Beyond Coming Out:
New Insights About GLBQ College Students of Color

The Ohio State University
CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ENTERPRISE

Access | Affordability | Engagement | Excellence

The Ohio State University's Center for Higher Education Enterprise (CHEE) strives to make change. Solve problems. Shift paradigms. Foster belonging. Encourage high achievement. Do good work. Align dreams with reality. For colleges and universities. For students and families. For communities and the nation. Our ambitious goal is to set aside what was and define what will be for generations of students to come. Our distinctive research and policy studies are focused on advancing higher education by removing obstacles and creating new opportunities. Our hope is that all students live up to their potential and go on to have meaningful impact on global society. **By redefining student success, we're changing lives.**

Acknowledgments

Any undertaking of this magnitude leaves one indebted to a number of individuals without whom this report would not be possible. First, the authors thank the talented staff and students who work at the Center for Higher Education Enterprise (CHEE) at The Ohio State University (OSU) who lent their assistance, time, and support to producing previous versions of findings, proofing drafts of this report, and checking the document for errors; they include Alesia Howard, Dr. Joseph Kitchen (now at Harvard University), Tiger Litam, Meng-Ting Lo, Parker Quattlebaum, Amber Samimi, and Chris Travers. Second, we want to thank every college student who agreed to participate in the research studies that inform this national report. Without your insights, perspectives, wisdom, and stories, we would have little to say about this important topic and no evidence to bolster our claims. Thank you for entrusting us with this information; we release this report as a way of "giving voice" to your experiences. Third, we thank Cindi Love and juan battle for lending support to this project. And, finally, we acknowledge our colleagues and partners at Ohio State who continue to support CHEE's work in many ways including President Michael Drake, Provost Joe Steinmetz, Vice Provost Mike Boehm, Vice President Javaune Adams-Gaston, Dean Cheryl Achterberg, and Dr. Eric Anderman; the Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) graduate program, and members of SHADES. To all those implied or listed explicitly, we extend sincere thanks.

Sincerely,

The Authors

CHEE is committed to solving issues of national significance....

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Message from Director

The Center for Higher Education Enterprise has completed its first full year of operation and, consistent with our mission, we have already started to create and nurture a vibrant presence as a "go to resource" for research, outreach, and practice related to student success. As a center, research is our most effective tool in reclaiming access, restoring affordability, reframing engagement, and redefining excellence in higher education. And we have an abiding commitment to sharing our distinctive research contributions with those who can most benefit from them, including campus leaders, policymakers, parents, educators, and students themselves. Consequently, we work closely with our partners both on- and off-campus to apply, disseminate, or translate our research findings into practical solutions to real-world social problems.

Over the last year, with generous support, CHEE has relocated to the famed Ohio Stadium, edited a forthcoming book on historically Black colleges and universities, sponsored two visit days for vulnerable youth in support of the White House's Reach Higher Initiative, and appointed several CHEE Senior Fellows and faculty affiliates including: Drs. E. Gordon Gee (President, West Virginia University) and Vincent Tinto (Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University) as Senior Fellows, and Drs. Robert Holub (Ohio Eminent Professor, Germanic Languages), Joseph Kitchen (Researcher, Harvard University), Stéphane Lavertu (Associate Professor, Public Affairs), and Caroline Wagner (Associate Professor, Public Affairs) as Faculty Affiliates. We collected data for several contracted large-scale evaluations, analyzed data for multicampus survey studies, assessed the impact of Ohio's AmeriCorps College Guides program, and much, much more.

For the 5th year in a row, student members of the CHEE team (and my previous Centers) have all graduated and completed their degrees—we're a student success research center committed to graduating all students we employ. We strive to achieve this goal on all levels. In May 2015, CHEE students earned 4 PhDs and 5 bachelor's degrees. I applaud my team's tireless efforts to create a culture of inclusive excellence where diversity begins and

Message from Director (cont'd)

ends with success in every endeavor. Indeed, "access without success is useless," as I like to say, but access that leads to success is priceless.

Now we release this national report titled, "Beyond Coming Out: New Insights About GLBQ College Students of Color." This 52-page report highlights two major findings from CHEE's research studies on GLBQ college students of color and interview-based studies that date back to the early years of my faculty career. So much of what we know or what has been published, studied, or written about GLBQ people in general or GLBQ college students focuses almost exclusively on the process through which individuals come to understand themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, "non heterosexual," "same gender loving" or some other term— what has come to be known as "coming out." And while useful, there's so much more to the lives, experiences, and contributions of GLBQ people. We need to know more to do more and do more with what we know.

Despite considerable progress over the years and the addition of this national report, we still have a long way to go and I hope that this report is just one of many more steps that we will take to improve the conditions of GLBQ people of color worldwide. We must move "Beyond Coming Out" to creating conditions in schools, colleges, families, workplaces, churches, and society where all people feel free, safe, and protected to live out, love out, and learn out.

I would be remiss if I did not thank CHEE staff and students for responding so well to the many new directions that emerged over time for this report, taking initiative for various aspects of the project, and working extremely hard to meet deadlines while maintaining our collective commitment to the standard of #goodwork. I am proud of what we have achieved this year and the production of this report; I am even more excited about what lies ahead.

Read on and learn,

Terrell L. Strayhorn, PhD

Professor & Director

Executive Summary

Despite considerable progress over the years, more information is needed about the experiences of GLBQ college students of color to create conditions that engender their success. **Beyond Coming Out** responds to this clarion call, drawing on nearly 8 years of data from 50 participants at over 20 public and private universities in the United States.

This 52-page report includes never-before published results about how GLBQ college students of color identify, how they deploy sexual identity labels and the meaning they make of such processes, as well as the strategies they utilize when disclosing their sexual identity to others. For instance, for our first finding "What's a Label, Anyway?" we describe how GLBQ students sort through a number of factors when adopting, adapting, or resisting sexual identity labels. Our analysis reveals that "coming out" for GLBQ students of color involves a far more complicated, non-linear decision-making process than traditional development models suggest.

Consistent with CHEE's core goal of generating distinctive research contributions, the report also presents a new typology that has implications for research and practice, as well as insights about online identity disclosure behaviors that could lead to development of new or revision of existing theory. The report closes with a comprehensive set of recommendations for campus administrators, faculty, policymakers, GLBQ students and allies, as well as clergy and religious leaders. Included in the Appendix is a list scholarly publications generated by the authors of the report that readers are encouraged to reference, as well as a list of resources.

This report goes way **Beyond Coming Out** to identifying specific steps for **Leaning In** for understanding, **Moving Out** of our own way, **Stepping In** to someone else's shoes, and **Taking Action** to improve the lives of GLBQ youth and campus experiences of GLBQ college students of color everywhere.

CHEE exists to advance the higher education enterprise through the creation and dissemination of distinctive research that informs policy, strengthens communities and enables student success.

Introduction

It has been more than 40 years since the American Psychological Association (APA) removed "homosexuality" from their *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-II), which until December 1973 recognized homosexuality as a mental illness. Gay rights activists and allies often herald this landmark decision as the "coming out" of homosexuality from the DSM-II and a watershed event in the contemporary gay rights movement in America. Certainly there have been many other national events and key decisions since the DSM-II update that indicate growing public support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer (GLBQ) people in the United States. In fact, on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that gay and lesbian couples have the right to marry in a 5-4 decision that has come to be known as the #LoveWins ruling.

Once seen as sexual perversion, deviant behavior, or a form of disease, homosexuality or same-sex attraction has now come to be understood as a normal variant of human sexuality by growing segments of the world's population. Now more than ever there are openly-gay politicians,

The historic #LoveWins Supreme Court decision legalized the right to marry for gay and lesbian couples in the United States. While over 70% of college students nationwide support gay marriage according to national opinion polls, less than 50% of gay college students of color report full support of the issue. While the vast majority of gay minority students oppose anti-gay discrimination, over 1/3 of participants in our studies express uncertainty due to conflicting religious and cultural beliefs.

elected officials, judges, doctors, athletes, and actors—in fact, today's college student has always known at least one celebrated gay actor on TV sitcoms and movies. A recent Gallup poll found that 74% of Americans would vote for a qualified gay or lesbian presidential candidate, interestingly with support rates being highest among Catholics and atheists. Protestants, however, averaged just 64% support and the report failed to include racial/ethnic differences. Research shows that race and

Introduction (cont'd)

religion are important determinants of attitudes towards GLBQ people (Battle & DeFreece, 2014), thus, we devote space to making recommendations for religious and spiritual leaders.

Despite growing representation and swelling public support for GLBQ people across the country, there is still clear evidence that problems persist, especially when it comes to GLBQ youth in the U.S. Culling information from reports and websites of the Human Rights Campaign, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, and Bullying Statistics suggest that:

- About ¼ of GLBQ students from elementary to high school are victims of bullying while at school;

GLBQ YOUTH STATS

- About 30% of all committed youth suicides are related to sexual identity;
- 9 out of 10 GLBQ teens report being bullied in schools because of their sexual orientation; they are 5 times more likely than straight peers to miss school;

- 4 out of 10 GLBQ youth say their community is NOT accepting of LGBT people;
- Interestingly, ¾ of GLBQ youth say they are more honest online than in the "real world" (see "Evolving Theory" pg. 30).

High rates of bullying in elementary, middle, and high school among GLBQ youth is troublesome for many reasons. Consider that many gay youth come to internalize an automatic association between schooling and bullying—seeing schools and education institutions as sites of violence rather than learning—which in turn leads to high rates of **truancy**, **lower grades** (i.e., average GPA of GLBQ youth is half a grade lower than their peers), and dashed or leveled **college aspirations** (i.e., GLBQ youth who experience bullying are 2 time more likely to say they're not going to college, compared to peers). Indeed, we have other information about GLBQ college students. Information included in reports and websites from Campus Pride, the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, and Campus Explorer to name a few suggest:

Introduction (cont'd)

Over 2 Million College Students Nationally Identify as GLBQ

- Approximately 10-12% of college students nationwide identify as GLBQ, making them a larger group than most ethnic minorities;

- 20% of college students nationally fear for physical safety due to their gender identity or sexual orientation;

- GLBQ college students are 2 to 3 times more likely than straight peers to attempt suicide;

- 100% of Black gay males in our studies have contemplated or attempted suicide at least once;

GLBQ College Students

- Today, over 100 LGBT campus centers exist in the U.S., many with paid staff members;

- Over 38 colleges offer gender neutral housing options for GLBQ students and 14 schools have been rated "trans-friendly."

While useful for understanding the beliefs, fears, worries, and future aspirations of GLBQ people generally and college students specifically, these statistics mean nothing and will never change if action isn't taken to understand better the lived experiences of GLBQ people in the country and specific subpopulations who have been given short shrift in previous research and writings such as GLBQ college students of color. The time is now for academicians and administrators, researchers and representatives, pastors and policymakers, parents and peers to join forces in taking action against injustice, discrimination, and harassment of any kind. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" to quote the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. More than a national report or compendium of research findings, **Beyond Coming Out** is a call to action. And in an era of instant messaging, snapchat, and caller-ID screening, we certainly hope this is a call that each of us will answer without delay.

What We Know from Research

Page limits of this national report will not permit full review of all existing literature on this topic; what is presented is a laconic summary of what we know from research about GLBQ college students of color. We organize our review into three sections.

One line of research has directed considerable attention to formulating theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain the process by which individuals come to understand themselves as GLBQ persons and the extent to which such understandings are reconciled with previously held perceptions of self (e.g., Cass, 1984; D'Augelli, 1991). Consider Cass' (1979) hypothesized model that suggests "the process by which a person comes to understand and later to acquire the identity of homosexual as a relevant aspect of self" (p. 219). This stage-wise model posits gay identity development as movement from "identity confusion" to "identity synthesis" through four other stages: identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, and identity pride. While useful, stage-

What We Know from Research (cont'd)

wise models are largely predicated upon White GLBQ student samples (Renn, 2010), and thus may have limited applicability to racial/ethnic minorities who identify as non-heterosexual like GLBQ students of color.

Only in the last decade have scholars turned significant attention to the precarious experiences of GBLQ college students of color. A large segment of that literature focuses on Black gay and bisexual collegians (e.g., Goode-Cross & Good, 2009; Patton, 2011; Strayhorn, Blakewood & DeVita, 2008; Strayhorn & Mullins, 2012; Washington & Wall, 2010). For instance, Strayhorn and colleagues (2010) argue that contrary to prevailing theories, "coming out" for Black gay male collegians is a complex process marked by strategic decisions to disclose (or conceal) their gay identity to different people, in different ways, at different times.

Apart from theoretical models and research on GLBQ Black students, emergent work on other GLBQ college students of color include studies on Black lesbian and bisexual women (e.g., Greene, 2000; Patton Davis & Simmons, 2008); Korean gay men (Strayhorn, 2014); and students that identify as queer (Vaccaro & Mena, 2011), to name a few. For instance, Strayhorn (2014) interviewed Korean gay men and found that participants "went to college to live out," implying that they were motivated, at least in part, to enroll in college to "come out." While this literature is helpful, more information is needed about the experiences of GLBQ college students of color, how they come to understand their sexual identity, strategies they employ when disclosing their sexual identity to others, and the labels they use. Thus, the purpose of this report.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report was to highlight two major findings from our research studies on GLBQ college students of color attending more than 20 public and private colleges and universities in the United States. Drawing on about 8 years of data from 50 participants, we focused on two central research questions: (a) How do GLBQ college students of color deploy sexual identity labels and what meaning do they make of such processes? and (b) What strategies do GLBQ utilize when disclosing their sexual identity to others? Additionally, we present a new typology related to sexual identity adoption, adaption, and resistance, along with emerging thoughts about online sexual identity disclosure that may provide the building blocks for developing future theory.

Study Objectives

Studies that inform this national report had several major objectives:

- To identify challenges and supports that GLBQ college students of color recognize as critical to their college experiences;

- To gain insights from GLBQ college students of color about their experiences with bullying, discrimination, harassment, and other forms of oppression such as heterosexism, homophobia, and racism;

- To deepen existing knowledge about the experiences of gay and bisexual men of color; and

- To expand what is known, from research, about the identity disclosure process for GLBQ college students of color.

This report was produced using data from the *National Study of GLBQ College Students of Color (NSGSC)*, comprised of dozens of studies conducted over the last 8 years by the lead author (Strayhorn) and his students at the University of Tennessee Knoxville and The Ohio State University. Initial studies focused primarily on the academic and social experiences of Black gay male collegians at predominantly White and historically Black colleges and universities. Over the years, the research program has expanded to include additional subpopulations in this order:

- Black bisexual males;

- Latino gay and bisexual males;

- Gay and bisexual males of color;

- Lesbian and bisexual women of color.

Just as the research program grew to include other subpopulations, so too did the terms or labels we used to categorize participants; early on, we used gay, lesbian, and bisexual but due to its prevalence among students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) we incorporated "queer" in 2011 (Strayhorn & Scott, 2012). To date, a forthcoming book, 5 peer-reviewed journal articles, 8

Study Objectives (cont'd)

book chapters, a white paper, and over 20 conference presentations have been produced using data from the NSGSC. Not only has this research generated an impressive body of scholarship on GLBQ students of color, but the graduate and undergraduate student researchers engaged in this work over the years include:

- Terrell Strayhorn
- James DeVita*
- Amanda Blakewood*
- Fred McCall****
- Ferlin McGaskey*
- William Roberts-Foster**
- Jonathan Reid**
- Colber Prosper**
- Taris Mullins**
- Jameel Scott
- Derrick Tillman-Kelly*

- Brian Dean***
- Joe Lines***
- Anastasia Elder****
- Tay Glover****
- Joseph Kitchen*
- Michael Steven Williams*
- Trevion Henderson****
- Zak Foste****
- Royel Johnson*
- Tiger Litam
- Parker Quattlebaum
- Christopher Travers****
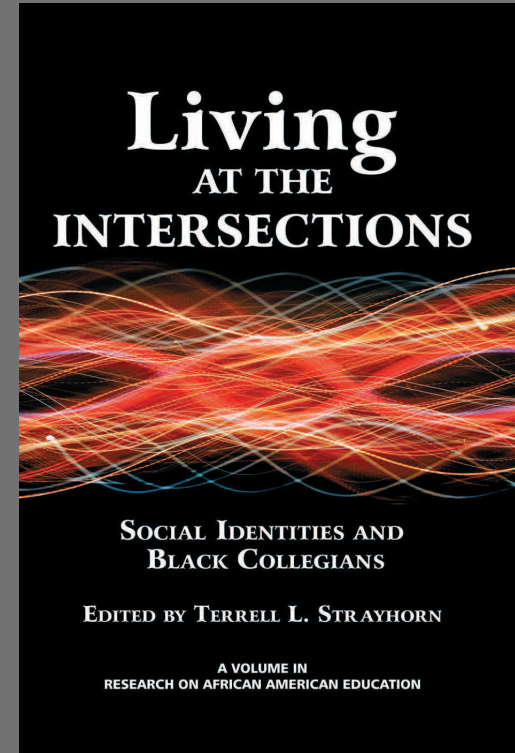
Indicates progress <u>since</u> working on project: *Graduated with Doctorate;
**Graduated with Masters; ***Graduated with Bachelors; ****In Graduate/Professional School

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How We Did It

Studies that inform this report employed multiple methods to collect data including:

1. Interviews: In-depth interviews with college students. Interviews were conducted one-on-one or through focus groups, via phone or Skype. Most interviews averaged 60 minutes, some ran as long as 200 minutes.

2. Demographic Questionnaires: Tools designed to elicit personal and background information about participants such as race/ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, academic standing, and academic major or minor, among others.

Table 1. Sample Sizes for Interview Participants, 2010-2015

RACE/ETHNCITY	N	%
Asian	4	8%
Chinese	1	
Korean	2	
Vietnamese	1	
Arab/Middle Eastern	1	2%
Native American	1	2%
Black	22	44%
African American	19	
Carribbean	2	
African	1	
Hispanic/Latino	10	20%
Mexican American	7	
Cuban	3	
Multiracial	6	12%
Other	6	12%
TOTAL	50	100%

Note. This table includes approximate sample sizes by race/ethnicity for participants interviewed and transcribed since 2010; these numbers do not reflect untranscribed interviews, survey respondents, or pilot samples.

Special Considerations

Before reading through the report's key findings, there are a few special considerations that deserve mention. First, we use the terms "gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer" or "GLBQ" when referring to the sexual orientation or identity of study participants collectively. This naming is consistent with language included in email messages and flyers used to inform potential participants about the study. However, we recognize and readily admit that it may not represent the diversity of terms used by participants and students like them. When referring to participants individually, the preferred identity label(s) noted on the demographic questionnaire or shared during the interview is used.

Second, sexuality—rather than gender identity or expression—was the primary focus of the studies that informed this national report and we pressed to keep this purpose in mind while writing this report. Gender identity and sexual identity have too-often been conflated; **Beyond Coming Out** includes gender identity or expression as a major axis of identity and only to the extent that it

was mentioned by participants. In acknowledgment of this important distinction and recognition of gender's importance, we deliberately used the term GLBQ rather than the more commonly used acronym (LGBT) throughout this document.

Third, eligibility criteria for the research program has expanded over time. The initial studies that inform this report were launched in 2007 and included Black gay and bisexual college men only. Within just 2 years, criteria were extended to include all men of color in college who identified as non-heterosexual, gay, bisexual, same-gender loving, queer, or a near-equivalent term. In 2013, we modified the protocol to include college women too since so many expressed interest in being part of the study. Consequently, Black men are a significantly larger proportion of study participants, which may result in findings and recommendations being most transferable to such students or their near peers. Since data collection is always on-going, our next version of this report will include more

"As far as being a queer identified person, I'm out in that regard but I guess I don't talk to my family about a queer label as much as a gay label. I think for heterosexual identified people it introduces a layer of complication that is not always useful."

- Jamie

Special Considerations (cont'd)

insights from non-Black and/or women study participants.

Finally, the studies that inform this report required willing participants to "identify publicly or privately as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, non-heterosexual, same-gender loving" or by an equivalent label. In the spirit of transparency, this language was used originally as a way of affirming the experiences of those who might not identify as "gay" or "queer" specifically but felt attracted to or engaged in sex with members of the same sex. While useful for recruiting a relatively large number of students of color over the years, we admit that this approach has limits as it may not attract those who are uncertain, questioning, or more private about their sexual orientation than others. Ultimately, students in our studies had to be willing to participate in an interview or focus group, in-person, via phone, or Skype, which risks revealing who they are to members of our research team or other focus group participants. To the extent that this is true, our findings and recommendations may not apply equally well for addressing the needs and experiences of

all GLBQ college students of color. In fact, "one size fits all" approaches have little use in higher education and, thus, we encourage readers to keep this in mind.

Despite these special considerations and limitations, this report is timely and provides much-needed new information about the experiences of GLBQ college students of color. Our findings challenge existing ways of thinking about GLBQ youth and push forward the boundaries of stage-like models of gay identity development so that we move **Beyond Coming Out** to a more nuanced understanding of students' aspirations, their fears and worries, their successes and victories!

What We Learned

Two key findings represent major insights from these studies that relate to the experiences of GLBQ college students of color. First, we learned that, contrary to popular belief, GLBQ students use an array of phrases, terms, or words to describe and define their sexual orientation. Interestingly, we learned that some GLBQ students do not consciously use identity labels but rather adopt existing labels that align with how they view themselves. Others create or produce a label with which they're comfortable and then use that new or modified label to self-identify. Still others resist existing, traditional labels or the labeling process altogether, in lieu of something else. Provided in the following sections are a summary of our major findings.

"I identify as pansexual. I have little faith in the general population of America's knowledge of all things clear [sic]. I usually introduce myself as bi, but I hate it. I hate it with every fiber of my being."

-Gabriela

What's a Label, Anyway?

Label is defined as "a word or phrase that describes or identifies something or someone" (Merriam-Webster). In terms of sexual identity, non-heterosexual individuals often use labels to describe and disclose their sexual attractions, behaviors, and/or orientation to others. Commonly used sexual identity labels include: gay, bisexual, lesbian, and queer, to name a few. Prevailing sexual identity development models suggest that as individuals come to understand and/or accept their non-heterosexual attractions or behaviors as part of a naturally occurring evolution of their core self, they use specific labels such as "gay" or "lesbian" to describe their sexual identity or position (-s or -ing) on a developmental spectrum of sorts (e.g., "coming out" vs. out).

While certainly useful and the state of affairs for many decades, stage-like models that posit gay identity development as a linear process characterized by movement from one category (or label) to another category (or label) in route to a final destination or identity

What's a Label, Anyway? (cont'd)

"landing pad" marked off by a sublime label such as "identity synthesis" or "identity achievement" may miss important subtleties or nuances to GLBQ college students' experiences. For instance, our studies have shown that GLBQ college students of color may live across, beyond, and between labels, traditional categories, and discrete boxes. Our study sample consists of diverse students—one might be deeply involved in a romantic relationship with a same-sex partner but conceal their sexual orientation from family members and co-workers, despite being comfortable posting pictures with their partner online (see "Evolving Theory" pg. 30), all while harboring personal frustrations about whether "homosexuality is right or wrong," as one participant explained. And depending on the scenario and student, timing and context, participants in our study might answer the question "how do you identify" as gay, bisexual, straight, queer, "just me," all of these, or none of these.

While previous scholars and theorists have placed considerable weight on the label itself and assumed that it issued information that could be useful for describing the individual, their development, and sexual identity, key insights from the studies that inform this report challenge such assumptions. What label is used and why? How did they come to choose that label? And what does it mean? Labels are selected for any number of reasons—consciously and subconsciously, intentionally and unintentionally—but do not issue meanings on their own. The label one uses may reflect a desired reference or level of comfort on the one hand. On the other, it may reflect the "path of least resistance" or a term with which most people are familiar, thereby avoiding the need to explain or "always educate the masses," as one participant put it. For example, one student self-identified as a "Black bisexual" although his "real story" constructs him as Black pansexual queer. "Few people know what pansexual means…or queer… especially as it relates to people of color so I usually just go with 'gay' or 'bisexual' since everyone knows what I mean with no questions asked," he explained. "In the end, who really cares about the label…they're all pretty imprecise."

What's a Label, Anyway? (cont'd)

That identity labels may mean everything or nothing is an important take-away from this report and broadens significantly what we know about GLBQ students' use of traditional categories and labels.

The first key finding relates to "what" GLBQ college students of color do to self-identify as non-heterosexual (used here as a general reference not the measure by which sexual identity should be judged), while the second key finding relates to "how" they make decisions about disclosing or sharing their sexual identity with others.

"I would say I'm pansexual but it would be so hard to explain to normal people who already don't know what it is so like just to make it easy I'll just like tell them I'm bisexual."

-Bryana

Omnisexual
Androsexual
Skoliosexual
IAmWhoIAm
Asexual
Homosexual
SameGenderLoving
Polysexual
Gynesexual
Allosexual
JustMe
Demisexual
Gay
Aromantic
Fluid
Pansexual
Bisexual
Queer
Questioning
Lesbian

SEXUAL IDENTITIES TYPOLOGY

IDENTITY ADOPTERS	IDENTITY ADAPTERS	IDENTITY RESISTERS
Refers to individuals who adopt existing sexual identity labels largely for utilitarian purposes (e.g., "I have to be something). Labels are used to help others understand the individual's sexual orientation even though one may not identify that way in all instances. Labels are adopted so that others can best understand the individual, who they are, and how they generally identify.	Refers to individuals who adapt or modify existing sexual identity labels to make them suitable or fitting for them. Labels may be adjusted to different conditions but generally adapters deploy labels that best match their present understanding of themselves, who they are, and how they generally identify at present. In this way, labels shift with time.	Refers to individuals who resist adoption or adaptation of existing sexual identity labels (e.g., "I'm just me"). Quite often this is for political reasons and an explicit act of "identity politics." Labels are viewed as overly prescriptive, restrictive, simplistic, and imperfect. They offer little understanding about people, who they are, and how they construct themselves.
Example: A pansexual Black female may adopt the label "lesbian" as a way of signifying her non-heterosexual orientation, given that most people know the term. Adopting a familiar label makes it unnecessary for individuals to educate others on less well-known labels (e.g., pansexual, asexual, free spirit).	**Example:** A Latino male might identify as "gay" early on, but come to understand himself and his attractions as far more complex and, thus, adapt to identifying as "pansexual cis queer" Adapting labels may lead to educating others about its meaning, but it also provides an array of combinations from which to choose.	**Example:** An Asian female sophomore who is sexually attracted to both men and women while in college may see the LGBTQ Center's events as "too gay focused" or "too political" since she neither adopts traditional nor adapts to other sexual identity labels; "I'm just me; don't try to put me in a box," she might say when asked.

"I identify as bisexual and it took a long time for me to get to that – to even be able to accept that term. When I was in middle school around the time my sister passed away, 13, and I went to a Christian school, it was a struggle. Of course I couldn't be out openly seeking for help because it just wasn't appropriate but one time I identified myself as 'I'm just straight and I'm gonna get rid of this,' whatever and no that didn't happen. Then I identified as I am heterosexual with lesbian tendencies and then 'I'm like Luna, that doesn't make sense. You like boys and girls' and I guess I was just thinking the best term for me would be bisexual but now even I'm thinking coming out and being okay with your sexuality is an ongoing process."

-Luna

Coming Out, Staying In, Both or Neither: Check all that Apply

There are four points that relate to our key finding about the process of sexual identity disclosure for GLBQ college students of color. First, contrary to dominant theories and models, it is clear that the "coming out" process for GLBQ college students of color is all but linear and orderly. It is a far more complicated process of moving to, through, and back to places (physically or mentally) where one might identify openly as GLBQ to most in many settings, partially conceal their GLBQ identity to some and deny it altogether to others, or simultaneously manage a complex arrangement of decisions to disclose or conceal their sexual identity to others under certain circumstances, conditions, and settings.

Not only do our findings expand what is known about the sexual identity development process but they also push us "Beyond Coming Out" to recognizing that some GLBQ college students experience multiple "coming out" moments while some report feeling little need to "share that aspect of themselves with others," as Liana and Blake explained; this is our second major point. The idea that coming out refers to a single moment where one decides to "be out" or not is particularly limited in its applicability to GLBQ college students of color and denies their agency to decide if, when, and where to share information about their sexual orientation with parents, siblings, co-workers, religious leaders, and peers. Participants in our study struggled to identify the "moment" when they came out, as many expressed that "it all depends." For example, one GLBQ womyn [sic] of color said that she's "kinda [sic] out" on campus to her closest friends but many of her family members "don't know that side of [her]." In fact, she shared elaborate details about how she manages this online by "not friending any of her family members or family members' friends on Facebook." She does all of this while serving as a leader for the GLBQ students of color group on campus. While the students in our studies couldn't be more different from each other, many of their experiences converge on this point—"coming out," if that's what it is called, is a continual process where "one comes out to a

Coming Out, Staying In...(cont'd)

close friend today...a roommate tomorrow...an advisor next month...and perhaps last to your grandma or pastor," as Leonard explained.

The entire process of identity disclosure for GLBQ college students of color is shaped by myriad factors including: safety and belonging, perceived receptiveness, relevance, and timing. The first of these is self-evident—GLBQ students make decisions about identity disclosure (or denial) based on the extent to which they feel safe from harm and a sense of belonging. GLBQ students who feel unsafe, unprotected, or vulnerable are far more likely to deny their sexual orientation (i.e., "I'm straight"), while those who feel accepted and respected are inclined to disclose. GLBQ college students of color also make judgments about identity disclosure based on the perceived receptiveness of individuals and groups. When perceived receptiveness is high, GLBQ students are more inclined to share their sexual orientation with others; when perceived receptiveness is low, GLBQ students are not inclined to share but rather conceal, deny, or hide their sexual identity from others.

GLBQ college students of color demonstrate that the adoption and disclosure of sexual identity labels is all but routine. In fact, a number of elements, as well as internal factors, such as their perceptions of their peers and their evolving understanding of their multiple identities, inform how students choose to label and disclose their sexuality. Thus, in many ways, selection of identity labels and the manner and medium of disclosure are intimately related. With careful thought and examination of their various contexts and social situations, GLBQ college students of color have come to utilize labels as a strategic means for managing the naming and sharing of their sexuality with others.

While it is clear that some GLBQ college students of color select and use sexual identity labels rather arbitrarily and some do so intentionally, we have uncovered fairly consistent evidence in our studies that GLBQ college students of color consider a host of factors when making

Coming Out, Staying In...(cont'd)

decisions about identity disclosure; this is our third major point. These factors include, but may not be limited to:

1. Safety and wellness;
2. Sense of belonging;
3. Perceived receptiveness;
4. Ease of disclosure;
5. Timing.

Most of these are fairly self-explanatory but we offer a few examples for illustration. Virtually all of our participants shared that their decisions to disclose or conceal their sexual orientation to others hinged in part on whether they felt safe, supported, and unthreatened. "Sometimes I think people might want to know just so they can hurt you, you know not so much physically but verbally [harassment] and socially [alienation], so if I feel like that's their motive then I don't tell them anything," as one student put it. "If I don't feel safe or like you're accepting before you know, I probably won't feel any better when you do know so I avoid

My father's side of the family didn't really take it well. When I came out on Facebook, which was back in 2009, that was pretty much how they found out."

-Joseph

telling my business to people like that...at work, at home, at church, don't matter to me," one Black bisexual male remarked after being confronted by a teaching assistant at the major research university that he attended. Safety and wellness are particularly important to note given the rise in Title IX reporting, campus violence, and campaigns to improve campus climates.

Sense of belonging is a basic human need sufficient to drive behaviors and it has affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Strayhorn, 2012). We've also learned that some GLBQ college students of color make decisions about identity disclosure based on their need to belong, to find meaningful connections with others on- and off-campus. Consider the following: "I don't think that I 'came out' per se because I'm like further along in knowing like who I am...well, at least not to all people...but the ones who know know [sic] because I met them through [a GLBQ student organization] or [a GLBQ event] or like I just wanted some gay friends so I told them." Indeed,

Coming Out, Staying In...

sense of belonging factored into students' decisions about disclosing their sexual orientation and college seemed to be a time when belonging needs take on heightened importance as students transition to and through a new setting and phase of life. In terms of ease of disclosure, one Latina first-generation lesbian offered a perspective that reflected the essence of others: "Basically, I mean that I decide based on how much it's gonna [sic] take out of me to tell you that I'm gay (laughing). If I'm gonna [sic] be all nervous and stumbling with words or hesitant or emotional or...basically, you drain me (laughing)...I'm not telling, I can just be straight to you. If it's easy or like worth it, then you'll know the real me." Simple comment, yet so profound.

Fourth and finally, it is clear that the sexual identity development of GLBQ college students of color is powerfully shaped by demographic and personal characteristics, namely race, sex, social class, and religion, combining with socioenvironmental conditions (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, campus climate) to produce different and distinct developmental trajectories for GLBQ college students of color. Although early and prior gay identity development models by Cass (1991) and D'Augelli (1994), for example, posit identity maturation as a linear process characterized by movement from one stage (e.g., "exiting heterosexuality") to another (e.g., "becoming a gay offspring), insights from our studies demonstrate how existing stage-like models present an oversimplification of the "coming out" process for GLBQ ethnic minorities in college. Findings from studies that inform this national report also show how GLBQ minority students' developmental trajectory is determined, at least in part, by one's social identities intersecting simultaneously within a larger apparatus of power, privilege, and oppression (for more, see Strayhorn, 2013). So, under such pressures, some students are privileged to "come out...live out...and stay out to everybody," as one participant eloquently put it, while others are oppressed to live at the margins of campus "silenced through fear, shame, rejection or all of these."

An Evolving Theory of Online Sexual Identity Self-disclosure: Research in Brief

BY: TERRELL L. STRAYHORN

It has long since been argued that any verbal or nonverbal communication reveals something about us. The shoes we wear, the way we walk, or even the music we listen to may offer a peek into our personality, our past or present. While interesting, these are not necessarily forms of identity self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is generally defined as "purposeful disclosure or sharing of personal information with another person." For instance, if I purposefully wear the jersey of my favorite sports team to reveal to others my undying loyalty to the league, then this clothing choice represents intentional self-disclosure. Similarly, if I purposefully purchase an expensive, luxury car to share with others my financial worth, then this calculated decision to stun represents an act of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure takes place on various levels and at different stages throughout one's life course—for example, some engage in superficial self-disclosure or "small talk" (e.g., " Where are you from?") as a way of initiating relationships that then proceed on to more personal levels of self-disclosure (e.g., "Are you gay?"). Students often introduce themselves to others sharing their

An Evolving Theory...Research in Brief (cont'd)

name, major, and year in college, which carry very little risk, but then move on to share more personal, riskier information such as their dreams, aspirations, past mistakes, sexual attractions, and romantic relationships, to name a few.

Existing theories on self-disclosure posit the process through which individuals come to make decisions about sharing or disclosing personal information with others. For instance, social penetration theory suggests that people engage in a reciprocal process of self-disclosure that changes in breadth and depth over time as the relationship

matures and this dynamism affects how the relationship develops; by depth, I'm referring to how personal, sensitive or risky information is and breadth refers to the range of topics shared (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). Figuratively, social penetration theory compares the process of identity self-disclosure to peeling through the layers of an onion (see Figure 1).

Consequently, one might argue that social penetration theory serves as the foundation for most prevailing gay identity development models. Traditional models assume that all

Outside veneer that is presumed heterosexual from early ages

Develops over time to a point where one "exits heterosexuality" or experiences "identity confusion" and starts to recognize homosexual or same-sex attractions

Deepest layers associated with GLBQ identity acceptance or pride
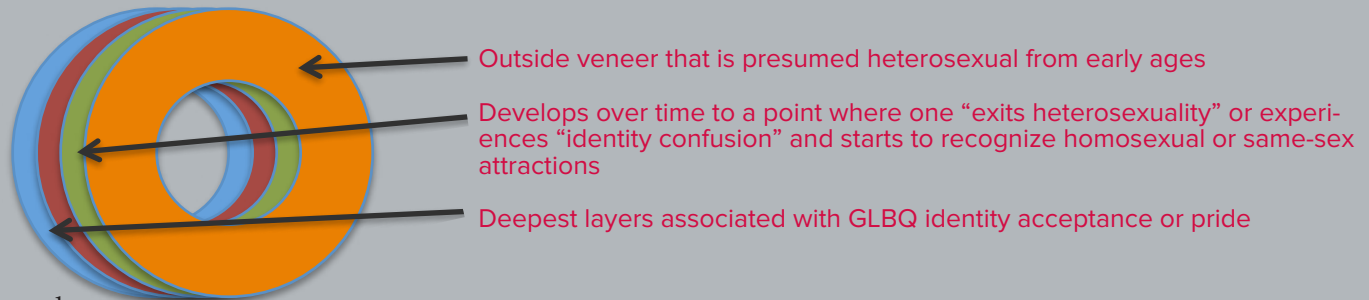
Figure 1.

An Evolving Theory...Research in Brief (cont'd)

individuals work through multiple layers of consciousness (e.g., exiting heterosexuality to becoming a gay offspring [D'Augelli, 1994]) and eventual acceptance of their sexual identity (e.g., from identity confusion to acceptance and pride [Cass, 1984]) by way of temporally ordered phases or stages. And while these models have generated decades of research and seem to have adequate applicability to the experiences of White gay males, they present an oversimplification that fails to capture the complexity of experiences shared by those who are simultaneously ethnic and sexual minorities such as GLBQ college students of color. For instance, my previous research on Black gay males reveals a far more distinct developmental trajectory and complicated decision making process than what traditional "coming out" models suggest. Black gay males might disclose their identity to a close female friend but intentionally conceal their identity from other Black men as a way of avoiding the threat of physical harm, protecting their masculinity, or masking their attraction for a same-sex college roommate (for more, see Strayhorn & Mullins, 2011). The intentionality

of these decisions seems to challenge strict stage-like formulations that render masking or hiding behaviors as signs of developmental immaturity, identity confusion, or a form of "arrested development," as I once said, that leads to a host of negative consequences. Intentionally concealing or disclosing one's sexual identity based on a host of factors reveals a degree of personal agency that has been missed in prior GLBQ research.

Whereas much of the prior research on GLBQ youth has focused on how sexual identity unfolds in face-to-face contexts that require physical presence, our studies of GLBQ college students of color suggest the importance of online social networking sites as a "space" for identity negotiation. At least one-third of our participants over time shared stories about how they:

1. "Came out" online by either changing their sexual orientation status from "straight" to "gay or lesbian," joining an online group or "liking" a page that signaled their same-sex attraction, or by intentionally changing

their "relationship status" on Facebook to "in a relationship with" the name of their same-sex or bisexual partner (see Figure 2);
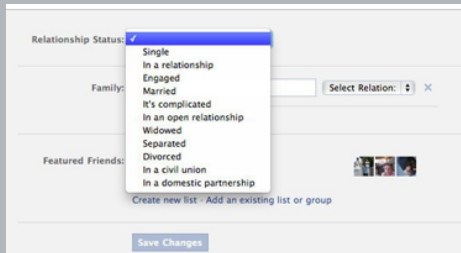

Figure 2.

2. Posted pictures of themselves on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter in close proximity to or in intimate moments (e.g., hugging, kissing) with a same-sex partner, romantic interest, boyfriend, girlfriend, or "date" as many participants referred to them;

3. Carefully managed their online profile and social networks via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter through

a fairly elaborate set of decisions that allowed them to self-disclose their sexual orientation to close friends, peers, and distant "associates" whose opinions seemed to matter less or they felt less at risk of judgment and rejection; careful management of one's online identity also enabled students in our studies to conceal their identity from parents, family members and religious leaders—this was sometimes done by "unfriending" or denying family members access to their "real" online profile.

These observations provide useful empirical evidence that may evolve into a theory of online sexual identity self-disclosure for GLBQ students of color. Whatever it's called, it should move **Beyond Coming Out** through linear, stage-like phases to a more dynamic, non-linear process that ebbs and flows from self-disclosing to intentionally concealing and back again, from posting online to picking a label or resisting labels altogether.

"[Coming out online is]...just nice and an efficient way to tell everybody instead of going to every single person and dealing with every single person's reaction. I can just put it out on Facebook and everybody knows and I don't have to care about your reaction. I don't have to see it. So it's nice.

-Hun Soo

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

By now, we hope it is clear how our findings presented in this national report relate to prior or existing theory, extant research, and future educational practices designed to ensure the success of GLBQ college students of color. But, as every good instructor knows, repetition is the "mother of all learning, father of all action, and thus the architect of accomplishment," to paraphrase Zig Ziglar. Mere repetition of facts and figures ad nauseam can feel a bit like preaching however and an old proverb declares that "example carries more weight than preaching." So this table was developed with these goals in mind—to share again how our findings connect with prior knowledge and to provide useful examples that illuminate key insights and main takeaways from this report.

*We adapted D'Augelli's stages by changing "lesbian/gay/bisexual" to "GLBQ," in consonance with the focus and language of this national report.

EXISITING MODELS	RELATION TO OUR FINDINGS	KEY INSIGHTS/NEW QUESTIONS
Cass (1979) • Identity Confusion • Identity Comparison • Identity Tolerance • Identity Acceptance • Identity Pride • Identity Synthesis	Recall that GLBQ college students of color use a variety of labels and terms for self-identification, sometimes intentionally to signal aspects of their "core self" but sometimes more casually. GLBQ college students of color might use language, phrases, or words akin to what Cass called "Identity Confusion" (the 1st of 6 stages) that in actuality is part strategy for rejecting binary labels (e.g., gay or straight), embracing sexual orientation, or articulating a richer, self-definition that reflects all aspects of their identity such as race, class, gender, religion, and cultural background. Cass' model suggests that compartmentalizing one's sexuality is a marker of "Identity Comparison" (2nd of 6 stages) and while likely true for some GLBQ people, GLBQ college students of color may compartmentalize their sexuality (i.e., identify publicly as straight but privately as gay) for any number of reasons as part of a complex identity management process to avoid loss of family support, religious shaming, and physical harm.	Remember that every student is unique and made an individual by the distinctiveness of their own story. Theories are designed to generalize, to offer plausible explanations, to predict what might happen, take place, or unfold. Existing theories should not be used to judge the appropriateness of a students' developmental trajectory, the health of their identity evolution, or the extent to which they are "out" enough to be "truly part" of the gay community. Identity synthesis may be a final destination for some, if not most, but it might also be just another stop along the path to fullness of self for others. Must one become a gay offspring to be deemed developmentally healthy? What if social identity status or comparison occur at church or in an ethnic fraternity? Where does that fit? Listen to GLBQ college students of color. Embrace their stories and views of themselves. Resist boxes, binaries, categories, and open up to the idea of GLBQ students' development being **Beyond Coming Out** and current models.
D'Augelli (1994)* • Exiting heterosexual identity • Developing a personal GLBQ identity • Developing a GLBQ social identity • Becoming a GLBQ offspring • Developing a GLBQ intimacy status • Entering a GLBQ community	Recall that GLBQ college students of color in our studies rarely articulated a formal, stage-like process for their sexual identity development. And identity disclosure was characterized by a far more complicated process of choosing to conceal, disclose, or even camouflage one's sexual identity depending on a number of factors like who wants to know, the individuals' assessment of who needs to know (or deserves to know), perceived receptiveness of the individual, threat of harm, loss, or negative reaction, to name a few. Many GLBQ college students of color enter intimate relationships with same-sex partners and share their sexual orientation with close friends or online before they ever attempt or consider disclosing this information to their parents/guardians, siblings, grandparents, or spiritual leaders—quite the opposite of what D'Augelli's model suggests.	

From Leading Voices...

"Dr. Strayhorn and CHEE offer us a crucible of conviction in which to test our willingness to root up and discard the alienation of the past and choose new ways of being with one another. Thank you!"

Cindi Love, EdD
Executive Director
ACPA-College Student Educators International

juan battle, PhD
Professor
City University of New York (CUNY)

"A wealth of research exists discussing how racial and sexual minorities experience their multiple identities as loci of oppression and liberation. This document not only adds to that chorus, but includes specific recommendations to a variety of stakeholders ... as we work to liberate, educate, and empower all students!"

Epilogue

The average attention span is about 8.25 seconds, so, if you're still reading by this point it means that we've (hopefully) done a good job of feeding your interest, and that you're ready to answer our call to action!

Over the past 30 pages or so we've brought together two never-before published findings on GLBQ college students of color. While insights presented in this report represent timely and important contributions to existing scholarly research and theory, **Beyond Coming Out** is much more than a compendium of research findings.

As scholars committed to generating and disseminating distinctive research contributions to ensure success for all students, this topic is particularly important. While there is some evidence that the hearts and minds of people across the country are changing, there is much more work to be done. Research is important as it provides the lens through which we can glean understanding about the experiences of GLBQ college students and develop policies and practices that enable their success.

Unfortunately, *most* research and theory rely primarily on White GLBQ people, rendering GLBQ college students of color voiceless. Thus, it's no surprise that many efforts to provide support to GLBQ college students fall short of improving conditions for students of color in particular. You cannot help those whom you don't understand.

Beyond Coming Out *unapologetically* centers the voices and experiences of GLBQ college students of color, in keeping with each author's epistemic values. Recognizing their stories as both credible and crucial is the first of many steps necessary to improve the quality of life for GLBQ college students of color. Additional "next steps" are offered in the following section. We ask that you take serious the recommendations presented and commit to moving "Beyond Coming Out" in organizations, on your campus, and in your community.

Recommendations

The complexity of issues surrounding GLBQ college students of color and their success defies solutions of a singular nature. In other words, merely creating LGBT resource centers on campus or hiring support staff to work with non-heterosexual students are unlikely to yield substantial gains alone. What is required is a comprehensive approach to the problem—that is, systemic change to the policies, practices, mindsets, and campus conditions that disenfranchise GLBQ students of color and threaten their academic success.

The time is now for all to join forces in taking action against injustice, discrimination, and harassment of any kind towards GLBQ individuals of color. Offered in this section is a robust set of recommendations targeted toward various groups and organizations. It is important to note however that while our study focused exclusively on the experiences of GLBQ college students of color, our recommendations may hold promise for improving the experiences of all students.

To Administrators:

There are a number of things campus administrators can do to create conditions that engender success for all GLBQ college students generally, and ethnic minorities specifically. We recommend that campus administrators:

- Make clear and strong public statements about the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion, as well as the safety and protection of students with diverse sexual (and gender) identities.

- Acknowledge, affirm, and provide resources to campus GLBQ student organizations that involve persons of color. Keep in mind that these organizations may be small in number but can make a big difference for GLBQ students of color on campus. Like any other organization, they need space to host meetings, events, and financial resources to cover expenses.

- Ensure equitable and fair campus media coverage of

Recommendations (cont'd)

GLBQ students of color events and issues in campus publications and other media outlets such as website and social media.

- Offer implicit bias and diversity workshops for the entire campus community to educate, raise awareness, and promote sensitivity of staff, faculty, and administrators to GLBQ students' needs.

- Provide training and professional development activities for campus police that enhance their capacity for working with GLBQ issues such as hate crimes, bias incidents, anti-gay violence, and sexual assault.

To Faculty:

Faculty members have a unique opportunity to engage GLBQ students of color both inside and outside the classroom. We recommend that faculty members:

- Incorporate GLBQ specific courses within curriculum or content within courses, especially highlighting the experiences or contributions of people of color. Consider findings from a NGLTF study, which reported that 29% of students felt the curriculum did not adequately represent the contributions of GLBQ people. Make use of GLBQ speakers, YouTube videos, texts, and films as instructional materials.

- Be conscious—thinking in the moment—about use of gender pronouns such as "he" or "she" in the classroom and strive to use more inclusive language like: us, they, or people (plural pronouns). Work to avoid heteronormative statements and phrases such as "husband and wife" or "women date men," for instance. Remember, words matter.

- Recall that GLBQ college students of color use myriad identity labels ranging from gay to pansexual, to name a few. You might deploy such terms when talking generally about human sexuality, demographics, and diversity.

Recommendations (cont'd)

- Assign readings authored by or videos that include GLBQ people of color and their many contributions to society, your field, or the subject under study.

- Set ground rules that govern conversations in the classroom and prohibit the use of inflammatory or offensive language referring to one's sexual orientation, gender identity, or combination of both. For instance, ask your students: "Are there ground rules that we might set that will help make this a safe learning environment for all?"

To Policymakers:

Policymakers across various levels and sectors have an opportunity to formulate, enact, revise, or remove policies that affect the academic and social success of GLBQ college students of color. We recommend that policymakers:

- Formulate new or revise existing policies such as Title IX and anti-discrimination clauses to include protections against harmful behaviors toward GLBQ people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

- Adopt policies that permit inclusion of questions related to sexual and gender identity on college admissions applications, enrollment forms, and other documents so as to collect data on GLBQ students, faculty, and staff. Many administrators wrestle with the decision to include such questions, thinking them "too personal" to ask. Keep in mind that many demographic questions are arguably personal by definition such as one's race/ethnicity, age, family income, and marital status; yet, we ask these questions all the time. Sometimes we get in our own way overthinking the obvious--we can't address needs if we don't know they exist. Data makes the invisible visible and helps us identify needs that can be addressed directly. Collecting data on GLBQ students, faculty, and staff is useless if do not use it; ask for what you'll use and use that for which you ask.

Recommendations (cont'd)

- Allocate resources to develop a nationally representative longitudinal dataset aimed at understanding GLBQ people, their experiences to and through education, and labor market outcomes, to name a few; this is especially relevant for federal agencies such as the US Department of Education, Bureau of Census, or National Science Foundation, to name a few. Survey designs should ensure adequate representation of people of color through oversampling or a stratified sampling approach.

To Researchers:

Given CHEE's core commitment to generating distinctive research contributions, we want to encourage fellow researchers to help advance knowledge about GLBQ college students of color. We recommend that researchers:

- Uphold ethical standards of responsible conduct in research and work hard to safeguard privileged information about GLBQ people, especially college students of color, who volunteer to participate in studies, assessments and evaluations. Some participants in our studies reported fears and worries about "being outed" by researchers who, despite good intentions, might include too much detail about a participant and their background which could inadvertently reveal their personal identity. For instance, believe it or not, there may be only one "Black gay male Merit Scholar, majoring in math at [a] historically Black college" in the Northeast. While striving for the "rich, thick description" that characterizes high-quality qualitative research, one might also violate ethical standards to protect confidentiality and identity of students. Effective practices for balancing rich details with such protections should be shared with the larger research community.

- Treat all participants fairly and pay close attention to preferred ways of being identified (e.g., pronouns, names). Violating preferred norms can be read by

Recommendations (cont'd)

participants as disrespectful, harmful, and do violence to the research setting, which limits, if not prevents, the researchers' ability to access information held by the informant. It's important for researchers—quantitative or qualitative—to check implicit biases, challenge existing assumptions about sexuality, and avoid heteronormative language in interview protocols, surveys, and other research-related documents.

• Establish data-sharing agreements and anticipate potential hurdles to data sharing, concerns, and financial obligations, given the importance of generating new knowledge about GLBQ college students of color. One way to achieve this goal is to launch a number of new studies on GLBQ college students and, indeed, some of this needs to be done. Another way to advance this line of inquiry is by mining existing datasets or databases of qualitative data using a battery of techniques, approaches, and theoretical frameworks. Secondary analysis of qualitative data

is a relatively new practice but holds promise for yielding new insights from interviews, focus groups, and documents. Research centers like CHEE might develop data sharing agreements that provide at-large researchers with access to data from GLBQ college students.

• Bear in mind how research findings are utilized by consumers of published results. Highlighting implications and making solid recommendations is just one way to make sure research findings are not used to deny GLBQ students access to campus resources, equal protections under the law, or supportive environments that promote inclusive excellence in higher education. Working together, researchers can collect new or analyze existing data, disseminate results, share findings and datasets, and #DoGoodWork for all.

Recommendations (cont'd)

To GLBQ Students and Allies:

Much of what we offer in this report speaks directly to the experiences of GLBQ college students. We recommend that GLBQ students and allies:

- Report incidents of discrimination, bullying, and harassment, no matter how seemingly small or minor. Verbal and physical abuse based on race/ethnicity and/or sexual orientation have no place in higher education and cannot be tolerated, bystanders have a responsibility for what they see.

- Acknowledge and respect everyone's preferred identity labels in terms of the pronoun, name, ethnicity, or sexual identity they choose to use. Don't think of this as a "gay issue" or "choice" in the political sense. Champion everyone's right to self-expression. We get to name our reality and must respect others' naming too. Ignoring this can negatively impact relationships, sense of belonging, and safety of your campus peers.

- Demonstrate your commitment to fostering inclusion of all people, including GLBQ students of color, by making strong statements encouraging their involvement (e.g., "We simply can't do this without our GLBQ friends") or using one's position to make room for their voice at the proverbial table (e.g., "I've talked enough but want to open the space for others to share...").

- Given the importance of belonging and involvement to student success, CHEE recommends the establishment of gay-straight alliances even on college campuses. Organizations like SMYAL provide training and support to youth who wish to form or expand such groups on their campus.

To Faith-based Organizations

The relationship between sexuality and faith and/or spirituality can be difficult to negotiate, especially for GLBQ college students of color. However, there are a number of changes faith leaders and faith-based organizations can

Recommendations (cont'd)

make to better support GLBQ college students people of color specifically and GLBQ people of color broadly. We recommend that they:

- Avoid teaching or preaching that encourages anti-gay violence or harm to people on the basis of sexual orientation or any fixed identity trait. Work to build inclusive churches, synagogues, places of worship, nonprofit organizations, gatherings or groups that celebrate the humanity of all, affirm people's experiences, and promote belonging.

- Create space for open dialogue about diverse sexualities, encouraging congregants to reserve judgment and learn about the challenges of GLBQ people of color. For instance, host speakers or guest ministers who can help engage in empowering dialogue about diverse sexualities, spirituality, and faith development.

- Practice compassion. Educate self about intrapersonal,

interpersonal, and societal challenges faced by GLBQ people of color.

- Speak out against the inequitable treatment of GLBQ people of color by the religious community and broader society. Remember that a fundamental belief that connects virtually all world religions and dominant faith movements is valuing human dignity and love for all mankind [sic]. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said. Let's join hands across faith and spiritual lines to fight against injustice...period.

- Establish new and expand existing outreach ministries and inreach activities to address the life and health disparities experienced by GLBQ people of color with a focus on prevalent issues, including homelessness, abuse, and physical and mental health, among others.

Appendix: List of Scholarly Publications*

Books

Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Strayhorn, T. L. (Ed.). (2013). *Living at the intersections: Social identities and Black collegians*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Book Chapters

Strayhorn, T. L. (2010). Racial and sexual identity politics in college: New directions in campus equity. In T. E. Dancy, II (Ed.), *Managing diversity: (Re)Visioning equity on college campuses* (pp. 141-158). New York: Peter Lang.

Strayhorn, T. L., Blakewood, A. M., & DeVita, J. M. (2010). Triple threat: Challenges and supports of Black gay men at predominantly White campuses. In T. L. Strayhorn & M. C. Terrell (Eds.), *The evolving challenges of Black college students: New insights for policy, practice, & research* (pp. 85-103). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). Coming out, fitting In: Interrogating the social experiences of Black gay male undergraduates at predominantly White institutions. In T. E. Dancy, II & M.C. Brown (Eds.), *African American males and education: Researching the convergence of race and identity* (pp. 151-170). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Strayhorn, T. L., & Scott, J. A. (2012). Coming out of the dark: Black gay men's experiences at historically Black colleges and universities. In R. T. Palmer & J. L. Wood (Eds.), *Black men in black colleges: Implications for HBCUs and beyond* (pp. 26-40). New York: Routledge.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2013). And their own received them not: Black gay male undergraduates' experiences with White racism, Black homophobia. In T. E. Dancy, M. C. Brown II, J. E. Davis (Eds.), *Educating African American Males: Contexts for consideration, possibilities for practice* (pp. 105-120). Washington: Peter Lang.

*This list reflects publications generated from the larger research program, NSGSC, led by the lead author.

Appendix: List of Scholarly Publications

Strayhorn, T. L. (2014). I ain't no punk: A framework for Black gay male students' belonging. In F. Bonner (Ed.), *Building on resilience: Models and frameworks of Black male success across the P-20 pipeline* (pp. 200-214). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Strayhorn, T. L. & Tillman-Kelly, D. L. (2013). When and where race and sexuality collide with other social locations: Studying the intersectional lives of Black gay men in college. In T. L. Strayhorn (Ed.), *Living at the intersections: Social identities and Black collegians* (pp. 237-257). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Journal Articles
Strayhorn, T. L., Blakewood, A. M., & DeVita, J. M. (2008). Factors affecting the college choice of African American gay male undergraduates: Implications for retention. *The NASAP Journal, 11*(1), 88-108.

Strayhorn, T. L, & Mullins, T. G. (2012). Investigating Black gay male undergraduates' experiences in campus residence halls. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing*, *39*(1), 140-161.

Strayhorn, T. L., Glover, S. T., Kitchen, J. A., & Williams, M. S. (2013). Negotiating multiple identities: A critical narrative inquiry of how Black gay men "make it" at historically Black colleges and universities. *The NASAP Journal*, 15(1), 42-56.

Strayhorn, T. L. & Tillman-Kelly, D. L. (2013). Queering masculinity: Manhood and Black gay men in college. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men, 1*(2), 83-110.

Strayhorn, T.L. (2014). Beyond the model minority myth: Interrogating the lived experiences of Korean American gay men in college. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*(6), 586-594.

White Papers
Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). When intersectionality and critical race theory meet face-to-face: The story of Andreas and Marquis. MMKC: Men & Masculinities Knowledge Community, 2012 (NASPA Conference Edition), 6.

Appendix: List of Resources

Bisexual Resource Center
http://www.biresource.net/

Campus Pride
http://www.campuspride.org/

Center for Black Equity
http://centerforblackequity.org/

Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals
http://www.lgbtcampus.org/

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
http://glsen.org/

Human Rights Campaign
http://www.hrc.org/

National Black Justice Coalition
http://nbjc.org/

National Center for Lesbian Rights
http://www.nclrights.org/

National Native American AIDS Prevention Center http://www.nnaapc.org/index.htm

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
http://www.nqapia.org/

Point Foundation
http://pointfoundation.org/

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL)
http://www.smyal.org/

The Trevor Project
http://www.thetrevorproject.org/

Unid@s, The National Latina/o LGBT Human Rights Organization
http://www.unidoslgbt.com/

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