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## Executive Summary and Recommendations: Developing Best Practices to Support Equity for LGBT\*Q+ Identified Faculty and Staff at the University of Dayton

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## **Developing Best Practices to Support Equity for LGBT\*Q+ Identified Faculty and Staff at the University of Dayton**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Over the course of the academic year 2019-2020, under the sponsorship of the Women's Center and the Women's and Gender Studies Program and with the support of the Provost's office through a Gender Equity Research Fellowship, Dr. Darden Bradshaw engaged in a year-long qualitative study examining policies, practices and perceptions of equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBT\*Q+) faculty and staff on the University of Dayton campus.

The study participants included 35 self-identified LGBT\*Q+ faculty and staff members from the University community who participated in one-on-one interviews, focus group sessions or both as well as 13 senior administrators who participated in one-on-one interviews. Benchmarking of UD's 25 peer institutions policies that support equity was also undertaken. Data analysis was emergent and interpretivist, bringing together the participants voices to portray the multi-faceted experience of being LGBT\*Q+ on a Catholic, Marianist campus.

Findings indicate that definitions of equity are not universal and thereby necessarily impact one's perceptions of equity for LGBT\*Q+ employees on campus. Regardless of one's definition of equity, the lived experience of LGBTQ+ persons on a Catholic Marianist campus can be characterized as filled with tension, invisibility, and persistent marginalization. This invisibility and marginalization may be greater for those individuals who identify as trans\* or bisexual and is facilitated by the acceptance of a heteronormative cisgender lens. Out of the University of Dayton's Marianist charism and Catholic foundation, spaces designed to foster inclusion are experienced by LGBT\*Q+ persons as not fully welcoming. Admittedly there have been significant and welcome changes in the last four years, but we have far to go to achieve equity and current diversity efforts are not diverse enough. LGBTQ+ faculty and staff seek action as well as statements of support and point to the fatigue as microaggressions and overt aggressions persist. Furthermore, while policies are designed to foster equity and changes to University policies have occurred to increase equity it is practices, often applied across the campus in inequitable ways, that appear to create the greatest disparity.

A summary of major recommendations are as follows:

- Recognize that LGBT\*Q+ identified employees have not had the same employment and benefits related protections afforded others for years and are therefore, anxious that such rights and protections continue. If the institution wishes to demonstrate "respect for the dignity of all," then make a commitment to LGBT\*Q+ identified faculty and staff that regardless of decisions made in the political arena or the U.S. Supreme court that the University will ensure equal employment protections regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression and will ensure continuation of health care benefits for same-gender married persons.
- Use clear language within policy descriptions and language that includes gender-neutral pronouns, sexual orientation and LGBT\*Q+ labels including same-gender or opposite-gender spouse thereby fostering an employee's ability to determine if a particular policy is applicable to their situation without needed to "out" themselves to pursue benefits or care, especially as it relates to transition related services.

- Publicize policies broadly, as in the Chosen Name policy, or when altered to be more inclusive, as in the recent changes to the Family Leave policy, making them widely known.
- Define what constitutes ministry as it applies to the ministerial exception clearly ensuring that positions to which such a definition may apply are 1) noted within the job announcement and description, and 2) made overt in the hiring process.
- Develop and demand clear messaging in regards to expectations of language use in internal documentation and communication; through education and critical practices ensure all people affiliated with UD experience a university in which language use is inclusive and does not marginalize or “other” people; educate and train employees in pronoun usage.
- Reevaluate the way the term ally is used ensuring it does not continue to promote a silencing effect.
- Diversify and expand definitions of diversity in use on campus and within units.
- Promote deeper, richer diversity education. Provide regular and sustained educational programming that intentionally targets LGBT\*Q+ identities and scholarship. This includes internally and externally facing opportunities.
- Foster and encourage difficult conversations and dialogue not in spite of, but because of the Marianist charism and Catholic doctrine, as it pertains to LGBT\*Q+ people. Embrace the difficult as a welcome part of being a Catholic, Marianist institution,
- Develop and dedicate resources to the development of an LGBT\*Q+ Equity and Diversity position with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- Critically assess and devote financial resources to ensuring the physical plant is inclusive and that gender-neutral restroom facilities are increased with signage and maps (both analog and digital) for easy access.
- Utilize the results of the Halualani and Associates Diversity Mapping Project and AIM4 Community Excellence survey to examine and subsequently adapt curriculum to represent LGBT\*Q+ content, including funded opportunities within CAP.
- Provide more training about implicit bias in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity for Tenure & Promotion processes. Develop mentoring programs for new LGBT\*Q+ tenure-track faculty and support measures in which implicit bias (specific to LGBT\*Q+ issues, gender identity and sexual orientation) are considered when using Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) scores for tenure and promotion decisions.
- Ensure measures for employee evaluation are equitable and reflective of LGBT\*Q+ diversity; develop and offer increased training in regards to implicit bias in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity for supervisors and staff engaged in assessing staff positions. Create and fund an equity advisor position for staff members.
- Undertake measures to ensure the diversity of the employee body is fully reflected from those in the highest positions of power to the makeup of committees thereby making advancement opportunities accessible for all.
- Commit to and ensure there is visibility of LGBT\*Q+ persons across campus both for prospective and current employees. This includes support of affinity groups, like QDayton, through web presence, inclusion in discussion within new employee/new faculty orientations, and in other communication.
- Cultivate and seek diverse applicants with targeted and strategic recruitment efforts for LGBT\*Q+ persons.

- Acknowledge the manner in which oppression takes a toll on LGBT\*Q+ persons and shift the burden of the work to facilitate equity for LGBTQ+ people, ensuring it does not fall solely on the shoulders of those with that marginalized identity.
- Offer listening sessions that promote discourse among those with this identity and the institution, as well as just for those who share this affinity.

There are additional recommendations embedded within the report. Finally, it is a strong recommendation that future research be conducted that: 1) addresses the intersectional nature of equity; 2) that a campus-wide survey or study is conducted thereby ensuring the voices of those on the margins of the marginalized are heard while also engaging allies, and 3) that a separate study examining equity concerns and issues specific to staff be undertaken.