



GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND  
TRANSGENDER ISSUES

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The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Issues Knowledge Community (KC) of NASPA ([www.naspa.org/kc/glbtc](http://www.naspa.org/kc/glbtc)) provides avenues for both social and professional involvement. Knowledge Community activities allow for personal and professional growth, increased awareness and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender professionals and students, and promote understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender professional and student needs.

The KC produces white papers, which are compilations of current and cutting-edge research summaries and briefs. The goal of the white paper is to share knowledge and information about issues related to the status of the GLBT community in higher education that will prompt discussion, further research and showcase scholarship being conducted by students and professionals in the field. Higher education and student affairs professionals can consider these recent findings/results when tailoring programmatic and pedagogical efforts on their campus. All scholars, researchers and professionals are welcome to submit summaries or briefs about their scholarship to the whitepaper; membership in NASPA is not a prerequisite. For more information about the submission guidelines, contact the KC leadership at [glbtkc@gmail.com](mailto:glbtkc@gmail.com)

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# Some of us are brave: A review of the research on the experience of Black LGBT professors in colleges and universities in the United States

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*This is a preview of a book chapter from the forthcoming book *Gender and Sexualities in Education: A Reader* - Edited by Dennis Carlson and Elizabeth Meyer*

“If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.”- Audre Lorde

In 1982, Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith sought to name or give expression to black women's studies in their groundbreaking anthology. All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave: black women's studies. In their introduction, Hull, Scott and Smith state, “black women could not exist consciously until we began to name ourselves” (Hull, Scott, and Smith, p. xvii). They go on to point out that the process of naming was the necessary starting point for the growth of black women's studies, for by naming themselves; black women were able to speak to their unique experiences of gender and racial oppression. This process of naming is doubly difficult for individuals who bear identities that are fixed and unfixed at the same time. Scholars have argued that race is a permanent social construct with material consequences (Brondolo, Gallo & Myers, 2009; Harrell, 2010; Love et al., 2010). On the other hand, queerness as a social construct is commonly based on liminality, instability, and fluidity. What are the personal and professional implications of having an identity that is irreversibly located by skin color and displaced by sexual orientation? This broad question is central to this review of the research that provides a backdrop against which to read black LGBT professors' experiences and their range of responses to university environments.

In order to better understand the literature I created two categorical strands. The NDHE literature strand is comprised of articles addressing identity experiences for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and racial and ethnic minorities. The second categorical strand of literature is composed of transdisciplinary studies of queer people of color in education (QPOC) The body of literature on African American faculty discusses how experiences of personal and institutional racism are primary obstacles to professional success in university settings (Flowers and Jones 2003; Fries-Britt and Kelly, 2005; Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey & Hazelwood, 2011). NDHE is an umbrella term that includes the experience of marginalized communities on campus. Research in this broad area outlines critical issues confronted by racial and sexual minorities in higher education and allows the juxtaposition of the experiences of marginalized individuals across race, gender, and sexuality. The literature describes issues of disclosure, homophobia, and heterosexism as major barriers to LGBT faculty success on college campuses (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Rankin, 2005; Sears, 1992). Campus climate is one of the literature's most prominent themes across both categories.

The diverse research reviewed has direct implications for research and policy. Future research will have to focus more directly on both the status and processes of self-definition and autonomy in respect to Queer People of Color in higher education. This literature review strives to make clear and plain some of the issues facing LGBT people of color in higher education. This review is limited: it is not exhaustive in articulating all of the issues but does provide a jumping-off point for further research.

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# Complex decisions: Exploring the college choice process for Black gay men as they choose between historically Black universities & predominately White institutions

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In the American societal context and within higher education Black gay men live “invisible lives” (Boykin, 1996; D’Augelli, 1994). Their voices and experiences are often silenced. An array of scholarship has been produced that underscores the college choice process for African-American students (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, C., & Rhee, 1997). However, the experiences of students who identify as both Black and gay and how they negotiate the college choice process is virtually non-existent within higher education literature.

This study expands the discourse and explores how Black gay men simultaneously negotiate both race and sexuality during the college choice process when deciding to attend historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominately White institutions (PWIs). This scholarship is guided by the following questions: 1) How do Black gay men negotiate race and sexual orientation when choosing to attend an HBCU or PWI? and 2) What roles do race and sexual orientation play in the college choice process of Black gay males?

In order to frame our study we utilized Crawford, Allison, Zamboni and Soto’s (2002) Dual-Identity Development Framework. This framework allowed us to situate our participants and provided a vital base while analyzing participant collegiate contexts and their varying levels of sexual identification. Perna’s (2006) Proposed Conceptual College Choice Model combines both the economic and socio-cultural models that have been widely used in higher education scholarship.

Lastly, we examined campus climate research that confirms that LGBTQ students have more negative perceptions of their campus climates than their heterosexual counterparts (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld and Frazer’s, 2010).

The participants in this study attend a private HBCU located in an urban area, and a nearby PWI, a public, suburban land-grant university. Six participants from each university were included in our study.

Our findings revealed that participants in the Assimilation and Integration phases, those with high racial/ethnic identification, chose to attend HBCUs. Consistent with scholarship chronicling college choice for Black students these participants had strong ties to HBCUs through familial relations, alumni, and community organizations that promoted pursuing higher education within the HBCU context (Freeman & Thomas, 2002). The students profiled within the study held strong perceptions of both PWIs and HBCUs. Negative perceptions of the HBCU environment impacted those students who chose to attend PWIs. Some participants held very negative views of the Black community and these perceptions influenced their decision to pursue an HBCU. One participant expressed that “those schools [HBCUs] were just not for me. I have been around ignorant Black people all my life and I didn’t want to endure that in college” While these students were African-American they often used language that included negative Black stereotypes and deemed these institutions and its students as the “other”.

The students profiled within this study considered race and sexuality in different ways when deciding to attend either an HBCU or PWI. Understanding the identities and potential struggles of

students within the LGBT community provides significant insight that can aid both K-12 and higher education communities to better serve these students as they seek to find their best institutional fit.

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# Stormy weather: The influence of individual forces and urbanization on the persistence of LGBTQ faculty

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*“Although I am comfortable, I do not see a climate in which out LGBT faculty members can hope for advancement or promotion.”* (study participant)

The above quote from one of our study’s participants supports research that suggests an oppressive environment for LGBTQ faculty (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Rankin, 2003; Sears, 2002). Climate, the shared perceptions of the work environment, is cited as a critical factors in retaining faculty (Callister, 2006). Most of the research focusing on the LGBTQ community exhibits a metropolitan bias (Bell, 2000; Whitlock, 2009). There is limited research on LGBTQ faculty and nothing on campus climate and retention. The purpose of our study is to understand the influences of faculty-level characteristics and urbanization on retention of LGBTQ faculty.

Data originated from Rankin et al. (2010). Of the 5,149 participants in the national survey, all faculty cases (n = 498) were selected for analysis. To perform a functional multi-level analysis, only institutions with  $\geq 2$  faculty cases were included. IPEDS was used as a second data source to capture urbanization. LGBTQ faculty’s “intent to persist” was the variable of interest. Respondents were also given the option to clarify their reasons for leaving or persisting through open-ended responses. The qualitative data was analyzed for patterns using five-tier ethnographic coding (Saldana, 2009). Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was used with the quantitative data to address the multi-level research questions.

## Results

The findings suggested that 141 of the 349 faculty (40.4%) considered leaving their positions. The faculty who considered leaving reported the following experiences: feared for physical safety, denied employment, advancement, or fair consideration in salary; exclusionary behavior; and reluctance to disclose identity to avoid intimidation. Faculty who considered leaving had significantly higher perceptions of campus intolerance towards LGBTQ people, including a negative learning environment and harassment. Faculty who persisted reported significantly higher perceptions of LGBTQ inclusiveness, including support for faculty, response to harassment, resources, leadership, and curricula.

Results from the HLM analysis (Table 1) indicate that the desire to leave their institution for LGBTQ faculty increases by:

- 30% if they are at their institution for 21 or more years ( $p < .05$ );
- 68% if they fear for physical safety ( $p < .001$ );
- 64% if they have higher perceptions of denied employment, advancement, or fair consideration in salary due to LGBTQ ( $p < .10$ );
- and 65% if in a rural area ( $p < .10$ ).

## Discussion

Of the 349 LGBTQ faculty surveyed in this study, over 40% seriously considered leaving their positions because of an oppressive climate. One participant indicated that “the oppressive atmosphere on my campus was overwhelmingly anti-LGBT” and another stated his same sex partner and himself “were subject to verbal harassment from other faculty members when we married.” In a very real sense, these

faculty considered leaving because of their identity, not job dissatisfaction. Results from our study demonstrate the significant relationship between faculty desire to leave and negative campus climates.

Through the multi-level analysis, we determined that LGBTQ faculty who work in a town or rural setting are more likely to want to leave than faculty who work in an urban environment. Participants shared comments regarding anonymity and one stated “I think about how much easier it would be if I were in a more progressive state or a city.” Many cited remote locations as “too conservative” and that a “bigger campus [would offer] more diversity.”

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>	<b>SE</b>		
<b>Adjusted log odds of leaving</b>				
Intercept	0.70***	0.14		
<b>Institution demographics</b>				
Urbanization: suburban	1.1	0.27		
Urbanization: town/rural	1.87*	0.38		
<b>Fixed effects</b>				
<i>Demographic information</i>				
Number of years employed: 21+	0.43**	0.41		
<i>Personal experiences</i>				
Feared for physical safety: sexual identity	2.13****	0.22		
Denied employment, advancement, or fair consideration in salary: sexual identity	1.79***	0.21		
<b>Chi-square table</b>				
	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>chi-square</i>
Intercept	0.5	0.28	79	100.00*
* <i>p</i> <.10 ** <i>p</i> <.05 *** <i>p</i> <.01 **** <i>p</i> <.001				

**Implications**

- Implement policies that welcome LGBTQ employees and students
  - Include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in nondiscrimination clauses
- Extend equitable benefits (e.g., trans-inclusive health policies, domestic partner benefits, tuition remission, child-care services, etc.) to LGBTQ faculty
- Support non-tenured faculty members engaged in LGBTQ-focused research
- Actively recruit LGBTQ faculty members across disciplines
- Implement procedures that directly respond to acts of intolerance

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# Disidentifying the rainbow: Toward a Queer of Color Critical Theory

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The purpose is to describe the contours of a critical theory in the family of Queer Theory and Critical Race Theory called the Queer of Color Critique and begin to describe its implications to student affairs practitioners, scholars and researchers as a post-modern conceptualization of identity. Torres, Jones & Renn (2009) discussed three distinct theoretical identity paradigms that are employed in student affairs to frame individual identity status and development: enlightenment, sociological, and post-modern. Identity framed through the enlightenment paradigm is innate and develops along a clearly linear path. Sociological situates the self in the context of interaction with social symbols and institutions. Queer of Color is consistent with Torres et al.'s description of the post-modern paradigm, which is concerned with challenging the notion of identity stability by promoting fluidity, performativity, and fragmentation (p. 586). The Queer of Color Critique framework employs intersectionality to retain fluidity of identity; disidentification, reflecting performativity; and oppositional consciousness, which demonstrates fragmentation.

## Disidentification

Disidentification allows one's identity to remain "in-flux, thus imbuing actions with multiple meanings (Ferguson, 2004). Munoz (1995) described it as a form of mimicry of colonial power that simultaneously demonstrates a mastery of the colonizer's symbols while also putting those symbols to use for purposes they were never intended. It has also been associated with Foucauldian and feminist acts of resistance to power structures (Sawicki, 1991).

To disidentify is "to constantly find oneself thriving on sites where meaning does not properly 'line up'" (Munoz, 1995, p. 84). It brings "both similarities and differences simultaneously to bear on one's identity" (Medina, 2002, p. 664). The idea of performativity is central to disidentification. Performativity reveals that individuals can step out of or transform an identity by performing it differently than the dominant construction (Butler, 1990). Identity is always changing because every time an individual repeats an action, it is impossible to repeat it exactly the same. Each small iteration reflects the fluidity of the identity (Abes & Kasch, 2007).

Disidentification interrupts the narrative that queer students of color are too small in number or insignificant to matter. Disidentification casts a counter narrative that queer students of color are powerful, creative and inventive agents worthy of study, whether through qualitative or quantitative measures.

## Oppositional Consciousness

Alimahomed (2010) studied Asian and Latina lesbian's experiences and concluded that by their very existence, queer women of color "disrupt dominant discourses of queerness and representations as authentic racial subjects" (p. 154). Consequently, they employ a "differential mode of oppositional consciousness" that involves an ability to read cues and symbols and adopt the most effective choice of action for survival. Among queer native women, Walters, Evans-Campbell, Simoni, Ronquillo and Bhuyan (2006) also observed the ability to occupy and shift among social positions within the same identity.

Haritaworn (2008) advanced the concept of oppositional consciousness by linking the capacity to hold dual frameworks or systems of knowledge to a queer of color theoretical standpoint.

He said queer people of color shift positionalities. The concept of positionality “urges us to reflect on where we stand, to define our speaking positions and how they relate to others, especially those whom we claim speak for” (§ 1.5). It is important for individuals (academics, researchers, theorists, community activists, policy makers, etc) to identify and stake out their social identities in order for others to evaluate their claims. To fail to acknowledge one’s position is by default to exercise hegemonic authority and power (Haritaworn, 2008).

In different discourses oppositional consciousness is also understood as “code-switching” (Molinsky, 2007; Nilep, 2006) or “visibility management” (Lasser & Tharinger, 2003). Whatever it is called, oppositional consciousness suggests experiencing multiple identity development can result in one having being bi- or multi-culturally literate and possessing distinct knowledge systems that inform one’s identity.

### **Intersectionality**

McCall (2005) described intersectionality as an attempt to retain the complexity of a subject and eschewing simplification when addressing issues of identity. She identified strategies intersectional theorists have developed to “satisfy the demand for complexity and, as a result, face the need to manage complexity, if for no other reason than to attain intelligibility” (p. 1773). The three approaches, anticategorical, intercategorical, and intracategorical, are employed to various extents by post-modern theories of identity discussed by Torres, Jones & Renn (2009). Anticategorical, often employed by Queer Theory, destabilizes and abandons categories. Social life is considered too irreducibly complex (Rahman, 2010). Intercategorical involves the provisional adoption of categories and employs them to highlight inequities between and among categories. Critical Race Theory, which has a vested interest in the category of race, employs intercategorical intersectionality. It uses settled categorical definitions rather than questioning the settled categories. Finally, intracategorical problematizes categories (but doesn’t actually challenge them per se) by focusing on the complexity within the categories (Hancock, 2007). It seeks to describe variance rather than compare (McCall, 2005). Intracategorical best fits the intersectional aims of the Queer of Color Critique. Rather than deny the importance of categories, it focuses on the “process by which they are produced, experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday life” (McCall, 2005, p. 1783).

### **Conclusion**

The Queer of Color Critique is in the family of critical theories that interrogate whose lives, knowledge, and identity are considered legitimate by society (Butler, 2009). Popular critical theories that have recently been introduced in higher education and student affairs are Critical Race Theory (Parker & Stovell, 2004) and Queer Theory (Renn, 2010). The Queer of Color Critique builds on those theories and applies oppositional consciousness, disidentification, and intersectionally in ways that have emerged from research with queer people of color. Student affairs scholars, researchers and practitioners can use it to reframe identity development to include multiple ways of arriving at healthy identity (Moradi, DeBlaere, & Huang, 2010), navigating multiple research positions (Moradi & DeBlaere, 2010) and research methods (Griffin & Museus, 2011).

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# Whose classroom is it anyway? Performing identity to transform pedagogy.

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## Purpose

“Changing what we teach means changing how we teach” (Culley & Portuges, 1985, p. 2). Yet since the United States Supreme Court mandated diversity as a compelling state interest (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003), colleges and universities have diversified their respective student populations without adequately preparing and supporting educators to effectively serve them. Oppression may be systemic or individual (Katz, 1978, Samuel, 2005). As an institutional space, the classroom unites, without interruption, the systemic oppression and individual interactions between different social identities contributing to its reproduction in larger society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000). According to Samuel (2005), oppression has evolved from an aggressive prejudicial behavior to a more subtle form, making it difficult to detect and therefore more severe. Existing literature may refer to it as “blink of an eye unintentional oppression” (Moule, 2009, p. 321) or microaggressions defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults” about historically marginalized social identities (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007, p. 271). Given the relations of power inherent in the classroom setting, such polite oppression impacts the teaching and learning environment referred to here as classroom climate.

## Context

According to Sue and Sue (1999), the biggest hurdle to creating inclusive and safe spaces is an individual’s failure to understand personal unconscious bias and discrimination. Sears (2002) found that the quality of interpersonal interaction largely determines the supportive nature of a learning environment. Each faculty member’s awareness, knowledge, and skill to competently engage social identities and shape multicultural environments vary greatly. In the classroom, faculty members are often unaware of the negative impact their own pedagogical practice can have on their students. Much of the social justice work in higher education has focused on training faculty and developing curriculum to reflect multiculturalism (Vacarr, 2001). The lack of on-going faculty support to better engage the complexity of diversity leaves a gap between conceptual understanding of social identity marginalization and the ability to effectively respond to interpersonal reactions with the “other”. This results in institutional and individual marginalization. This study bridges that gap by providing a framework for on-going cultural competency development for faculty.

## Rationale

Systemic oppression rooted in White superiority is typically unrecognizable by White people (Taylor, 2009). This facilitates “othering” at an individual level through polite oppression (Yep, 2003, p. 18). Sustained dominance of this master culture is normalized through social regulation, control, and othering. Schools are driven by and operate under this dominant culture of power (Delpit, 1988). The master narrative of middle class, White, Christian, and heterosexual determines access and success (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2003). Students whose social identities fall outside this scripted master narrative are often marginalized (Carter, 2005; MacLeod, 2004; Venzant Chambers & McCready, 2011). Students with multiple marginalized identities face greater levels of



“marginalization and diminished engagement” (McCready, 2010). For lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) Students of Color, this marginalization includes tokenization, being forced to choose one identity over another (Kemp-DeLisser, 2012), and passing or covering (Yoshino, 2006). Literature exists on the impact of hegemony on diverse faculty (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008) and diverse students (Lewis, 2003; McCready, 2004, 2010). There has been less research on the actions of White faculty (Pennington, Brock, & Ndura, 2012; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, Campbell, 2006) and little focus on how these actions intersect with pedagogy (Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010; Vacarr, 2001). Embracing the oppositional stance to extant literature, this exploratory study focuses on White undergraduate faculty critically reflecting on experiences to be more effective.

### Research Questions

Using a CRT framework for my analysis, this research study seeks to interrogate white heterosexual faculty member’s interactions with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) students of color at a predominantly white institution and provide a more complex analysis of what happens in these learning spaces using performance ethnography. The following questions guide this study:

1. How do LGBQ students of color perceive and experience classroom climate at a predominantly white institution?
2. How do white heterosexual faculty members perceive and experience classroom climate?
3. What prepares these white heterosexual faculty members to enter the classroom and effectively engage with interactions that reveal racial, ethnic, gender identity, and sexuality difference?
4. How can white heterosexual faculty members make meaning of their experiences to better facilitate these interactions with the “other”?

### Methodology

Critical performance ethnographies enliven the oppression of socially imposed roles (Alexander, 2005) and constructively examine values, attitudes, and practices (Denzin, 2003). The study will have four distinct phases:

- I. “Scripting”: Participating White heterosexual faculty will examine their concept of classroom climate using semi-structured interviews and written teaching philosophy statements.
- II. “Counterstories”: A purposeful sample of LGBQ Students of Color will critically reflect on experiences of classroom climate through personal narratives and semi-structured interviews. The counterstories will then be dramatized into performed ethnography.
- III. Performing counterstories: A trained acting ensemble will stage the dramatized pieces as part of a workshop experience. Participating faculty respondents view the performance and capture immediate impact using and “free-writes” (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p. 165).
- IV. Reflection: Respondents will also read a complete transcript of the life history interview of one of the students [identities protected] featured in the performance. Participating faculty respondents will complete a semi-structured post-performance group discussion interview and complete a written reflection about pedagogy.

I will analyze where, when, and how teachers converge and diverge on their approach towards interpersonal interactions, the resources needed, and make recommendations for effective practice.



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