

Implicit Inclusion Is Not Enough: Effectiveness of Gender Neutral Housing Policies
on Inclusion of Transgender Students

Thesis

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Abstract

Increasingly discussions about gender neutral housing policies are beginning on campuses of higher education around the United States. Currently there is a dearth of information on how to begin drafting such a policy and no standards exist to consult for the comprehensiveness of a policy. Administrators interested in creating these policies must take into account a variety of factors, both logistical and ethical when creating a gender neutral housing policy. This study utilizes a single-site case study methodology to understand the process two administrators underwent at one institution as they attempted to implement a policy of Mixed Gender Housing at their university. This study found that the need for explicit inclusion of transgender students in the verbiage of a policy is essential in order to promote a campus community that is supportive of providing transgender students with on-campus living environments conducive to their needs. The exclusion of transgender students from policy discussion such as this institutionalizes and reinforces campus-wide transphobia, and perpetuates an essentialist understanding of gender identity as a dichotomy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Colleges and universities operate largely under the construct of gender as a binary (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis & Tubbs, 2005). This is exemplified in the options of gender categories on forms and documents, the labeling of restrooms, the partitioning of locker rooms, and the assigning of on-campus housing roommates, rooms, and floors. This makes navigating college campuses as an individual whose gender identity is not located within the binary difficult. These systems of organization preclude or make problematic access to the daily functions of an institution. Converting on-campus housing to all-gender housing begins to break down this systematic exclusion for transgender individuals. This form of housing allows students to live with students, without segregation by gender, providing opportunities for individuals to select roommates without being forced to disclose their gender identity.

Gender exists as a set of identities beyond the confines of the current social dichotomy (Bornstein, 1995). Under the largely accepted definition of gender, individuals are either male or female (Bornstein, 1995, 1998). This stands in direct

opposition to scientific evidence that not all individuals are born as either men or women, or as one of two sexes (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Bornstein, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Given the social structure of gender, biology is analogous to the gender dichotomy of male and female. The gender dichotomy therefore correlates to the binary of gender expression as masculine or feminine. The structure of gender systematically eliminates a set of individuals who are not born biologically congruous with a specific sex, who identify as an alternate gender than the one they are socialized into, or who identify their gender in a different way entirely.

Although research is a necessary basis for continuing to support and understand the issues facing transgender college students, it is also imperative that educational opportunities be provided for student affairs professionals (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005; Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Renn, 2007). Clear policies must be implemented that are financially and administratively supported in order to make schools safe for GLBT students (Beemyn, B., 2005). GLBT students are at risk for issues ranging from discrimination to psychological trauma to suicide (Griffin & Ouellett, 2004).

Institutions of higher education have an obligation to create safe housing spaces for individuals who identify outside of the current constructs of gender (Beemyn, B., 2005; Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Renn, 2007). It is imperative that residence halls create environments where transgender students can succeed. Forcing transgender students into housing segregated by the gender dichotomy not only disrupts their gender identity development but it also places these students'

safety at risk (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B.G., 2005; Beemyn et al., 2005). Once these students are admitted to an institution it is essential that every opportunity for them to succeed is provided.

Many schools are beginning to work towards implementing gender neutral housing programs. Currently, little research has been conducted on the subject and no comprehensive program database exists. These facts make it difficult for institutions to begin developing such programs, because there are no trends or precedents to follow. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that because these programs are relatively new it is difficult to understand precisely how inclusive and effective they are for transgender students. There has yet to be a study of how an institution plans to implement a gender neutral housing policy in order to provide a more inclusive on-campus living environment for their transgender student population.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the process of creating a gender neutral housing policy. A case study was used in order to understand the explicit and implicit administrative goals of creating such a policy, particularly in terms of transgender students. In order to increase inclusivity of transgender students, it is necessary for colleges and universities to examine, identify, and redesign the physical and social structures that are currently based on the gender binary. Ultimately, it is imperative that higher education administrators

acknowledge that existing structures alienate and exclude students who do not identify within the two primary gender identities (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis & Tubbs, 2005). Safety, comfort, and support should be strived for as these structures are redesigned to be more inclusive of transgender students (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B.G., 2005).

The goals of this study were to contribute to the current research on gender-neutral housing and provide research on the factors for consideration when creating a policy. This research aimed at providing a concrete analysis of the process of creating a gender-neutral housing policy and the goals surrounding implementation. This research expands the literature supporting gender-neutral housing as a more inclusive option for transgender students.

Guiding Research Framework and Questions

The research was conducted as a single site case study, which is an approach to qualitative research that explores phenomena occurring at a specific time or place as a means of understanding the larger implications of this occurrence (Merriam, 1998). Constant comparative method was used to analyze the data (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Employing this method allowed me to simultaneously examine the data for concepts and then compare and relate these concepts to one another, synthesizing categories for larger, emergent themes.

Data for this study included documents and interviews from a medium-sized public institution on the west coast. Participants were asked to share their personal

views of the policy and the process of creating it. The guiding question and sub questions for this study are as follows:

What are the explicit and implicit goals of creating a gender neutral housing policy?

- a. How, if at all, do issues for transgender students factor into the creation or implementation of a gender neutral housing policy?
- b. What are the administrative motivating factors for creating a gender neutral housing policy?
- c. What institutional factors are taken into consideration when creating this policy?

Significance of Study

According to the 2010 study conducted by the National Student Genderblind Campaign (NSGC) only fifty-four institutions in the United States exist with a gender neutral housing policy. In comparison to the estimated 4,000 institutions of higher education nationwide, approximately one percent of U.S. institutions have such a policy. Given this fact, a single site case study will contribute considerably to the existing research on gender-neutral housing.

Collecting data at a single institution provided a clearer understanding of the potential impacts that gender-neutral housing can have on a campus, its students, staff and administrators. The use of a single location also created an opportunity to understand the process of creating and enforcing such a policy. Using a single site

provided detailed data that can support future research on policy implementation and the effects of gender-neutral housing.

Through this case study the development of goals and factors of a gender neutral housing policy were analyzed. This study is important both for institutions of higher education and for offices of university housing as an outline of the process of instituting such a policy. Trends of policies of this type can then be established, thereby assisting other universities and colleges in creating a gender neutral housing policy. Practitioners can also better understand the types of institutional research that they can possibly encounter when working to create such a policy. This study will prove to be most beneficial for practitioners at institutions of higher education, notably those in or in conjunction with housing offices. This group of practitioners can be influential in successfully implementing a gender neutral housing policy.

This study also examined the extent to which the needs of transgender students are a part of the policy making process. The results will assist with understanding how such a policy can impact the transgender student population and their inclusion within on-campus living environments. This inclusion is based on the ability for all students to make decisions regarding roommates without segregation based on gender. The option to make such a choice is imperative for transgender students who do not always define themselves based on the gender binary under which most housing offices operate. The results of this study can be used to demonstrate how effective a gender-neutral housing policy is in providing

transgender students with a less restrictive process for selecting a roommate or living environment.

Operational Definitions and Terminology

For the purposes of being most inclusive the pronoun “xe” will be used in place of either “he” or “she” and the pronoun “hir” will be used for both “his” and “her.”

It is important to understand the definitions of terms used throughout the study. For the purposes of this study it is necessary for the reader to understand the researcher’s definition of “gender” and “gender neutral housing policy.” These definitions will then later be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the case study site in creating an inclusive gender neutral housing policy.

“Gender” has come to represent all aspects of classifying one’s identity around or between the normative binary of man and woman (Bornstein, 1995, 1998). Gender is a complex concept that consists of several different components, including social influence and personal identity. Gender is the system that turns males and females into men and women (Bornstein, 1998; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Society is centered around the construction of binaries of opposing terms (Fausto-Sterling, 2000) and defines gender as a mutually exclusive set of two categories, where if you are not a man you must be a woman (Bornstein, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Gender is assigned at birth, and plays a large role in dictating identity because from birth, individuals are not just placed in these roles, but they are gendered within these roles (Bornstein, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

Representing one's gender is a cyclical process that becomes shaped and redefined throughout one's life (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Bornstein, 1995, 1998). One's gender identity correlates and derives meaning from one's biological sex (Bornstein, 1995). Society places a meaning on individuals based on their biology, creating gendered expectations, which are defined as a person's gender role. These expectations are then internalized by the individuals and influence one's gender identity. This ascription to societal norms of gendered characteristics and behaviors is projected outwardly to the rest of society. In turn, this gender identity is rationalized by outsiders based on the socially constructed gender roles into which individuals should fit. The individual then receives these messages and reconstructs his gender identity. The process then continues where societal norms and expectations mediate the individual's gender role and individual gender identity.

Gender is a series of binaries, including biological sex (man and woman), male and female, masculinity and femininity, gender expression, gender performance, and personal gender identity (Bornstein, 1995). These binaries are inherently contradictory because they are not completely inclusive of all person's gender. When understanding that gender variance exists, it is difficult to argue that the term should still operate as a mutually exclusive duality. The term must be expanded to encompass alternatives to male and female. The term must also allow for self-definition and reject social imposition of an identity.

For this argument, the term "gender" will not speak so much to the system of power that the identity represents in society. Instead it will represent a personal

identity that is individually constructed. “Gender” will refer to the personal identity, one that is individually constructed, out of the different factors of one’s biology, one’s gender expression, and one’s gender attribution. “Gender” will therefore correspond to the terms “men” and “women,” recognizing that these words differ from their social correlates of “male” and “female” which are used predominantly to denote biological makeup.

For this study I have defined “gender” as a continuum, with the poles marked by the identity binary of men and women. This is done fully recognizing that by doing so, the definition of gender is not fully inclusive, and does not provide adequate room for individuals identifying as a gender not present within this continuum. This definition of gender allows for colleges and universities to expand their operational use of the term without reinventing the system in place. While it might not be the most inclusive form of the term, it is far more inclusive than the male-female binary and allows for students to not only self-define their gender but to do so outside of the constructs of such a dichotomy.

“Gender Neutral Housing” will be used to describe a policy implemented by an institution of higher education that allows individuals to cohabitate with other individuals who have different gender identities than their own in an on-campus living environment. This definition allows for a variety of interpretations, including the type of living arrangement, the number of units offered out of the total number of on campus living spaces, and the actual wording of the policy.

Delimitations and Limitations of Study

The delimitations of this study consider the lack of existing research on the subject of gender neutral housing. As demonstrated in the review of existing literature, there is little analysis of the individual decisions made by institutions to create such a policy. There is even less existing data on the degree to which transgender student needs are accounted for in the creation of such policies. Although through this study a detailed analysis of gender neutral housing policy creation was conducted, it is limiting in the degree to which it can be generalized to other institutions. This is because of the variety of factors present in the creation of any policy that are individual to the university.

Although representative of almost two percent of the existing gender neutral housing policies nationwide, individual characteristics of the institution impact and shape aspects of the policy at this specific university. These factors include the location, institution type, structure of policy approval processes, and community influence. Although these characteristics are also essential components of understanding the goals of the policy, they are limiting in that they are unique to this specific institution. Further analysis of additional policies will be necessary to draw results that can be generalized.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research topic, the purpose and significance of the study, and the limitations of the research. Chapter Two includes an extensive review of relevant literature, in an

effort to contextualize the study. The literature review discusses theories of gender and provides descriptions of current gender neutral housing policies in the United States. Chapter Three details the methodology and the methods used for this study. Chapter Four reports the themes found in this study, analyzes and examines these themes within the documents and interviews. Chapter Five concludes the study, discussing results and their implications for practice and future research on gender neutral housing policies.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In chapter two I discuss the existing literature as relevant to this study. It begins with a historical overview of gender and moves through transgenderism. Following the overview of gender theory, issues facing transgender students in college are discussed. The chapter concludes with literature on the existing gender neutral housing policies nationwide. This chapter illustrates the variety of issues facing transgender college students today. It also discusses current literature on what college and university administrators can do to assist transgender students through the creation of services and policies, particularly in on-campus housing. Specifically, this literature demonstrates the need for continued research on ways that on-campus living communities can be more inclusive of transgender students.

The History of Gender

Historically, “sex” and “gender” were used as two interchangeable terms with indistinguishable meanings (Laqueur, 1990). Gender (or sex) served as a mechanism of dividing society and labor. The family unit worked to support itself and all of the labor associated with doing so occurred in the individual households

(Engels, 1884; Gilman, 2005). As labor began to move out of the house and a public workforce began to emerge, the division of labor shifted. In western societies this division of labor came to represent a division between the public and private spheres, where men worked out of the house and women worked within the house (Chodorow, 1978; Kollantai, 2005). This marked the beginning of the privatization of women's lives and the association of women's work with reproduction and motherhood, and the gendering of traits, characteristics, and abilities (Chodorow, 1978).

Bodies have always served a pivotal role in demarcating the differences between men and women. Western notions of the body view it as separate from the mind. This duality of mind-body has been systematically equivocated to the male-female binary. These binaries combine to create the dominant social view of men as rational individual and women as systems of reproduction (Chodorow, 1978; Engels, 1884; Gilman, 2005; Wollstonecraft, 2005). Women's bodies have thus been objectified, creating an identity of women as vessels. This dichotomy is the foundation of anatomical and psychological differences between the sexes that have served to justify the structuring of Western society (Chodorow, 1978; de Beauvoir, 1952; Engels, 1884; Wollstonecraft, 2005). Gender has been historically represented as a strict binary with clearly defined roles for individuals.

As early as 1792, a change began in the way that women were perceived in the workforce. This shift marked women's reemergence into the public sphere, and the push for equal treatment of both genders. Mary Wollstonecraft (2005) wrote

what is arguably one of the first texts to discuss the role of women within society. Beginning in 1792, women began to push for equal rights, culminating in the suffragist movement. This fight demanded that women's voices be formally heard, and made women's issues public for the first time (Mill, 2005; Millet, 1969; Ortner, 1974; Wollstonecraft, 2005). In terms of gender roles, equality began to be discussed and the normative division of society was challenged. Differentiation between the two genders was still evident, but the rationale behind it began to be challenged.

Second-wave feminism emerged as a challenge to this essentialist approach to gender and social divisions. The beginning of this wave marked a shift in the discourse around gender, connecting it directly to individual identities and thus, identity politics. This view of gender as a personal identity and not a social system of categorization was an instrumental change in the way that gender defined who a person was and could be (Friedan, 2005; Millet, 1969). The gender binary thus became viewed as a political system of power, one that individuals were required to negotiate in order to create their own gender identity. Thus, the binary began to flex in its uniform rigidity, and gradations of gender norms began to emerge.

This binary was further challenged through the continued expansion of the feminist movement and the constructivist understanding of identity formation (Friedan, 2005; Millet, 1969). Gender came to be understood largely in the context of sexual orientation, and as the hetero-normativity of society began to be challenged, so were the possible categories of gender identity (Millet, 1969;

Radicalesbians, 2005). Gender identity converged with the transgender movement to challenge the preconceived definition of the body as a determinant of gender (Halberstam, 1998). The gender binary has thus been reconstructed to incorporate different constructions of personal identities that previously were not possible within the rigid dichotomy. This movement forced the consideration of the distinction between constructed gender and essential genders in order to depict the insufficiency of the male-female exclusive binary (Feinberg, 1993).

One of the most influential scholars on transgender identity, Kate Bornstein (1995), depicts gender as a manifestation of the social construction of class. Gender is thus a structure dependent on power, and this power is hinged upon the polarity of the gender system. In order to subvert the system it must be destroyed entirely. Gender exists as a binary that dictates if one is not a man, then one must be a woman. Their existence and meaning is dependent on the existence and meaning of the other.

The gender binary is a cultural construct, so that culture does not create roles for naturally gendered people, but instead creates gendered people (Bornstein, 1995). Gender roles are thus a collection of behaviors, traits, and nuances that culture ascribes to one of the two genders, creating an infinite series of micro-binaries: if you are not strong you are weak (and both traits correlate to a gender). Gender therefore no longer exists as a system of categorization with two limited possibilities. Gender is now understood as a complex struggle between dominant social powers and personal agency and identity formation. Given the current

understanding of gender as a complex identity that includes more than just two categories, this study aimed to understand how colleges and universities can take an expanded definition of gender into consideration when creating policies.

Sex and Gender

Because gender is one of the primary focuses of this study it is important to distinguish between the terms “sex” and “gender” and how they differ in meaning. The term “sex” has historically referred to the biological, chromosomal, hormonal, and reproductive capacities of one’s body, as set forth from birth (Sausa, 2002). This concept refers to the binary of male-female, with what is popularly believed no alternative to the two options. “Sex” is also often incorrectly employed to refer to one’s gender, which includes the social markers of what distinguishes individuals as men or women, and the expression of such gender as masculine or feminine.

Gender connects the appearance of one’s genitalia to an identity that is rigidly defined as either male or female. There are many different variations of genitalia, including ranges of acceptable penises and acceptable vaginas (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Despite these variations and ambiguous demarcations of genitalia, there remain only two categories of gender. This identity is believed to be fixed, inflexible, and constant throughout one’s life (Bornstein, 1998; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Kate Bornstein disagrees with this notion, stating that gender is instead “neither natural nor essential” (Bornstein, 1998, p. 21) but a performance.

Gender is also a complex social construct with many components. The term “gender role” refers to the social influences and ideals for the way that an individual should behave (Bornstein, 1995; Stryker, 2008). This term also connects the individual to the constructed binary of male and female. It is thus a narrow characterization of an aspect of an individual’s identity. Gender roles are often rooted in the appearance of genitalia, because only two different options for biological composition are scientifically acknowledged. From birth each individual is assigned a gender role that influences the way that xe perceives himself.

The term “gender attribution” refers to the gender which is ascribed based on a collection of social cues and perceptions (Bornstein, 1995, 1998). These cues can come in many different forms: physical, behavioral, textual, and mythic. They include visible characteristics such as body type, hair, and movement, as well as mannerisms, eye contact, documentation and identification, and social archetypes. In other words, others attribute a specific gender to a person based on common understandings of the gendering of these social artifacts (Bornstein, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

Using this information is important for understanding how transgender students begin to navigate their lives as college students. Because an individual can take control over hir gender performance, which is informed by hir gender identity, it can quickly become complicated to include transgender individuals in policies and practices that hinge on the existence of a gender binary. Transgenderism becomes

the next stage in expanding the understanding of gender and redefining it outside of a dichotomy.

Transgenderism

“Gender identity” is the term that defines how an individual perceives his or her own gender (Bilodeau, 2005; Bilodeau, & Renn, 2005; Macgillivray, 2003; Stryker, 2008). This is a personal decision and oftentimes correlates directly with the individual’s gender role. Gender identity is the internalization of the self within the gender categories of male and female (Bilodeau & Renn, 2007). The term “transgender” describes a person whose gender identity conflicts with his or her gender assignment or with the societal expectations for the gender expression that correlates to his or her gender. “Transgender” also serves as an umbrella term for other more specific terms that refer to different gender expressions such as transsexuals, drag, MTF (male-to-female), and FTM (female-to-male) (Beemyn, 2005; Bilodeau, 2005; Stryker, 2008). For transgender individuals, the incongruence between one’s gender identity and gender role begins the process of challenging the social categories that have been imposed upon his or her.

It is important to recognize that feminist, postmodern, and queer theories view gender identity as separate from biological sex (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Bornstein, 1995, 1998; Lees, 1998). Gender identity is socially constructed through interactions and institutionalized power differentials and inequalities. These theoretical foundations thus view gender as a male/female binary that stems from

the class system. Because transgender students exist in a world where they are socialized to identify characteristics as a product of a certain gender, the process of transitioning to a gender that does not correlate to their biological sex is an on-going process of personal identity development.

Problems with gender arise from the inability of society to confront its existence, and the power dynamic inherent in its phallogentricity (Bornstein, 1995, 1998). Gender fluidity, ambiguity, and transitivity make it impossible to make room for transgenders within the gender poles. There exists a social silence surrounding the gendering of transgenders, because acknowledgement of their gender variance threatens the very norms of society. The fear behind incorporating transgenders into the construction of gender is the fixation of gender as part of our identity (Bornstein, 1995). We are defined by our gender and to incorporate gender outlaws into this construction means that our own understanding of our personal identities is at risk. The solution offered by Bornstein (1995, 1998) is to abolish the gender system entirely and thus abolish the partitioning of our identities and our society. This definition of gender can be utilized by institutions of higher education as policies, such as gender neutral housing, are considered for implementation.

Medical and Social Definitions of Transgenderism

Transgenderism is complex and can be difficult to understand. This knowledge is necessary in order to comprehend why an institution would choose to implement a gender neutral housing policy. Transgenderism is often viewed as

threatening to the structure of society because it challenges the concept that gender only has two options (Bornstein, 1995; Bornstein 1998; Carter, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). If transgender persons indicate gender options outside of the binary system then the system is flawed. This threatens to disassemble one of the founding systems of identity. Furthermore, individuals who identify exclusively as either male or female find this idea troublesome because it challenges their personal identity as a man or a woman.

There remains a medical stigma around the gender identity of transgender persons (Bilodeau, 2005; Bornstein, 1995; Carter, 2000; Stryker, 2008).

Transgenderism is viewed as a disorder that can be treated, often through gender reassignment surgery. The medical field believes that it is indeed possible to fix persons who do not identify as a gender that is congruent with their genitalia (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). This idea compromises the validity of the belief that gender does not simply occur as the social binary and instead can be a personally defined choice.

Central themes of a transgender journey include visibility, self-identity and acceptance, shame, societal oppression, and incongruence of genitalia and self (Allen, 2003). These concepts weave the individuals telling their stories together, demonstrating that while gender identity is a personal journey, all individuals exist in a society that constricts personal identity by our gender. Themes such as these contextualize the reasons why institutions would wish to create a gender neutral housing policy.

Campus Climate for Transgender Students

The campus climate for transgender students is often one of hostility or unfriendliness (Beemyn, 2005). Aside from issues facing all students attempting to navigate their institution, transgender students often face the additional issues and problems of explaining their gender identities, being unable to find access to public restrooms and locker rooms, and negotiating potential discrepancies between their gender or name of record and preferred gender or name (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Nakamura, 1998). All of these issues are magnified by the fact that institutions nationwide have been reluctant to recognize and actively support transgender people (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005).

While many institutions have moved towards actively programming for and assisting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer students, transgender students are often included in these services with little thought to their differing needs (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). This exacerbates the hostile environment with a guise of inclusion. These environmental stressors often leave transgender students exhausted and alienated. In order to better serve transgender students, institutions of higher education should continue to examine how certain policies and artifacts are innately gendered and work to move away from such dichotomous and exclusionary practices. This includes examining the ways that residence halls

depend on the division of students based on gender, providing little opportunity for individuals who identify outside of this binary.

Transphobia continues to serve as a barrier on college campuses. When transgenderism is not well understood, it causes other individuals to become fearful as a coping and distancing mechanism (Spade, 2010). It has also been found that transphobia results when an individual feels that the existence of a transgender individual threatens his or her identity within the gender binary (Nagoshi, J. L., Adams, Terrell, Hill, Brzuzy, & Nagoshi, C. T., 2008). Therefore, the presence of transgender individuals can serve as a threat to the rigidity of the social construction of gender, resulting in transphobia as a means of coping with and rejecting transgenderism as a valid identity (Craig, 2009).

On college campuses, transphobia can be detected as an underlying current that runs through policies and practices that adhere to and perpetuate the gender binary, with resistance to acknowledging the existence of other gender identities (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). Transphobia can furthermore be communicated in overt and covert ways. Institutional administrators can send the message that transphobia is acceptable through the passive reinforcement of the gender binary on their campuses, including in forms, printed materials, websites, and policies and procedures (Negrete, 2008). When this message is sent to transgender students, it can have damaging effects on their identity development.

Transgender Student Development

The development of transgender students has been studied by several researchers in conjunction with the development of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Attempts have been made to depict qualitative patterns of involvement, leadership, and identity of LGBT college students (Renn, 2007). Grounded theory has been used to articulate emergent themes in the data because the exploration of current theories and identity models do not encompass fully the identities of LGBT students, particularly transgender and queer students.

Analysis of the identity development model outlined by D'Augelli in *Identity Development and Sexual Orientation* (Bilodeau, 2005) has been used to interpret the development of transgender identity in college students. Two biologically female college students at a large Midwestern institution were interviewed about their gender identity along six stages: exiting a traditional gender identity (Process 1), developing a personal transgender identity (Process 2), developing a transgender social identity (Process 3), becoming a transgender offspring (Process 4), developing a transgender identity status (Process 5), and entering a transgender community (Process 6). The ultimate goal was to identify themes of transgender student development that could contribute to the formation of a separate identity model for transgender students. After interviewing these students it was found that coming out to student peers (Process 3) often corresponded to and connected with the transgender students' political activism (Process 6).

In one particular study, student leaders were identified by organization advisors and asked to participate in interviews (Renn, 2007). They were asked about their role as a leader, their sexual and/or gender identity, and the climate for both on their campus. Students from a large research institution, a small liberal arts institution, and a moderately sized commuter institution were included in this study. Increased involvement as an LGBT leader on campus corresponded to the degree to which the student was publicly out, or publicly displays and acknowledges their LGBT identity, on their campus. This relationship between involvement and identity was depicted as a cycle, where the more involved a student was in an LGBT organization the more publicly they were identified as a member of the LGBT community. Students developed a leadership identity and an LGBT identity, and as their involvement increased, the two identities became more interrelated for the student.

A difference should be noted between student leaders included within the current system and the student leaders who were working for a reconstruction of the current system (Renn, 2007). This difference was connected largely to the student's identity as LGBT or queer. Transgender and queer students were more likely not to see a fit for themselves within the current system and would work for a reorganization that broke the binaries of sexual orientation and gender identity. Recommendations included student affairs professionals educating their coworkers about LGBT student identity development and the personal consequences for students who are publicly affiliated with LGBT organizations.

The D'Augelli model of identity development and sexual orientation in college students was created to understand the development of GLBT student identity. Renn and Bilodeau applied this theory to understand how it pertained to student leadership (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). The aforementioned study analyzed the development of seven students across the six processes outlined by D'Augelli, especially seeking support and entering into the community. The main question concerned the relationship between involvement in leadership in GLBT student organizations and the relationship between leadership development and LGBT identity development. Students discussed their search for LGBT organizations as they began to explore their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In this search they were looking for a community of students with similar experiences. Given the evident need for support and community, the authors concluded that student affairs professionals should work to educate their campuses about LGBT student development. They should also understand the necessity of LGBT student spaces, where students can gather in a designated space to support one another. Lastly, providing housing options that support transgender students' gender identity is another way that transgender students can be supported.

Issues Facing Transgender Students in College

Many higher education institutions have begun to acknowledge the needs of transgender students and the issues that they face on campuses (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Carlson, 1998; Eyermann & Sanlo, 2002; Lees, 1998). As part of a multicultural college education model, visible inclusion must be integrated into

campus policies (Carlson, 1998; Quart, 2008). Publicly emphasizing the institution's position on inclusion serves to benefit the development of transgender students. Transgender students are able to disclose their gender identity with less fear of being stigmatized.

Currently, the majority of college campuses demonstrate little understanding of transpeople and consequently often engage in trans-exclusive practices and policy (Beemyn, B., 2005). Compounding this trans-exclusion is the lack of empirical research on the experiences and needs of transgender college students. In order to assist with changing this climate, a common vocabulary is needed. Current vocabulary does not express the complexities of gender identity. The development of such a vocabulary will aid in shifting discourse from viewing transpeople as having a personal disorder to a social issue of narrow and rigidly defined gender categories (Bornstein, 1995). This vocabulary will also assist administrators to eradicate or change policies that marginalize gender-variant students (Beemyn, 2005; Lees, 1998). Notably, same-sex or single-gender residence hall policies ignore the needs of transgender students and stigmatize those who do not fit into the binary. By educating campus populations about transgender needs and issues more inclusive policies could be implemented that would enhance safer campus-wide environments.

Transgender students struggle with issues of inclusivity on their campuses (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Quart, 2008; Taylor, 2005). It is most often difficult for them to find a safe space, and an arena where they are actively included.

Campus resources are typically limited both in support and in education about the issues facing transgender students (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Eyermann & Sanlo, 2002; Taylor, 2005). Staff members and administrators do not always have the necessary information or education on how to best support transgender students. Added to this are the various daily problems they encounter around campus. These issues include access to health insurance, documentation, bathroom access, locker rooms, and housing (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Lees, 1998; Nakamura, 1998; Simmons, 2005).

Given the variety of daily issues facing transgender students on campus, it is also important for professionals to remember that for many transgender students, college is the first time that they are away from home and can explore their gender identity (Lees, 2002; Rasmussen, Sanlo, Goodman, & O'Carroll, 2005). These students exist in a society that is far from gender neutral and an environment that categorizes people on a binary of gender: if you are not one, then you are the other (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Lees, 1998; Nakamura, 1998). This dichotomy also shows a relationship between socially produced and perpetuated stereotypes of behavior and action. Consequently, transgender people feel invisible or set apart from the campus community. Additionally, the transgender population is not homogenous. Transgenderism varies on sexual orientation and stages of transition. Acknowledging these differences becomes important to recognize the different needs of individual transgender students, and not view them as a single, homogenous group. Although reaching out to transgender students becomes

difficult because they are often closeted, not publicly presenting their true gender identity, efforts should be made to make information available and make them feel safe when seeking it out (Beemyn, B., 2005).

In order to fully address the needs of transgender students on college campuses Kelly Carter (2000) calls for three different strategies to be employed. The first of these is to work to eliminate the use of the gender dichotomy as a presupposition for policy and practice. While the elimination of the gender binary in totality is improbable, even if only because institutions are not independent from the rest of society, making efforts to be gender neutral when possible is necessary. The second strategy is to offer institutional support and resources specifically for transgender students. Many institutions include these resources in tandem with the lesbian, gay, and bisexual support on campus. The final aspect of Carter's argument is to educate the university or college community about transgenderism and transgender issues. This effort works to eliminate bias and misunderstanding and creates a culture that is more aware of the problems associated with relying on the gender binary.

The Role of Policies

When institutions enact nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policies they create symbols of an institutional commitment to preserving and working for equality (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). Further examples of policies that represent this same ideology include LGBT training for staff, faculty, and administration, and

neutralizing terminology by way of removing heteronormative terms from office and department titles. An example of this is changing “married student housing” to “family housing.” Implementation of these policies not only depicts an institution’s commitment to equality, but also begins and fosters discussions about LGBT-specific issues. Ultimately, policies do matter. While it is clear that an institution can hold written policies that are not employed or utilized, the act of creating LGBT-inclusive policies represents the institutional importance of preserving and working for LGBT equality.

Not all policies are passed with ease. It is often the case that when policies are being created with little precedent that resistance occurs (Human Rights Campaign, 2011). Change can be slow to take effect, particularly when an institution is pioneering policy creation around a controversial issue. Examples of such controversial policies include the legalization of same-sex marriage, the addition of sexual orientation to nondiscrimination policies, and recognizing domestic partnerships for benefits.

In 2004 Massachusetts legalized gay marriage (Messinger, 2007). The state government soon faced arguments from many sides arguing that this change in legislation devalued the institution of marriage. States continue to debate the issue of whether or not same-sex marriages should be legalized, an argument that still serves as a primary issue in American politics, and with little resolve visible in the foreseeable future. In the same way, gender neutral housing policies are becoming a national discussion for college and university administrators. Because decisions are

left to individual institutions, there are no national standards or expectations for components of the policies.

Similar controversy continues to surround the decision of institutions to allow domestic partners to qualify for partner benefits. Because offering these benefits is still the choice of individual institutions, administrators continue to encounter the decision of whether or not to extend them to domestic partners (Spielman & Winfeld, 1996). This deliberation tends to center around two reasons: the moral responsibility to do so and the competitive edge provided by doing so. Still implementing such changes to existing policies is still a challenging process that is often met with resistance, particularly so if sexual orientation is not included in the institution's nondiscrimination policy.

Currently no federal law protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Human Rights Campaign, 2011). Instead, the decision to include either is made at the state level. The controversy exists as states debate on an individual basis as to whether or not they will amend their nondiscrimination policies. Such conversations tend to center around issues of religion and general support of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community.

Issues affecting the creation of these policies are similar to those that are now being discussed around gender neutral housing. With any controversial policy comes setbacks. In the same ways that the legalization of same-sex marriage, the addition of sexual orientation to nondiscrimination policies, and the extension of

benefits to include domestic partners have caused controversy, so often does the creation of gender neutral housing policies.

Role of University Housing

Housing offered by colleges and universities provides a safe place of shelter for all (Robison, 1998). According to the Association of College and University Housing Officers, International (2010) part of the mission of University Housing offices is to provide an environment that promotes learning and student success and enhancement. Ideally, along these lines, every student has the right to obtain an education, and on-campus housing that provides an environment conducive to doing so. Housing officers are obligated to uphold standards of conduct and create safe spaces that allow inhabiting students to learn. The residence hall's primary purpose is to assist students with their personal growth and development (ACUHO-I Professional Standards Committee, 2010; Blimling & Miltenberger, 1984; Robison, 1998). The residence halls must be viewed as a safe and comfortable home and each student should be seen as an important member of the community.

Students who live in residence halls succeed in ways that off-campus students do not (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1984; Johnson & Gavins, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Studies have shown that students who live on campus are more likely to achieve a higher GPA, to graduate in four years, and to apply to graduate school. They are also more likely to participate in social, alcohol-alternative activities. Residence halls also improve the self-image of students. As a whole,

residence halls offer structured, supervised opportunities to learn in a new living environment and work towards being an independent adult (Johnson & Gavins, 1996). This environment also sets standards and norms for appropriate behavior, and can support students who violate these expectations. Developmentally, the residence hall environment provides greater support for student growth than living independently off campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Residence halls are designed to assist with students' transition to college life and the university community (Johnson & Gavins, 1996; LaNasa, Olson, & Alleman, 2007; Robison, 1998). They are designed to facilitate and support the psychological, social, intellectual, and physical development of students. Importantly, they also assist with setting and maintaining social values and norms. Students have found that on-campus living facilitates students' social involvement with other students, faculty, and staff members, which integrate students into the social culture and norms of the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Due to the supportive communities that residence halls are often chartered with creating, this study examines the ways that gender neutral housing policies can assist university housing in fulfilling its mission.

On-Campus Housing Issues for Transgender Students

Beemyn, Curtus, Davis, and Tubbs (2005) argue that institutions need to determine the housing options available for transgender students that will create the safest and most comfortable environment. Specific concerns about the physical

design and demographics of the halls exist for transgender students. The best options for students should be found, which take into consideration both the needs of the students as transgender and also the financial expenses of living in the halls with these options.

There are many different ways that on-campus housing can provide support for transgender students. On-campus housing can begin to recognize and acknowledge transgender students through neutralizing the terminology used to define types of housing (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). This can begin to help students feel more included and welcomed. The way that students identify their gender on forms can also be modified to be more inclusive (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Bleiberg, 2004). Residential life offices can also address students' needs on an individual basis, providing opportunities for students to express specific needs and concerns.

Housing that is based on the gender binary does not serve transgender students, and especially does not include those students in transition (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Beemyn, B. 2005; Bleiberg, 2004). Traditional housing buildings are often designed to segregate students based on sex, and typically have communal bathrooms. Such building designs are unsupportive of students who do not identify as male or female in safe self-selection of their housing assignments. Thus, few safe spaces for transgender students exist within on-campus housing (Beemyn, B.G., 2005; Bleiberg, 2004; Griffin & Ouellett, 2002).

Co-educational or mixed-gender halls provide for slightly more inclusion, but only as far as the segregation persists (Beemyn, B.G., 2005; Bleiberg, 2004; Griffin & Ouellett, 2002). Halls that are mixed-gender by floor or suite but not by room still force the student into a living environment based on hir birth gender role. Single-gender housing also means that any change in a student's gender results in a change in housing (Nakamura, 1998). Thus, many transgender students feel that they must forfeit their rights. This study demonstrates ways that policies can provide more inclusive communities for transgender students so that they are not forced to operate within a binary gendered living situation.

Initiatives of Institutions

An increasing number of colleges and universities in the United States are beginning to consider the needs and potential issues facing transgender students (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). It is clear that traditional campus housing operates under a heteronormative gender binary that excludes transgender students. Given research on the identity development of transgender students, institutions are obliged to acknowledge the diverse gender identities that students express and to provide equal access to housing for all students. While institutionally it is important that a formal written policy exists, institutions can best serve transgender students by handling the housing requests of transgender students on an individual basis (Beemyn, 2005). This will help to ensure that each student's personal needs are met and they each receive fair treatment.

Conversations surrounding Gender-Neutral Housing policies have been taking place nationwide. Institutions are making decisions regarding implementing such a policy based on a variety of factors, including institutional type, institution location, student support, alumni relations, and available building space. According to the National Student Genderblind Campaign (NSGC) in 2010 approximately fifty four gender-neutral housing policies existed nationwide (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). Policies differ in the type of student eligible for gender neutral housing, the facilities in which the gender neutral housing is located, and the methods used to assign students. The following is a synopsis of several of these policies.

Themed Housing or Learning Communities

Several institutions offer gender neutral housing as a themed house or learning community. This form of gender neutral housing allows students to reside together based on a mutual interest in gender and sexuality (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). The goal of these policies is to create an environment where students are not restricted to housing assignments based on the “traditional limitations of the gender binary” (Colorado College, 2010). Specifically, this option is seen as ideal for students who have a gender identity or expression that varies from the traditional limits of the gender binary. Predominantly, this option is available to all upper-class students during the room selection process (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010).

Applications for Gender Neutral Housing

A few institutions offer gender neutral housing to students when they request an application. This process involves a student application, and often an interview with a housing administrator (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). A few institutions allow students interested in gender-neutral housing options to be considered on an individual basis (Macalester College, 2010; National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). After granted permission to reside in gender-neutral housing, students select their own roommates or can have the housing office assign them a roommate who has also selected the gender-neutral housing option.

Housing Policies Designed to Support LGBTQ Students

Some institutions offer gender neutral housing in order to allow students of the same gender, opposite gender, or other gender-identities to live together (Humboldt State University, 2010; UC Riverside, 2010). These housing options were created in order to affirm the experiences of lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning students. Priority is often given to students who notify the housing office that they require these accommodations based on their gender identity or gender expression (UC Riverside, 2010).

Upperclass-Only and Lottery Process Gender Neutral Housing

Predominantly, gender neutral housing policies are restricted to only upperclass students (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). Students can indicate interest in this option when completing their “personal profile” on the housing application. The style of room that gender neutral housing is offered in varies by institution, from single rooms in apartments to shared double occupancy rooms.

Additionally, institutions have added a gender neutral housing option to their traditional housing lottery process (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010; Sullivan, 2008; The Pennsylvania Gazette, 2005). The process for selecting gender-neutral housing remains the same as the traditional lottery process, adding the option for students to select a roommate of a different gender. Transgender students are able to select this housing option through the lottery or through a separate and confidential process.

Campus-Wide Gender Neutral Housing

A few institutions allow any upperclass students to live together anywhere on campus (Hansen, 2006; Residential Life & Housing, 2006; Tucker, 2010). The policies allow students sharing a double bedroom to reside with whomever they choose, attempting to take into account concerns and interests of the gay and lesbian community on campus. Policies at these institutions are viewed as being more inclusive of transgender and intersex students as well as students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Many campuses feel that gender neutral housing

fosters living environments that are most conducive to student health, safety, and development. Just as several institutions are successfully implementing gender neutral housing policies, many universities and colleges are being met with resistance as they work to create them.

Institutional Policies Met with Opposition

This section outlines several institutions that were met with significant resistance when creating gender-neutral housing policies. It is important to understand that not all of these policies are implemented with ease. Often administrators and students face opposition as they begin working on a policy. Wesleyan University implemented gender-neutral housing in the 2005-2006 academic year (Wesleyan University's Trans/Gender Group, 2006). In the 2002-2003 academic year the university added gender identity and gender expression to its non-discrimination policy. The following year the institution began designing a gender-blind hall (Ferro, 2003). Placement in this hall was made open to all students, including first-years who selected gender-neutral housing as an option on their housing contracts (Sanfilippo, 2003). In 2004 the university determined that this building would not continue to be gender-neutral for the upcoming school year. This decision was made after administrators took steps to determine how many students were taking advantage of gender-blind housing options (Wesleyan University's Trans/Gender Group, 2006). During the 2005-2006 school year students worked with administrators to implement a university-wide gender-neutral housing policy which was placed on a three-year trial policy.

Harvard University implemented a housing policy that guarantees gender-neutral housing to students with a “gender based need,” which is defined by the institution as transgender or students in gender transition (Kolin & Newcomer, 2009). The university has chosen to delineate between those who want gender-neutral housing and those who need gender-neutral housing. Part of this distinction is due to the limited availability of rooms and suites that are or can be deemed gender-neutral. Many students feel that the policy should be expanded campus-wide and initiatives such as installing locks to bathrooms and suites to privatize them. Harvard has not ruled out the possibility of eventually being a gender-neutral housing campus, and The Report on Harvard Housing Renewal, set to begin in 2012, argues for the university to become as gender-neutral as possible.

The spaces at Harvard University that have been used by the university for Gender Neutral Housing are suites where bedroom locks have been installed by the university (Harvard Trans Task Force, 2010). The Lottery Rules for room selection state that gender-neutral housing is considered on an individual basis, with the appropriate room configuration and with permission from housing administrators. Because spaces that meet these criteria are upper-class or senior housing, this option is not recommended for non-senior groups.

At the end of 2009 a student at Columbia University raised the issue of not being allowed to reside on campus in the same room as his best female friend (Kalawur, 2009). A proposal for gender-neutral housing was submitted to administrators. Proponents of the policy change noted that gender-neutral housing

provides an opportunity for students who identify as LGBT to select roommates with whom they are comfortable. Concerns over the policy centered around providing heterosexual couples with the option of living together on campus. Jeffrey Chang, one of the co-founders of the National Student Genderblind Campaign stated that of the campuses offering gender-neutral housing only about 1% of heterosexual couples choose this option.

The proposal was not accepted for the 2010-2011 school year but is being considered for the following academic year (Tunnell, 2010). Administrators postponed the proposal in order to have a larger campus discussion later in the 2010-2011 school year. These discussions are intended to serve as town hall meetings where students and administrators can dialogue about issues and concerns around what they are labeling “open housing.” This waiting period will also provide the university with time to incorporate the changes into publications, tours, and the housing lottery system. Overall this decision was met with disappointment from the student body. Students expressed concerns that for the 2010-2011 academic year there will be students who are unable to find safe on-campus housing.

Yale College made a similar decision at the beginning of 2009 (Randall & Subrahmanyam, 2009). Administrators cited the need for further research into the implementation of gender-neutral housing as the reason for postponing implementing such a policy. A task force was formed to investigate the effects of gender-neutral housing at peer campuses. In December of 2007 the Yale College

Council was assembled and in January of 2008 voted 22-2 to implement the gender-neutral housing policy. This decision was submitted to the Dean's Office which then formed its own committee to conduct further research. The Dean of Student Affairs stated that the decision is being weighted heavily because the college does not want to isolate gender-neutral housing to specific buildings for fear of marginalizing transgender students.

A proposal for gender-neutral housing was tabled in 2007 at Cornell University after being proposed by a member of the Student Assembly (Marcus, 2007). Administrators stated that the issue was postponed because they feel the university was able to accomplish what it wanted to in terms of gender-neutrality without causing a great deal of commotion. Students involved in the proposal felt that the institution was discriminating against students by denying them the option to choose a roommate regardless of gender.

Several different approaches were taken at these institutions in order to pass gender neutral housing policies. The individuals responsible for initiating discussion about the policies varied from students to administrators. Additionally, the motivating factors ranged from being able to better serve the LGBT community to allowing oppositely gendered friends to live together. The common link between all of these universities is that they were met with several levels of institutional opposition. Many institutions found issue with finding an appropriate building to house gender neutral housing. The factors that impeded these institutions from

implementing the gender neutral housing policies are similar to those that affected the administrators at the site institution in this study.

Analysis of Literature

Significant gaps exist in the current literature on gender neutral housing. The sparse articles on these policies are typically found on university websites or newspapers. Given this, there is little scholarly literature outlining the various aspects of this type of housing, including the variety of housing options labeled “gender neutral.”

Student development theory on the study of transgender identity development is also relatively new. It is necessary for student affairs practitioners to understand how these theories look at gender identity as a binary system in order to assist transgender students. Utilizing such information will enable student affairs practitioners to respond appropriately to incidences of bias, connect students with appropriate resources, and advocate for necessary institutional policy changes. Such understanding will also allow student affairs as a field to create more inclusive college and university communities by challenging the daily operations that function as a product of the gender binary. This will enable transgender students to be more visible and included on campuses.

There are no studies that outline the process an institution used to implement a gender-neutral housing policy. While such policies are becoming increasingly prevalent on college campuses nationwide, little research has been

conducted to illuminate the processes and steps that lead to successful implementation. This means that in order to begin development of a policy an institution must conduct case-study analysis on an individual basis, slowing the process while enough information is collected and benchmarking is completed.

Additionally, the literature shows that there are several methods that institutions can use in order to begin the process of creating a gender neutral housing policy. There are no studies that synthesize this information to draw on larger themes. Studies similar to mine are necessary in order to provide greater clarity and direction to departments and institutions looking to create these types of housing policies. Such information would allow administrators to understand the ways that different institutions have developed these policies and the issues they have faced.

My study aids in closing these gaps, by outlining the processes of implementing a gender neutral housing policy, by addressing the specific issues associated with traditional nationwide on-campus housing, and by connecting gender identity development to the creation of such policies. This study will also serve as a base that can be used when an institution is contemplating creating a gender-neutral housing policy.

It is necessary for student affairs practitioners to understand how institutional policies may look at gender identity as a binary system, thereby excluding transgender students. Utilizing such information will enable student

affairs practitioners to respond appropriately to incidences of bias, connect students with appropriate resources, and advocate for necessary institutional policy changes. Such understanding will also allow student affairs as a field to create more inclusive college and university communities by challenging the daily operations that function as a product of the gender binary. This will allow for transgender students to be more visible and included on campuses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

This study aimed to provide an understanding of the process of implementing gender neutral housing at an institution of higher education. The goal of this study was to analyze the language used in documents and discourse about a gender neutral housing policy to determine if transgender students were a motivating factor in creation of such a policy. It is thought that any gender neutral housing policy will have a positive impact on the transgender student community, even if only indirectly. The role that language and specific terminology plays in the verbiage of such a policy can impact the policy's explicit inclusivity.

The research questions are as follows:

What are the explicit and implicit goals of creating a gender neutral housing policy?

- a. How, if at all, do issues for transgender students factor into the creation or implementation of a gender neutral housing policy?

- b. What are the administrative motivating factors for creating a gender neutral housing policy?
- c. What factors are taken into consideration when creating this policy?

This chapter reviews the methodological approaches used in this study. A general overview of the case is provided. Following this description the procedural outline for the study is discussed, including the site selection, data collection and analysis procedures, ending with the trustworthiness of the research. This chapter provides the reader with necessary information of how the study was conducted and my positionality to the case.

Context of the Case

In January of 2009 two administrators in the office of University Housing began work on a gender-neutral housing policy for their mid-sized public institution on the west coast (Interview, Martina). The development of this policy began following an observed need for it by two housing administrators. After garnering initial support, these two women developed a set of three goals for the first draft of the policy: 1) to ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses, 2) to stay progressive as a housing department, and 3) to create a safe space for transgender students or students questioning their gender identity. The policy was originally aimed at allowing students to reside on campus in the most conducive environment for their personal and academic success, to eliminate

restrictions on roommates based on gender identity and to support transgender and gender-questioning students.

As the policy development moved forward the on-campus apartment complexes were chosen as the site of the gender-neutral housing spaces. These locations were selected based on the layout of the apartments, which consist of four single-occupancy bedrooms and two bathrooms. Roommates would therefore be able to determine who used which bathrooms on an apartment-by-apartment basis because the bathrooms are not gender-specific. Staffing concerns and expectations were also addressed.

Following several meetings in early 2010 the goals of the policy were expanded and altered, shifting the focus from supporting transgender students to providing opportunities for students to cohabitate with the opposite gender. The new proposal outlined that students would self-select their own room and roommates. Additionally, the plans for a Pilot Program began. Unfortunately, just before the program was supposed to begin, University Housing was asked to postpone the initiative for an additional year due to institutional changes in leadership.

Methodological Approach

Case studies in education often approach a problem in a holistic manner, attempting to gain a detailed understanding of the situation, making them particularly useful for dealing with emergent issues of practice (Merriam, 1998).

Merriam states that “[a] case study approach is often the best methodology for addressing...problems in which understanding is sought in order to improve practice” (Merriam, 1988, p.xiii). It is through case studies that educational practitioners can examine a specific program, institution, or initiative in detail in order to understand the occurring phenomenon. Case studies are therefore particularly suitable when the context of the phenomenon is inseparable from the variables within the case (Yin, 1994).

Given the nature of gender neutral housing policies, the use of qualitative research methods and theory were deemed to be the most appropriate for this study. Therefore, constant comparative method was used to analyze data collected for this single site case study. This was helpful given the continuously developing nature of the selected case study site. Corbin and Strauss (2008) state that sound qualitative research occurs when the research questions are able to be worked through in the field.

A single site case study contributed to the existing research on gender-neutral housing. Currently there is little analysis of the individual decisions of administrators at institutions to create such a policy. There is even less existing data on the impact that this type of policy has on transgender students and campus community. Collecting data at a single institution provided a clearer understanding of the potential impacts that gender-neutral housing can have on a campus, its students, staff and administrators. A single site case study also provided an opportunity to understand the process of creating and enforcing such a policy. Using

a single site will provide detailed data that can support future research on policy implementation and the effects of gender-neutral housing.

A case study is a bounded system (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1978). The boundaries of this system mark the experience being focused upon. The data collected from within those lines makes up the pool of data. This data is gathered primarily through personal observation and often involves a collection of variables that are later constructed into generalized themes. At the core, a case study provides for an understanding of a specific experience as a means of giving context and conclusions for future studies and circumstances (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1978).

Typically case studies combine multiple methods of data collection in an effort to create an entire picture of the specific circumstance being examined (Eisenhardt, 1989; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 1998). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) documents, manuscripts, reports, and other materials can be used as primary data alone or in conjunction with interviews and field observations. This study utilizes documents as well as conducted interviews and observations made by the researcher to form the data pool for the case.

Case studies provide a method for capturing the natural ways that human beings conceptualize and make sense of the world (Stake, 1978). Case studies are also considered to be a beneficial method of communicating data to readers. For the purposes of this study, the readers are potential policy makers. Therefore a case study is a tangible way to articulate to these individuals answers to the research questions around gender neutral housing policies.

Naturally, case studies aim at understanding an experience and increasing the knowledge that exists around this experience. Because of this, case studies can become a basis for generalization (Stake, 1978). The knowledge gained by conducting a case study can be used to recognize the uniqueness, the similarities, and the utility of an experience in relation to guiding future action and research. It is through detailed, focused analysis of data that themes, concepts, relationships, and possible theories emerge, forming generalizable conclusions (Merriam, 1988).

Four different characteristics define case studies: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1988). The particularistic nature of case studies refers to their focus on understanding specific problems in the context of their individual situations. Case studies are also descriptive, providing detailed, literal descriptions of occurrences, as opposed to using numerical data to convey meaning. They are heuristic, meaning that they provide readers with new meanings and expand the readers' understanding of what is known. Lastly, inductive reasoning is important to case studies, because generalizations emerge from close examination of the data.

Through case studies researchers are able to recreate a specific occurrence for readers as a means of illuminating a larger problem (Merriam, 1988). Case studies also provide insight into the complexities of a problem, denoting a variety of factors that can contribute to the problem. In this same way, they are able to depict the impact that time, location, and people involved can have on the context of the case. Because of its concrete, contextual nature, case study knowledge provides an

approach to research problems that allows readers to participate in the interpretation process, extending generalizations to their own reference populations (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1978).

Site Selection and Sampling

Sampling occurred at two levels for this case study: selection of the institution and selection of the administrators to interview. The site for the case study was selected through a series of conversations between the researcher and the administrators at the institution. This institution provided an opportunity to observe a gender neutral housing policy as it was being developed. This was a unique opportunity to witness a policy as it was currently being created instead of retroactively inquiring about the stages of an existing policy's development. Conversations with administrators at this institution began in conjunction with a summer internship search. The creation and implementation of a gender-neutral housing policy was discussed as a possible project for me to work with during this internship.

I was selected as the summer intern through a national college and university association search. Upon accepting this position I began discussion with the housing administrators about the use of the institution as the case study site. The administrators agreed to allow me to conduct data collection while at the institution, but independently of the internship. I arrived at the site in June of 2010 and remained at the site until August of 2010. During this time I collected

documents, informally discussed the gender neutral housing policy with administrators and formally conducted interviews.

The second level of sampling occurred after I arrived at the institution. The two administrators interviewed were selected based on their level of involvement with the policy creation and their positions at the institution. Both women were upper level administrators in the office of University Housing. This provided them with enough agency to make policy implementation decisions in conjunction with other institutional administrators. Additionally, these women worked with the creation of the policy from its inception, and were therefore able to provide detailed information regarding the process.

The sampling criteria used for selecting these two administrators is congruent with those outlined by Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006). Sampling refers to the unique characteristics, perspectives, and qualities of the individuals being studied, and their direct connection to the purpose of the study.

The sample size of two administrators was deemed appropriate given the total size of the department. The two women interviewed were two of the four Learning Community Coordinators at the institution. According to Patton (2002), given the methodological design of the study, this sample size provided a minimum sample that reasonably covered the issues at hand.

The two specific administrators who were interviewed were selected based on the purpose of the study. Because the study aimed at understanding the factors

that administrators face when creating a gender neutral housing policy it was clear that the most important factor for selecting the sample would be the degree to which the administrators had been involved in the policy creation. These two women had worked with the policy since its inception and were the involved in every step of its creation. They were therefore asked to participate based on their knowledge of the policy.

Data Collection

Data was collected between the months of June, 2010 and August, 2010. As a participant in the site, I utilized three different categories of data: documents, interviews, and observations. In conjunction with the use of case study, these three forms of data were collected in order to create a detailed picture of the case (Creswell, 2007). All three of these forms of data were collected as a means of creating a more complete understanding of the case site's policy development.

Documents. Documents were collected with permission from the university. These documents include memos, timelines, proposal drafts, summaries of meetings, goals, surveys, and forms. Each of these documents were created and updated by administrators in the University Housing office. These documents were dated and served to create a chronology of events surrounding the creation of the gender neutral housing policy. The documents detail the steps that the department took to develop and implement the gender neutral housing policy. They demonstrate the chronological steps taken to create the policy and mark important changes and alterations that the policy proposal went through as it was being

developed. The majority were drafted by the women interviewed, while some were created by hall directors working with the women on the policy.

Documents provided information around the actual policy creation and implementation. These documents began in January of 2009 and continued through May of 2010. They included department goals, learning outcomes, and processes related to the policy. They also detailed the parameters and protocol for creation of a pilot program. Lastly, they included several drafts of timelines for implementing a gender neutral housing policy.

Interviews. Additionally, two interviews were conducted with two housing administrators who work directly with the policy creation and revision. These interviews were conducted near the conclusion of the data collection period. They served to supplement the information in the documents and provide insight into institutional and departmental decisions.

Interviews were conducted in a group setting, with two University Housing administrators in an office in the University Housing administrative building. Each participant was provided with the interview waiver form (Appendix O) and the study goals and purpose were explained. The interviews were voice recorded after gaining permission from the participants. The interviews lasted approximately forty five minutes and were transcribed verbatim at the conclusion of the interviews.

Interviews and document analysis provided a more descriptive and complete understanding of the reasons for creating a gender-neutral housing policy. Interviews provided personal points of view and interpretations of the policy.

Document analysis demonstrated the administrative perspective and the process of implementing a policy. Together, these two methods combine to depict both how individuals understand the policy and the institutional mission for the policy.

Observations. Finally, I made informal observations throughout the process in regards to campus climate and institutional goals. I recorded these observations throughout the data collection period. The observations occurred during informal conversations with other University Housing administrators, weekly departmental meetings, and general work within the department. I was primarily focused on contextualizing the information given within the interviews and found in the documents in an understanding of the departmental and university politics and campus climate. I observed the ways that the policy was discussed in department meetings, how administrators responded to inquiries and setbacks of the policy, and the ways that the Learning Community Coordinators handled these challenges. They occurred most often in the office of University Housing, particularly in departmental meetings. These observations were utilized to create a better understanding of the politics within the office and at the institution as they related to the policy implementation.

Data Analysis

Interview, observation, and document data was collected and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This system aimed to identify categorical examples that pertain to the original research question. These

categories were used to understand the different reasons for the institutional creation of a gender-neutral housing policy. Other analysis targeted the perceived impacts of such a policy on the transgender student population.

Constant comparative method aims at “generating and plausibly suggesting...many properties and hypotheses” (Glaser, 1965, p. 438) about a general occurrence. This method generates hypotheses through the joint method of coding and analysis, as a means of generating theory more systematically. Constant comparative method does not attempt to generalize or find universal theories. It therefore does not require that all available data be used or analyzed. Furthermore, this method allows for multiple forms of data, including interviews, documents, articles, and observations. The reduction of all utilized data into categories that become theoretically saturated and can be used to produce a final theory is important to this method.

The process of using constant comparative method is broken into four stages by Glaser (1965). The first stage involves coding all data in as many categories as necessary. As the researcher moves through the data, previously coded information is examined to ensure that categories continue to accurately represent the data coded within it. From this process descriptive properties begin to emerge for each category, further defining the appropriately coded data.

As this first step comes to an end, I began to integrate these categories and their properties as the second step (Glaser, 1965). During this process, the

comparison moved away from actual comparison of data to data and became a comparison of emergent properties of data to one another. In this step, diverse properties of categories were also integrated. Through the compilation and comparison of categories, the theory began to emerge.

In the third step used in my data analysis the theory was delimited (Glaser, 1965). Through this process, collected categories were further synthesized, combined, and compared as a means of paring down the categories into a small, cogent set. Reducing terminology and themes allowed for generalizations to begin to emerge and set boundaries for the applicability and utility of the emergent theory. This step also delimited the list of categories, causing them to become theoretically saturated. As data is constantly compared to data already coded for a specific category, data added to the category strengthened the properties of that category and defined the boundaries of it.

The final step revolved around formulating theory from the saturated categories, which was not employed for this study. The decision to not include this step was made because of the narrow focus of the study. Because I aimed at better understanding the processes and barriers of creating a gender neutral housing policy, it was not my goal to generate a new theory. Instead the saturated categories were used to make recommendations for future research and factors that policy makers should consider when looking to create a gender neutral housing policy.

At the completion of data coding fifty-two codes existed. Upon further analysis these codes were categorized and analyzed for recurring themes. In total, fifteen themes emerged: safety, support, staff, explicit concerns of implementation, gender, explicit goals, roommate selection, informational handouts, assessment, parent and community correspondence, marketing, location, student success, equality and inclusion, and student sexuality. Codes that were similar in definition were later consolidated, creating lists of themes. As these codes were collapsed, categories were consolidated into more general themes and further analyzed. These concepts became the basis for the study's findings.

Trustworthiness

Given the multiple realities of naturalistic studies, trustworthiness must be ensured through establishing internal validity. In this case, trustworthiness of findings was guaranteed through the use Guba and Lincoln's (1986) definitions of rigor and trustworthiness in naturalistic research studies. These definitions state that studies can ensure trustworthiness exists through the use of triangulation, prolonged engagement, and persistent observation.

In qualitative studies, researchers do not seek to find the single, universal truth (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1986). Instead, it is understood that because studies are based on human behavior and decisions, bound by their current context, that hypotheses and conclusions can be found only within the context of the research phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1986). It is therefore important to ensure

that the conclusions found by the researcher are congruent with the context of the research data.

In order to assure that this form of internal validity occurs, trustworthiness is sought. For this study, I used triangulation of multiple forms of data to cross-check my findings. Through the use of interviews, observations, and documents, I was able to guarantee that a total depiction of the case was created. According to Mathison (1988) this method of triangulation focuses less on providing a technical solution for validity, and instead on creating a holistic understanding of the phenomena being studied. This idea is congruent with the primary focus of case study methodology, which aims at creating a complete description of the case's details (Merriam, 1988).

In an effort to support triangulation, I also utilized the strategies of prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Prolonged engagement is the method of experiencing prolonged contact with the case and its participants in an effort to discern distortions in the data or notable situations (Guba & Lincoln, 1986). Additionally, persistent observation supports long-term engagement as a means of finding deep understanding in the data. These two forms of trustworthiness allowed me to experience detailed contact with the case. I did so through four months of working with the participants and observing the case unfold. Through these forms of trustworthiness I was able to assess the data for thematic trends and emergent themes.

Researcher Positionality

I chose to explore this topic as a result of my experience as an undergraduate student at an institution that established gender neutral housing during my first year. My institution elected to implement gender neutral housing campus-wide, excluding the first-year halls and all-women's hall. This decision was reached as a result of a proposal drafted by two undergraduate students, and served as the first example of policy change that I witnessed to have quick and direct impact on an environment. As a result of offering gender neutral housing on campus I felt that my institution valued inclusion and the creation of safe spaces for all students on campus. This idea has served as my primary motivation as a student affairs professional.

I believe that gender neutral housing has the ability to create spaces on campus where transgender students can feel safe, but only if they are intentionally implemented with this goal in mind. As demonstrated by the literature, transgender students continue to be an underserved group on our college campuses. The creation of specific policies such as gender neutral housing can serve to alleviate this marginalization by working to eliminate the use of the gender binary to undergird current practices.

Given this, I write this study as a proponent of gender neutral housing policies as opportunities to create more inclusive communities for transgender students. This belief is important in understanding the struggle that appears in this case study between the creation of any gender neutral housing policy and the

implementation of a policy that is explicitly aimed at serving transgender students. I also believe that not all policies are equally effective in building these safe spaces, given a variety of factors that limit or prohibit explicit inclusion of transgender students in their verbage.

Summary

Using the constant comparative method, a detailed case study was created based on the combination of documents, interviews, and observations collected during the site inquiry. In order to collect this data, I traveled to a midsize public institution on the west coast for two months. This data was then used to understand the goals of the office in creating a gender neutral housing policy. Specifically, the data was used as a means of determining whether the creation of a more inclusive on-campus living environment for transgender students was an explicit or implicit goal.

Chapter 4: The Case

Chapter four presents the results and findings of the case study, aiming at presenting the results of the study in terms of the initial research questions, exploring the issues and factors facing administrators as they created and implemented a gender neutral housing policy. Through observing this journey and the ultimate policy that resulted, the goal was to analyze this policy's relative inclusivity of transgender students.

The overarching research question for this study focused on understanding the explicit and implicit goals of creating a gender neutral housing policy. There were several explicit and implicit goals that the housing administrators had in mind when creating the Mixed Gender Housing policy. More specifically, a goal of the study was to understand what the administrative motivating factors were in creating this policy, what institutional factors were taken into consideration when the administrators created this policy, and how, if at all, transgender students factored into the creation or implementation.

The case begins in January of 2009 when two University Housing administrators first began to discuss creating a gender neutral housing policy. The chapter then follows their timeline in working to create such a policy, highlighting specific themes that emerged. The study examined the process that university housing administrators went through in order to develop a gender neutral housing policy. They created a policy, named Mixed Gender Housing, and made plans for a pilot program to monitor how well the housing option was received.

Administrators went through a lengthy process in creating and implementing what was ultimately called the Mixed Gender Housing Policy. From its inception to its postponement, administrators faced a variety of challenges and decisions, including buildings in which to place the housing option, how to negotiate staffing, what the campus and community reaction would be, and what to call the policy.

The policy was driven primarily by two administrators, referred to here as Jacqueline and Martina. These women worked for University Housing as mid-level administrators. They were charged with this policy creation as part of their departmental committee work. Jacqueline had previously worked at an institution that offered gender neutral housing options and she was particularly passionate about beginning such a housing option at this institution.

Motivations and Considerations

In January of 2009 two administrators in the office of University Housing began work on a gender-neutral housing policy for their mid-sized public institution on the west coast. These two administrators were women working as Learning Community Coordinators (LCC's). Their roles primarily focused on creating communities in the residence halls that supported students academically and socially. They felt compelled to move forward with creating such a policy for a variety of reasons. The office had been receiving questions from students who were inquiring why such a policy did not already exist. Jacqueline stated "it was mostly our students that came to us and...were questioning why they couldn't live with someone of a different gender. So it was really our students that came to us and...we just wanted to do the best that we could to support their wishes and what they wanted."

When Martina began asking students for input she and Jacqueline received a great deal of support. Jacqueline spoke of interviews the University Housing office conducted, stating "students who were gay or allies...also came to us to talk a little bit about it and in some of our interviews we had a student who disclosed that she was gay and that this was a perfect opportunity for her to feel comfortable with people who accepted her for who she was." Student interviews conducted by the LCC's revealed that students felt that gender neutral housing would provide them with the opportunity to live with individuals they regard as friends and that they

trust. Students felt that “this living environment added to their overall success as students” (Appendix B). Students also spoke to the right of each student to feel safe in his or her living environment, as well as the right to live on campus without fear of discrimination.

Martina and Jacqueline were motivated to develop such a policy to help students develop interpersonal skills and support student success. They were aiming to create environments “that will be conducive to their academic and personal success” (Appendix C) and helping students with the “ability to develop skills” (Appendix C). Additionally, these women were motivated to help make a positive impact on students’ lives, giving students what they “need to succeed,” and the overall benefits of living in gender neutral housing for students. The Learning Community Coordinators felt that this type of housing would allow students to “develop skills to enhance personal communication with people of the opposite gender” (Appendix B), to increase their independent living skills, and to “develop and improve interpersonal skills” (Appendix B).

The office of University Housing was also considering the positive effects of such a policy from a financial standpoint. “The business side of things came into play as well and we wanted to stay competitive with the community, outside community...[because] there are a good number of apartment complexes in the community...where people could live together no matter what gender. So we wanted to stay competitive in that as well” (Martina, interview). Current students

discussed in interviews that they or their friends were in heterosexual relationships and would be interested in “getting a place together, possibly sharing a double room” (Appendix B) on campus as opposed to moving off campus if the option were available.

Given the level of informal support and clear student desire for a gender neutral housing policy, the administrators began to discuss the possibility of creating such a housing option. University Housing administrators recognized that they had to take into account the climate and culture of the local area surrounding the university. The university is located in a more conservative section of the state, so the administrators had to take into consideration possible negative backlash and financial repercussions as a result of their policy. Martina and Jacqueline knew that the role of the local community would need to be carefully maneuvered, and that there was potential that the policy would be met with institutional resistance. In order to anticipate this, they began researching other existing policies and garnering further campus support.

The administrators stated several goals when working on creating the Mixed Gender Housing policy. These went through many revisions, and some that were initially included were later removed. These changes can be connected to institutional factors that will be discussed. The final Mixed Gender Housing proposal included goals of:

- Promoting student safety

- Ensuring equality in ability to choose roommates
- Providing opportunities for more independent living experiences
- Competing with off campus student market
- Staying progressive as a department
- Increasing opportunities for personal communication with students of the opposite gender

These goals were selected as a means of making it possible for all students to have the ability to live in an environment most conducive to supporting their personal and academic success.

There were also several implicit goals that the administrators hoped would occur as a result of the policy. Jacqueline and Martina spoke to the removal of the initial goal “to create a safe space for transgender students or students questioning their gender identity” (Appendix C). This goal was eliminated from the policy when Jacqueline and Martina were met with resistance from the institutional administrators about the explicitness of the policy. As a means of moving the policy forward in approval, the women decided to shift the goals to be more implicitly inclusive of transgender students. In their interviews, both women discussed the institutional factors that motivated them to change this goal in subsequent drafts of the policy. This goal therefore became an implicit one for the administrators, Jacqueline and Martina. Administrators wanted to provide safe spaces for students

to express their gender and to create on-campus living environments that were inclusive of transgender students.

The housing office had many different motivations for creating a gender neutral housing policy. Administrators had been approached by students, either current or prospective, on different occasions. These students had inquired as to whether or not a gender neutral housing option existed, and if not, whether plans were in place for creating one. Students spoke about the need for this policy in order to provide safe living communities for all students and to support their academic and personal success.

Additionally, administrators felt compelled to keep their office progressive and able to compete with other peer institutions and off campus housing that did offer such housing options. Several other public institutions located in proximity to this one already had gender neutral housing policies in place. Students also had the option of choosing to live off campus and take advantage of gender neutral equivalent housing arrangements. Staff members were therefore motivated by student request, institutional competitiveness, and supporting student success. These factors influenced administrators as they began creating and redefining the goals for the policy.

Initial Factors of Administrators' Policy Design

After assessing the climate of the institution and the local community Martina and Jacqueline decided to move forward with creating a gender neutral housing policy. This work came in the form of articulating the goals, assessing existing policies at peer institutions, and garnering institutional support. Together, the two Learning Community Coordinators (LCC's) and one hall director began working on the policy. On February 10, 2009 the administrators set the goals of the Gender Neutral Housing policy:

- To ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses
- To stay progressive as a housing department
- To create a safe space for transgender students or students questioning their gender identity. (Appendix C)

The administrators wanted to provide "students with a much more flexible and comfortable lifestyle...where they can interact with their peers and make new friends and build relationships" (Appendix C). The policy aimed at allowing students to reside on campus in the most conducive environment for their personal and academic success, to eliminate restrictions on roommates based on gender identity and to support transgender and gender-questioning students" (Appendix C). These goals differed from previous goals because they were pared down to focus directly on the core goals of the department. These goals emphasized the need for this policy as a means of creating more inclusive living opportunities, particularly for

transgender students, and to keep the department progressive and competitive both with peer institutions and with off-campus housing.

In preparation for submitting a draft of the proposal, Martina, Jacqueline, and a few of the hall directors drafted a literature review and examined similar policies at other peer institutions (Martina, Interview). This research aimed to articulate why the policy would assist the university in remaining competitive with other state institutions.

After meeting with other housing administrators, the LCC's determined that the addition of gender-neutral apartments would not require any additional professional staff to be hired (Appendix B). Instead, they planned to provide additional training to the Community Advisors (CA's) working with those apartments in order to provide the supplementary necessary support. The housing office was reluctant to require the creation of any full-time positions given the current spending freeze and budget cuts that were occurring both at the institutional and state level. The LCC's hoped instead that they would be able to assign a hall director with a personal passion for this community to oversee the building in which it was housed.

A marketing plan was created to inform "the right students" (Appendix B) of the policy and to answer questions regarding the new living options. Martina and Jacqueline defined these students as the students who would most likely be interested in or would be best served by a gender neutral housing option. While

they did not explicitly state that transgender students were a large constituent in this group, it is clear that given the initial goals of the policy and the personal interests of these women that transgender students were a clear target population.

In addition, campus resources and support were outlined. Delta Lambda Phi, the only gay and bisexual fraternity on campus, and the campus' Pride Center formally endorsed the creation of the policy. The president of Delta Lambda Phi stated that:

Every person has the right to live on campus in a place where they can interact with their peers and make new friends and build relationships in ways that aren't possible off campus. On that same note, each person has the right to feel safe in that environment—right now [our school] isn't doing all it can to make sure ALL students are in a safe and accepting environment in the Residence Halls. If [our school] rejects the proposal for Gender Neutral Housing they are sending the message loud and clear that the safety of their students isn't their number 1 priority. (Appendix B)

Members of Delta Lambda Phi also met with the administrators working on creating the policy in order to vocalize student support of the initiative. Gay students also contacted the housing office inquiring about the existence of gender neutral housing. These students stated that gender neutral housing was “a must” for them because of their sexual orientation.

At this stage in the policy development, the LCC's had developed a set of initial goals and benchmarked these goals against peer institutions. Part of these goals explicitly stated that the gender neutral housing policy aimed at creating more inclusive environments for transgender students or anyone exploring their gender identity. Jacqueline and Martina had also worked with the department to develop a staffing plan for the housing option. Lastly, they began utilizing the initial support they had found in concrete ways. This support would later prove necessary in continuing the development of the policy.

The housing administrators considered several factors when creating the Mixed Gender Housing policy. Many logistical concerns became apparent as the administrators began developing the policy. These included how to staff the housing option, where on campus it would be located, and how students would select their roommates.

Location as a Principle Factor for Consideration

The location of the Mixed Gender Housing option was an important factor for the administrators to consider. The building layout, access to bathrooms, and campus location were each important factors when determining which building(s) would house the Mixed Gender living option. Following the initial research and discussion in the department, a great deal of conversation revolved around the location of the gender neutral housing on campus. Most of the residence halls on campus are traditional-style halls consisting of double and triple rooms with

common bathrooms. Additionally, the majority of halls nearest to the center of campus house students based on their major. The remaining sets of towers are reserved predominantly for first-years. This led administrators to select the newest apartment-style residence halls as a possibility.

On March 16, 2009 the on-campus upperclass apartment complexes were chosen as the site of the gender-neutral housing spaces (Appendix B). These locations were selected based on the layout of the apartments, which consist of four single-occupancy bedrooms and two bathrooms (Martina, interview). Roommates would therefore be able to determine who used which bathrooms on an apartment-by-apartment basis because the bathrooms are not gender-specific. Additionally, administrators believed that the apartment-style living would foster a greater sense of independence and create safer and more comfortable spaces for students regardless of their gender identity and assumed gender roles that might otherwise be in conflict with traditional-style residence halls.

This decision took a great deal of time for the administrators to make. Due to the number of factors contributing to the location choice, administrators were forced to locate the gender neutral housing in one of the upperclass apartments. The administrators discussed the type of housing, campus location, and the student population that would be most appropriate for a gender neutral housing option. Limiting the housing option to only upperclass students living in single bedroom,

shared apartments seemed to be the best arrangement in order to see the policy implemented.

The administrators had to consider to whom this option would be available as part of this deliberation. Since it was decided that first year students would not be allowed to participate, the location had to be in buildings open to upperclass students only. This narrowed options, eliminating entire buildings from consideration.

The access and relative privacy of bathrooms was also factored into location selection. It was clear based on their research that typically institutions offered gender neutral housing in buildings that did not have public, corridor-style bathrooms. Instead, bathrooms are located within suites, apartments, or connected to bedrooms, offering students access to a private or semi-private bathroom.

The only upperclass buildings on campus fitting the criteria were the new upperclass apartment complexes. These apartments consisted of four single bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The policy stated that it would be left to the residents of each apartment to negotiate bathroom use. A single block of eleven apartments on the same floor was selected to be mixed gender. The cost of living in a double room with a communal bathroom at the studied institution for the 2010-2011 academic year is \$5888. This cost is compared to the \$6,495 cost of residing in the apartments chosen for Mixed Gender Housing. The difference in cost is \$607.

Administrators also had to determine how this housing option would be staffed. Traditionally, there is one Community Advisor (CA) per floor of the apartment complexes and one full-time hall director overseeing the entire apartment community. Discussions were had in regard to increasing the number of hall directors or CA's but due to financial constraints neither seemed feasible. Based on budget limitations, the administrators determined that the housing option would not need a specially appointed staff position to be created. Instead, it was decided that additional training would be required of all staff members working directly with this community and the staff members selected would have a personal, vested interest in Mixed Gender Housing. Staff training was also going to be offered to all of the housing administrators, both in residence life and housing administration.

Substantial emphasis was placed on the role of the Community Advisor in creating community and ensuring the success of each apartment within the Mixed Gender Housing. The CA's were expected to complete weekly visits to the apartments, provide leadership and support for the residents, and following up with roommate issues and concerns. While the majority of these expectations do not vary from the primary CA responsibilities, CA's were to become the frontlines for these apartments.

Finally, the process for students to select roommates had to be determined. Administrators wanted to ensure that all apartments would be filled and all students were willingly living in the Mixed Gender Housing. Therefore, the office

determined that students would be required to complete an application and interview in order to be approved to reside in Mixed Gender Housing. Additionally, students would be responsible for selecting their own roommates and filling every space in their apartments. This responsibility would also apply to any room transfers or mid-year move outs. If a roommate were to move out of the apartment during the school year the students would be responsible for filling the vacancy with another resident willing to live in Mixed Gender Housing. This rule differed from the procedures for filling vacancies in non-gender neutral rooms.

Emphasis was placed in the policy goals on the fact that residents can select their own roommates and have the opportunity to live with whomever they wanted. The roommate selection process was discussed with the Housing Administration office, which handles all roommate placements. Students living in Mixed Gender Housing would be informed that they could select their own apartments within the community and roommates through the traditional online process.

Administrators also felt that this form of living space would provide students with greater levels of independence, flexibility, comfort, and self-sustainability. All of these factors were seen by administrators as more conducive and supportive of students' lifestyle, regardless of their gender identity. The combination of private bedrooms and bathrooms and limited sharing of communal spaces was also considered to contribute to a more comfortable living environment for all students.

Institutional Factors for Consideration

In addition to the administrative factors for consideration the housing, administrators also had to factor in institutional concerns when working on the Mixed Gender Housing policy. Given the conservative nature of the institution's location, the administrators had to be wary of the policy's marketing. Additionally, they were concerned with how the policy would be perceived by students' parents and community partners. The housing office was asked to consider how they would create institutional support for this policy and what means they would use in promoting it to the campus community.

The housing office drafted several documents aimed at answering potential questions about the policy and anticipating possible criticisms or resistance to its implementation. They were asked several times from university administrators what potential issues or obstacles they anticipated encountering as a result of the policy. They were also asked to prepare how they would address the campus, alumni, and town community reactions to the Mixed Gender Housing policy.

A plan of action was developed to collectively address the reaction of parents, community members, and alumni. Administrators designed answers to frequently asked questions. Many of these emphasized that students residing in Mixed Gender Housing did so on an entirely voluntary basis and that the housing option would be limited to one section of university housing. They also discussed tailoring the policy's marketing "to the right students" (Appendix B).

These challenges forced Jacqueline and Martina to make difficult decisions regarding the explicit goals and name of the housing policy. Prior to the January 12, 2010 Mixed Gender Housing Proposal the term “gender identity” appeared within the phrases “students questioning their gender identity” (Appendix C) and “regardless of gender identity” (Appendix C) as part of the policy goals. Beginning in this proposal the goal “to create a safe space for students who identify as transgender or students questioning their gender identity” (Appendix C) was removed. The phrase “opportunity to live with whomever they choose, regardless of gender identity” (Appendix C) was also removed from the introductory paragraph. These changes were made in order to increase the likelihood that the policy would be accepted. Martina and Jacqueline became focused on passing the policy through the institutional administrators, regardless of the fact that the policy was being changed drastically.

The name of the policy changed early on from “Gender Neutral Housing” to “Mixed Gender Housing.” This decision was discussed by administrators who cited the more conservative nature of the campus community as reason for the change. They stated that the phrase “Mixed Gender” still carried with it the connotations of a gender binary, therefore making it more acceptable to the institution’s conservative counterparts. While Martina and Jacqueline seemed to struggle with this change and the clear message sent to students by the name change, they felt that transgender students would still be able to read the policy and see that it included them.

Administrators working directly with the policy were not thrilled about having to change the name. They openly discussed their reservations in interviews. Ultimately, both Jacqueline and Martina stated that the overall policy was more important than its specific name, and they agreed to find an alternative. At the time of the interviews the women were still in discussion about the final name, hoping to find one that connoted greater gender inclusivity without being “gender neutral.”

The policy states clearly that it provides the opportunity to students to live with whomever they choose. Although the final version of the policy does not explicitly include issues facing transgender students, implicitly it was a motivating factor for administrators. In earlier documents, the goal was included of creating more inclusive environments for transgender students. Specifically, the goal was to be more inclusive of students “who identify as transgender” (Appendix C) or “for students who are questioning their gender identity” (Appendix C).

In later drafts of the policy, the focus on living spaces for students “regardless of their gender identity” (Appendix B) was also changed to instead provide opportunities for students to reside with “people of the opposite gender” (Appendix G). This change was one of the most significant, in that it altered the purpose of the policy from serving transgender students to only serving students who identified within the gender binary. Throughout the pilot program design, students were asked to discuss their experience in living with individuals of a different or opposite

gender. They were asked to speak to how they thought mixed gender housing would differ from their previous experiences of living with someone of the same gender.

The emphasis of whom Mixed Gender Housing was created for shifted with the change in the policy name. When administrators chose to change the name from “Gender Neutral Housing” to “Mixed Gender Housing” the policy also transitioned from the emphasis on transgender students to students interested in living with students of the opposite gender. The policy shifted to focus on creating more independent living experiences for students, promoting a higher level of independence among them, supporting their ability to engage in personal communication with people of the opposite gender.

The climate of the local community also affected the policy’s wording and name (Martina, Interview). Because of the town’s more conservative nature, the administrators were urged to reword goals to be more explicitly narrow in whom the policy would impact. Transgender students, although a primary constituent for administrators, were therefore removed explicitly from the policy. “They [transgender students] were part of the process...just due to the nature of the [university] we word[ed] it in a way while it doesn’t explicitly say...it’s for a variety of gender identities we were hoping that students could read the example...and they would be able to...say you know what? This is a safe space for us” (Martina, Interview). The hope was, however that once the policy was implemented that it would create a more open environment for “a transgender student who wants to

live in housing since they won't need to conform to either of two gender consignments" (Martina, Interview).

Housing administrators decided that the policy would be ready to introduce to the campus community during the winter term of 2011. (Appendix F). This change in the timeline was made in order to provide additional training for the housing administration staff who would be responsible for answering the majority of questions regarding specific living arrangements and assignments. Staff training was also expanded to include all residential and apartment life hall directors and paraprofessional staff members.

Resistance and Stonewalling From Institutional Administrators

As the development of the policy progressed beyond the drafting stage and reached a point of implementation, the institutional administrators began a series of stall tactics that continuously strained Jacqueline and Martina to further detail and plan for the creation of mixed gender housing. Marketing of the policy was a primary topic of discussion for the office of University Housing. The office wanted to ensure that the facts of the policy were clearly outlined and questions answered correctly. A list of answers to anticipated frequently asked questions was therefore added to the proposal (Appendix G). These questions were divided into constituent groups of students, families, alumni, and community.

For students the questions dealt with roommate selection and the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Appendix G). The document stated that students would have the opportunity to select anyone to be their roommate, regardless of gender identity. Additionally, FERPA was outlined to inform students that information regarding their living arrangements is federally protected from being shared with other parties.

Answers for families consisted of information regarding how living assignments would be made and how information would be disseminated (Appendix G). These stated that students will have the opportunity to live in Mixed Gender Housing but no student will ever be involuntarily placed in this type of housing. Information specific to families would be provided at Open Houses and online. Information for alumni included an outline of the benefits of living in Mixed Gender Housing and where to find additional resources.

Additionally, the administrators were told to anticipate questions from the community (Appendix G). They expected to be asked how the campus would address criticism of the addition of Mixed Gender Housing. Information regarding how biased incidents would be addressed was also assembled. They also outlined campus and community resources to support students and maximize the positive impact of this housing option.

On February 24, 2010 the housing administrators met with the Core Managers to further discuss implementation of the policy (Appendix H). For this

meeting the learning outcomes of the Mixed Gender Housing Program were outlined:

- Students will have the ability to live with whomever they choose
- Students will develop skills to enhance personal communication with people of the opposite gender
- Students will have more independent living experience in the apartment community. (Appendix H)

The idea of “equality” was also removed from this draft of the proposal when the goal “to ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses” (Appendix B) was eliminated. This change in the proposal signaled a shift in the explicit goals. The policy now aimed entirely at students who identified within the gender binary and providing them with opportunities to interact with the opposite gender and grow as a result of this living experience.

This shift also speaks to one of the largest departmental motivating factors for implementing the policy: competition with the off-campus housing market. Because students at this institution had the option to live off campus with students of the opposite gender, University Housing was concerned about losing the revenue of these students because this option was not available on campus. Administrators changed the policy to focus specifically on fostering developmental, independent living experiences for students to engage with oppositely-gendered students, operating within the gender binary. This shifted the policy to no longer explicitly

support transgender students or create living environments inclusive of students with gender identities outside of the gender dichotomy.

Institutional administrators felt that a pilot program would be the most effective way to test how successful a Mixed Gender Housing option would be (Appendix H). Jacqueline and Martina designed a program that would run for an entire year in a small number of the predetermined apartments. The purpose of this program was to find and fix any potential problems before the full plan for gender neutral housing was implemented. This Pilot Program was intended to be an additional mechanism of assessment for the Mixed Gender Housing Program, although Jacqueline and Martina speculated that it might have also been used as a stalling tactic in order to delay the full creation of gender neutral housing. The Pilot Program plans were outlined, beginning with gaining student interest in participating. Assessment measures were also created once the program was in place.

Initially, an interest list was to be created using the roster for the apartment complex where Mixed Gender Housing would be located. These students would be contacted and provided with information regarding the housing option. After residents were selected to take part in the pilot program they would self-select their roommates and apartments in July of 2010.

After students were placed in their apartments hall directors and housing administrators would contact each resident. This communication would take place

over the summer and would include expectations of participation in the Pilot Program as well as tips for living with someone of the opposite gender.

Once school begins, the Community Advisors would meet with the residents in each apartment and complete an apartment agreement (Appendix H). Throughout the year the Community Advisor would continue to interact with each apartment as a means of engaging in meaningful and educational discussions about living in Mixed Gender Housing. This communication would take place on a weekly basis at minimum. Additionally, assessment of each apartment would take place at the end of each quarter as a means of checking in with the living conditions of all pilot program apartments.

Housing Administrators Work to Meet Institutional Demands

On March 17, 2010 The Pilot Program was determined to run from Fall 2010-Spring 2011 (Appendix I). On April 20, 2010 a specific time line was set in place for recruitment and selection of students to pilot the program. Advertising for the Mixed Gender Housing option would be disseminated beginning May 3, 2010. Applications for the housing option would then be due on Friday, May 14, 2010 at 5pm in order to conduct candidate interviews between May 17 and May 21, 2010.

The interviews would be conducted by one Learning Community Coordinator and one Hall Director (Appendix I). The interview questions were outlined as follows:

- “Why is living in Mixed Gender Housing important to you?”

- What do you see as the benefits of living in Mixed Gender Housing?
- What do you see as obstacles to living in this new community?
- Have you had past experience with living with someone of a different gender? What did you learn from that?
- The pilot program will be closely monitored for its effectiveness and this will require regular communication between residents and University Housing. You will be asked once a quarter to complete a survey or attend a focus group. Knowing how valuable your opinion is in making this living option a success, are you still willing to participate in the Pilot Program?
- How involved are your parents with your life at school? Are they aware about Mixed Gender Housing?
- Is there anything you foresee needing from your CA or Hall Director to help make your experience in MGH a positive and successful one?"

(Appendix I)

On May 24, 2010 notifications would be emailed to each candidate regarding their acceptance status into the pilot program. Additional communication would occur with the accepted students on June 7, 2010. The housing administrators would email these students with tips on living with someone of a different gender. This date would also mark the time when the housing office would begin general communication and placement coordination with the students.

Throughout the summer of 2010, as previously determined, communication would continue. Students would receive additional information regarding the pilot

program as well as information on the room selection process. One goal of these documents was to ensure that students in these apartments were given the resources and information necessary to have a successful year in Mixed Gender Housing. Another goal of the communication was to assist students with any issues or concerns that they may have prior to move in. After move in, these documents were supposed to help students have “meaningful and educational discussions about living with one another” (Appendix I).

A timeline for the academic year 2010-2011 was also established (Appendix I). Move In Day would be September 14, 2010 followed by a Week of Welcome. During this time Community Advisors would begin contact with their Mixed Gender Housing apartments.

Specific requirements for the CA’s were outlined. They would distribute a communication guide on apartment life and on Mixed Gender Housing as well as a copy of the Apartment Agreement. They would then set up a meeting with residents within the first two weeks of the quarter in order to complete this agreement. Communication between the CA’s and the Mixed Gender Housing apartments would continue throughout the quarter and year. At some point during Winter Quarter 2011 the CA’s would host a “family dinner” for their residents in the pilot program.

At the end of the Fall Quarter 2010 University Housing would establish focus groups consisting of pilot program residents. The goals of these focus groups would be to assess the overall satisfaction and success of the program and to solicit

feedback regarding continuing the housing option for the following academic year, 2011-2012.

Halfway through Winter Quarter 2011 University Housing would send a survey electronically to all pilot program students to check in on their satisfaction with their living arrangements. A second focus group would then be held during Spring Quarter 2011. During this focus group students would be asked different questions. They would be asked if there was any information they feel would have been helpful to have prior to moving into Mixed Gender Housing. They would also be asked about their overall satisfaction with the program and if this housing option contributed to their overall success as students.

An Interest Form for the Pilot Program was designed on March 23, 2010 (Appendix J). The form states that Mixed Gender Housing gives students the opportunity to live with anyone they choose. It also details the requirements for participating, which include maintaining contact with the office of University Housing, participating in online surveys and focus groups, and providing feedback on the program. The interest form asks for the student's name, current address, email address, contact phone number, college, and current GPA. Additionally, students were asked to explain why they want to live in Mixed Gender Housing, why it would be the best environment for them, and to list their roommates.

On April 20, 2010 the Learning Outcomes for the Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program were set as follows:

- Ability to assess the needs of residents living in a mixed gender apartment.
- Ability to assess the satisfaction of residents living in a mixed gender apartment.
- Ability to develop skills to enhance personal community with people of the opposite gender.
- Ability to have a more independent living experience in the apartment community. (Appendix K)

As the plans for the pilot program were completed Jacqueline and Martina prepared an assessment plan in order to ensure that the program would be a success and the policy would subsequently be approved. Plans for assessing whether or not these Learning Outcomes were met were also outlined (Appendix L). This outline included the data parameters, methods of assessment, and methods of communication. Data would include students' GPA's, the number of Incident Reports filed from the Mixed Gender apartments, the number of roommate conflicts in the apartments, and the number of room transfers from the apartments. Assessment would come in the form of the two focus groups and the online survey. Additional communication between the students and the office of University Housing would be done through email, a Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program facebook group, and weekly Community Advisor check-ins.

On May 5, 2010 the information for the website was outlined (Appendix M). This information outlined the parameters of the policy. The content included

answers to a list of anticipated frequently asked questions. All continuing students are allowed to participate. Eleven apartments were reserved for Mixed Gender Housing. Students participating selected their own roommates. Living in these apartments costs the same as all other apartments in the complex.

Institutional Administrators Ultimately Silence Plans

The proposed timeline was followed rather closely (Martina, interview). Eight apartments of four students were filled with students accepted into the pilot program at the end of the Spring of 2010 quarter. Summer communication between the housing office and the students began in June of 2010 and continued until August.

In the beginning of August 2010 the office of University Housing was asked by the president of the university to postpone the pilot program for an additional year (Interview). The housing administrators stated that this was because “the university has been under a lot of change over the past two years” (Martina, interview). The LCC’s are hopeful that the pilot program will begin in the 2011-2012 academic year and that mixed gender housing will become a housing option at the institution after that.

Because the university was inaugurating a new president in the upcoming academic year, administrators at the institution felt that simultaneously implementing a potentially controversial policy such as gender neutral housing may overshadow this positive change for the institution. They were also concerned that

the institution should have a stable upperlevel administration in place that was prepared to support any negativity as a result of this policy.

The students in the pilot program were contacted by Martina when news of the postponement was heard. She worked with the housing assignments office to coordinate placing these students in single-gender apartments close to their original roommates.

Conclusion

This case study reveals several important findings about the creation of a gender neutral housing policy. When looking to create such a policy, administrators must review and take into account a variety of factors at different institutional levels. The way that these factors are navigated depends on what the institution seeks to accomplish by implementing such a policy. Lastly, the name of the policy serves to embody and publicly display these decisions and goals. This case study reveals the variety of decisions administrators must make when attempting to create this type of policy. These decisions can then have clear impact on the creation of more inclusive living environments for transgender students.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

This chapter discusses larger implications of the Mixed Gender Housing policy and whether or not its goals will be fulfilled based on the analysis of documents and interviews conducted. It will also focus on implications of this policy for transgender students at the site institution and whether or not this policy will assist with or create additional issues they face when living on campus. Examinations of other gender neutral housing policies across the country will be used as methods of comparison in order to demonstrate the relative distinctiveness or similarity of the process of attempting to create the Mixed Gender Housing policy to others. Finally, I will highlight the levels of resistance that Martina and Jacqueline faced when attempting to implement the policy. This chapter will culminate in recommendations for future policy makers and university administrators interested in creating and implementing a gender neutral housing policy.

Revisiting the research questions provides the context for further analysis of the findings. The first research question pertained to how transgender students were factored into the creation or implementation of a gender neutral housing

policy. This study found that while transgender students were initially a motivating factor for the two administrators working on the policy, it was ultimately found that their explicit involvement was removed from the wording of the policy. This further illuminated the succeeding research questions.

The second research question looked to understand what the motivating factors were for the administrators working on the policy. Analysis of the data revealed that several different students and student organizations inquiring about the policy approached the administrators working on the policy initially. After being approached Martina and Jacqueline were motivated to continue to pursue the policy out of a personal drive. A combination of personal motivation and student inquiry served as factors for administrators to work on the policy.

The final research question looked at the institutional factors to be considered when creating a policy. Martina and Jacqueline continually discussed the campus climate, conservative nature of the community, leadership decision-making, and institutional mission as factors that were often beyond their control when working on the policy. These considerations often also were the cause of resistance for the two administrators as they worked to develop the policy. Through further analysis of the case additional factors are illuminated.

Discussion of the Case

This case study reveals the variety of factors that must be weighed and negotiated when creating a gender neutral housing policy. Jacqueline and Martina had to shape the policy so as to maximize its success and probability of being approved by the president's office. Given this, they had to make several logistical decisions that all had the potential to impact the persistence of the housing option. These logistical factors, including location, staffing, roommate selection process, and student eligibility, are decisions that any housing department would have to make when seeking to create a gender neutral housing policy. This case study provides insight into the process one institution underwent when attempting to implement gender neutral housing, although it was never actualized. Because the policy was never ultimately created, this case demonstrates the levels of pitfalls, stall tactics, and resistance that can delay the creation of a policy indefinitely. Finally, this case study offers an understanding of passive transphobia through the intentional exclusion of transgender students from policy creation.

Jacqueline and Martina were motivated initially by their own personal interests in creating a gender neutral housing policy. Additional factors emerged from a more ethical standpoint, stemming from the personal interests of individual administrators working on the policy creation. The policy was spearheaded by two women who were personally invested in creating more inclusive living environments for transgender students. Because of this, the factors of inclusive

environments, student safety and success, and community acceptance also influenced the decisions made about the logistical factors.

Similar to my case study, the creation of a gender neutral housing policy typically stems from students displaying interest in it and administrators recognizing a need for it (American University, 2010; AskDartmouth, 2008; Oberlin College and Conservatory, 2010; NSGC, 2010; The Pennsylvania Gazette, 2005; Residential Life & Housing, 2006; University of California, Riverside, 2010; Wesleyan, 2010). This need often evolves from the inherently exclusive nature of traditional housing assignments based on the gender dichotomy (Beemyn, B. G., 2005). In this particular case, Martina and Jacqueline were initially motivated to provide more inclusive living environments on campus that accommodated students who do not identify within this binary.

At this particular institution, this policy was fought for because the administrators were so personally invested in seeing its successful creation. Jacqueline and Martina were able to use their investment in the policy to garner institutional support. Both women had previously worked at institutions with gender neutral housing policies. Martina had served as an integral member in creating one of the first policies in the country. The policy she helped to implement also served as the flagship policy for the state she worked in, serving as a model of best practice for peer institutions statewide. It was witnessing the ability of institutions across a state to quickly move to create a gender neutral housing policy that initially motivated Martina to seek one out at her current institution.

Jacqueline and Martina are good friends in the department and began discussing the need for a similar policy at their institution. Jacqueline had also worked at universities with gender neutral housing policies, and appreciated the greater level of inclusion they offered to students living on campus. The drive of these two women is what initially garnered enough support from the housing office to begin working on the logistics of creating this type of housing option on campus. One of the most important ways that individuals can work to actively create campus communities that are more inclusive of transgender students is by challenging policies that assume gender as a dichotomous identity (Carter, 2000). As student affairs professionals, focusing on the elimination of policies and practices that presuppose the existence of a gender binary works in tandem with the creation of resources and support services that actively serve the transgender community. It is possible for gender neutral housing policies to accomplish both of these goals.

Transgender Student Exclusion Through A Dualistic Policy Name

Institutions call their gender neutral housing a variety of names. Such names include the “Intersections of Sexuality and Gender Residential Community Cluster” (American University, 2010), All Gender Housing (Macalester College, 2010; National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010), Unity Theme House, Gender Inclusive Housing, and the Gender Equity (or Equality) Housing (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). Predominantly, these names center around the

notion of gender variance and connote the idea that gender exists beyond the male-female binary.

Given this comparison, administrators who wish to create more inclusive on campus living environments for transgender students should take special consideration in the name of their policy. The name denotes the relative inclusivity of a policy and the definition of gender used by the housing office. This can in turn affect whether or not a transgender student would feel that a policy includes them when initially encountering it.

The choice to name the policy “Mixed Gender Housing” is a relatively unique one. None of the 54 schools included in the National Student Genderblind Campaign share this name (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). While the terms could be considered synonymous and used interchangeably, they have very different connotations. Policies that are named gender neutral, or some variation of this term, often specifically state that the housing option is for students questioning their gender identity or who are transgender. Institutions that include statements

like this include Oberlin College¹, Wesleyan University², and University of California, Riverside³.

Martina and Jacqueline were forced to change the policy name to Mixed Gender Housing in order to cooperate with institutional figureheads who worried about the liberal nature of a policy called “gender neutral.” In the same way that the explicit goals focusing on transgender students were removed, the policy’s name was changed in order to more accurately reflect the new goals, which aimed at creating experiences for oppositely gendered students. This change represents the conservative nature of the campus community and campus climate.

Martina and Jacqueline were met with significant resistance when attempting to name the policy “gender neutral housing.” The women felt that upper-level administrators at the institution did not want to create a policy that explicitly acknowledged the need for a different type of housing for a specific population of students. Administrators at the institution wanted to avoid the controversy that often surrounds the creation of these types of policies. By changing the name to one

¹ “Gender-blind housing provides an opportunity for enrolled students of any gender identity (male, female, transgender, those who do not identify, etc.) to opt to live together in rooms, floors, wings, or buildings. Designations of single-sex and gender-blind housing will be reviewed on an annual basis (Oberlin College and Conservatory, 2010).”

² “The residential halls, apartments, and houses of Wesleyan University are places where we celebrate the uniqueness and dignity inherent in each one of us, no matter our race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, class, ability, or age (Wesleyan University, 2010).”

³ “Gender neutral housing opportunities are available within UCR Housing. Any student may request gender-neutral housing. Placement priority will be given to students who notify UCR Housing that they require accommodations based on their gender identity or gender expression....[G]ender neutral housing allows same-gender roommates, opposite-gender roommates, or other gender-identity roommate pairings, regardless of physical sex. (To clarify, gender identities are numerous and include man, woman, and transgender, among many others.) Thus, residents of gender neutral housing may request any roommate whosoever (University of California, Riverside, 2010).”

that denotes the existence of a gender binary, administrators felt that their policy could more explicitly appear as coeducational housing, while theoretically implicitly, including transgender students.

The changing of the policy's name is one of the most important findings of this case. While the policy was originally designed to support transgender students, renaming the policy "Mixed Gender Housing" denotes the total removal of transgender students from the policy's realm of inclusion. Jacqueline and Martina initially began working on this policy with transgender students in mind. Through several drafts and revisions, these students were further and further semantically marginalized until even the name of the policy was changed so as not to include them. Such silencing speaks to the relative levels of institutional discomfort in implementing a policy that explicitly caters to the needs of transgender students. Although the oft-cited conservative nature of the institution's location was discussed as the cause of this resistance, the personal convictions of institutional administrators responsible for making decisions about policy creation is also a likely cause.

Institutions of higher education often adhere to policies and procedures that perpetuate the social construction of a gender binary and further preclude the full integration of transgender students into the campus community (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Bilodeau, 2005; Carter, 2000; Negrete 2008). This message translates to transgender students that there is no space for them

within the current system and that their gender identity is not valid (Negrete, 2008). It is through the continued implementation of essentialist policies based on the gender dichotomy that transphobia is systematically integrated into the fabric of an institution. At the site institution, the unwillingness of the president's office to implement a policy that even alluded to the existence of gender identities outside of the gender binary represents a campus environment that is transphobic. Furthermore, it speaks to an aversion to the explicit inclusion of transgender individuals in this policy based on the idea that to do so would serve as a threat to the institution's community. It also reinforces the president's office's alliances with the local community over the safety and community of their students.

Changing the name from "Gender Neutral Housing" to "Mixed Gender Housing" represents a perpetuation of the core issues facing transgender students by a policy that was initially designed to support them. One of the largest problems facing transgender students on college campuses continues to be their marginalization through gender-exclusive language and rigid gender categorization (Beemyn, B., 2005; Bornstein, 1995). By changing the name of the policy to "Mixed Gender Housing" it no longer aims at serving transgender students, but instead denotes a policy that applies only to students who identify within the gender binary. This policy therefore becomes one allowing men and women to cohabit, as opposed to creating spaces on campus where transgender students could feel safer living.

Transgender students continue to struggle with finding spaces on campus that are explicitly inclusive of them (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, B. G., 2005; Quart, 2008; Taylor, 2005). Altering this policy signifies an institutional commitment to perpetuating the gender dichotomy, which directly works against visible inclusion of transgender students (Carter, 2000). One of the most important ways that an institution can work to include transgender students into their campus communities is by changing policies that are undergirded by the existence of a gender binary. When the site institution forced Jacqueline and Martina to change the policy name, the decision was made to perpetuate the gender binary within the very policy initially focused on including transgender students.

Several institutions have received negative publicity as a result of not endorsing a gender neutral housing policy or by not doing so in a timely fashion (Ferro, 2003; Harvard Trans Task Force, 2010; Kalawur, 2009; Kolin & Newcomer, 2009; Randall & Subrahmanyam, 2009; Sanfilippo, 2003; Wesleyan University's Trans/Gender Group, 2006). Often this publicity begins in the institution's newspaper, although it has at times been documented in larger papers. This type of publicity puts institutions in a reactive stance instead of a proactive stance.

Given the painstaking steps that Martina and Jacqueline had to go through in order to receive approval for their final policy draft, it is clear that the upper-level administrators did not want to be in a situation where they were forced to respond to negative press. This decision speaks to the inherent value system at the

institution. While peer universities had already passed a policy, with relative ease, upper-level administrators were more concerned with the perception of the policy than with providing more inclusive living spaces for its students. Martina and Jacqueline consented to changing the name in the hopes of passing any version of the policy through the president's office.

Location of Mixed Gender Housing and Barriers of Participation

Location of gender neutral housing is consistently a concern for housing administrators. This decision takes into account a variety of factors that are often integral to determining the success of the housing option. Predominantly, the decision of location factors in the students eligible to participate, relative privacy of bathrooms, staffing, and (if applicable) any learning communities or program focuses around LGBT issues.

Often the locations that are deemed most suitable to be gender neutral housing are those with private bathrooms. Of the 54 policies included in the National Student Genderblind Campaign's study (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010), 27, or one half, are located in selected upperclass halls, apartment buildings, suite-style buildings, or other buildings that offer students private or semi-private bathrooms. This demonstrates the relative importance of bathroom access as a determining location factor. Access to restrooms is often listed as one of the key issues facing transgender students on college campuses (Beemyn, 2005). As

institutions determine where to house their gender neutral housing, location of and access to bathrooms is of concern.

Given the considerable cost difference between the selected apartments and a traditional double room, the question that administrators must consider when implementing such a policy is how to justify such a cost increase. If a student feels that Mixed Gender Housing is the only on-campus housing option available to him, then the student has little choice but to assume the additional financial cost of residing in Mixed Gender Housing.

The lack of discussion around the cost of apartment-style housing denotes a lack of deference to the transgender students supposedly being served by this policy. Instead, it further supports the idea that this policy was not actually being designed for transgender students and instead for residents who identified within the gender binary. Cost is often a large consideration for institutions wishing to implement gender neutral housing, because it is important to ensure that transgender students are not being forced to incur additional financial burden in order to reside in the residences the institution has selected to be gender neutral (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, and Tubbs, 2005). Given that one of the final goals of the policy was to remain competitive with the off-campus housing market, cost was most likely not considered because it was assumed that students would seek out this on-campus option as cost-effective.

Off-campus housing around this institution is typically more expensive than living on-campus, particularly for the amenities included in the on-campus apartments. The primary competitive edge that this policy sought to offer then was the opportunity for students of the opposite gender to reside together. It is therefore clear that cost was presumed to be a nonissue for the students who would otherwise seek out off-campus housing as a means of residing with persons of the opposite gender. The lack of consideration over cost-subsidies for residents choosing the Mixed Gender Housing option therefore further clarify that as this policy was developed it became less about better serving transgender students and more about remaining competitive as a housing office and increasing institutional revenue.

Aside from cost, the department also made decisions about which students would be eligible to reside in gender neutral housing. Of the 54 policies, only thirteen, or just under one-quarter, are explicitly open to first-year students. The rationale of not including first-year students in the Mixed Gender Housing policy was that upperclass students are more mature and capable of making the decision to reside with a member of the opposite gender. Many institutions make the decision to make first-year students ineligible for gender neutral housing in order to avoid potential backlash from parents or students, although no institution currently assigns differently-gendered roommates unless requested by the students. Not including first-year students allows the institution to place the burden of finding a

roommate on the student. Traditionally, the office of housing selects roommates for first-year students.

By not including first-year students in the Mixed Gender Housing policy, the site institution further demonstrated the resistance to implementing a student-focused policy. The primary motivation behind not including first years was made in order to avoid any possible negative inquiry from parents or community members based on roommate assignments. Although an identical apartment complex that was open to first-year students was located adjacent to the complex chosen for mixed gender housing, the upper-level administrators were not willing to include first-years in this housing option.

Given the amount of information developed and time spent on creating a website page, orientation handout, and general FAQ sheet for parents and the community, the institution's upperlevel administrators demonstrated their overwhelming concern that the policy would solicit a great deal of negative response. Worry over the potential risk of such reactions was high enough for the administrators to willingly not include an entire group of students that could want to or need to reside in mixed gender housing. This decision is clearly not a student-focused one that sets the best interests of residents at the forefront. Instead, excluding first-year students supports the findings that this policy was slowly being focused only on providing options for oppositely-gendered students to reside together.

At this site institution, students wishing to participate in Mixed Gender Housing were responsible for finding enough roommates to fill an entire apartment of four students. This responsibility held true for the entire year, so if a vacancy occurred it was the roommates' responsibility to either find a student to fill the space or "buy out" the vacancy.

Placing the responsibility on the students is an unique requirement. For all other housing, that is all non-mixed gender, the institution will automatically assign a new roommate from the waiting list to any vacancy. Students also have the option of finding a roommate themselves or "buying out" the space. Shifting the burden to the roommates within the apartment creates additional barriers and deterrents for taking part in mixed gender housing. Jacqueline and Martina were unclear as to why this rule was established. Most likely the institution did not want to assume the possible liability of assigning students into Mixed Gender Housing if the student later found they did not want to live there. There is not this additional concern when placing students into same gender room assignments.

One of the issues that administrators must consider and navigate when instituting such a policy is how it will function when enacted. Roommate disagreements are inevitable and it is naïve to believe that they will not occur in Mixed Gender Housing as well. In order to provide the same support for these students as all other on-campus students, administrators must have a plan in place on how to reassign these students. In order to mirror the options available for same-

gender housing students, housing services should create a waitlist of students interested in Mixed Gender Housing. This interest could either be indicated on the housing application or on the room change request form. This would alleviate the pressure on students in Mixed Gender Housing to fill vacancies.

University Housing should also be prepared for potential vacancies in Mixed Gender Housing that cannot be filled. When creating this type of housing option the institution must weigh the benefits of offering this option against the possible financial loss if all spaces are not occupied. Typically there is a cost for any student who cancels a housing contract. This cost is used to offset the lost revenue when a space is not occupied for the entire year. Ultimately when institutions make a commitment to providing any gender neutral housing option they are showing their dedication to creating more inclusive living spaces. Administrators need to recognize that any substantial change like this can come with a price in its initial phase.

Institutional Factors Beyond Policy Makers' Control

Given the resistance that administrators were met with during the creation process of the policy, they made the decision to change the goals, aligning the new ones with pre-existing University Housing initiatives. The new goals focused on creating intentional living experiences for students with students of the opposite gender. This change was made in order to support another goal of competing with the off-campus student housing market.

This change marks one of the most important moments in the development of this policy. It is the removal of transgender students from the policy entirely that clearly denotes the institutional resistance to visibly and formally creating more inclusive spaces on campus for transgender students. Policies such as gender neutral housing policies serve as symbols of an institutional commitment to equality and inclusivity (Zemsky & Sanlo, 2005). When transgender students were eradicated from the entire document, the overall mission of the policy shifted irrevocably. The refusal to allow the explicit inclusion of transgender students in this policy changes the overall purpose of the policy and effectively creates coeducational housing opportunities only.

Because the mixed gender housing was already going to be offered in apartments with single occupancy living spaces, altering the goals to no longer create inclusive living opportunities for transgender students makes these mixed gender apartments available only to normatively gendered students. When the goals shifted to offer opportunities for oppositely gendered students to cohabit, the policy shifted from being founded on a more inclusive understanding of gender to one underpinned by an essentialist view of gender. Problems with understanding gender as an identity with more than two categories becomes problematic given the social power inherent in its phallogentric construction (Bornstein, 1995, 1998). Refusal to challenge the inadequacies of the gender binary perpetuate the social silencing of transgender individuals. The policy simultaneously applies only to

normatively gendered individuals and reinforces the social construction of gender as a dichotomous identity through the use of dualistic language. Effectively, this policy precludes the participation of transgender students by marginalizing their personal identities as nonexistent, or at the very least, non-normative.

This shift, along with the goals that supplanted the inclusion of transgender students are financially motivated. This shift speaks to the values of the institution and the underlying rationale behind the policy's resistance. Martina and Jacqueline were consistently faced with building contingency plans into the policy in order to ensure that the mixed gender housing did not result in a fiscal deficit for the university. These include the clauses that roommates are responsible for filling vacancies and students cannot sign up for mixed gender housing if they do not have enough roommates to occupy an entire apartment. The burden of occupancy shifts entirely to the student. This arrangement does not exist for any other form of on-campus housing.

This financial concern, coupled with the explicit goal of competing with the off-campus housing market by allowing men and women to cohabitate clearly denotes the institutional priorities surrounding this policy. While Jacqueline and Martina were focused on creating a policy to explicitly serve transgender students, the institution continued to provide pressure and resistance to change the policy enough to no longer even include them. The institutional administrators clearly demonstrated that they did not want to pass a policy that included transgender

students in its verbiage. They appeared to have reached some compromise by allowing Jacqueline and Martina to word the policy as effectively a coeducational housing opportunity with the implied institutional understanding that transgender students could seek this housing option out as a better alternative to living in the single-gendered communities elsewhere on campus.

Transgender students often feel less comfortable living in single-gender living environments because such communities make it more difficult to pass under increased pressure to adhere to certain gender norms (Johnson & Gavins, 1996). By creating coeducational living opportunities, although only through the sharing of communal quarters, transgender students would have the theoretical opportunity of living in an apartment that would be more inclusive than other residence halls on campus. This is still not enough of a progressive step towards visible inclusion. The decision to not include transgender students in the policy in favor of supporting the communal living experiences of oppositely gendered students marginalizes transgender students on the basis that the policy still operates on a strict gender binary. If transgender students are expected to interpret their implied inclusion in the policy then it is equally likely that they could read their explicit exclusion to be as passive transphobia. Since there is no statement about transgender students in the policy, their absence signals a public lack of institutional support.

Removing transgender students from the policy entirely changes the perception of the policy, shifting it from a socially inclusive policy to a financially

driven one. This decision, coupled with the change in the policy's name represents the influence that the campus community, and undercurrents of transphobia, can have on policy implementation. The new goals are financially-oriented, focusing on increasing the number of students interested in living on-campus by creating environments similar to those off-campus.

They also hinge on the gender binary, explicitly focusing on the experiences of students with oppositely-gendered students. These changes mark the reality that many institutions will face as gender neutral housing policies become more prevalent on college campuses. Institutions must make the decision as to whether or not their policy will explicitly include transgender students or if the policy exists for all students, implicitly indicating that this housing option is more inclusive than other housing options assigned based on the gender binary. To only implicitly include transgender students places the burden of interpreting the policy on the student. Furthermore, the refusal to explicitly include transgender students in the policy, while hoping that they will understand that the housing option is still aimed at them, reinforces covert transphobic thought in the campus community. This decision sends the message to the campus that intentionally not including a group of students in a policy is not discrimination if the policy does not explicitly prohibit their inclusion.

Of the housing offices currently offering gender neutral housing options, several of them are available only to, or priority is given to, students who self-

identify as transgender (Emerson College, 2010; National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010). Aside from these policies, the greater majority of gender neutral housing policies do not openly address why the policy exists. Instead the policies focus on how students can participate and what class ranks are eligible. This speaks to a national divide between explicitly including transgender students or providing a living option for them that is aimed at being more inclusive, but without stating that this is an option for transgender students.

Martina and Jacqueline encountered a few unanticipated set backs and potential community opposition to the policy. These included both the request to postpone the pilot program and the community climate. From these two instances, it is possible for administrators to have full institutional support for policy implementation, and yet never see it created. It is evident that upper level administrators, while averse to the policy's implementation, utilized the current climate of the institution to further delay a potentially controversial policy to be created. At the time of the Mixed Gender Housing pilot program the institutional change was deemed to be too great to support a new policy of this type. Yet even as an institution undergoes a leadership change, the student body is still experiencing the same issues that previously existed. Given that campuses can often be hostile and unfriendly places for transgender students (Beemyn, 2005; Nakamura, 1998), administrators should have continued to pursue the creation of this policy, regardless of the pending inauguration of a new president.

The fact that the current university figureheads chose to postpone the policy under the guise that the institution was not stable enough to withstand any backlash from its creation is testament to the overarching opposition to the policy's implementation. The pilot program was suspended after students had already been placed in it and only weeks prior to Move In Day. Administrators therefore made a decision to postpone a program designed under their supervision. Given the timeline of these occurrences it can be interpreted that the institution had little faith that the office of University Housing would be able to either create or fill a pilot program for the housing option. The administrative resistance to this policy was clear throughout its development, and once it was about to be actualized administrators asked for it to be delayed further, citing institutional change as the rationale.

Inclusion of Transgender Students

Issues surrounding the safety of students appeared in both discussion regarding implementing the policy and in rationale supporting such a policy. Creating "a safe space" was a motivating factor in the initial discussion around gender neutral housing at this institution. Specifically, administrators sought to create a safe space for students who were questioning their gender identity and for transgender students. While it appears that safety was a motivating goal behind initial thoughts of such a policy, the phrase "safe space" appears only four times in

the entirety of the documents. The final time it appears is in the first draft of the gender neutral housing proposal dated March 16, 2009.

One of the most important factors in institutions moving to create a gender neutral housing policy is the safety of students. Other institutions, such as Harvard University (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010), Emerson College (Emerson College, 2010), and University of California, Riverside (National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010), explicitly state in their policies that the safety of transgender students or students questioning their gender identity is a priority for the institution. It is clear that while creating safe spaces was an initial goal of the sample institution, this factor was removed from later proposal drafts and replaced by other goals and purposes.

Although the actual creation of safe spaces was not an explicit goal in the majority of the documents, the safety of students was used as a factor of support for the policy. Interviews with students were cited in the campus resources and support section of the March 16, 2009 proposal and the January 19, 2010 Student Statements and Requests document. Students were quoted stating that “each person has the right to feel safe” (March 12, 2009) in their living environment. Students also stated that a gender-neutral housing policy would demonstrate a clear institutional standpoint that the safety of all students was valued.

Although safety was not listed as a primary goal of the policy, it was used as an argument for support. These two factors stand in direct conflict with one

another. The original phrasing of the goal was to “create a safe space for students who identify as transgender or students questioning their gender identity” (Appendix C). The removal of this goal demonstrates that while safety was still an important component in creating the policy, the explicit safety of transgender or students questioning their gender identity was deemed detrimental to the implementation of the policy.

This is further supported by interviews with Jacqueline and Martina. Martina indicated that while one of her overall goals was to better support transgender students, the conservative nature of the campus community would oppose a policy that directly stated this. Instead, she spoke of implying the greater campus safety that would be afforded to transgender students through the implementation of a gender neutral housing policy.

Institutions must therefore take into consideration a myriad of factors when attempting to institute a gender neutral housing policy. While the administrators behind the policy may value or see importance in the support of transgender students, they are not necessarily able to explicitly state this in the policy. The values of individuals responsible for approving the policy must be considered when phrasing goals and aspects of the policy.

If providing transgender students with safer and more comfortable living environments is a primary goal, then measures should be taken in order to assure that even if support of transgender students is not explicitly stated, that such

advocacy is implied in the language choice used in the policy. The Mixed Gender Housing policy, while initially aimed at assisting transgender students, does not ultimately convey openness for transgender students.

This is an important distinction to make. Martina and Jacqueline hoped that while transgender students were removed from the primary goals of the policy that these students would read the policy and see that it was designed with them in mind. But given the often hostile nature of campus environments for transgender students (Beemyn, B., 2005; Beemyn, 2005, B. G., 2005; Lees, 1998), it seems contradictory to create a policy aimed at supporting these students without explicitly including them in the policy. The absence of transgender students in the policy perpetuates the conservative beliefs of the community and campus that initially removed them from the policy, thereby propagating a campus climate that is not openly accepting of transgender students.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that in addition to the factors of implementation that administrators must take into account, institutional roadblocks and resistance can create an even greater struggle to see the policy implemented. Martina and Jacqueline were deeply committed to seeing the Mixed Gender Housing option finally offered at their institution. It took years of research, draft writing, editing, and communicating to receive preliminary approval to create a pilot program. Ultimately the pilot program was postponed by the president's office due

to simultaneously occurring leadership changes. As of April 2011 the pilot program had still not been placed into effect.

The levels of stalling and stonewalling that Martina and Jacqueline faced while working on the policy are important. Such resistance represents the pitfalls and setbacks that administrators face when working on the creation of policies around controversial issues. In this specific case, the administrators succeeded in receiving preliminary approval for Mixed Gender Housing policy, although the final draft of the policy was a mere shell of its original goal. The levels of sacrifice that the administrators had to make in order to have their policy endorsed by the institution altered it irrevocably. In order to support transgender students, policies must explicitly break down the gender binary. Housing that is essentially coeducational but implicitly applies to transgender students does not truly offer opportunities for transgender students to be included (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Bleiberg, 2004; Nakamura, 1998). This policy changed from a previously progressive move towards more inclusive on campus living spaces for transgender students to a financially motivated policy that would allow for better competition with off-campus housing through offering coeducational on-campus housing.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

More research is needed to understand the experiences of transgender college students and transgender issues in higher education (Beemyn, B., 2005). This research will provide administrators with better ability to reach out to

transgender students. Ways to determine the number of transgender students on college campuses should also be found in order to understand the number of students being affected by gendered policies and practices. It is imperative that student affairs professionals persist in providing them with adequate support and assistance (Bazluke & Nolan, 2005; Beemyn, 2005; Eyermann & Sanlo, 2002; Griffin & Ouellett, 2002; Lees, 1998; Rasmussen, Sanlo, Goodman, et al, 2005; Eyermann & Sanlo, 2002).

There is a clear need for gender neutral housing policies as a means of better supporting transgender students. Additional research is needed in order to understand the long-term effects of these policies on creating more inclusive living environments. It will also be necessary to assess the success of these policies at different institutions and to determine ways they can be improved or more intentionally implemented. As the number of institutions offering gender neutral housing continues to grow, it is clear that this type of housing is considered an improvement for college campuses looking for ways to be more inclusive.

There is also little research connecting the construction of gender as an identity that exists beyond a binary to the incongruence with the division of on-campus housing based on such a binary. In order to combat this, institutions must restructure their housing in order to alleviate the alienation felt by transgender students in single-gender housing systems.

As housing administrators begin to work on the creation of gender neutral housing policies it is important that they factor into consideration the aspects of the institution that can inhibit or prohibit the policy's success. It is integral to engage upper-level administrators who are crucial to policy approval in the discussion. Furthermore, the campus climate must be assessed in order to ascertain the need and potential success of such a policy. Involving key individuals early on and seeking out campus support for the policy can assist administrators in passing a gender neutral housing policy.

Institutions are considering creating this type of housing option increasingly as new apartment or suite style residence halls are constructed. Predominantly, gender neutral housing is offered in buildings that have private or semi-private bathrooms and in buildings with suite-style of apartment arrangements (NSGC, 2010). Student affairs practitioners should consider offering gender neutral housing in buildings with access to private bathrooms as a way of being more inclusive of transgender students. This type of layout reduces the need to create entire gender neutral floors or buildings based on bathroom configuration. It is more difficult to offer gender neutral housing in buildings with communal bathrooms because of the additional need to determine bathroom access.

Discussion around gender neutral housing is one of the ways that student affairs practitioners can continue to advocate for more persistent, prevalent inclusion of transgender students on college and university campuses. Many

institutions are moving towards more visible inclusion of transgender students in other ways as well. The student government at Smith College voted in 2003 (*Smith college students strike gender-specific terms from their constitution, 2003*) to remove female gendered pronouns from their constitution and documents and to replace them with more gender neutral terms. This move was voted for by the student body and was enacted in efforts to make the student government more open to transgender populations and students who do not identify as female.

Boise State University built a unisex restroom into the plans for the new student union (Huckabee, 2007). Shortly thereafter a university official responded to a student organization that the restroom would be a suitable option for transgender students. University officials later responded to this comment noting that the restroom was being called the “handicap accessible unisex restroom,” but was available to all persons who wished to use it. This installation was part of a movement to make public buildings more inclusive of individuals’ needs and to make the student union truly a place where all students could feel comfortable to gather and be safe with who they are.

Cornell University has been working with issues of inclusivity on their campus and fostering a sense of tolerance and openness to diversity (Marcus, 2007). In 2007 they began talking about issues of gender-neutrality and public restrooms. There were thirteen universal restrooms on campus that could be used by anyone. Students noted that there needs to be a better campus-wide understanding of how

segregating bathrooms by gender serves to reinforce the gender binary. The university also offered screens to change behind in locker rooms as a solution to the single-sex only locker rooms on campus.

These examples demonstrate that there are still ways that institutions are operating within the gender binary and making life on college campuses more difficult to navigate for transgender students. As continued research is done on gender neutral housing policies it is necessary to examine the other ways that transgender students are unsupported.

Using this information, institutions might organize themselves around the idea of protecting and supporting gender diversity as part of student development. In order to do so, they must move from the normal-deviate binary towards a multicultural education (Carlson, 1998). Here, transgender students are not forced into either gender role, leaving them free to define their own identity. Through intentionally including all student identities, the previous binary is broken down and the act of normalizing is challenged. In order to disrupt the otherwise binary logic of identity formation institutions must work to integrate previously silenced or repressed groups into policies and campus life. This work will move campuses towards accepting alternatives to the gender binary. Higher education has the responsibility of promoting the formation of a student self that is open, without rigid identity boundaries and with greater room for growth. In essence, institutions of

higher education should shift student development towards politic of self that focuses on the politics of everyday life and personal regulation with others.

Student affairs professionals, in order to uphold their responsibilities to challenge and educate students through co-curricular activities and experiences, must advocate for mixed-gender housing (Bleiberg, 2004). This type of housing better takes into account students' needs, particularly around sexual orientation. Increasing numbers of college students are coming out as not heterosexual and often are made uncomfortable with traditionally organized housing. It is heterosexist for housing to segregate along gender lines, based on the idea that this will prevent all sexual relationships from occurring within room assignments. This type of housing also discourages opportunities for students to interact with alternative perspectives and segregates students from learning how to live with differently gendered students. Lastly, this form of housing discludes transgender students because it requires students to label themselves as one gender or the other and does not take into account the varying stages and levels of gender identity. This often results in forcing transgender students into an unsafe or uncomfortable living situation.

To partner with setting these norms, non-discrimination policies are necessary. To ensure that each student feels like a valued member of the community, procedures must be implemented to ensure that all student concerns are taken seriously. They must dictate that acts of discrimination violate community

norms and will not be tolerated. To promote and enforce such policies, staff education is necessary. Staff education can occur by training staff to relay accurate information, create safe spaces, and encourage and facilitate public dialogue. Through these processes, residence halls should ensure the safety, productivity, and inclusivity of all residents.

Support services can also be made more readily available to students. In order to integrate visible inclusion into policies, institutions must work towards breaking down the binary of gender so that transgender students are able to govern their own identity without constraint. These services can work in tandem with the other progress occurring around campus in housing and nondiscrimination policies by advocating for transgender students' rights and connecting them with the resources available on campus. As institutions look to become more inclusive of transgender students, it is necessary to create institutional shift away from defining gender within a rigid dichotomy and towards a more extensive understanding of gender identity.

Limitations of Findings

The limitations of these findings center around the lack of comparable research studies on the subjects of gender neutral housing and the inclusion of transgender students in on-campus housing. Given this, the findings of this study are limited in the degree to which they can be generalized to apply to other institutions. Instead, these results can be used to expand the existing body of literature on

gender neutral housing and serve as a contribution to future research on the subjects.

The nature of conducting a single site case study further limits the degree to which these results can be generalized. Because of the unique characteristics of the institution, its location, and the timing of their policy implementation, findings are limited in their applicability to other institutions. Instead the factors that were found to be salient for this particular institution can be taken into consideration by other institutions when creating a gender neutral housing policy.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the importance of creating policies that are more inclusive of transgender students. The study also reveals the levels of institutional resistance that can prohibit a policy like this from being created. Lastly, it demonstrates the importance of administrators who believe in this type of policy in order to see it through to completion. Gender neutral housing policies need to be intentionally implemented in order to fully support transgender students. In order to do this, administrators need to take into consideration a variety of factors, both logistical and ethical. These various factors can influence and shape the ways that the policy is perceived and the degree to which it will be successful in reaching its goals.

It is not enough just to offer explicitly coeducational living opportunities with the implicit availability to transgender students. Such policies limit visible institutional support for transgender students and instead replicate and validate a campus culture that closets these students by forcing them to interpret policies that neither explicitly include nor exclude them. Gender neutral housing policies that only imply the inclusion of transgender students also perpetuate a cycle of covert campus transphobia. Administrators implementing gender neutral housing policies must consider who these policies are truly intended to serve and work to see their explicit inclusion in the verbiage and message.

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Appendix A. Interview Waiver Form

Informed Consent

Title of Research: Implicit Inclusion Is Not Enough: Effectiveness of Gender Neutral Housing Policies on Inclusion of Transgender Students

Investigator: Maria Anderson

Before agreeing to participate in this interview it is important that you read the following information. This statement outlines the purpose, procedure, benefits, and possible risks of this study. Your right to withdraw from the interview at any time is also outlined.

Explanation of Procedures

This study is designed to understand the goals and intentions behind an institution's decision to implement gender-neutral housing. Maria Anderson, a Master's student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio is conducting this study to learn more about a housing department's rationale and intended impact of implementing gender-neutral housing on campus. Participation in this study involves an interview, which will last approximately one hour. The interviews will be audio recorded. These interviews will take place in a mutually agreeable location for the researcher and the participant.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no risks or discomforts that are associated with participation in this study.

Benefits

The anticipated benefit of this study is the opportunity to better understand the role that implementing gender-neutral housing has in creating more inclusive communities for transgender students within residence halls.

Alternative Treatments

This study does not involve any treatments or procedures, and thus no alternatives are known.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept in a locked drawer during this project. The only persons with access to the data will be Maria Anderson and The Ohio State University IRB. No identifying information will be collected or recorded during the interview. Results from this study will be included in a Master's thesis and may be published in a professional journal or presented at a conference or professional meeting. Results of this study will assist student affairs practitioners in better understanding the effects of gender neutral housing on creating more inclusive living environments for transgender students.

Withdrawal Without Prejudice

Participation in this study is voluntary. Withdrawal from participation will have no penalty. Any participant is free to withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation in the study without any prejudice from the institution.

New Findings

Any new findings that develop during the study that may impact the participant's willingness to continue to participate will be provided to each participant by Maria Anderson.

Cost and/or Payment to Subject for Participation in Research

There is no cost to participate in this study and participants will not be paid to participate.

Payment for Research Related Injuries

The Ohio State University has no provisions for compensation for an injury resulting from participation in this study. The cost of health care services is the responsibility of the participant.

Questions

Any questions concerning this study and/or in case of injury related to this study, participants can contact Dr. Leonard Baird (faculty advisor for this study) at 614-688-3045. Questions regarding the rights of a participant in this study should

contact Cheri Pettey, Senior IRB Protocol Analyst, Exempt Research, at the Ohio State University, at 614-688-0389.

Agreement

This agreement indicates that you have received a copy of this informed consent form. By signing below you agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject

Date

Subject name (printed)

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix B: Document, GNH Proposal

The Gender-Neutral living option at [site institution] makes it possible for students to choose the best living environment that will be conducive to their academic and personal success. Gender-Neutral housing gives students the opportunity to live with whomever they choose, regardless of gender identity. It creates a safe space for students who are questioning their gender identity or who identify as transgender.

Goal/Purpose:

- To ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses
- To stay progressive as a housing department
- To create a safe space for students who identify as transgender or students questioning their gender identity

How to Achieve Goal/Purpose:

- Students who select this living option will self-select their own room and have the opportunity to select their roommate once that process is made available online.
- This living option will be in [sophomore apartment complex] (for sophomores) and [first year apartment complex] (for freshmen)
- A block of apartments on the same floor will be identified as gender neutral apartments

Marketing: Marketing materials, e-mails, Facebook messages, and collaboration with the [school newspaper] and other on- and off-campus sources of media, Housing can effectively market Gender-Neutral Housing to the right students and answer all potential questions that students may have about it.

Staff: There is no need for extra staff in Gender Neutral Housing. The Community Advisors will provide leadership and support for their residents without the need for a specially appointed staff member to be created.

Campus Resources: Support has been garnered from many different on-campus organizations such as Delta Lambda Phi and the Cal Poly PRIDE Center. The president of Delta Lambda Phi, strongly affirms his opinion that “every person has the right to live on campus in a place where they can interact with their peers and make new friends and build relationships in ways that aren't possible off campus. On that same note, each person has the right to feel safe in that environment—right now [site institution] isn't doing all it can to make sure ALL students are in a safe and accepting environment in the Residence Halls. If [site institution] rejects the proposal for Gender Neutral Housing they are sending the message loud and clear that the safety of their students isn't their number 1 priority.”

A current resident shares that Gender-Neutral Housing provides the opportunity for him to “live with those individuals I regard as friends, the people I trust. I feel that basing whom I am permitted to dorm with in on-campus apartments based on sex is isolating in the view that men and women cannot live together and coexist purely as friends.”

The student body president of [site institution], has expressed an outpour of support for Gender-Neutral Housing.

Facilities: [apartment complexes] are excellent accommodations for Gender Neutral Housing because of the student's ability to select both their roommates and the division of bathrooms. Since apartment bathrooms are not gender-specific, it is up to the individual residents to decide which roommate correlates with which bathroom. The higher level of independence and self-sustainability provides students with a much more flexible and comfortable lifestyle regardless of gender identity and the assumed gender roles that appear in residence hall living.

Appendix C: Document, Gender Neutral Housing Goals

Extension of equality to everyone, no times of discrimination, it allows people who are questioning their gender identity to feel equal, opportunity to choose, to feel comfortable, progressive in the way we think,

The Gender Neutral living option at [site institution] makes it possible for students to choose the best living environment that will be conducive to their academic and personal success. Gender Neutral housing gives students the opportunity to live with whomever they choose, regardless of gender identity. It creates a safe space for students who are questioning their gender identity or who identify as transgender.

Goals:

- To ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses
- To stay progressive as a housing department
- To create a safe space for transgender students or students questioning their gender identity.

How:

- Students who select this living option will self-select their own room and have the opportunity to select their roommate once that process is made available online.
- This living option will be in [building to be determined]
- A block of rooms next door

Appendix D: Document, Notes 7-10

**Gender Neutral Housing
July 10, 2009
Meeting Notes**

Timeline:

August/September: Introduce to student IHC/Committee

October/November: Proposal Approval

- Student Survey
- Present during Housing Communication Meeting
- Focus Groups

November/December: CSD Training

December/January: Admin Staff Training
- Marketing

TO DO's:

- Survey Questions

- 2 Hall Directors, 1 LCC – create 5 to 8 questions and share via email

by 7/17

- 1 Hall Director – Focus Groups (August plan)

- Proposal

- Martina – more professional writing

- Presenting to Department/Campus

- Hall Director/Jacqueline

Appendix E: Document, mixed gender white paper

According to a survey conducted in 2002 by American Demographics, 18 to 24 year olds are nearly “four times as likely as those 55 and over to have a best friend of the opposite gender”. Colleges across the country have been and continue to expand the on campus housing policy framework so that mixed gender housing is an option for students. A recent article in the [Los Angeles Times](#) indicated that 50 campuses across the nation have implemented mixed gender options within their on campus housing portfolio. Other recent articles in the [Washington Post](#), and the [Huffington Post](#) all point to the growing popularity of this practice on college campuses.

[site institution] students have expressed interest in mixed gender living accommodations for the past five years. Even as student leaders were touring the construction project at [apartment complex], the common question raised by the student leaders was “Are you going to allow mixed gender housing in the apartments?”

In association with the [Inter Hall Council](#), the University Housing Department has explored models from colleges in and out of [state] who currently offer a mixed gender housing option. College students who are living in a mixed gender community indicate that their decision to live with someone of the opposite gender was based most, on who they feel comfortable living with. It was not about their sexualities, it was about whom they were good friends with.

University Housing is planning to offer a Mixed Gender Pilot Program for the 2010 – 2011 academic year in [an apartment complex]. Students interested in the Mixed Gender Pilot Program will complete an application, participate in an interview, and agree to participate in assessment efforts throughout the academic year. The program will provide valuable feedback for future planning. The Mixed Gender Pilot Program will be open to 44 students. These 44 students will live in 11 apartments.

The Mixed Gender Pilot Program will be closely monitored by University Housing staff for its effectiveness.

The outcomes of the Mixed Gender Pilot Program are as follows:

- Students participating in the Mixed Gender Pilot Program will provide feedback and information that will be useful in assessing the needs of students living in a mixed gender living arrangement.
- Students participating in the Mixed Gender Pilot Program will continue to develop and improve interpersonal skills in communicating with a person of the opposite gender.
- Students participating in the Mixed Gender Pilot Program will have the opportunity to increase independent living skills.
 - Students participating in the Mixed Gender Pilot Program will provide information that will be useful in assessing the satisfaction of students living in a mixed gender apartment.

Appendix F: Document, GNH Proposal 1-11

The Mixed Gender living option at [site institution] makes it possible for students to choose the best living environment that will be conducive to their academic and personal success. Mixed Gender Housing gives students the opportunity to live with whomever they choose.

Goal/Purpose:

- To ensure equality in the ability to live with whomever a student chooses
- To ensure the opportunity for students to have a more independent living experience
- Provide opportunities for students to develop personal communication with people of the opposite gender
- To increase the level of resident satisfaction
- To increase the number of students interested in on campus residential communities
- To stay competitive with off campus community housing options

How to Achieve Goal/Purpose:

- Students who select this living option will self-select their own room and have the opportunity to select their roommate once that process is made available online.
- This living option will be in [apartment complex]
- A block of apartments on the same floor will be identified as gender neutral apartments

Marketing: Marketing materials, e-mails, Facebook messages, and collaboration with the [school newspaper], Housing's website and other on- and off-campus sources of media, Housing can effectively market Gender-Neutral Housing to the right students and answer all potential questions that students may have about it.

Staff: There is no need for extra staff in Gender Neutral Housing. The Community Advisors will provide leadership and support for their residents without the need for a specially appointed staff member to be created.

Introduce the topic to all of the members of the department. This introduction would take place in the winter quarter of 2011. Provide extra training for the housing administration staff who answer most of the questions dealing with living arrangements/assignments.

Provide staff with training: residential/apartment life and educational, custodial (if needed?), admin staff, HBS, Advisors

Facilities: [apartment complexes] are excellent accommodations for Gender Neutral Housing because of the student's ability to select both their roommates and the division of bathrooms. Since apartment bathrooms are not gender-specific, it is up to the individual residents to decide which roommate correlates with which bathroom. The higher level of independence and self-sustainability provides students with a much more flexible and comfortable lifestyle regardless of gender identity and the assumed gender roles that appear in residence hall living.

Perception (FAQ sheet is also helpful)

Students:

- students will have the opportunity to live with whomever they want, regardless of their gender identity.
- FERPA – sharing of information of their living arrangements will not be shared with other parties

Families:

- students will have the option to live in GNH, it will never be forced upon anyone
- specific information for families provided during Open House, with assignment information, on the website and during opening

Alumni:

- website information that expresses the progressive nature of the GNH option.
- explain the benefits of giving all residents the opportunity to live wherever they choose

Other questions to consider:

- o How will you address the campus and community's reaction to a GNH option?

- What campus and community support resources will you utilize to maximize the positive impact of a GNH option?
- How will you handle a potential hate crime within the GNH community?
- How will you sell the rest of the [site institution] community on the benefits of GNH? How will you disseminate the information?

Appendix G: Document, GNH FAQ's Suggestions

Gender Neutral Housing FAQs Suggestions

Logistical

- **Are bathrooms co-ed?**
All bathrooms are private, single-occupancy facilities that any resident may use.
- **How much does it cost to live in gender neutral housing or [apartment living]?**
Located in [apartment complex], residents pay the same rate as any other [apartment complex] resident.
- **Will there be gender neutral residence hall rooms?**
Cal Poly University Housing continues to examine their residence hall community living policies on a yearly basis, however, at this time, there are no plans for a gender neutral housing option in the residence halls.

Placement

- **Can you automatically be placed in gender neutral housing?**
No, students must request the option.
- **Can students move out of GNH mid-year?**
Students in Housing may request roommate changes using standard Residence/Apartment Life policies and procedures.
- **What happens if a resident moves out mid-year? How is that spot filled?**
- The Advisor will arrange a meeting for any prospective move-ins. If a fit is found, the new apartment residents will fill out another apartment agreement.
- **Can you live with your significant other?**
Yes.
- **Can family members live together?**
Yes.

- **Can a parent influence placement?**
Cal Poly respects the decisions and confidentiality of students as they complete their housing contract, in accordance with FERPA guidelines.

Parents/Families

- **Can students or their families request to NOT be placed in GNH?**
Placement is always optional and never required. Simply do not request the living option.
- **What info is protected through FERPA? Is the fact that a student lives in GNH protected info?**
Yes, this information is protected by FERPA.
- **Family concerns of why we are offering these living options.**
University Housing believes that that gender neutral housing offers important living options that meet the diverse needs of [site institution] students and potential [site institution] students. In addition, the Residential Life mission encourages an educational and supportive living-learning environment.
- **Religious concerns.**
Students with religious concerns need not request these living options.
- **Isn't this going to be contagious or corrupting for other students?**
Students are entitled to their personal opinions. See above.

Other

- **What about safety and security?**
[apartment complex] has not experienced any unusual or more frequent incidents since it opened. The building is located next to the Administration Office. There is triple key security (a separate key for rooms, apartments, and the building).
- **Will there be a Community Advisor?**
Student staff positions will be open to every student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. A commitment to the mission and goals of Residence Life is important. Community Advisors who are placed within the GNH community will receive additional and intentional training on a wide range of pertinent GNH topics.
- **How will you gather potential residents for a pilot GNH program?**
 - Following the dissemination of GNH specific survey to all on-campus residents an informational session will available for students to attend, at which additional details of the project will be presented.
 - At the informational session, students will have the opportunity to volunteer for a focus group which will address the specific benefits and obstacles of a GNH options, as well as assess general student sentiment towards the option.

Appendix H: Document, Mixed Gender Housing Core Manager Proposal

The Mixed Gender living option at [site institution] makes it possible for students to choose the best living environment that will be conducive to their academic and personal success. Mixed Gender Housing gives students the opportunity to live with whomever they choose.

Goals

- To increase the number of students interested in on campus residential communities
- To stay competitive with off campus community housing options
- To increase the level of resident satisfaction

Learning Outcomes

- Students will have the ability to live with whomever they choose
- Students will develop skills to enhance personal communication with people of the opposite gender
- Students will have more independent living experience in the apartment community

Implementation

- Students who select this living option will self-select their own room and have the opportunity to select their roommate(s) once that process is made available online.
- A block of apartments on the same floor will be identified as mixed gender apartments in [apartment complex]
- Pilot Program
 - Interest list created from those who sign up for housing in [apartment complex]
 - Residents will self-assign their apartments with their roommates in July
 - LCC & [Hall Director] will email each resident during the summer with expectations and tips for living with someone of the opposite gender

- CA will meet with the residents from each apartment to create an apartment agreement and have meaningful and educational discussions about living with one another
- CA will visit each apartment weekly to touch base with the residents and check on the environment in their apartment.
- A brief assessment will be conducted at the end of each quarter

Assessment

- Pre and Post Survey
- Focus Groups
- Mixed Gender Compatibility Tool
- Pilot Program

Staff Training

- Community Advisors will receive additional training
- Residential Life & Education Staff will develop a training module that each unit can use in training their staff about potential issues.

Campus Outreach

- President's Office
- Vice President of Student Affairs Office
- Dean of Students
- Parent Program
- University Police Department
- Pride Center

Appendix I: MGH Timeline and Plans

Mixed-Gender Housing Pilot Program Time Line

Screening Process:

- Option advertised to all on-campus housing residents during the week of May 3, 2010.
- Applications due by May 14, 2010 by 5pm.
 - Possible Application questions:
 - Name, current address, email, college, current GPA, contact phone number, summer contact number if different
 - A short essay: Why do you want to live in MG Housing?
 - Please list names of friends whom you've identified as potential roommates
- Interviews to occur May 17-May 21, 2010 by LCCs Jacqueline, Martina and 3 Hall Directors and one of the summer CSDs. (Max 2 people per interview--- one LCC and one Hall Director)
 - Proposed Interview Questions:
 - Why are you interested in living in MG Housing?
 - Do you have potential roommates already identified?
 - What do you see as the benefits of living in MG Housing?
 - What do you see as the difference between living in a mixed gender space versus your pervious experience in housing living with someone of the same gender?
 - The Pilot Program will be closely monitored for its effectiveness and the residents in the Pilot Program will be receiving regular communication from University Housing and asked to participate in focus groups or surveys. Knowing how

valuable your opinion is to University housing, are you still willing to participate in the MG Housing pilot program?

- How involved are your parents with your life at [site institution]?
- Is there anything you foresee needing from your CA or Hall Director to help make your experience living in MG housing a positive one?
- Acceptance into Mixed-Gender Pilot Program emailed on May 24, 2010 by 5pm
- By June 7th: send out a document of things to think about over the summer before moving into Mixed-Gender Housing (a brochure about living with someone of a different gender and tips to begin opening lines of communication).
- Summer Communication: Remind students to look for the email from Housing Administration explaining the room selection process and another email about things to think about before moving in.

Academic Year 2010-2011

- Move in begins September 14, 2010
- During Kick-off have CAs visit the MG apartments and hand out a Mixed Gender Apartment Communication Guide with Agreement inside. CA to set up a meeting with occupants during the first two weeks of occupancy to complete agreement.
- At the end of Fall Quarter 2010: focus groups with pilot program residents to assess overall satisfaction and success of program; get feedback about continuing MG housing for 2011-2012.
- Winter 2011: CAs to touch base again about apartment agreement and communication styles. Invite MG apartments to have “family dinner” with CA.
- Towards middle of Winter 2011 send out a survey to get the pulse of our residents living in MG Housing.
- Spring 2011 conduct focus groups to ask:
 - Is there anything you wish you would have known before living in MG housing?
 - And questions pertaining to the overall satisfaction of the residents and if they feel this living environment added to their overall success as students.

Appendix J: Document, Application – Pilot Program

Mixed-Gender Housing Application

The Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program will run from Fall 2010-Spring 2011. Mixed Gender Housing gives students the opportunity to live with whomever they choose. By participating in the Pilot Program, you are agreeing to maintain contact with University Housing throughout the year via your Community Advisor, online surveys, and focus groups. Your feedback is integral in establishing Mixed Gender Housing as a permanent living option for future students.

Name:

Current Address:

_____ Email:

_____ Contact Phone Number: _____

College: _____ Current GPA:

_____ **Short Essay Response:**

Why do you want to live in Mixed-Gender Housing at [site instituion]?

Why do you believe it is the best living environment for you?

Please list the names of friends whom you have identified as potential roommates:

Appendix K: Document, MGH Pilot Program Learning Outcomes

**Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program
Learning Outcomes**

- Ability to assess the needs of residents living in a mixed gender apartment
- Ability to assess the satisfaction of residents living in a mixed gender apartment
- Ability to develop skills to enhance personal community with people of the opposite gender
- Ability to have a more independent living experience in the apartment community

Appendix L: Document, Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program Assessment Plan

Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program Assessment Plan

Data Needed to Assess Effectiveness:

- GPA
- # of IRs the MG apartments generate
- # of roommate conflicts coming from MG apartments
- # of roommate switches that occur

Methods of Assessment:

- Focus Groups during Fall and Spring
- Online survey during Winter

Methods of Communication

- Emails
- Facebook group for MG Housing Pilot Program
- Weekly CA apartment visits

Other:

- Add a short description on Mixed-Gender Housing Pilot Program to website?

Appendix M: Document, Website

Mixed Gender Housing Website Content

During the 2010-2011 academic year, some exciting things are happening in [apartment complex]! We are pleased to offer a Mixed-Gender Housing Pilot Program option that will allow residents to live with whomever they choose, regardless of gender. The program is open to all continuing students and will be available in [apartment complex's] 4-bedroom apartments.

After determining your interest and if want to participate, fill out the Mixed Gender Housing interest form and you will be contacted for a brief interview to ensure that you are a good fit for the Pilot Program. We are looking for a variety of students open to giving us feedback about Mixed Gender Housing in hopes of making it a regular housing option for future students. So talk to your friends, find some roommates, and sign up for the Mixed Gender Housing Pilot Program!

Please make sure that you and all of your roommates complete the interest form. The pilot is limited to 11 apartments or 44 residents.

The Deadline to Apply is Friday, May 14, 2010.

Learning Outcomes:

- Ability to assess the needs of residents living in a mixed gender apartment
- Ability to assess the satisfaction of residents living in a mixed gender apartment
- Ability to develop skills to enhance personal community with people of the opposite gender
- Ability to have a more independent living experience in the apartment community

Application Timeline:

Mixed Gender Housing Interest form due by *May 14, 2010*

Interviews will be conducted for all residents interested in participating in the pilot program *May 17, 2010 – May 21, 2010*.

Accepted residents will be invited to participate in the program *May 24, 2010*.

Information and helpful tools for success will be communicated to all participants during the summer of 2010.

FAQ's

What is a pilot program?

As Mixed Gender Housing is a new and exciting housing option, we want to take one year to implement and assess the program before making it a more permanent housing option for continuing students.

Who can participate?

Continuing students who plan to live in [apartment complex] during the 2010-2011 academic year may participate in the pilot program.

Where will the pilot program take place?

Eleven apartments have been designated 'Mixed Gender Apartments'. During the summer months, you will have the opportunity to choose your apartment.

Will I get to choose my own roommates?

Students participating in the pilot program will choose their roommates and apartments. When filling out your interest form, make sure to indicate the roommates you wish to live with. *Every* person wanting to live in the apartment must fill out the interest form.

What are the requirements?

Because this is a new program in University Housing, we'd like to make sure we are giving you the resources and information you need to succeed living in a mixed gender apartment.

Your CA will visit each apartment weekly to say hello, give you information about Poly Canyon Village events and assist with issues or concerns you're having.

You will also be asked to provide the department feedback frequently.

How much will Mixed Gender Housing apartments cost?

Mixed Gender Housing apartments are the same rates of any [apartment complex], 4 bedroom apartments.

Appendix N: Current Gender Neutral Housing Policies

Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
American University*	Intersections of Sexuality and Gender Residential Community Cluster	dependent on student selection of location	none	2008	none		students apply to have the housing option as a theme housing option
Bennington College	gender neutral housing	all upperclass halls	none	after 2000	none	no	couples of any sexual orientation permitted to live together
Bowdoin College	gender neutral housing	all upperclass halls	none	2010	none	no	does not apply to one-room triple bedrooms
Brown University	gender neutral housing	upper-class suites and apartments and 1/3 of upperclass doubles	none	2004, expanded 2008	yes	no	indicate during housing lottery
California Institute of Technology	gender neutral housing	all on campus housing	none	N/A	no	yes	
Carnegie Mellon University	gender neutral housing	specific set of apartments	none	2007	yes	no	

Clark University	gender neutral housing	all upperclass halls	none	2006	no		
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Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
Colorado College	gender-neutral special interest hall	specific hall	yes	2004	no	yes	students are not asked to identify their gender
Connecticut College	gender neutral housing	all upperclass halls	none	2009	no	no	students select roommates during housing lottery
Emerson College**	gender neutral housing	60 beds spread across various halls	yes	2010	yes	no	first year students who identify as transgender can work with housing office
Goucher College	gender neutral housing	specific hall suites	none	2010	no	no	
Guilford College	Gender Blind Housing	on campus houses, no residence halls	students must submit proposal	2006	no	no	
Hampshire College	n/a	all housing	none	1970	no	yes	no policy exists allowing/prohibiting students from living with students of different gender
Harvard University	gender neutral housing	limited number of suites	yes; includes interview	2008	no	yes	offered only to students who identify as transgender on housing forms
Haverford College	gender neutral housing	upperclass two-bedroom apartments	none	2000	no	no	students apply during lottery
Humboldt State University	gender neutral housing	specific hall	students select gender-neutral housing option on housing	2006-2007	no	no	run as a living learning community

			form				
Lake Forest College	gender neutral housing	all but two residence halls	none	2009	no	no	
Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
Lawrence University	gender neutral housing	selected locations; all with private bathrooms	none	2006	no	no	
Lehigh University	gender neutral housing	all upperclass halls	none	2010	no	no	
Lewis & Clark College	gender neutral housing	selected upperclass halls	application & interview	2005	no	no	all couples are prohibited from living together
Macalester College***	all gender housing	one floor in one hall	must apply and be accepted	2010	yes	no	
Northeastern University	gender neutral housing		none	2009	no	no	first year students can contact the housing office and have cases evaluated on an individual basis
Northwestern University	gender neutral housing	two upperclass halls	no	2010	yes	no	
Oberlin College	all gender housing	all housing but single-gender halls	none	2004	no	yes	
Pitzer College	gender neutral housing	all housing	none	Fall 2008	no	yes	

Princeton University	gender neutral housing	suites in one hall; private bedrooms, shared living and bath rooms	yes	2010	yes	no	
Oregon State University	gender inclusive housing	one apartment-style hall	none	2008	yes	no	students select option on housing application

Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
University of California, Berkeley	Unity Theme House	suite style residence hall	essay included in housing application	2008	no	yes	affiliated with Gender and Women's Studies major and LGBT Studies minor
University of California, Riverside	gender neutral housing	several locations, including theme house	no	2005	no	yes	priority is given to students who self-identify as requiring accommodations based on their gender identity/expression
University of California, Santa Cruz	gender neutral housing	on-campus apartment complex	roommates assigned based on interviews	2009	no	no	
University of Connecticut	gender neutral housing	30 beds in 5 2-room suites in 1 building	yes	2007	no	no	
University of Chicago	open housing	all housing but single-gender halls	yes	2009	yes	no	
University of Michigan	gender neutral housing	singles or doubles with private or adjoining "unisex bathroom"	must meet with University Liaison	N/A	no	yes	
University of Oregon	Gender Equity Hall	one specific	none	2009	yes	no	

		hall					
University of Southern Maine	gender neutral housing	specific floor and rooms dispersed in halls; doubles and suites	none	2004	no	no	
University of Vermont	gender neutral housing	selected upperclass halls	none	2010	no	no	
Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
Ramapo College	gender neutral housing		yes	2009	yes		
Sarah Lawrence College	all gender housing	upperclass doubles and triples	none	2004	no	no	
Skidmore College	gender neutral housing	one floor in one hall	none	2008	no	yes	first come, first serve basis for upperclass students. first-years select on housing form
Southern Oregon University	gender inclusive floor	one floor in one hall	none	2009	yes	yes	
Stanford University	gender neutral housing	five residences (2 houses, 1 upperclass hall, 1 apartment complex, 1 graduate apartment building)	none	2008	yes	no	
SUNY Geneseo	gender neutral housing	suite style rooms		2009	yes		
Swarthmore College	gender neutral housing	doubles in most halls	none	2001	no	no	

Syracuse University				2010			
Wesleyan University	gender neutral housing	doubles or triples in various halls	none	1993	no	no	support transgender students
Whitman College	co-ed housing			2009			require parents to sign a letter notifying them of their child's living arrangement
Institution	Policy Name	Building Type(s)	Application Process	Year Created	Pilot Program?	First Years included?	Other Characteristics
Willamette University	gender neutral housing	selected upperclass halls	separate application from housing application	Fall 2008	yes	no	university reserves the right to prohibit couples of any sexual orientation to room together
Yale University	gender neutral housing	selected upperclass halls	yes	2010	no	no	available to seniors; students may share suites but only same-gender students may share rooms

Sources:

All institutions: National Student Genderblind Campaign, 2010

*American University, 2010

**Emerson College, 2010

***Macalester College, 2010