



A PATH FORWARD – TOGETHER
LGBTQIA Community Support

NOVEMBER 1, 2017

LGBTQIA Community Support
Action Team

Preliminary Report



LGBTQIA Action Team Report November 1, 2017

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I. INTRODUCTION

On September 23, 2017, Georgia Tech President Bud Peterson announced the formation of Action Teams comprised of faculty, staff, students, and community leaders to explore a number of areas of importance to the future of the Institute. In addition to Campus Culture, Campus Safety, and Student Mental Health, an Action Team was constituted to address LGBTQIA Community Support. This report is the culmination of the work of the LGBTQIA Community Support Action Team.

The Team received its charge from President Peterson on October 3. Over several initial meetings, we classified major topics for investigation and analysis into four categories: **Housing/Facilities** (focusing on gender-inclusive housing and restrooms), **Health/Legal**, the **LGBTQIA Resource Center**, and **Visibility/Education**. We created four “subgroups,” each of which worked independently to investigate challenges, issues, and opportunities in their areas, with periodic full Action Team meetings during the month for Team input, feedback, and recommendations for the subgroups’ work in progress.

Subgroups’ work included extensive benchmarking of practices among peer and aspirational institutions, as well as comprehensive outreach to the Georgia Tech community. Benchmarking efforts utilized data recently compiled in the Georgia Tech LGBTQIA Resource Center Strategic Plan (see *Appendix D*) as well as original benchmarking by members of the Team. We solicited input from all constituents of the Georgia Tech community through our published email contact account. Subgroups of the Action Team also identified a wide array of Georgia Tech people and organizations to contact, meet with, and discuss issues relating to our charge. Among those, our subgroups received input from many students, staff, and professors; Institute Diversity; Georgia Tech Division of Student Life; Georgia Tech Human Resources; Stamps Health Services; Georgia Tech Dean of Students; Georgia Tech Department of Housing and Department of Residence Life; University System of Georgia System Office; Georgia Tech Office of the Registrar; Pride Alliance; and Progressive Student Alliance.

II. BRIEF HISTORIC CONTEXT

Although the history of LGBTQIA initiatives at Georgia Tech has not been recorded with precision over the many years of the Institute’s existence, relatively little was done until the present decade. In 1988, students formed a student organization called the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the predecessor to our current student organization, Pride Alliance. In the late 1990s, “Gay and Lesbian” was added to the Georgia Tech non-discrimination policy.

In 2003, Georgia Tech began offering limited domestic partner benefits. With proof of domestic partnership, enrollment was available in dental, vision, and life insurance plans. USG medical coverage was not available. Otherwise, little attention was given to the LGBTQIA community at Georgia Tech in the first decade of the 2000s outside of student-led groups.

The present decade has brought an encouraging, expanded attention to the support of Georgia Tech’s LGBTQIA Community. In 2010, Georgia Tech added gender identity to its non-discrimination policy. In 2011, President Bud Peterson committed that all new construction and major renovations on campus would include the creation and designation of gender-inclusive restrooms. In 2012, the Family Friendly Task Force Report recommended the expansion of benefits coverage to include domestic and same-sex partners. However, after this recommendation, USG chose not to cover medical benefits for domestic partners, though legally they could have done so.

In July 2015, as a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the University System of Georgia (USG) expanded enrollment and medical coverage to same-sex married couples. The USG no longer offers benefit coverage to non-married same-sex or heterosexual domestic partners. The BuzzCard Center also will issue a card for all spouses and domestic partners. This card allows access to the Campus Recreation Center (with membership), the library, one's personal residence in family housing, and Stamps Health Services.

Two critically important groups and organizations were established at Georgia Tech during the current decade. In 2011, a Pride Alumni Group was established in the Georgia Tech Alumni Association, an affinity group for LGBTQIA alumni. Likewise, the Pride Employee Resource Group, an ERG to support LGBTQIA employees at Tech, was established in 2013. Georgia Tech opened the LGBTQIA Resource Center in 2014, hiring Dr. Aby Parsons as its first director.

Progress in LGBTQIA community support during the past decade is encouraging. After careful analysis of important, pressing needs and the best practices of comparison universities, the LGBTQIA Action Team submits the following recommendations to President Peterson as we seek to take a big step forward in Georgia Tech's support of its LGBTQIA community.

III. FACILITIES AND HOUSING

a. Gender-Inclusive Restroom Policy Proposal

Overview

In 2011, President Bud Peterson committed that all new construction and major renovations on campus would include the creation and designation of gender-inclusive restrooms. While some gender-inclusive restrooms have been created in light of this commitment (e.g., West Village Dining, Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons), the Institute has not yet met the needs of the Tech community in establishing safe, inclusive restrooms for all. As a result, our proposal includes two primary foci: 1) the provision of accessible and adequate restroom facilities across Georgia Tech's Atlanta campus; and 2) the proper advertisement and promotion of these facilities to the community.

In line with common principles of Universal Design, gender-inclusive bathrooms provide equitable, flexible, and intuitive options for individuals across the spectrum of experience and identity. Indeed, gender-inclusive restrooms are accommodating not only for transgender/gender nonconforming individuals, but also for individuals with disabilities whose caretaker is of a different gender, parents accompanying young children of another gender, and the list goes on. As a result of providing gender-inclusive bathrooms, institutions mitigate what J.L. Hernan identifies as minority stress, a symptom of the "system of surveillance and policing of public spaces" that occurs in gender-segregated spaces.

Recommendations

With this context in mind, the LGBTQIA Community Support Task Force recommends the following:

- I. *Gender-Inclusive Bathroom Replacements (Short-Term)*
 1. Phase 1
 - a. Comprehensive Facilities Audit

To be extended to other campuses at the discretion of the president.

- i. All building managers will review their facilities and submit a comprehensive spreadsheet of all building restrooms indicating all single-stall gender-inclusive, single-stall gendered, and multi-stall gendered restrooms; review must also include details on ADA compliance. Buildings affected include all Georgia Tech-operated buildings, including residence halls, with high priority to central Atlanta campus. **Proposed Deadline:** First day of Spring 2018 academic semester.
- ii. All submissions will be directed to the implementation team sanctioned by Georgia Tech higher administration.
- b. Mid-Point Map
 - i. This is a comprehensive visual map listing all current gender-inclusive restrooms in each building on campus. This map is to be integrated into the online Georgia Tech campus map. **Proposed Deadline:** February 28 of Spring 2018 academic semester.
2. Phase 2
 - a. Expansion Review and Strategy
 - i. The implementation team will review all submissions to identify current single-stall, gendered (male or female) bathrooms AND current gender-neutral restrooms.
 - ii. The implementation team will review all submissions to identify currently gendered multi-stall facilities, and determine which facilities may be immediately available for conversion into a gender-neutral option.
3. Phase 3
 - a. Building staff will replace all single-stall gendered restroom signs with gender-inclusive restroom signs.
 - i. Where it is unequitable to ask buildings to find funds for these signs, funds will be made available by the Office of the President.
 - ii. **Proposed Deadline:** First day of Summer 2018 academic semester
 - b. Updated Map
 - i. The map is to be available online integrated into the Georgia Tech campus map and visibly available in print in each building.
 - ii. **Proposed Deadline:** June 30 of Summer 2018 semester.
 - iii. The highest priority is to replace all single-stall gendered restroom signs, but consideration should be made for current gender-inclusive signs to be replaced. Bathroom sign replacements should be done in the format seen to the right, and adjusted for individual building aesthetic.



All gender-inclusive restrooms currently in the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons (CULC) are to remain open all 24 hours of the CULC operational day.

Gender-Inclusive Bathroom Replacements (Long Term)

Gender-inclusive: a facility that is usable by persons of all gender identities and expressions and that is not gender specific.

In the immediate future, the Institute will commit to installing, converting, or retrofitting facilities or other spaces for the creation of a gender-neutral restroom option in each campus building. While President Peterson has committed previously to the creation of gender-neutral bathrooms in all new construction and major renovation, **we propose that this commitment grow to include the creation of an accessible gender-neutral facility in each building over the course of the next five years.**

In all new construction and in buildings that maintain a high impact or traffic of students, a multi-stall gender-neutral restroom will be made available. Buildings to be included are: Student Center, Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Bio-Quad, West Village, North Avenue Commons, Library, Campus Recreation Center, Stamps Health Services Building, and Brittain Rec.

Recommendations for the new Student Center:

1. Multi-Stall Gender-Inclusive Restroom
 - a. In an effort to continue the commitment to all-gender restroom accessibility, a multi-stall gender-inclusive restroom is to be included in the new Student Center.
 - b. As a model and reference for this space, Stamps Health Services building previously included a multi-stall gender-inclusive restroom, but was revoked due to poor design. To avoid such misuse in the future, please reference the following models: Emory University, University of Southern California, Northwestern University, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Washington, Portland State University, Cal Poly Pomona, American University, and Pace University.
 - i.
 - b. Gender-Inclusive Housing Policy Proposal**

Georgia Tech has implemented gender-inclusive housing practices on an as-needed, case-by-case basis for students. This informal process requires a broad cast of staff including several members of the Housing and Residence Life teams, as well as the Division of Student Life (most recently the founding director of the LGBTQIA Resource Center, Dr. Parsons). The desire to create and implement a Gender-Inclusive Housing (GIH) policy at Georgia Tech has three main priorities: 1) to serve students of all gender identities equitably by creating and maintaining processes to self-select into the housing options that they deem best fit, 2) to establish an inclusive and dynamic business practice that assists the Department of Housing in maintaining its bottom line in an increasingly competitive housing market, and 3) to bring Georgia Tech into alignment with the best practices implemented by peer and aspirational institutions so that Georgia Tech maintains its commitment to inclusive excellence and innovation.

Federal and State Law

Following the Dear Colleague Letter of 2016 issued by the Department of Education, the Georgia Tech Department of Housing produced a draft of a Gender-Inclusive Housing practice (see **Appendix A**) to satisfy the federal mandate that students be provided with housing accommodations in line with their gender identity. The proposed draft closely mirrored Georgia State University's policy, which was implemented in fall 2015.

While the 2016 Title IX guidance was rescinded in early 2017, Georgia Tech must remain steadfast in its commitment to addressing the needs of its transgender students by providing safe and appropriate housing accommodation. As an Institute that prides itself on a tradition of excellence, Georgia Tech has a responsibility not only to meet the minimum standards of care for all students, but also to demonstrate innovative and holistic approaches to diversity and inclusion. Indeed, creating the next LGBTQIA Georgia Tech graduate, engineer, researcher, and professional requires a commitment to carving out ideological, intellectual, and physical space for the development of students. In doing so, we catalyze

better mental health outcomes, increased productivity, and a culture of belonging.

Benchmarking

A review of 65 AAU and peer institutions illustrates the following:

- 72 percent of institutions have a current gender-inclusive housing policy (n=47).
- 51 percent of institutions with a GIH policy include first-year students (n=24).
- 49 percent of institutions with a GIH policy did not restrict GIH housing to a particular residence hall, floor, or building (n=23).

A review of practice and policy amongst USG schools reveals the following:

- Georgia State University implemented a GIH policy in fall 2015. The policy is inclusive of first-year students, and does not restrict GIH to particular halls or buildings.
- Kennesaw State University offers a GIH option in their Stonewall House. Otherwise, housing is segregated by legal sex, and accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis.
- University of Georgia offers special accommodations to transgender students. Requests are made through the LGBT Resource Center and Department of Housing.
- Georgia Southern University offers no clear guidance online. Administrators were not immediately available for further discussion.
- Armstrong State University assigns housing based on legal sex; will consider accommodations upon request.
- University of North Georgia assigns housing based on legal sex. Transgender students may request accommodations from the Department of Residence Life; no formal policy.
- Georgia College and State University (GCSU) allows accommodations on a case-by-case basis, and is currently reviewing its practice; GCSU is also considering implementing a policy. Have proposed a few options to administration, but have not found a toe-hold so far.

Recommendations

With the aforementioned context in mind, the LGBTQIA Community Support Task Force strongly recommends the following to be implemented for academic year 2018-19:

1. The creation of a gender-inclusive housing policy (Appendix B) to be included in the Georgia Tech Policy Library and subsequently listed on stakeholder websites including: Department of Housing, Residence Life, Division of Student Life, LGBTQIA Resource Center, Institute Diversity, Office of Compliance Programs, Office of Admissions, and respective Living-Learning Community sites (e.g., Honors Program, Grand Challenges).
2. The immediate chartering of a gender-inclusive housing team to be charged with the implementation of the GIH in time for incoming first-year students in the fall of 2018.

3. The implementation of mandatory trainings to prepare employees to ensure comprehension and compliance for those who will be working with the newly implemented GIH policy. These trainings should be facilitated in collaboration with the LGBTQIA Resource Center.
4. The continued practice of reserving/holding space in residence halls that are amenable to GIH in the interest of providing accommodation to first-year students who would otherwise be relegated to gendered halls/buildings.[‡]

Policy Considerations

The proposed policy outlined in *Appendix B* includes the following considerations:

1. The policy is inclusive of all Georgia Tech students, regardless of their year of study or their gender identity.
2. Students will self-identify their sex on their annual housing form (M, F, N). This protects students from unnecessarily revealing their transgender identity, and also provides transgender students the ability to easily live with students who share their gender identity and/or legal sex.
3. All students are provided the option to live in gendered housing that reflects their legal sex and/or their gender identity. Students need not “out” themselves as transgender in order to live in their preferred residence.
4. Department of Housing will use student self-identification of sex (as opposed to legal sex) for the purposes of gendered-housing assignments. Rather than utilizing legal sex data imported from Banner, StarRez, or other residential software, Housing will defer to a student’s self-identified sex as listed on their annual housing application.
5. All students are provided the option not only to live in gender-neutral housing, but also to denote which genders they are open to living with (e.g., a cisgender woman may opt to live with cisgender women, transgender women, transgender men, and non-binary people, but not with cisgender men OR a transgender man may be open to living only with other cisgender or transgender men).
6. Students may also prioritize the extent to which they are willing to participate in GIH. For example, if a non-binary student would prefer to live with other non-binary students, they may indicate this as first preference. If no other non-binary students are available to be placed with that student, the student might opt to remove themselves from GIH altogether (second preference) and to be housed with a student sharing their legal sex.
7. Georgia Tech will follow the best practices of AAU and peer institutions by providing open accommodations across campus. No halls or buildings will be designated as the sole allocated spaces for gender-inclusive housing. Gendered halls will accommodate trans students sharing that hall’s legal sex *OR* gender designation (e.g., a trans man may live on a men’s hall or women’s hall as preferred).
8. Cisgender students also benefit from the ability to live with cisgender students who do not share their legal sex. Students may opt to live with friends, siblings/family members, or other peers

[‡] Currently, Glenn and Towers buildings are amenable to first-year transgender students seeking GIH as they provide both gender-specific and gender-inclusive shower/toilet facilities.

regardless of their sex or gender identity. The policy will state that GIH is not intended for romantic partners.

9. Students who opt-in to GIH will be held to a formal housing agreement. (For examples, review *Appendix C* for Georgia State’s current GIH Agreement).

IV. HEALTH AND LEGAL ISSUES

The LGBTQIA community faces a number of health care and legal-related issues that affect individual well-being and the ability to thrive as a member of the greater Georgia Tech community. The following areas are identified for immediate action and long-term consideration:

a. Transition-Related Health Care Insurance

A major concern facing the transgender community involves health care insurance coverage for the high medical expenses incurred in conjunction with gender transition-related care. At Georgia Tech, this impacts students and employees separately through various health insurance options.

Our research shows that more than 86 colleges and universities⁶ provide student insurance coverage for transition-related medical expenses, and several more that provide coverage for at least hormone therapy. The institutions on this list include all of Georgia Tech’s identified peer institutions. Remarkably, through our team’s research and discussion of this issue with Stamps Health Services, it was discovered that Georgia Tech’s StudentBlue student health insurance plan, underwritten through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia, *does* provide coverage for both hormone therapy and gender-affirming procedures, effective in 2016. This is a tremendous step forward in the support of Tech’s transgender students.

On the employee side, unlike student insurance, Georgia Tech’s health insurance plans are provided through the University System of Georgia (USG) and are not specifically negotiated solely for Tech’s employees. At this time, we are awaiting further guidance and response from the USG regarding the possibility of future coverage for gender-affirming surgeries and hormone treatments as a part of the various USG employee health insurance plans provided through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia (BCBSGa) and Kaiser Permanente (KP).

Information on peer institution employee health care plans is less readily available than student plans. However, recent federal regulations⁷ from the Department of Health and Human Services interpret section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination in health coverage and care in any programs that receive federal funding. As a result, most insurers cannot deny or limit coverage treatment related to gender identity, including all insurers receiving federal funding (like Georgia Tech).

Our recommendations with regard to health insurance include:

- *Short-Term:*
 - Stamps Health Services should partner with the LGBTQIA Resource Center and external medical experts to provide specific policy information and procedures to definitively outline coverage for transition-related care under Tech’s student health care plan.
 - Pending response from the USG, continue discussions with GTHR and USG offices on transgender care coverage for employees.
- *Long-Term:*

- Georgia Tech needs to provide leadership in influencing the conversation with the USG office to add and maintain transition-related coverage under all employee health care plans. Coverage should be assured in all future student plans as well.

b. Comprehensive Training for Health Care Professionals at Stamps Health Services, including HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, and Support

While a number of resources are available for students through Stamps Health Services, feedback from the LGBTQIA community and Resource Center strongly indicated the need for additional, comprehensive training for health care professionals and student-facing employees. This need is particularly acute in care related to transition surgery consultation and treatment and for preventative and supportive care for the community of men who have sex with men, or MSM.

Research shows that the MSM community is experiencing a higher rate of HIV diagnoses nationally,⁶ including a reported increase here among the Georgia Tech community. Those impacted have expressed concern for the lack of support on campus in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, as well as care and support for those recently diagnosed. Many students are unaware of STD/STI testing available on campus as the services are not broadly communicated or effectively marketed, and the costs to students of HIV testing are high.

Our recommendation with regard to training for health care professionals and HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support include:

- *Short-Term:*
 - Collaborate with Dr. Aby Parsons and the LGBTQIA Resource Center and external medical experts to create a comprehensive training program for all campus health care providers.
 - Since the Stamps Health Services facility cannot close for extended periods of time, consideration should be given for multiple sessions over several days.
 - It is suggested that the sessions include extended training on transgender-related education by external medical professionals.
 - Increase campus awareness for STD/STI testing, as well as prevention and care resources (e.g., currently, STI testing information is only listed under the Women's Health section of the Stamps Health Services website).
 - Increase awareness and emphasis on transgender medical care.
- *Long-Term:*
 - Develop an online/video training module for staff that can be updated easily on a regular basis and incorporated into future training sessions.
 - All new employees would be required to view the tutorial during the onboarding process.

c. Chosen/Preferred Names and Pronouns

It is important for Georgia Tech to recognize that many members of the community go by a name other than their legal name or birth name. For students, faculty, and staff, this is important for their gender identity and safety. Currently, the Office of the Registrar does allow students an option to identify a chosen/preferred first name on the Banner student record. Class rosters should reflect chosen/preferred names as well as pronouns students use. Faculty and staff do not currently have the option to choose chosen/preferred names or pronouns in the PeopleSoft Human Capital Management application used by the Office of Human Resources.

Our recommendations with regard to chosen/preferred names/pronouns include:

- *Short-Term:*
 - Expand the chosen/preferred name option to employees. The HR data system does allow chosen/preferred names, but the field is not currently being utilized by Georgia Tech. This should be reconsidered.
- *Long-Term:*
 - Capturing pronouns in the Banner student information system is currently not available. However, it is anticipated the vendor for the software will release an update in spring 2018 that will allow institutions to capture this information. It is suggested that Georgia Tech implement this option as soon as it is available.
 - The Office of Human Resources should work with the PeopleSoft system vendor to allow the chosen/preferred pronoun option for faculty and staff.

d. Mental Health Initiatives

Although a separate Action Team is providing a more thorough report on mental health issues, we recognize the need to reinforce mental health-related needs specifically affecting the LGBTQIA community. Research shows that suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24. The related statistics within the LGBTQIA youth population are staggering, with the population nearly three times more likely than heterosexual youth to have contemplated, and almost five times as likely to have attempted.⁷ Specific actions must be taken to address the mental health needs of our LGBTQIA community across campus.

Our recommendations with regard to LGBTQIA mental health initiatives include:

- *Short-Term:*
 - Given the several open searches already underway in the Counseling Center, the opportunity exists to hire counseling staff specifically trained in LGBTQIA-related areas. This does not necessitate hiring a specialist to serve only the specific population, rather a counselor with more extensive training in related areas such as gender and LGBTQIA studies.
- *Long-Term:*
 - Develop and offer training targeted for student-facing faculty and staff on basic counseling skills, particularly crisis intervention training. This training would be targeted for employees such as Student Life staff, academic advisors, hall directors, graduate student advisors, and new faculty members.
 - Develop and implement LGBTQIA QPR training, or increase the focus on LGBTQIA suicide prevention resources within the standard QPR trainings.

e. Queer Sexual Violence Prevention

Sexual and relationship violence affects many communities; however, it is rarely discussed. Recent studies indicate that the LGBTQIA community is at a greater risk for sexual assault.⁸ While there is a sexual and relationship violence awareness program at Georgia Tech (VOICE), more needs to be done to incorporate queer and trans issues into sexual violence prevention training.

Our recommendations with regard to training for sexual violence prevention include:

- *Short-Term:*
 - Include resource information on the Health & Well-Being website specifically for the LGBTQIA community.

- Increased collaboration from leadership of the Health & Well-Being unit on campus with the LGBTQIA Resource Center; support has been lacking thus far.
- *Long-Term:*
 - Develop targeted programming for the LGBTQIA community in partnership with the existing VOICE and PAUSE programs through Health Initiatives.
 - Enhance employee training resources to address queer sexual violence prevention issues.

V. LGBTQIA RESOURCE CENTER

Overview

The LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Ally) Resource Center needs additional resources — including staff, space, and funding — to achieve its mission and vision. One staff member alone cannot provide the services that our LGBTQIA students, faculty, and staff are identifying as priorities, particularly given the high volume of requests for support, referrals, and consultations, a number that has exceeded 400 since the Center opened just over three years ago. Further, the Center has had no dedicated space other than one office (a converted storage room).

Background

The Center opened April 1, 2014, as a joint initiative between Institute Diversity (ID) and the Division of Student Life (DSL). The Center has been staffed by one full-time professional director since it opened. There is no other staffing other than a part-time graduate assistant who works 15-20 hours per week. In 2016, the Center completed a strategic planning process. The outcome of this process was a five-year strategic plan that identified crucial strategies that will enable its growth and position it to be in better alignment with centers at our peer institutions. Further details about the Center, its mission, vision, history, and strategic goals can be found in its strategic plan (located in the appendices).

Recommendations

The LGBTQIA Resource Center subcommittee has analyzed benchmarking data on LGBTQIA centers, reviewed the Center's strategic plan and annual reports, met with the Center's director, and conducted a needs assessment for space and resources. Additional meetings were held with leadership in Student Life and Institute Diversity. Finally, conversations were also held with student groups, faculty, and leaders of administrative units.

a. Space

Current Status

- The Center's physical space includes only one office for the director, which is located in the Smithgall Student Services ("Flag") building. The office is off a corridor that is adjacent to the building exit and, consequently, there is a considerable amount of walk-through traffic as people enter/exit the building.
- With this location, there is very little privacy. Safety is also a concern. The high visibility of the area also may make it uncomfortable for a student or employee who wishes to maintain confidentiality.

- There is no storage and no place for small gatherings or meetings, other than one sofa in the office.
- There is no area to provide resources or literature on LGBTQIA issues or topics.

Immediate Recommendations

- The Center needs space to address safety, privacy/confidentiality, and (proposed) expansion of staffing and programming (see below). Further, the space needs to provide greater opportunity for involvement by students, faculty, and staff as well as signal the importance of the Center to the campus community. Immediate space needs include:
 - Director's office, ideally large enough to include a small meeting table for four-six people when private or sensitive meetings need to be held
 - Individual offices for a (proposed) full-time professional staff member and a graduate assistant
 - A flexible office space to be used by "drop-in" advisors, student assistants, faculty, or others who are affiliated with the Center
 - Social resource space that would include a reception and gathering area and space for a literature holder and resource area (bookshelves, etc.)
 - Storage space for program materials
- After conducting a short walk-through of space in the first floor of the Smithgall building with the director, two immediate options were identified. These options would need to be considered in alignment with broader conversations about space allocation within the Smithgall building and Division of Student Life.
 - Option 1: It was observed that the former Greek Affairs suite, Suite 141, which is co-located with New Student and Sophomore Programs (NSSP) and Student Organizations Finance Office (SOFO), is currently vacant and could be an option. It would address most, if not all, of the immediate space needs for the Center with only minor renovation and limited reassignment of currently occupied offices.
 - Option 2: A second option for space could be reassigning the two IT staff offices adjacent to the director's existing office and doing some minor renovation. This may not fully meet the immediate space needs.
- Within the Center, consideration should be given to allocating space to the Pride Alliance student leadership. There are needs for storage of the organization's materials, places for the officers to meet, and the ability to work closely with the director, who is also the organization's staff advisor.

Long-Term Recommendations

- Given that the Center's mission supports students, faculty, and staff, we recommend that the Center be included in the new Student (Community) Center that is currently being planned.

b. Organization and Staffing

Current Status

- The Center was jointly established by the Division of Student Life and Institute Diversity. While it currently reports jointly to both units, the primary reporting and day-to-day supervision of the director is within Student Life (to the associate dean of students).
- The professional staffing consists of a full-time director and a part-time graduate assistant.
- A funding request was submitted to create a full-time coordinator position during the Institute's normal budget process. As of the date of this group's work, it was not funded.

- It was noted that the director is not currently an assistant dean of students, which is one of the only director-level positions in the Division of Student Life that does not have this status (for example, the director of the Women’s Resource Center is also an assistant dean of students). This was an intentional decision to hire based on content expertise rather than “general” student affairs expertise (which would be required of an assistant dean to be able to support the “on call” system).

Immediate Recommendations

- We recommend that Georgia Tech’s Office of Strategic Consulting be engaged to conduct an organizational review of the Center. The review may need to take into consideration the following:
 - Nearly all LGBTQIA centers benchmarked had at least two professional staff members. We recommend providing new resources to expand staffing to include a second, full-time staff member, either at the program coordinator or assistant director level. This staff member would be in addition to the graduate assistant and student assistants (to staff reception area and assist with programs). The addition of a second full-time position will allow the director to focus on more strategic initiatives, collaborate with academic units, and develop and expand programming, including more Safe Space training programs.
 - An additional staff member whose focus would be weighted toward faculty and staff initiatives. This position would have specific expertise working with these populations. The position could focus both on LGBTQIA faculty/staff as well as working with faculty/staff on LGBTQIA support (for example, developing online training modules). This position could either reside in the LGBTQIA Center, or be located in OHR or Institute Diversity and coordinate closely with the Center. Various members of the Action Team identified advantages and disadvantages to each approach, and the Team recommends that key stakeholders be consulted on this question, should such a position be created.
 - Further clarification of the reporting relationship between Institute Diversity and Student Life may be needed. Specifically, the director mentioned that her reporting to Institute Diversity was not fully clear and most of her interaction and day-to-day supervision is within the Division of Student Life.
 - The Center’s connection with OHR’s Employee Resource Group (ERG) for LGBTQIA faculty/staff needs to be explored and refined.

c. Funding and Resources

Current Status

- The Center has a limited state and Georgia Tech Foundation budget. The director must do fundraising to campus units to pay for hallmark events such as the Lavender Graduation and others that must use non-state funding (for purchases such food).

Immediate Recommendations

- An institutional budget should be established for the Lavender Graduation, and this event should be coordinated closely with Institute Communications’ Special Events staff. Similarly, institutional budgets should be established for other “signature” events such as the Annual LGBTQIA Welcome Reception.
- The director should work with the Office of Development to create a strategic case for support that could be shared with prospective donors and alumni. This may include an opportunity to name the Center.

- Funding should be allocated for the Center to have its own digital signage.
- With the proposed expansion of staffing and space, funding should be allocated for technology needs for the Center (including computers, printers, etc.) as well as professional development of the staff (attending/presenting at relevant conferences, etc.).

d. Programming

As additional resources and staffing are provided to the Center, our subgroup recommends that the Center consider expanding programming to include the following:

- Expansion of Safe Space and Trans 101 training programs
- Outreach to the Alumni affinity group to engage LGBTQIA alumni
- Creation of online training program for LGBTQIA issues
- Faculty Fellows program (e.g., working with faculty in teaching LGBTQIA students, possibly in partnership with the Center for Teaching and Learning)
- Endowed faculty chair in STEM/LGBTQIA area of scholarship
- Opportunities for the director to teach an appropriate courses on LGBTQIA topics (for example, in the Honors Program)

VI. VISIBILITY AND EDUCATION

Overview

Compared to other universities in the South and across the United States, Georgia Tech is still not regarded as LGBTQIA friendly. The LGBTQIA Resource Center has done a phenomenal job of building community and beginning to educate the campus on the lives, needs, and culture of members of that community. In order for a center with only one full time staff member to effect the kind of long-term change that reflects true inclusivity and respect, the entire Yellow Jacket community must be committed and engaged. We need to be more aware of the contributions that LGBTQIA people make to Georgia Tech every day, and we need to be more aware of how we as a campus can provide greater support to that community.

The work below presents a few recommendations benefitting visibility and education surrounding the LGBTQIA community at Georgia Tech. Our sources included discussions with students both inside and outside Georgia Tech's LGBTQIA community. We also looked at various programs and resources offered by universities around the country. Many of these recommendations are either already part of the extensive work of the Center but need expanding, or are among the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan (see *Appendix D*) but would require ***additional staffing and funding for the Center; thus, increased staffing should be seen as a primary need/top priority of this report, with the success of many of our other recommendations relying on this initial requirement.*** Recommendations in this section are directed not only to the Office of the President's, but to the community at large as well.

Short-Term Goals

Education and Understanding of LGBTQIA Issues

1. The president and his cabinet should complete Safe Space and Trans 101 courses. The Institute's top leadership need to have a solid, basic understanding of the community they are trying to serve.
2. Create a comprehensive online reference for the community to educate them about LGBTQIA terms and concepts. There are already some glossaries and collections of resources on the Center's website (ex. Princeton University⁹).
3. Create webinars that can be accessed and shared at any time from the Center's website (ex. University of Maryland¹⁰).
4. Develop and facilitate trainings for LGBTQIA students to address intra-community violence and oppression.
5. Increase the number of Safe Space trainings available to the community at large and encourage more offices and departments to pursue Safe Space training.

Visibility of LGBTQIA People on Campus

1. LGBTQIA issues need to be represented in diversity conversations at the school, college, and Institute levels. That means that there must be LGBTQIA representation on each of the new Diversity & Inclusion councils that are forming. Dr. Parsons or a designee chosen by her should be on the new Institute D&I council when it forms.
2. Tour guides and FASET leaders should attend presentations about the Center and include information about LGBTQIA resources in their interactions with prospective and admitted students.
3. Create programming for LGBTQIA international students. This could include coffee talks, book discussions, a q-chats group, and more. Include more extensive information about the Center in the orientation material that every international student receives from the Office of International Education.
4. Host a webpage on the Center site where students, faculty, and staff who are out can share their stories and be accessible to other LGBTQIA folks on campus (ex. Emory University¹¹).
5. Georgia Tech's various media outlets should promote LGBTQIA events, news, and achievements to express support for its students, faculty, and staff. Their LGBTQIA identities should be emphasized and connected to their pursuit of academic excellence at Tech. This would promote the idea that Georgia Tech as an institution is engaged with the community and thinks these issues are important.
6. Professors should make efforts to indicate to their students that they are sensitive to LGBTQIA issues; examples include indicating pronouns in their email signatures, including information about the Resource Center in syllabi, or asking for chosen/preferred names when calling roll.

Long-Term Goals

Education and Understanding of LGBTQIA Issues

1. Create an LGBTQIA training (not necessarily Safe Space) as a part of all trainings for RAs, PLs, academic advisors, and TAs.
2. Expand the General Catalog to include more courses that cover LGBTQIA history, theory, policy, and advocacy. It is important that students who have a stronger interest in these topics have the opportunity to learn in a formal classroom setting.
3. Create structured channels for ongoing dialogue between deans, school chairs, other faculty administrators, and students about how faculty can better support the needs of students in their

classrooms and research labs. Faculty relations often appear intractable to students. It is up to faculty leaders to work with students to effect change (ex. Kansas State University¹³).

4. Develop new ways to leverage the size and influence of the Greek community in service of LGBTQIA students on campus. The percentage of Greek community members who have attended Greek Ally Trainings should be increased substantially.

Visibility OF LGBTQIA People on Campus

1. Develop a means of safely gathering useful data, perhaps through Institutional Research and Planning, about LGBTQIA people on campus. Data is vital to understanding the scale and scope of the needs of any population or community.
2. Develop programming that specifically addresses the needs and unique environment of graduate students at Georgia Tech.

VII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the LGBTQIA Community Support Action Team would like to offer some reflection on the motivations and purpose of the work required to produce the list of recommendations contained herein. We, along with many in the LGBTQIA community, are grateful to the Office of the President for their recognition that the needs of our community are among the vital and pressing issues needing immediate attention following the events of this September. However, the reason for including an LGBTQIA Action Team wasn't clear to everyone. Among the wide range of input we received during this process, one question was repeated frequently enough to warrant a direct response: "Why do we need an LGBTQIA Action Team?"

Despite the laudable progress that Georgia Tech has made in recent years toward becoming more accommodating and accepting of the LGBTQIA community, there is still plenty of work to be done. The act of being openly queer in a hostile world often takes an immense toll on a person's mental health and overall well-being. It has been observed time and time again that rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide are many times higher among members of the LGBTQIA community than the general population.¹⁴ The existence of anti-queer sentiment is undeniable¹⁵ at Georgia Tech and around the world, as is its contribution to the mental health crisis faced by the LGBTQIA community.

The events of this semester have only reinforced our certainty that we have an obligation to our community: to fight vigorously for the needs and rights of LGBTQIA students; to chip away at the culture of exclusion and fear of queer people by the majority; and to continue building and improving the resources and culture provided by our Institute until no queer Yellow Jacket's mental, physical, or spiritual health is damaged by their rejection, real or perceived, by the larger Georgia Tech community.

We, the members of the LGBTQIA Community Support Action Team, hope that this report will constitute the first of many steps taken toward a Georgia Tech and a world more accepting and supportive of our queer brothers, sisters, and siblings of all genders. We hope that the action items relayed in this report, composed primarily of recommendations for housing and facilities, health and legal issues, visibility and education, and the LGBTQIA Resource Center, will be addressed swiftly and carefully. Recognizing also that the needs of the community are ever-changing and that the work of the Action Team, conscientious though it was, is, in all likelihood, incomplete, we make one final recommendation: ***that the president establish a standing LGBTQIA Advisory Board, whether it be composed of members of this Action Team or others, to be consulted at least once a semester, and more often as needed, for input on the needs and concerns of the Georgia Tech LGBTQIA community.***

Finally, we extend our thanks to all who have assisted us in compiling these recommendations. It has been our honor to serve the Georgia Tech community as members of the LGBTQIA Action Team. All

recommendations and commentary found in this report have the full support of all 16 members of the Action Team.

Signed,

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VIII. REFERENCES

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- ² <http://myhousing.gsu.edu/campus-living/gender-inclusive-housing/>
- ³ <http://ksuhousing.kennesaw.edu/options/theme-housing.php>
- ⁴ Campus Pride: <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/student-health-insurance/>
- ⁵ National Center for Transgender Equality: <http://www.transequality.org/blog/hhs-issues-regulations-banning-trans-health-care-discrimination>; <http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/HHS-1557-FAQ.pdf>
- ⁶ Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/hrc-issue-brief-hiv-aids-and-the-lgbt-community>; <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-assault-and-the-lgbt-community>
- ⁷ The Trevor Project: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/preventing-suicide/facts-about-suicide/>
- ⁸ CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf
- ⁹ Princeton University, LGBT Educational Material <http://lgbt.princeton.edu/resources/#education>
- ¹⁰ University of Maryland, Rainbow Terrapin Network <https://lgbt.umd.edu/rainbow-terrapin-network-trainings-and-webinars>
- ¹¹ Emory University, Out @ Emory http://www.lgbt.emory.edu/resources/out_at_emory/index.html
- ¹² Kansas State University, LGBT Faculty and Staff Alliance http://www.k-state.edu/lgbt/faculty_staff.html
- ¹³ Intrabartola, Lisa. (2017) "LGBTQ College Students Experience Depression, Suicidal Thoughts Four Times More Frequently Than Heterosexual Peers." *Rutgers Today*. Web.
- ¹⁴ Coffman, Katherine B., Lucas C. Coffman, and Keith M. Marzilli Ericson. (2016). "The Size of the LGBT Population and the Magnitude of Antigay Sentiment Are Substantially Underestimated." *Management Science* 63.10: 3168-86. Print.

IX. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Georgia Tech Department of Housing Proposed Gender-Inclusive Housing Policy (2016)

Appendix B: Proposed Gender-Inclusive Housing Policy (2017)

Appendix C: Georgia State University Gender-Inclusive Housing Agreement

Appendix D: Georgia Tech LGBTQIA Center Strategic Plan

Appendix E: Glossary of LGBTQIA Terms