community, according to the Municipality Equality Index put out by the Human Rights Commission. The schools that are represented in this study serve approximately 2,000 international students annually.

LGBTQ international students are a demographic that inhabits two minority groups – international students and LGBTQ students, and there is a lack of ongoing support and access to resources to aid these students in their personal growth during their time in community college. This study examines how community colleges in Washington State can increase visibility and access to LGBTQ resources on campus for international students and what impact that increased visibility and access may have on campus climate and student experience. Informed by queer theory, globalization theory, and postcolonial theory, the value of increased visibility and accessibility of resources becomes clear through interviews with International Student Services staff and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff at Washington State Community Colleges. The findings of this study include four themes: perceptions of student experience, resources available for international students, how LGBTQ resources are advertised to students, and barriers to access for LGBTQ international students. Implications for community colleges include increased staff and administrator training, additional interaction with LGBTQ student clubs and affinity groups, and more open conversations about social justice and minority struggles in the United States.

Introduction

The first junior college in Washington State opened in 1915 in Everett. Although that school closed less than ten years later in 1923, it was quickly followed by the opening of the now oldest operating community college in the state, Centralia College. Schools continued to open at a steady pace, and by 1941 there were eight locally funded and operated community colleges. The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, or SBCTC, had its inception in the early 20th century, when the Community College Act of 1967 was amended and redesigned, becoming the Community and Technical College Act of 1991 (sbctc, 2021). This act provided each technical college a board of trustees and its own district. Today there are 34 community colleges and technical schools recognized as part of the SBCTC, which together serve 278,000 students annually (sbctc.org). Additionally, the schools served 11,868 international students during the 2019 – 2020 school year (sbctc, 2020).

The Washington State Board of Community Colleges and Technical Schools (SBCTC) is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and each of the schools covered by SBCTC is similarly committed. As of June 27th, 2019, the mission statement for SBCTC reads: “Leading with racial equity, our colleges maximize student potential and transform lives within a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in service to our diverse communities” (sbctc, 2021).

Washington State is also committed to equal rights and protections for LGBTQ individuals, as evidenced by The Washington State LGBTQ Commission, which has existed in an unofficial grassroots capacity for many years but was officially enacted into law in 2019 by Governor Jay Inslee. The mission of the LGBTQ commission is “to improve the government's

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interface with the LGBTQ community, identifying the needs of its members, and ensuring that there is an effective means of advocating for LGBTQ equity in all aspects of state government (Washington State LGBTQ Commission, 2021).

In addition to examining resources available in the state of Washington, there are several other methods of understanding the environment for LGBTQ individuals. One of these methods involves examining The Municipality Equality Index, or MEI, which is administered by the Human Rights Campaign, and scores cities based on “how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of LGBTQ people who live and work there” (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2020). Eleven cities in Washington State were surveyed, and the average score came out to 82.36 out of a possible 100, indicating that the climate for LGBTQ individuals in Washington State is generally favorable.

Campus Pride is another resource that can be examined to help understand the climate LGBTQ students experience. Campus Pride is a national nonprofit founded in 2007 which supports campus organizations and student leaders in their work to make their campuses more LGBTQ friendly. The index itself is advised by Dr. Genny Beemyn, director of The Stonewall Center at The University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Dr. Susan R. Rankin, a professor at Pennsylvania State University who focuses on campus climate research, and Shane L. Windmeyer, M.S., Ed, author of *The Advocate College Guide for LGBTQ Students*. It scores colleges and universities based on existing policies as well as LGBTQ resources available to students (Campus Pride Index, 2021). Not all the colleges included in SBCTC have published scores, but the six that are represented (Tacoma Community College, South Seattle Community College, Shoreline Community College, Everett Community College, North Seattle Community College, and Bellevue College) have an average score of 2.83 out of a possible five.

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The LGBTQ community has seen recognition and resources increase over the last decade, but there are still significant gaps in availability as compared to other marginalized communities (Rankin et al, 2010). Anti-LGBTQ attitudes still prevail in many areas of the United States, and queer students still face discrimination and harassment. According to Rankin (2003) as cited in Garvey et al (2015) “LGBTQ students fear for their physical safety, hide or conceal their sexual identity, and feel that discussing their sexual and gender identities to faculty and staff may have aversive consequences. LGBTQ students who disclose their sexual and/or gender identity more openly experience harassment at higher rates than those students who do not.” (Garvey et al, 2015, p 530).

One of the ways that institutions of higher education can combat this discrimination and create a more welcoming campus environment for LGBTQ students, as well as faculty members and administrators, is by offering high-quality resources that are easy to access. Campus Pride’s 2010 report, *The State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender People*, concludes with suggestions for best practices to support LGBTQ students on campus, including offering comprehensive counseling and healthcare services and integrating LGBTQ issues and concerns into the curriculum.

Domestic students who identify with a sexual minority group face obstacles related to their identities, but they do so with a nuanced understanding of the language and culture of the United States. Existing research shows that international students who identify as LGBTQ experience not only the barriers that domestic students do, but additionally the stresses of acclimating to a new culture and sometimes a new language. Differences between students and staff may create misunderstandings due to cultural differences and stigma associated with seeking treatment for mental or physical health concerns. Existing studies (Oba & Pope, 2013,

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Valosik, 2015) highlight the need for collaboration between international student services and counseling services, underlining effective communication as one tool to better support this population.

This research explores how community colleges can increase visibility and access to LGBTQ resources on campus for international students and what impact increased visibility and access may have on campus climate and student experience.

Although this paper's focus is LGBTQ international students, it attempts to go beyond applying queer theory just to the students themselves, and additionally looks at how the resources available to international students can be examined through a queer theoretical lens for potential improvement. Analyzing resources through a queer lens that centers on international students may give administrators and staff a unique perspective on the degree to which resources are fulfilling their original intent, as well as the opportunity to identify any gaps that could be filled by modifying how resources are advertised or distributed.

I am a white American and I identify as cis gendered and queer. Working with and understanding the experiences of international students has always been of interest to me, and I have worked on and off with international students and ESL students since my first year of university. Spending a semester abroad my junior year cemented this interest, and this passion influenced my choice of capstone project. I have previous personal and professional experience with community colleges in Washington State, and I am familiar with the laws and policies regarding LGBTQ rights in the state.

Literature Review

Existing literature focusing on the experiences of LGBTQ international students highlights the unique struggles faced by those who fall into two minority groups – being an international student, as well as identifying as LGBTQ. Additionally, students both international and domestic may face harassment or discrimination on their campuses. Due to these factors, it is important to understand the resources that LGBTQ international students need access to in order to succeed academically and socially.

Community colleges are often known as “people’s colleges” and serve to educate those who would not otherwise have access to higher education due to cost, location, family situation, or a multitude of other factors outside of the students’ control. Due to this circumstance, many community colleges are more diverse than four-year universities in race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and student age (Garvey et al, 2015). However, schools do not collect data on sexual orientation or gender identity, so relatively little research exists regarding the experiences of LGBTQ students or resources available for LGBTQ students at community colleges. Sanlo and Espinoza (2012) note this discrepancy and highlight the much greater number of studies focusing on LGBTQ students at four-year universities (Sanlo & Espinoza, 2012). This in of itself is not bad but considering that community colleges tend to attract a greater diversity of students this gap creates missed opportunities to understand the experiences of many students and erases the intersectional nature of the discrimination they may face.

According to the *State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People*, those who identified themselves as LGBTQ were significantly more likely to experience harassment (Rankin et al, 2010). Additionally, Garvey et al (2015) found in their study of

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campus climate at community colleges that LGBTQ students did not feel that their campus was inviting. Similar results were found in regard to the climate of classrooms, where students often felt that instructors did not attempt to create an inclusive environment, and students did not feel comfortable coming out or discussing their identities.

Kappra and Vandrick (2006) conducted a study of LGBTQ students learning English as a second language from around the country, focusing on three students, all of whom studied in the San Francisco Bay area. Despite the reputation of San Francisco, the students felt that their instructors did little to create an open and welcoming environment, and that the attitudes of their fellow classmates sometimes came across as homophobic. “I was surprised because the other students, they were all young people...I was surprised, I thought they were more open-minded, they were very homophobic. I arrived and they were joking about gay people” (Kappra and Vandrick, 2006, p.144).

These issues of campus climate can affect international students who identify as LGBTQ even more than they do domestic students. This is due to a number of conditions that are unique to international students’ experiences. Valosik, author of *Supporting LGBT International Students* published in *International Educator*, quotes Struble, the coordinator of the LGBTQ resource center at Missouri University “LGBTQ international students often experience a ‘double barrier’ when trying to build a community on campus. With their international student friends, they feel isolated because they’re the LGBTQ one, but then among the LGBTQ students on campus, they feel isolated because they’re the international one” (Valosik, 2015).

Many international students who identify as LGBTQ have a fundamentally different experience in terms of coming out, especially to family members, compared to domestic students. The United States ranks high on the list of countries that are accepting of sexual

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minority individuals, with 72 percent of Americans agreeing that homosexuality should be accepted by society according to the Pew Research Center (Poushter and Kent, 2020). However, not all countries are as openly accepting and some LGBTQ international students may be hesitant to come out even on an international campus, especially if there is a large population of other students from their school or country who may inadvertently relay the information back home.

This was the case with Hassan, a junior at Northwestern in 2014, who hesitated to approach the LGBTQ student group on campus. “There’s an entire vocabulary associated with queer politics that I really was not, and probably am still not, fully aware of or comfortable speaking in,” Hassan said. “Because that was missing, I didn’t really feel like I could contribute much to the organization” (Anthony, 2014). Additionally, Hassan was not out to his family back in Pakistan, and due to the attitudes of Pakistan and his family, he was not sure the degree to which he’d be able to come out back home. Another student, Sahir Doshi, teamed up with Hassan to start a queer international student group. “Queer international students say they represent the intersection of two vibrant minority communities on campus. Though their experiences align with each group in some regards, in other ways, being a queer international student on campus is a unique experience” (Anthony, 2014).

Although LGBTQ international students can find support through already existing queer student groups on campus or international groups and international student services staff, having a dedicated group that intimately understands the unique struggles LGBTQ international students face could be a better solution to the issue of support. According to Anthony (2014) the circumstances LGBTQ international students come from, including the culture of their home

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country and attitudes of family and friends can highly discourage students from exploring their identities, even when the environment is friendlier towards LGBTQ individuals.

Many American students have the opportunity to begin exploring their identities, including sexual orientation, in high school and therefore feel much more comfortable joining LGBTQ groups in college and participating in visibly queer activities such as pride month. Mark Park, an international student from South Korea was already out before attending Northwestern University, but he wasn't comfortable fully embracing his queer identity before coming to the United States. "Korea, as a country, is a lot more homophobic and it's a lot more conservative. It wants to really preserve those traditional values. Korea is so afraid of change that they're not really willing to... a lot of people are not really willing to open their minds up to something new" (Chun, 2020). International LGBTQ students may find a new sense of identity and relief when encountering queer communities on their United States campuses, "And so here I just started to embrace that, started to become myself, started to talk the way I want to, move the way I feel free to, you know, say the things that I want to and obviously with restrictions, but I have been able to be much more comfortable at Northwestern" (Chun, 2020). Additionally, Park shared that he doesn't think that he would want to return to South Korea, largely due to the freedom he has felt being in the United States, and the lack of acceptance he fears from family and society in his country of origin.

Comprehensive health services, both physical and mental, may be one of the most useful support services a student can receive. However, due to cultural taboos or language barriers, many students don't take full advantage of the services available. Valosik suggests one way to combat this issue is to make sure faculty and staff are educated and aware of the services available to LGBTQ international students (Valosik, 2015).

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Oba and Pope further elaborate on this subject, pointing out that LGBTQ international students face major challenges in four areas: sexual identity, relationship challenges, health issues, and returning to their home countries (Oba & Pope, 2013). The authors suggest mental health services as the best way to support LGBTQ international students through these challenges, and further advise that the international student office work closely with mental health services to ensure that students know what resources are available to them.

Theoretical Framework

This capstone incorporates several different theoretical frameworks, including queer theory, globalization theory, and postcolonial theory. Because this paper explores the needs of students who are both LGBTQ and international, it is necessary to understand the culture of queer identities transnationally, as well as the relevant ways in which other countries have been impacted by the United States culturally.

Queer Theory

Queer theory as we know it today has its roots in the 1980s and 1990s and focuses on the study of sexual practices and gender that exist outside of heterosexuality and challenges the notion that heterosexuality is the norm (Warner, 1993). Early queer theorists drew heavily on the work of Michel Foucault, who saw sexuality as constructed, and sought to understand how it functions within society (Spargo, 1999). Modern queer theory is not easily defined; in fact many queer theorists highlight this lack of cut and dried definition as part of the point of queer theory. “I have been utilizing ideas that sometimes get called queer for a while now, but I don’t have a definitive idea of what queer theory is, which, I think, is part of the point of queer theory” (Rasmussen, 2015, p. 1). However, the root of queer theory questions what we may think of as

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“the norm” of heterosexuality and binary gender. Queer theory pushes us to think about how non-heterosexual people and people outside of the gender binary see and experience the world. Sullivan (2003) says, “...sexuality, as we shall see, is constructed, experienced, and understood in culturally and historically specific ways” (Sullivan, 2003, p.1). The ways sexuality and gender identity are thought of and experienced differ between cultures, and so LGBTQ international students may not get the support they really need from resources at United States institutions partially due to cultural differences. This concern leads into the next theoretical framework used in this paper – globalization theory.

Globalization Theory

It was assumed for many years that Western culture – especially American culture – was responsible for the proliferation of same-sex attraction and trans genders and identities around the world. Jackson, a researcher of gender and sexual identities in Thailand, has found that globalization is not leading to the homogenization of queer cultures and identities. Rather, the cultural influence of the West has had little to no effect on queer culture around the world (Jackson, 2009).

Although the United States does hold a substantial amount of power in the global market due to its’ part in the spread of capitalism, “...religious and sex cultural issues that are of defining importance within the United States are often ignored by the rest of the world and “despite considerable efforts” (Altman, 2001, as cited in Jackson, 2009) many American cultural attitudes have not been internationalized” (Jackson, 2009, p. 17). Additionally, not all Asian countries were under foreign rule during the colonial era – notably Japan and Thailand (formally known as Siam). Tokyo and Bangkok were among Asia’s first “gay capitals”, which directly contradicts earlier theories of “import export” global queering wherein “queer sexualities beyond

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the West “derive from US-inflected Western modes of sexuality or from Western-based systems of modernity, such as capitalism”” (Wilson, 2006, as cited in Jackson, 2009, p. 17).

When considering how to best support LGBTQ international students, United States schools should understand and acknowledge that non-Western countries have historically been written off as homophobic and lacking in their own queer culture. United States schools that host international students should therefore be careful to not superimpose Western ideas of “queer culture” over the experiences and cultures of international queer students. One method that may help United States institutions avoid this mistake is to consider the ways in which colonialism still affects many non-Western countries, particularly in regard to sexual minorities. Examining available resources through a lens of postcolonialism may help schools avoid this problem.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism is, in essence, an acknowledgement that colonial rule leaves a mark on the colonized people and country even after the colonizing power is no longer present (either physically, or in terms of law, or both). Ghandi describes postcolonialism as “a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering, and crucially, interrogating the colonial past” (Ghandi, 2018, p. 6). This theory is an important facet of the experience of LGBTQ international students because Western colonialism has had an effect on attitudes towards homosexuality and gender identity in colonized countries.

One example of the complicated relationship between colonial attitudes towards sexual minorities and historic attitudes towards sexual minorities in other countries pre-colonialism is in India. Kole (2007) writes in *Globalizing queer? AIDS, homophobia and the politics of sexual*

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identity in India that during the fight against AIDS in India – mainly by American or European led NGOs – “AIDS discourses largely produced India as a "sexually repressed" and "sexually tabooed" society wherein HIV spreads faster than western societies” (Kole, 2007, p. 7).

However, much of the aforementioned discourse was influenced by western ideas projected onto Indian society and cultural norms. Kole additionally states, “I contend that India has a diverse, complex and elaborate spectrum of same-sex sexual cultures in which sexual minorities have always performed their identities in a variety of ways, in a variety of social spaces and *without* the political rhetoric of the West” (Kole, 2007, p. 2).

India is not the only example of non-Western sexual minorities – many indigenous tribes in North America, including the Blackfoot, Cree, Lakota, Navajo, and Ojibwe, have historically had specific roles for sexual minorities within tribal life. While not all indigenous tribes accepted deviation from traditional genders and heterosexuality, it is known that colonialism created marginalization based on race/ethnicity as well as gender and sexuality (Flores, 2020).

The effect of colonialism on attitudes towards homosexuality can also be seen in countries in Africa, specifically Egypt and Angola. Buckle (2020) has drawn direct correlation between African countries that experienced Commonwealth – British – rule and laws criminalizing homosexuality. “Many African countries did not see gender as a binary in the way that their European colonizers did, nor did they correlate anatomy to gender identity. In no African country prior to colonization do we see any persecution of LGBT individuals because of their sexuality, nor any anti-LGBT laws” (Buckle, 2020). Colonialism helped to spread fundamentalist Christian ideology throughout the continent and led to the criminalization of homosexuality in many African countries. And while the lives of LGBTQ individuals are improving, efforts from outside these countries – mainly Western aid efforts – have been shown

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to be largely ineffective, demonstrating the need for a bottom-up approach to change these laws (Buckle, 2020).

This difference in cultural attitudes and practices is important to understand if the goal is to support LGBTQ international students. Not only must it be acknowledged that students from other countries have diverse experiences in terms of how sexual and gender minorities are treated and the degree to which these identities are accepted, but many may have very different ideas of what sexual minority culture is, and how it incorporates into the mainstream. “The important point is, sexual diversity, gender plurality, sexual rights and freedom must be preserved and upheld in diverse societies in their own way” (Kole, 2007, p.14).

Research Design and Methodology

Methodology

The research methodology used in this study was a mix of in-depth interviews completed by staff and anonymous surveys completed by students. Administrators included deans of equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as administrators in the role of student advisor in the international student services office. Administrative participants were contacted via email, and interviews were conducted via phone or video chat. This paper used purposeful sampling for the administrators, due to the specific nature of the information being sought. International LGBTQ students were invited to complete an anonymous survey, which included the option for a short follow up interview. One response was received, but the respondent did not elect to participate in a follow up interview.

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According to Kvale (1996), in depth interviews are “a construction site of knowledge” (p. 2). This method of data collection is valuable to qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to form a relationship with participants, which may lead to more complete understanding on the part of the researcher than would be possible with other forms of data collection. However, this method of data collection relies heavily on building trust between interviewer and interviewee, which may be difficult depending on time constraints. This barrier was addressed by variation in the questions included in the interviews, which ranged from gathering background information on participants’ work history, to their own impressions of campus climate.

Anonymous surveys were used with students to ensure confidentiality. Student participants were recruited using snowball sampling and were contacted by the administrators interviewed. Student participants were given a link to a secure page where they could fill out the anonymous survey (see Appendix G) and give their email if they wished to participate in a follow up interview.

Ethics of Research

All subjects signed an informed consent form before any research was conducted. All participants were over the age of 18, and all spoke English. The identity of student participants was kept confidential, unless they selected the option to participate in a follow up interview. Students were identified using a pseudonym in any specific data used in the final report. Administrative staff were given the option to use a pseudonym. Data was stored on the researcher’s password protected laptop and was not distributed anywhere else.

Credibility of Findings

There were multiple strategies employed to ensure credibility of findings, including employing the use of member checking by giving interviewees the opportunity to look over transcribed interviews to promote accuracy. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), member checks include “Feeding back data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions to members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained” (p, 121).

Additionally, all work was reviewed by my adviser and colleagues in the Master of Arts in International Education program at The School for International Training Graduate Institute (SIT).

Data Management and Analysis

Accurate data management and careful planning is paramount in qualitative research, especially when the method of data collection includes interviews. Data from interviews was sound recorded and transcribed using a combination of transcription software and transcription by hand. The resulting transcribed data was analyzed using Dedoose and data was coded into themes and further discussed in the findings section of the report.

Limitations and Delimitations

As stated previously, I have existing personal and professional experience within the Seattle Colleges system, which helped when reaching out for interviews. However, COVID – 19 and the resulting reduction in students and budgets across the Seattle Colleges made it difficult for administrators to commit the same time and resources than they may have in earlier years.

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A delimitation of this study was the scale – I chose to focus on Community Colleges in Western Washington to maintain a manageable set of data. I am also familiar with the attitudes towards the LGBTQ community in western Washington and the culture of the area. I am hopeful that this study will be a valuable addition to the body of research concerning best practices for supporting LGBTQ international students in higher education.

Presentation of Data

For this research on the LGBTQ resource accessibility for international students at Washington State community colleges, six administrators completed interviews (Appendix A & B). Five work in an international student services role, and one works within the diversity, equity, and inclusion office of their school. Additionally, one student completed an anonymous survey concerning the campus climate towards LGBTQ students (Appendix C).

The study first explores the ways in which resources are presented to students, followed by the resources that staff interviewees tend to refer students to. Secondly, LGBTQ-specific resources are discussed, along with how those resources are made available to students. Next, an examination of some potential barriers to accessing these LGBTQ resources that international LGBTQ students may face is explored. Finally, the student survey results are discussed. Conclusions are presented in the final section. The first three sections are based on data from staff interviews only, while the section discussing results of the student survey are based on data from student responses only. Each interviewee has been assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity.

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Table 1: Staff Interviewees and Pseudonyms

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
ISS Staff	Annie, Bella	Jane	Helen	Nora
DEI Staff	Sally			

Annie has been working her role in international student services for three years and said that her previous experience studying abroad sparked her interest in working with international students. Her job responsibilities include “everything we do as far as student services for international students. So that would include student engagement, activities, orientation, advising, and we do academic advising, immigration advising, and cultural adjustment advising. And then managing our front desk, and just kind of the way students see us on campus and how we interact with them” (personal communication, April 29, 2021). Her favorite part of the job is interacting with students.

Bella has been working in student services for six years and has been in her current role for a year and a half. Her interest in higher education and background in working with LGBTQ youth drew her to working with international students and the LGBTQ affinity group on campus. The job responsibilities she has vary, but they include meeting with international students about immigration requirements, supervising international student workers, putting together events for International Student Services, and meeting with the LGBTQ affinity group. Her favorite part of the job is meeting with the LGBTQ student group and planning events where she gets to interact with students.

Sally has worked in her position in the diversity, equity, and inclusion office for 25 years, beginning as a student on work study. Her job responsibilities include scheduling meetings for

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the DEI director, answering emails and phone calls, and answering student questions. Her favorite part of the job is working with students.

Jane has been working in international student advising for three years and was motivated to work in international student services by her passion for travel and learning about different cultures. Her job responsibilities include “advising students on either their immigration requirements or their academic requirements. Our office recently picked up academic advising when before we weren't doing that, so now we're also doing that. And then we also plan events and activities for our students, as well as an orientation every quarter that helps them become familiar with the school. So from day to day it's mostly meeting with students for appointments” (personal communication, October 06, 2021). Her favorite part of her job is working with students and implementing student events and activities.

Helen is also an international student advisor and has been in her position for 18 years. Her initial interest in this work came from study abroad experience, as well as an interest in other cultures. Her job responsibilities include “advising international students academically and with their transfer to university. In addition, I provide support services for them in all aspects of their lives such as medical appointments, social connections, driver's license assistance, mental health support, helping with activities, managing medical insurance, and legal or emotional assistance as needed” (personal communication, October 13, 2021). She enjoys meeting one on one with students the most.

Nora works as an international student engagement manager and has been in her role for five years. She was drawn to this role from previous experience working with international students and has “always enjoyed learning more about different cultures” (personal communication, October 06, 2021). Her job responsibilities include running orientation,

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overseeing student activities and engagement, working with student leadership, and serving on various committees such as ESL (English as a second language) and residence life. She enjoys working with students the most.

Perceptions of Student Experience

Orientation. All interviewees mentioned that their schools provide some form of orientation to international students to help acquaint them with campus life, including resources (tutoring center, counseling center, student clubs and affinity groups, academic counselors, etc) available to them. When asked what their school does to create a welcoming environment for international students Jane, an international student advisor answered, “We provide them an orientation one week before classes start, so that way we can make sure they're all set up with their housing, their classes, everything they need to do to be a student” (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Bella, who works as a student success and retention specialist highlighted the orientation at her school, “I think our orientation, or I should say, orientation not in COVID, is actually one of the more amazing things that we do because it's really robust. And it's a whole week-long event. And it, I think it much more aligns with a more traditional four-year orientation. Like, as opposed to a lot of community colleges - their orientations for both domestic and international students tend to be leaner” (Bella, personal communication, March 04, 2022). However, none of the interviewees mentioned cultural awareness as an explicit part of orientation.

Campus Climate. Campus climate is an important aspect of the international student experience, as well as for LGBTQ students. When asked if they felt that their school created a welcoming climate for international students, all interviewees answered yes. When asked for

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examples, interviewees had unique responses. Nora explained, “We try extremely hard to never send students to another office/department without taking a few steps first: 1) Are we absolutely sure the student needs to go there next? 2) Is there someone there who will be able to greet them? 3) Does the student know how to get to that office? If not, can someone physically walk them there and ensure the student is served correctly?” (Nora, personal communication, October 18, 2021). Helen, who works as an international student advisor, listed a few different ways her campus supports international students. “We have vast resources for students including a first quarter mentor match, conversation partners program, lots of great activities and clubs, and a wonderful dorm with activities and outings” (Helen, personal communication, October 13, 2021).

Bella had a slightly different answer when asked about the campus climate for international students. “Right now, like many colleges, because international student populations have declined due to COVID and a lot of colleges in general are just seeing declining enrollment across the board there's a lot of budget cuts that are happening. That means staff layoffs, which means we don't have enough resources and staff to fully create the environment that would be 100% welcoming. With what we have, and our budget and our staff and our time I think we do a really great job. Could it be better, and are there students who maybe don't feel welcome because, you know, they slipped through the cracks? Yeah, sure” (personal communication, February 04, 2022).

Resources Available for International Students

Writing/Tutoring Center. Academic resources were mentioned by five out of the six interviewees, and of those academic resources the most common was the writing or tutoring center where students could get academic assistance. When asked which resources she tends to

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recommend for students, Annie answered, "...the writing and tutoring centers all day, every day. And they've remained open during COVID. That's where students can go on campus and reserve a room to study from. And then less, but still fairly often to our counseling office. Our counselors are academic counselors. So, if students are saying I'm having a mental health issue, or I'm having a problem studying we'll send them there" (Annie, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Similarly, Jane said that although they do a lot in the International Student Center, "...we work with our Learning Center, which does our tutoring. So, we often send a lot of students to work with our tutoring center" (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021).

Counseling Center. Another resource administrators mentioned referring international students to, although less often than the tutoring center, was a counseling center. Five out of the six administrators interviewed mentioned this resource. Jane said, "...we do work with our counseling center as well and making sure they understand the needs of our students. And we have a couple counselors, I think one speaks Mandarin, and we have some students that speak Mandarin. So, we try to make that accessible in some additional languages, if possible" (personal communication, October 06, 2021). Another interviewee, Nora, also talked about referring students to the counseling center. "We have a Counseling department and a Student Accessibility Services department. We also have a medical insurance plan for international students that includes a 24/7 student support service where they can access an off-campus counselor or advisor via chat, phone, or app" (personal communication, October 18, 2021). Bella, who helps refer students to resources on several different campuses, talked about the differences in how resources like the counseling center are connected. "Oftentimes at the North Campus, I will refer students to the tutoring center because the tutoring center at North partners with the counselors at North, so a lot of the things that the tutoring center is providing already have counseling built

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into [them]. At the Central campus, for example, the International Programs Office and the counseling office have a really strong partnership, so I'll send them directly to counseling. And then at the South campus, I send them to student leadership, because student leadership has become a hub for everything else. So depending on the campus, and depending on what it is, yeah, it's like a chess game" (personal communication, February 04, 2022).

Student Services Center/Front Desk. Two interviewees, Jane and Sally, talked about the open-door policy of the Student Services Center, and the open availability for students to come to the ISS department with any questions or issues they were having. "But then, like I said, about our open-door policy, if a student comes in, maybe they're upset, or they, you know, have a problem with their personal life or, you know, classes, teachers or something. We are definitely open and available for, you know, talking about those interpersonal issues" (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Sally also talked about referring students to student services, and the types of support they could find there, "students services, because they're a hangout place. So, when I say student services, I mean, something is going on with their student ID number, they need something in admissions, or they need financial aid, those are all student services" (personal communication, February 08, 2022).

Accessibility/Disability Services. The final resource that was mentioned as being important to international students' success was accessibility and disability services. This resource was brought up by four out of the six interviewees. "Most often I connect students with our faculty counselor or (if needed) our Accessibility and Disabilities office" (Helen, personal communication, October 13, 2021). "Since our school is pretty small, our international office tends to be like the one stop office for all those different things. But we do work with disability support services" (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Sally, who works in the

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office of her school, listed disability services as one resource her office works closely with. “Disabilities, DEI is diversity, equity and inclusion” (personal communication, February 08, 2022).

Next is a discussion of how LGBTQ resources are made known to international students.

How LGBTQ Resources are Advertised to Students

Signage. One of the main ways in which LGBTQ resources are advertised to students is through signage in offices or ISS spaces. Annie said “...we have signage in our office that says, this is a safe place, or you can come out to me. We have flags, like LGBT -- or the rainbow flag, we have the trans flag physically in our office, just kind of to encourage students to feel like it's a safe space” (personal communication, April 29, 2021). Another interviewee said, “I'm just realizing I'm in my office. I have up signs that say, like, safe space, and like rainbows, and things like that. And sometimes some staff will choose to put those [things] up” (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021).

Student Groups and Clubs. All of the interviewee's schools have LGBTQ student groups or clubs that are actively advertised to international students during orientation or other activities. “We also have clubs on both of our campuses for LGBTQ students” (Helen, personal communication, October 13, 2021). “Most quarters, we have an active LGBTQ club run by students. And we do have a faculty advisor for that, but I think it's more of students ask[ing] and then [they] can find that information or go to the Student Life Office to find that information” (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Sally talked about the LGBTQ student affinity group when asked what resources were available on campus. “There's an affinity group, so it's LGBTQ-IA, right. And so, the affinity center is the most visible, and then we do some

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things like there's trans, there's a trans day, and that and we celebrate trans people and what they've been through and bringing awareness to the murdering, there's a lot of murders. Yeah. But especially trans people of color. And let me see that we do anything for pride, no. Just tell everyone go to the parade. Yeah. So that's all I could think of is the affinity group” (personal communication, February 02, 2022).

Diversity/Gender Equality Spaces. Finally, two interviewees also mentioned that their schools have a diversity or gender equality center which serves as a resource for LGBTQ students, and these resources are advertised to international students. Even if interviewees were unsure of the details of the resources provided in these spaces, they were aware that these spaces existed on their campuses. “I’m not sure of all the resources that exist in the diversity, equity, and inclusion center, but they're definitely resources there” (Annie, personal communication, April 29, 2021). “I typically include Safe Zone training for my student workers, and make sure they are aware that our Gender Equity Center is an existing resource on campus” (Nora, personal communication, October 18, 2021).

The following section discusses barriers that may prevent LGBTQ international students from accessing resources on their campuses.

Barriers to Access for LGBTQ International Students

Cultural Taboo. The reality of LGBTQ issues being taboo subjects in some other countries and cultures was mentioned by five of the interviewees as a potential barrier. “Many international students come to us from cultures where it is not acceptable to talk about these subjects, so it can be a big shock to hear open conversations, and there is the risk of having students shut down” (Nora, personal communication, October 18, 2021). When asked about how

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to broach LGBTQ subjects with international students Helen said, “It is important not to make it a taboo subject and that it be normalized as much as possible (especially since in most cultures it is taboo)” (Helen, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Sally also mentioned cultural taboo as a potential barrier, especially for international students in homestay living arrangements. “If they're in a homestay, and a lot of the students hook up with people that speak their language, that means there's a lot of carryover of their culture. And if you're, say, from Uganda, or different parts of different countries on the continent of Africa, I feel like many countries will say we don't have any gay people. That's the culture. And I would hope that they have a homestay where they feel safe to be who they are” (Sally, personal communication, February 08, 2022).

Stages of Personal Development. Somewhat similar to the issue of cultural taboo, three interviewees mentioned how students are all at different stages of personal development and may not be ready to explore their sexuality. “As with many other topics, allowing students to ask questions in a judgment-free space and allowing students to approach us when they are ready to ask questions or talk is extremely helpful, rather than broaching the subject in a large public space such as orientation” (Nora, personal communication, October 18, 2021). Another interviewee, Jane, said, “I think the one challenge we sometimes come to is that students are in so many different places of their development -- that some people are really ready to dive into their, you know, discovering themselves and others are like, what is sexual orientation?” (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Bella, who works very closely with both international students and the LGBTQ affinity group on campus, said “when I've talked to LGBTQ international students, it really has taken them a while when they first arrive. It's like it's a - it's a much slower journey for them sometimes, to get to the point where they want to access

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our resources. And be comfortable being open in our spaces as LGBTQ” (Bella, personal communication, March 04, 2022).

Lack of Visibility. Finally, three administrators talked about a general lack of visibility of resources as a barrier to LGBTQ international students. “I do think we could give out more information and [talk] intentionally about the LGBT community for those students, so they maybe didn't have to wait or reach out themselves. We could have that available” (Jane, personal communication, October 06, 2021). Another interviewee mentioned, “I think we could post specific materials for LGBTQ students, hold student panels on the topic, add activities specific to LGBTQ students, or hold a workshop for students lead by our faculty counselor that would be a safe place to get support and resources” (Helen, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Bella talked about lack of visibility in connection with EDI, “one of the biggest things that I think schools can do in general to support international students, is to see international students with an EDI lens. Because right now, when we talk about EDI and higher ed, we're talking about domestic students. We are talking about, you know, like Latinx students or black men students, and nowhere do you think international in association with that. And yet, like we have, you know, we have Latinx international students, black men international students who, when they come here, they're facing similar experiences that our domestic students are [facing] based on their racial identities, based on their gender identities, based on their sexual orientation. But as a college, right, like as higher ed, there's no intersection there. And so, if International Programs and EDI departments can come together, I think that will really benefit LGBTQ international students, because they will be then included in being seen in that work” (Bella, personal communication, March 04, 2022).

The next section discusses the results of the student survey.

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Student Survey

One student completed the anonymous student survey but declined to participate in a follow up interview. The respondent has been assigned a pseudonym for ease of discussion. The results of the student survey are below:

Table 2: Student Survey Results

Student Pseudonym	Riley
What year are you in school?	First Year
What is your home country?	England
What are you studying?	Environmental Science
How would you rate the attitudes of other students towards LGBTQ individuals on your campus?	Somewhat positively
How would you rate the attitudes of teacher and staff towards LGBTQ individuals on your campus?	Somewhat positively
With whom do you feel the most comfortable talking about your mental health?	A friend
How well do you think your school advertises LGBTQ resources available to students such as counseling, student advocacy groups, and clubs or activities?	Somewhat poorly
Have you ever accessed any of these resources?	No
How comfortable do you feel taking advantage of these resources?	Somewhat uncomfortable

Riley is a first-year international student from England studying environmental science. When asked how they would rate other students' attitudes of LGBTQ individuals on their campus Riley responded, "somewhat positively." They also felt that staff and teachers had positive attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals, rating attitudes "somewhat positively." Riley said they felt most comfortable talking about their mental health with a friend and that resources were

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advertised “somewhat poorly.” However, they had never accessed the resources available, and said they would feel somewhat uncomfortable with accessing them. Unfortunately, Riley did not wish to complete a follow-up interview, so the reasoning behind their responses is difficult to understand but issues discussed by staff interviewees including lack of visibility, cultural taboo, and differences in stages of development of gender identity and sexuality may play a role.

Conclusions

This study explored the question of how Community Colleges can increase visibility and access to LGBTQ resources on campus for international students and what impact increased visibility and access may have on campus climate and student experience. In the context of the theoretical framework of queer theory, globalization theory, and postcolonial theory, international LGBTQ students have very different experiences of and attitudes towards sexual orientation and gender identity. They also face barriers of cultural taboo, different timelines of development compared to domestic students, and a general lack of visibility of LGBTQ resources for the international student population. The following statements summarize the key findings of this research study:

- **Lack of Visibility/Ongoing Support:** Resources were made visible/advertised to international students in a number of different ways, including signs and stickers in offices, introductions during orientation to student groups and clubs on campus, advertisement of separate equality centers on campus, and activities and events sponsored by LGBTQ affinity groups on campus. However, half of the administrators interviewed discussed lack of visibility as a barrier for international students accessing LGBTQ resources, especially in terms of ongoing support that

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would follow international students beyond initial exposure during orientation.

The results of the student survey show that while students rate the level of support for LGBTQ students on campus as generally positive, they would feel somewhat uncomfortable accessing any of the resources themselves.

- **Cultural taboo:** One perceived barrier to LGBTQ international students seeking out and accessing available resources was the idea of sexual orientation and gender identity as a cultural taboo outside of the United States. Interviewees explained that they believed if student's home countries held taboo beliefs about LGBTQ identities the student would be unlikely to access LGBTQ resources without additional support. However, queer theory and globalization theory show this conclusion may be biased. Western world views often inaccurately see other countries and cultures as anti-LGBTQ, when in reality attitudes are often different from Western ideologies about LGBTQ communities and people and therefore may be more difficult to understand from a Western perspective. This conclusion prompted several interviewees to discuss the idea of expanding conversations of LGBTQ resources beyond international student orientation and giving students more private spaces in which to discuss LGBTQ topics.
- **Stages of personal development:** Another perceived barrier to LGBTQ international students accessing resources on campus was the idea of differences in personal development. Not all students are at the same place in their personal development, and while some students may eventually want to explore their sexual orientation or gender identity, they are not at the place where they are comfortable doing so.

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Recommendations

This research investigated the visibility and accessibility of resources for LGBTQ international students on community college campuses in western Washington State. At the schools where administrators were interviewed, LGBTQ international students are made aware of resources to help support them throughout their time studying at these colleges through orientation, as well as flyers and informational boards throughout campus and online. However, half of the administrators interviewed mentioned some lack of ongoing messaging and support for students beyond initial orientation. In order to support this population, it is critical to understand that these students are both LGBTQ and international, and therefore the needs of both groups should be taken into consideration when identifying how best to support them.

Based on the research, the following may be helpful for community colleges to better understand the needs of this population and support LGBTQ international students throughout their time abroad.

Social Justice Focus: To incorporate discussion of LGBTQ resources more smoothly it would be helpful to include discussions of other social justice issues, including police violence and Black Lives Matter, as well as the xenophobia and violence towards Asians and Asian Americans. Discussion of these issues in orientation and other introductory environments as well as throughout the semester can help set the precedent for inclusion of minorities, including sexual minorities. “I keep thinking the same thing with the attacks against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in our community. And all of the Black Lives Matter protests this summer, I feel like we're failing and not having conversations around those topics with our students. But it's hard to figure out where it fits in” (Annie, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Colonialism

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is a major factor in the spread of racist and homophobic ideologies around the world, and those ideas persist even in postcolonial countries. By specifically designing and implementing programming to address issues of social justice related to racism and homophobia colleges can push back against the ideas spread by colonialism and create more welcoming spaces for LGBTQ international students.

Interaction with LGBTQ student groups/clubs: Having regular interaction with LGBTQ student groups, especially interaction where those groups come to speak to international students regularly beyond initial orientation, would open the door for students to connect with these groups without the pressure of having to seek them out alone. For example, asking student and staff representatives of LGBTQ affinity groups on campus to present during orientation and throughout the semester about what these groups do and how to contact them, or having a forum where students can ask questions anonymously. Establishing an initial connection in an environment where LGBTQ international students feel more comfortable increases the likelihood that these students would reach out and engage with these student groups of their own accord. Queer theory focuses on understanding how people outside the cultural norm of heterosexuality and binary gender experience the world. Connecting LGBTQ international students to groups that encourage exploration of queer world views, perspectives, and ideas may help encourage students to access the resources available. Additionally, hearing from students who have found these resources helpful in navigating challenges and exploring their identities could help LGBTQ international students find different ways of utilizing these resources.

Advisor/Counselor Training on Global LGBTQ Attitudes: One of the themes that emerged was the idea that being LGBTQ and talking about LGBTQ issues is taboo in other cultures. LGBTQ international students who faced discrimination in their home country may be reluctant

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to access available resources without ongoing additional support because of this. In her interview, Nora said, “Many international students come to us from cultures where it is not acceptable to talk about these subjects, so it can be a big shock to hear open conversations, and there is the risk of having students shut down” (Nora, personal communication, October 18, 2021). This barrier can be addressed by advisors researching and understanding the cultural context that students come from, and how these taboos influence how they feel about LGBTQ issues. It may also be helpful for advisors to be aware of culturally specific resources either on or off campus where students can connect with others from their culture to discuss their feelings. In addition to training staff and advisors on cultural context and taboos related to LGBTQ issues, it is important to highlight the limits of the influence western culture has had on queer cultures worldwide. Giving students the opportunity and space to explore queerness through other cultural lenses by providing materials with different perspectives or inviting speakers from other cultures to present on LGBTQ topics would give students access to more diverse resources to explore their own identities.

Additionally, facilitating anonymous conversations between advisors/staff and students about how students feel they could be better served could help address this issue. Anonymity could be achieved by setting up a form online or having a physical drop box in an office or meeting space on campus.

Further Research

This research focused on the visibility and accessibility of resources to LGBTQ international students on community college campuses in western Washington State, almost exclusively from the perspective of International Student Services staff and Diversity, Equity,

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and Inclusion staff. More research can be conducted by including the perspectives of other faculty and staff who may interact with LGBTQ international students (teachers, counselors, etc). However, students who access LGBTQ campus resources can provide invaluable feedback on how to better serve this student population. Connecting with more students and gathering feedback anonymously or through interviews would help as much or more to flush out research on this topic than connecting with more administrators.

Final Thoughts

This study showed that there are many resources available to LGBTQ international students, including counseling centers, tutoring/study centers, ISS offices and staff, and LGBTQ and international clubs and groups on campus, and that schools have made efforts to ensure that their campuses are safe and welcoming spaces for everyone. However, there are still improvements that can be made and further considerations to increase the accessibility of these existing resources to LGBTQ international students.

Addressing the issues raised in this study through the theoretical frameworks of queer theory, globalization theory, and postcolonial theory, one of the best ways to increase support for the minority population of LGBTQ international students is to see this population through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens. LGBTQ international students face unique challenges, some must navigate the landscape of being a person of color in the United States, and while others may not face overt racism, they navigate being a non-domestic student on their campus. All LGBTQ international students face the challenges of being sexual minorities. EDI resources may improve student experience and help members of this population thrive. Collaboration between international student services and EDI resources could include connecting international students

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with racial discrimination resources (affinity groups, community resources), scholarships and monetary resources, prayer and faith spaces, and spaces to connect with each other and college staff who share their culture and faith.

With increased cultural knowledge and understanding as well as the opportunity for students to contribute their knowledge and ideas to existing resources, community colleges can better support LGBTQ international students and see this population not only survive in a new environment but thrive and potentially learn more about themselves.

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Appendix A

Interview Template: International Student Services Staff

1. Please state your name and job title
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What initially drew you to working with international students?
4. Can you describe your job responsibilities?
5. What's your favorite part of your job?
 - a. Least favorite?
6. Do you think (school name) creates a welcoming campus climate for international students?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. If no, what do you think could be done to improve campus climate?
 - c. If yes, can you give an example of something (school name) provides that contributes to positive campus climate for international students?
7. What other departments or offices do you work with to support international students' transitions to school in the United States?
8. How often do international students come to you or others in the ISS department about academic or personal issues they may be having?
9. Do you feel you have adequate training and knowledge of available resources to assist international students with contacting health or disability services?
 - a. If yes, which resource(s) do you recommend most often
 - b. If no, which resource(s) do you wish you had more knowledge of or were more available to students?
10. How familiar are you with LGBTQ resources available to students both on and off campus?
11. Do you think information about those resources is effectively integrated into ISS offices/spaces?
 - a. If yes, how is that information integrated?
 - b. If no, how do you think it could be better integrated?
12. How often do you advertise these LGBTQ resources to international students?

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13. In your own words, what do you think is the best way for campuses to support LGBTQ international students?

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Appendix B

Interview Template: Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Staff

1. Please state your name and official job title
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What drew you to the field you are currently working in?
 - a. What is your favorite part of your job?
 - b. Least favorite part?
4. Can you briefly describe your job responsibilities? What does a typical day look like for you?
 - a. How often do you work directly with students?
 - i. (Regularly) What are some common issues students come to you with?
 - ii. (Not at all) How knowledgeable are you about common issues students have?
5. What types of resources are most utilized by students? (ex. Physical health, mental health, academic, life skills, etc)
 - a. What about by international students?
6. What other offices or departments does DEI work closely with?
7. Based on your experience and observation, is there a difference in how often available resources (health services, counseling, etc) are used between domestic students and international students?
8. How are international students made aware of the resources available through your office?
 - a. For example, through teachers or classes, through school events, through official school correspondence, through posters or flyers, etc
9. What resources are available through (school name) on or off campus for LGBTQ students?
 - a. How aware do you think students are that these resources are available?
 - b. Have you ever heard concerns about lack of available resources?
10. How welcoming to international students do you feel (school name's) campus is?
 - a. What about LGBTQ students?

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11. In your own words, what do you think is the best way for campuses to support LGBTQ international students?

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Appendix C

Survey Template: International LGBTQ Students**Please circle your answer or write in if applicable**

1. What year are you in school?
 - a. First year
 - b. Second year
 - c. Other: _____
2. What is your home country?
 - a. _____
3. What are you studying?
 - a. _____
4. How would you rate the attitudes of other students towards LGBTQ individuals on your campus?
 - a. Very positively
 - b. Somewhat positively
 - c. Somewhat negatively
 - d. Very negatively
5. How would you rate the attitudes of teachers and staff towards LGBTQ individuals on your campus?
 - a. Very positively
 - b. Somewhat positively
 - c. Somewhat negatively
 - d. Very negatively
6. With whom do you feel the most comfortable talking to about your mental health?
 - a. Family member
 - b. Partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)
 - c. A friend
 - d. A counselor
 - e. A staff person (advisor, International Student Services staff, etc)

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- f. Other: _____
7. How well do you think your school advertises LGBTQ resources available to students such as counseling, student advocacy groups, or clubs and activities?
- a. Very well
 - b. Somewhat well
 - c. Somewhat poorly
 - d. Very poorly
8. Have you ever accessed any of these resources?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
9. If 'Yes' how many times have you accessed any of these resources?
- a. 1
 - b. 2 – 5
 - c. 6 +
 - d. Other: _____
10. How comfortable do you feel taking advantage of these resources?
- a. Very comfortable
 - b. Somewhat comfortable
 - c. Somewhat uncomfortable
 - d. Very uncomfortable
11. Would you be interested in participating in a follow up interview expanding on questions asked in this survey?
- a. Yes
 - i. What is a good email address to contact you at?
 - 1. Email: _____
 - b. No

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Appendix D

Optional Follow Up Interview Template for Students

1. Did you have any concerns about your identity when deciding to study in the United States?
2. How does your experience as a member of the LGBTQ community in Seattle compare to your experience in your home country?
3. What do you wish your advisor or ISS staff had more knowledge of to better support your transition to (school name)?
4. Do you have any concerns about going back to your home country and being accepted as LGBTQ?
5. What, if anything, could (school name) do better or do differently to improve your experience as a LGBTQ international student?
6. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you first arrived in the United States?
7. What advice would you give to other LGBTQ international students who want to study in the United States?