Sexual and Gender Diversity

Wouter Deconinck

WILLIAM & MARY

2012 Physics Department Chairs Conference
“Developing an Inclusive Diversity Climate”

LGBT+ Physicist WG: T. Atherton, R. Barthelemy, E. Long, M. Ramsey-Musolf, E. Simmons,...
Sexual and Gender Identity

- Gender (≠ biological sex at birth): result of socially constructed ideas of how a particular sex acts
- **Sexual orientation**: pattern of attraction to a gender
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual
- **Gender identity**: gender a person identifies as
  - Male, female, transgender (trans male, trans female)
- **Gender expression**
  - How one chooses to act, independent of sex at birth
- **Identity politics**
  - varying interpretations of different categories (e.g. queer)
Campus Climate and Diversity

• Hurtado and Milem, Chang, Antonio: **campus climate** in dimensions of historical legacy, structural diversity, organizational, psychological, and behavioral climate
  - initially applied to ethnic/racial diversity

• **Effects** of campus climate on success: research shows
  - campus environment perceived as hostile → **higher attrition** (Hurtado & Ponjuan, Guiffrida et al.)
  - inclusive campus environments → **students feel better equipped** for multicultural society (Gurin et al.)
  - healthy campus climate → **democratic skills and positive learning** (Hurtado & Ponjuan)
  - gender discrimination → **negative impact** for women faculty (Settles, Cortina, Malley, Stewart)
Why Should You Care?

• **Students**: acceptance by peers and department, safety, substance abuse, name on degree, identity development, education, ...

→ student recruiting, performance, retention!

• **Faculty**: productivity, sense of community, partner benefits, dual-career issues, recognition of international marriage and partner visas, ...

→ faculty recruiting, performance, retention!

• Intersectionality: many people in multiple minorities (gender, orientation, ethnicity, disability,...)
Why Is This Timely?

- “2010 State of Higher Ed for LGBT People”
- Survey of 279 faculty in several academic areas
- Experiences of LGB faculty in STEM fields:
  - 47% observed exclusionary behavior
  - 21% experienced exclusionary behavior
  - 53% considered leaving

Exclusionary behavior experienced, by source:
- 70% administrator
- 30% students

Exclusionary behavior experienced, by cause:
- 80% sexual identity
- 30% gender expression
- 30% gender

APS March 2012: Sexual Diversity

• “First-ever session on sexual and gender diversity at a major physics conference.” (APS News, April 2012)

• Six invited speakers and lively panel discussion

• Over 120 attendees throughout the session:
  – 49% sexual/gender minority, 47% non-minority
  – 60% students, 40% post-graduate (19% faculty)
  – “I think showing successful academics who are out is an important way to dispel the notion that being out precludes or limits one’s professional opportunities.”

• Need for data, for role models, and for awareness

• Strong support from APS for diversity and inclusiveness

What Can You Do About It Today?

• In your department:
  – Use gender neutral and inclusive language ("partner" instead of "wife") in department communications
  – Invite LGBT speakers to present colloquia
  – Include LGBT faculty on departmental committees to offer experiences and solutions (but avoid tokenism)

• At your institution:
  – Participate in surveys that query LGBT demographics (e.g. CampusPride climate index)
  – Include protections for “sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression” in EEO policies

• More actions in the handouts!
Further Resources

- LGBT+Physicists
  - http://lgbtphysicists.x10hosting.com

- CampusPride Climate Index
  - http://campusclimateindex.org

- “2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT People”
  - http://campuspride.org/research

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

- Out in STEM (oSTEM)
  - http://www.ostem.org
Additional Slides
How Would You React?

• An undergraduate student in your program comes out as transgender and asks you, the chair, about resources and about the atmosphere in the department.

• A lesbian faculty candidate asks you about health benefits for her partner when you offer her a tenure track position.