



LGBTQ+ Climate

October 2002

Purpose

One purpose of this survey was to determine awareness of campus climate issues for LGBTQ+ students (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, allies). Another goal was to establish priorities for the new LGBTQ+ Student Resource Center.

Implications/Highlights

More respondents in the 2002 survey than in the 2000 survey thought the campus climate was supportive of LGBTQ+ students. Few students were aware of the process for reporting LGBTQ+ hate/bias incidents and of LGBTQ+ resources on campus. More students were comfortable seeing 'affection displayed in public' by heterosexual than by LGBTQ+ couples.

Participation Rate

Total Survey Response: N = 1221

Phone: N = 717 of 1269 contacted (56%)

Web: N = 504 of 2000 contacted (25%)

Findings

Forty-seven percent of respondents said they personally knew an LGBTQ+ student at Penn State. A majority (90%) described their own sexual orientation as heterosexual.

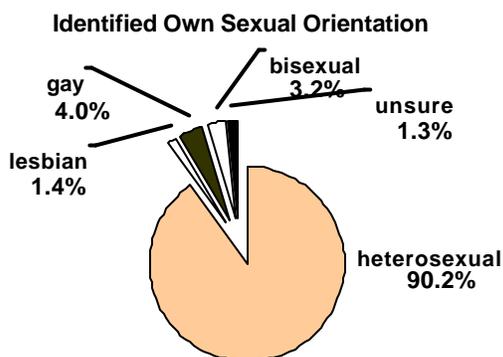


Figure 1. Approximately 10% of respondents identified their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual

Athletes,* seniors,* and those who responded to the online Web survey* were more likely to say they personally knew an LGBTQ+ student at Penn State.

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

More students in the 2002 study (32%) than in the 2000 study (20%) thought the campus climate was supportive of LGBTQ+ students. About the same proportion (65% in 2002 and 66% in 2000) said they were personally supportive of LGBTQ+ students.

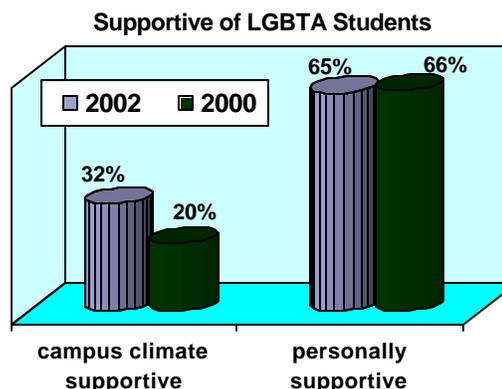


Figure 2. More students in 2002 than in 2000 thought the campus climate was supportive of LGBTQ+ students

Thirty percent of students reported becoming more supportive toward LGBTQ+ issues since coming to Penn State.

Attitude Toward LGBTQ+ Issues

30% more supportive
3% less supportive
67% no change

Students were asked how often within the past month they had personally heard or observed harassment of LGBTQ+ students.

Mean Number of Times in Last Month

	2002	2000
heard someone make jokes about LGBTQ+ students	3.43	6.00
heard someone make derogatory comments about LGBTQ+ students	3.03	5.05
saw derogatory written comments on campus about LGBTQ+ issues	1.18	1.36
saw someone physically harass LGBTQ+ students	0.11	0.01
had a class discussion/ reading that negatively portrayed LGBTQ+ persons/issues	0.22	0.00

For further information, please contact Dr. Betty Moore at the Student Affairs Research and Assessment Office.
315 Grange, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1809, blm1@sa.psu.edu



U.Ed. STA 03-136

Division of Student Affairs

Half of the students (51%) said they would report an LGBTQA hate episode which they personally experienced or witnessed. Few students (6%) were aware of the process for reporting LGBTQA hate/bias incidents.

Students were asked how effective they thought it would be to report LGBTQA hate/bias incidents through different channels.

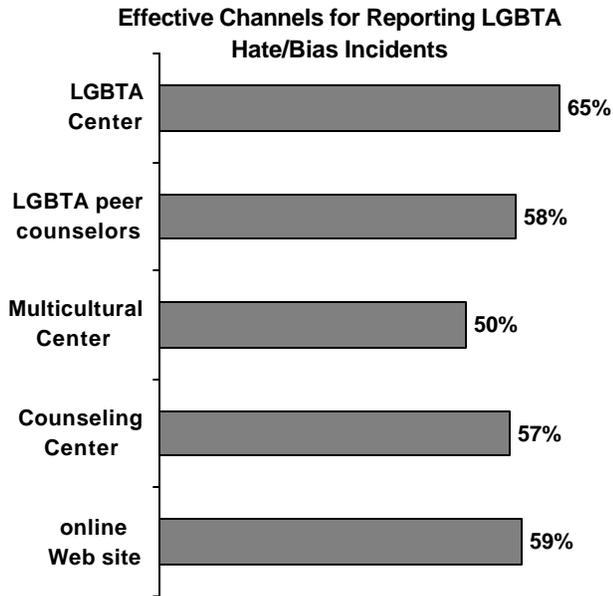


Figure 3. Students indicated that it would be effective to report LGBTQA hate/bias through different channels

Most students (80%) thought it was important for the new LGBTQA Student Resource Center to provide a safe place for LGBTQA students. A majority also thought the Center should provide LGBTQA library and research materials (68%) and a forum to highlight LGBTQA activities (72%); most also thought the Center should foster a sense of community for LGBTQA students (78%).

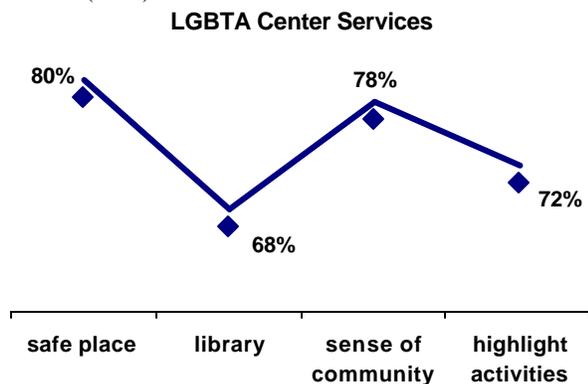


Figure 4. Students indicated it was important for the new LGBTQA Student Resource Center to provide different services

Athletes were *less* likely than non-athletes to want the Resource Center to provide a safe place for LGBTQA students,* foster a sense of community,* and provide a forum to highlight LGBTQA activities and events.*

Few students were familiar with LGBTQA issues and campus resources.

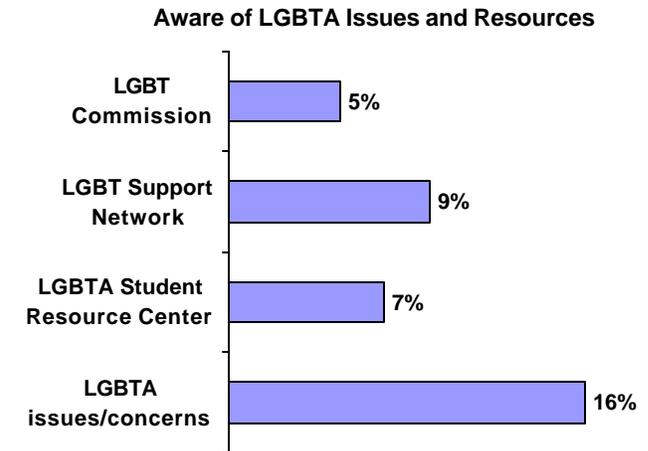


Figure 5. Few students were aware of LGBTQA issues or resources

Those who personally knew an LGBTQA student at Penn State were more likely to be familiar with issues,* the Student Resource Center,* and the Commission for LGBT Equity.*

Students were asked how they learned about LGBTQA issues and resources.

How Students Learned About LGBTQA Issues

- 28% the Daily Collegian
- 19% friends
- 14% student organization meetings/list serv notes
- 9% class information
- 9% campus offices

A fifth of respondents said they would attend an educational program on LGBTQA topics (20%) or an LGBTQA sponsored social event (21%). Nine percent said it was likely that they would make contact with the LGBTQA Student Resource Center.

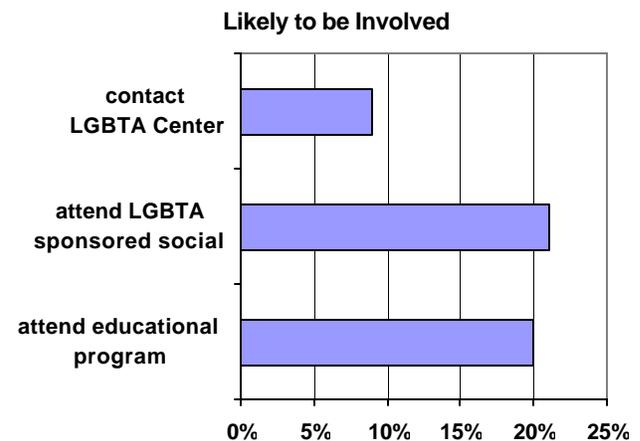


Figure 6. About a fifth of the respondents said it was likely they would attend an LGBTQA program or social event while less than a tenth would likely make contact with the LGBTQA Student Resource Center

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

A majority of students stated that they would be comfortable knowing their roommate (61%) or faculty instructor (85%) was lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Most (76%) were comfortable taking part in a class discussion on sexual orientation.

Comfortable with LGBT Discussions, Roommate, or Instructor

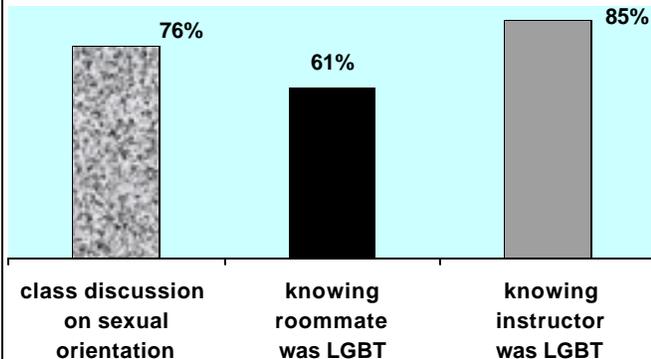


Figure 7. Most students said they were comfortable taking part in a class discussion on sexual orientation or knowing their roommate or instructor was lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

Women were more likely to say they would feel comfortable knowing their roommate * or faculty * instructor was lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Fewer were comfortable seeing affection displayed in public by LGBT students (42%) than by heterosexual couples (59%).

Comfortable Seeing Affection Displayed in Public

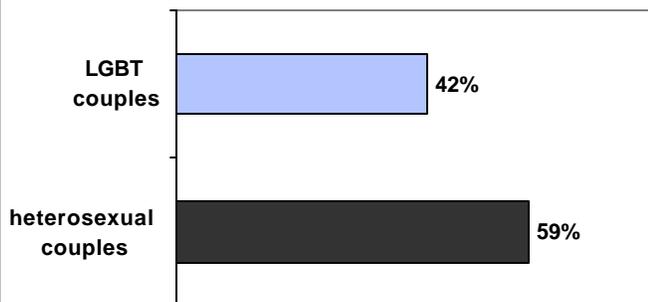


Figure 8. Fewer students were comfortable seeing 'affection displayed in public' on the part of LGBT students than by heterosexual students

A fourth of the respondents (27%) said they had taken a course which included a focus on sexual orientation or gender identity since coming to Penn State.

Took Course with Focus on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

- more women (34%) than men (20%)*
- more minority (35%) than non-minority students (26%)*
- more of those who personally knew an LGBT student at Penn State*

Students were asked to what extent their attitude toward LGBT issues had been influenced by class discussions, student organization dialogues or list serv notes, getting to know faculty or staff who have acknowledged they were LGBT and hearing about LGBT harassment incidents.

Influenced Attitude Towards LGBT Issues

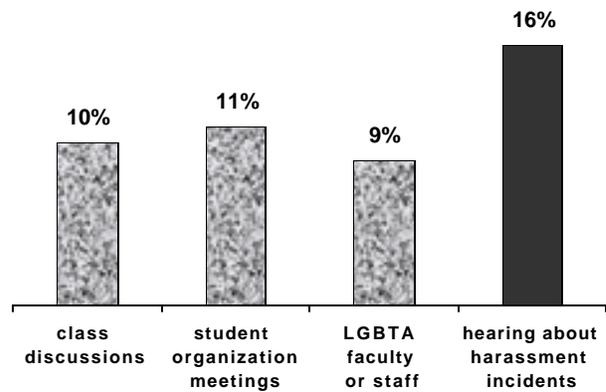


Figure 9. Hearing about LGBT harassment incidents influenced student attitudes

Those who were members of social fraternities and sororities were more likely than non-members to say they have become more supportive towards LGBT issues since coming to Penn State * and that they were influenced by hearing discussions through student organization meetings and list serv notes.*

Seniors were more familiar with LGBT issues and concerns than juniors, sophomores, or first year students.*

Seniors Were More Familiar with LGBT Issues and Concerns

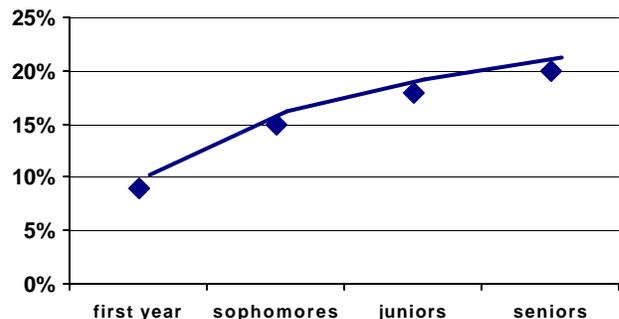


Figure 10. Seniors were more familiar with LGBT issues and concerns

Half of the respondents (54%) who were contacted through LGBT group list serves felt the various LGBT campus groups were inclusive.

Individual Comments from LGBT List Serv Group

- LGBT groups should work together more often.
- There should be efforts to reach students who are not LGBT.
- There should be a better way to report hate incidents.
- They should move beyond personal growth issues to effect broader community change.

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.