Implications of Quantifying Sexual Orientation During the Admissions Process

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Introduction

It was a deceptively simple question, one first posed by the admissions office at Elmhurst College, a private school in suburban Chicago affiliated with the United Church of Christ, to potential students, prior to the Fall 2011 semester: "Would you consider yourself a member of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community?" ("Elmhurst College: Application for admission," 2012, p. 3). This single question, however, ignited a sociopolitical firestorm that immediately swept the country. On various listservs and in the pages of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, administrators and educators considered the weighty implications of this demographical conundrum: Might other students, they wondered, simply check "yes" to be considered for minority scholarships? In publications such as *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The National Review*, journalists and media pundits fanned the flames, dispensing scores of articles that portrayed both positive and negative editorial slants. And on *AMERICAblog* and *The New York Times* online, gay-rights advocates and eager students joined the conversation, praising Elmhurst's step toward promoting equality (e.g., Beauchamp, 2011; Ruiz, 2011). The collective response was comprehensive and swift.

A content analysis of these various articles indicated that support for Elmhurst was overwhelmingly favorable. The college's president, S. Alan Ray, led the charge during an interview with CNN:

> We took this step in an effort to better serve each of our students as a unique person [and . . . it] also allows us to live out our commitments to cultural diversity, social justice, and mutual respect among all persons, and the dignity of every individual. These are among the core values of this institution. They provide the foundation for all of our academic, student, and community programs. (Martinez, 2011, para. 6)

As with every debatable topic, a rebuttal is inevitable, and *The National Review*'s Harden (2011) attacked the college through the magazine's column entitled "Phi Beta Cons: The Right Takes on Higher Education":

> I guess you could say that sex pays at Elmhurst College—at least, certain kinds of sex. I wonder, will Elmhurst administrators demand proof of sexual orientation before handing out these valuable scholarships? If so, what sort of proof will students be asked to give? In an era of student-loan sugar daddies, students these days are doing all sort of things to pay for college. In keeping with the spirit of the times, heterosexual Elmhurst students facing potentially crushing loan burdens may be compelled to consider 'broader' sexual horizons. (paras. 3-5)

Along with the conservative media, even academe itself cast a critical eye—and *The Columbia Chronicle*, a publication of Columbia College (another private school in Chicago), offered a cautionary editorial: "As the first college to take this step, Elmhurst is headed in the right direction, but the administration should keep in mind that well-intentioned ideas can be just a step away from very misguided practices" ("Elmhurst College asks applicants for sexual orientation," 2011, para. 10). Aware of these criticisms, Elmhurst's president was quick to clarify the college's intention, explaining that all students receive equal treatment when applying for academic awards: "[We] do [not] . . . deprive any deserving student of a scholarship. We offer scholarships of varying kinds to all qualifying admitted students . . . . Thus one student's gain is not another student's loss" (Ray, 2011, para. 8).

Despite Elmhurst's intentions, and even its most vociferous challengers, one fact remained: This straightforward question—"Would you consider yourself a member of the LGBT community?" ("Elmhurst College: Application for admission," 2012, p. 3)—generated a collective, national debate, which will influence institutional policy for years to come. Clarifying this notion, Shane L. Windmeyer, Executive Director of Campus Pride, an LGBT advocacy group focused on higher education, summarized the significance of the college's

move: "In the next [decade] we'll look back and ask why colleges didn't make this change much sooner" (Ring, 2011, para. 6). Einhaus, Viento, and Croteau (2004) share this concern:

> Openly LGBT students will be savvy in their consideration of institutions, and admissions professionals will need to be able to thoroughly and honestly communicate to these students, and sometimes their parents, what it might be like to be an LGBT student on their campus. (p. 14)

As LGBT students continue to navigate the admissions process over the next decade, however, they will face an inescapable reality: Elmhurst College opened the equivalent of Pandora's Box, and its contents have scattered from institution to institution, issuing a contentious, passionate dialogue among educators, students, and dozens of primary and secondary stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

Elmhurst College's recent decision influenced other schools to take notice. In 2012, the University of Iowa became the first public university to include a question about sexual orientation and gender identity on its application (Hoover, 2012), and at the University of Pennsylvania, admissions officers now examine essays for evidence of applicants' sexual orientation (Steinberg, 2010; Young, 2011). At the University of California and California State University, however, administrators are still deliberating whether or not to adopt the practice (Gordon, 2012). Aside from these developments, the Common Application—a national organization representing a few hundred schools and their admissions processes—recently chose not to include a demographic for sexual orientation and gender identity, reasoning that "colleges have other ways to indicate support for applicants who are gay or who do [not] identify with traditional gender categories, and that adding the questions could pose problems" (Jaschik, 2011, para. 1).

The Common Application may have issued its decision after considering a few noteworthy reservations: Could this kind of demographic harm LGBT students, perhaps "outing" them to homophobic administrators, faculty members, and fellow students—or even to unsuspecting parents? Could confidential information accidentally enter the public realm, despite clear legal restrictions from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974), also known as FERPA? Or could institutions overlook more fundamental concerns for LGBT students, like homophobia, marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination? Other potential consequences also come to light, especially when an admissions staff shares data with other offices on campus: Might residence life corral LGBT students into a single "queer" dormitory in order to protect them from harm? Might an obsessive administrator frighten LGBT students, say, with an email that explicitly warns against HIV/AIDS? Or might an LGBT office bombard potential students with junk mail and excessive good will, advertising countless diversity initiatives, scholarship opportunities, and specialized organizations? Questions like these clearly highlight a fundamental problem for LGBT administrators to consider: Despite good intentions, higher education could forward an irresponsible admissions policy when trying to serve effectively and compassionately its LGBT students.

The Common Application may have also anticipated another troubling matter: Not all admissions counselors consistently behave ethically, even when guided by codes of conduct and federal mandates, such as FERPA (1974). Hodum and James (2010) explain: "[Holding] substantial autonomy with regard to the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities . . . [these officers] could freely follow their own idiosyncratic whims, deciding for themselves which behaviors [from applicants] were appropriate or inappropriate [for admission]" (p. 320). Although Hodum and James (2010) do not address arbitrary decisions regarding an applicant's

sexual orientation or gender identity, their findings indicate that certain factors matter greatly and that marginalization and discrimination never disappear entirely, despite institutional safeguards and professional initiatives for objectivity.

Thus, the intention of this study was to ascertain the various positive and negative implications that surround a demographic for sexual orientation in a college application. These implications were identified by members of a national LGBT organization of educators and student-affairs administrators (anonymously referred to as the Organization throughout this study), who understood the myriad complexities of the LGBT movement in academe. These implications were important not only to the evolution of LGBT research but also to the current dialogue between the following groups: (a) administrators who currently identify LGBT students within applications and essays; (b) administrators who plan to implement a policy that asks applicants to reveal their sexual orientation and gender identity; (c) additional educators and faculty members who invite specialized guidance; and (d) LGBT students who self-identify within an application.

Rationale of the Study

Hundreds of institutions serve LGBT students via outreach programs delivered through offices with names like LGBT Life, LGBT Resource Center, and Campus Pride Center. These offices regularly advance the following objectives: to address and respond to homophobia within the campus community, to educate the campus's various stakeholders about LGBT issues, to foster diversity, and to provide a sense of community. Outreach programs also ensure that students receive the benefits of educational best practices—those kinds of personalized services that promote learning, scholarship, friendship, self-potential, and self-actualization—and make

any campus a safer, less-discriminatory place (Marine, 2011; Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002).

Although LGBT outreach services are relatively common within academe, very few institutions have considered Elmhurst's approach—that is, to target LGBT students *before* arriving on campus rather than *afterwards*. According to Jaschik (2010), the admissions process and retention efforts forge a complementary relationship: "[C]olleges use demographic information to reach out to students—before admissions decisions have been made—to tell them about programs and services for various group" (para. 9). By mining demographic data during the admissions process, institutions are able to connect enrollees with various on-campus organizations, like religious and cultural groups, and to develop a better understanding of their student bodies. Thus, any student who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender while filling out an application could subsequently receive LGBT materials from the institution. The Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Iowa explains how the practice works: "What we've heard from students, especially LGBT students, is that they don't find out about support services and organizations until they've been here for a year or two. [Sending out LGBT information after receiving an application] allows us to [increase our] personal outreach" (Hoover, 2012, para. 8). Outreach programs that connect other marginalized populations to critical extra-curricular services have generated positive results (Adams, 2012; Johnson, Takesue, & Chen, 2007; Schmidt, 2009) as have those programs that address LGBT students of color and other intersectional identities (Abes, 2012; Patton, Shahjahan, & Osei-Kofi, 2010; Poynter & Washington, 2005; Schueler, Hoffman, & Peterson, 2013). Any institution that seeks to quantify sexual orientation and gender identity, some would argue, is behaving in a similar fashion: It is simply trying to connect LGBT students to the campus-community at large and to track their

academic progress from matriculation through graduation (Baum, 2012; Ceglar, 2012; Newhouse, 2013).

Despite the benefits of quantifying sexual orientation, another question still remains: Does this policy actually benefit LGBT students? Some authorities would quickly issue an opposing argument, like the hypothetical one that appears in *The Gay and Lesbian Guide to College Life*:

> Certainly, many colleges offer a safe and empowering space for students to explore their sexuality and gender identity. But for high school students, who haven't yet had a chance to reinvent themselves on a liberating college campus, the process of coming out can be fraught with extreme anxiety about not fitting in, being an embarrassment to their loved ones, or being ostracized by the local community. (Baez, Howd, & Pepper, 2007, p. 11)

Although institutions offer outreach programs to provide educational best practices, the psychobiological foundations of sexual orientation and gender identity rarely issue simple conclusions about the LGBT on-campus experience. Any institution that quantifies sexual orientation and gender identity could unintentionally harm LGBT students—as well as the very administrators who work with these individuals. Thus, the LGBT establishment could benefit from a comprehensive study that looks at the various positive and negative implications that surround the quantification of sexual orientation.

Research Questions

Nine research questions guided this study's examination of the Organization and its members:

1. Are members of the Organization aware that other institutions have recently asked, or are considering asking, potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for college admission?

2. How many institutions represented by the Organization have considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission?
3. Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *at their own institutions*?
4. What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for such a policy *at their own institutions*?
5. Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *within academe in general*?
6. What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for such a policy *within academe in general*?
7. Do members believe that their institutions would support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?
8. What reasons do members give to explain their institutions' willingness, or lack of willingness, to support such a policy?
9. Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general? These demographics include: institutional enrollment, Carnegie classification, administrative structure, geographic location, type of position, duration of position, function of position, duration of LGBT experience, and duration of membership within the Organization.

Methodology

Following IRB approval, this study used a descriptive design (Anastas, 1999) in order to identify, categorize, exemplify, and describe the complex issues surrounding a sexual-orientation demographic as reported by self-selected members of the Organization through a questionnaire. The questionnaire included fourteen quantitative items (multiple choice and Likert scales) and three qualitative items (a brief verbal/written explanation of a particular issue), and it was accessed through the on-line host Qualtrics, a private research company, from August 25, 2013 through September 30, 2013.

Following the collection of data, the study's design presented a summative explanation of the Organization's responses. The following procedures were used to ascertain the various positive and negative implications that surround a demographic for sexual orientation in a college application: (a) descriptive statistics to measure frequencies, percentages, and averages; (b) decisional statistics to determine, for instance, if smaller institutions were more likely to support a policy like the one at Elmhurst College; (c) grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to code, categorize, exemplify, and describe qualitative responses; and (d) various tables to summarize quantitative and qualitative data in relation to each of the nine research questions.

Descriptive design guided this study's methodology because it is particularly useful for researchers trying to understand an innovative trend—like the one started by Elmhurst College—and it provides important recommendations for colleagues:

> Descriptive research . . . is directed toward clarifying a phenomenon's appearance or nature. Descriptive research is analogous to taking and developing still photographs. The scene depicted may be shown in great detail, but what is depicted is entirely dependent on where the photographer was standing, what the photographer decided to focus on, and how much of the context the photographer decided to leave in or out when the picture was taken and the print prepared. The greatest strength of this form of research is that its results can be perhaps among the most unambiguous. (Anastas, 1999, p. 125)

This study acted much like a photographer in the field, supplying an informative, detailed snapshot of a national LGBT organization of educators who shared their opinions and expertise concerning the quantification of sexual orientation. In fact, descriptive design has been a common practice within LGBT scholarship; recently it has been utilized when studying the following concerns: LGBT issues and college faculty (deLeon & Brunner, 2013; Woodford, Luke, Grogan-Kaylor, Fredriksen-Goldsen, & Gutierrez, 2012); LGBT families and healthcare access (Chapman et al., 2012); LGBT seniors and aging services (Knochel, Croghan, Moone, & Quam, 2012); gay-and-lesbian patients and oncological outreach (Katz, 2009); LGBT college students and smoking (Ridner, Frost, & LaJoie, 2006); LGBT youths and homelessness (Rew, Whittaker, Taylor-Seehafer, & Smith, 2005); LGBT teens and the ill-effects of reparative therapy (Dickinson, Cook, Playle, & Hallett, 2012); and HIV testing and the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center (Smith et al., 2006).

Population

Data for this study were drawn from a single population that consisted of approximately 700 members of a national LGBT organization in higher education. This population was beneficial to this study for two reason: First, the Organization's members influenced institutional policy regarding LGBT matters—for instance, they served as directors of LGBT centers or as deans within student affairs—and they regularly contributed to the ongoing dialogue about the LGBT experience within academe. Secondly, the Organization's demographics were comprehensive. They included geographic diversity (almost every state was represented); a range of institutional size (from small liberal arts colleges to comprehensive, research-intensive universities); contrasting administrative structures (private and public); types

of position (e.g., director and coordinator); functions of positions (within an LGBT office or elsewhere on campus); and varying degrees of LGBT experience within both academe and the Organization.

Other reasons also dictated the selection of this population. First, cluster sampling of the previous population would have generated trivial conclusions: If merely a handful of schools participated in the study, then the results would not have been illustrative, given probable geographic, structural, and educational differences. Secondly, systematic sampling could have issued too few respondents from the available pool. Lastly, a representative sample taken from the "true" LGBT population—that is, all LGBT administrators who worked in colleges and universities in the United States—would have been almost impossible to identify. Since schools do not include demographical delineations for employees' sexual orientation and gender identification within offices of institutional research, an accessible population/sample was not readily available to any researcher who wished to investigate LGBT issues within the campus workplace (e.g., Hill, 2006; Meyer & Wilson, 2009). Thus, the Organization provided a perfect microcosm of today's LGBT academic landscape and served the purpose of this study well: to determine what LGBT administrators thought about quantifying sexual orientation within a college application.

One concern, however, challenged the previous arguments in favor of the Organization: that it was a population of convenience. Many researchers who have sought to understand LGBT issues have frequently designed a methodology with a population (a) that self-reported sexual orientation—as did many members of the Organization, although implicitly—and/or (b) that included only a few participants, such as the Organization's approximately 700 members. Despite these limitations, current LGBT research indicates that populations consisting of

individuals who self-report their sexual orientation are commonplace (Katz, 2009; Robinson, 2010; Weber, 2008). These kinds of studies, however, often yield either highly focused results (e.g., McAllister, Harold, Ahmedani, & Cramer, 2009) or extensive qualitative data (e.g., Longerbeam, Inkelas, Johnson, & Lee, 2007)—even though valid discoveries and crucial recommendations are readily apparent for LGBT scholarship in general. Thus, finding a truly representative sample of any LGBT population was difficult—if not impossible—and this study recognized this situation by identifying a ready-made, expert-based population for research.

Moreover, the Organization served as an ideal population because the participants, either as members or allies of the LGBT community, did not harm themselves, or their institutions, when contributing to the study. First, the name of the Organization and its members remained confidential. Secondly, members already worked within an established, visible LGBT position, which means that they were expected to discuss issues surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexuality. Lastly, members did not experience psychological harm: the sheer nature of their position implied that they were LGBT advocates who handled homophobia, either internally or externally, quite well. By using an alternate population, a researcher might have risked "outing" an "in-the-closet" subject—a serious problem that could have precipitated grievous consequences (e.g., termination of employment, professional marginalization, emotional instability, or familial ridicule). The American Psychological Association (APA) also recognizes that "[t]here are unique difficulties and risks faced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals in the workplace" ("Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients," 2012, p. 25)—difficulties such as discriminatory policies, hostile workplace climates, job stereotyping, and a lack of benefits, such as family medical leave and same-sex partner benefits. (These difficulties would have been more pronounced at certain church-

affiliated institutions that perhaps condemn LGBT students and staff.) To clarify the previous guideline, the APA warns:

> The most salient issue for lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers . . . is identity management . . . [which causes these individuals to] adopt strategies to protect against actual or anticipated workplace discrimination . . . . Identity concealment strategies, however, exact a psychological price, including constant vigilance about sharing information, separation of personal and work lives, coping with feelings of dishonesty and invisibility, isolation from social and professional collegial networks and support [such as the Consortium], and burnout from the stress of hiding identity. ("Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients," 2012, p. 25)

Indeed, numerous extraneous factors would have precluded any researcher from obtaining a truly random sample of LGBT professionals within higher education at any given moment—especially in today's uncertain climate, even within academe, which generally has supported pro-LGBT policies for students, faculty members, and administrators.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire included 17 questions that generated both quantitative and qualitative data. All questions except numbers 4, 6, and 8 provided multiple-choice responses that included Likert scales, yes/no options, and specialized selections, such as the eleventh question, which asked respondents to identify the structure of their institution: (a) public; (b) private, religious affiliation; (c) private, secular; or (d) other. Questions 4, 6, and 8 were open-ended questions that encouraged respondents to expand upon a particular opinion and to explain, for example, why they supported asking potential students to reveal their sexual orientation during the application process. These three qualitative questions anticipated that respondents would provide explanations that escaped quantitative restrictions imposed by Likert scales and yes/no options. Moreover, the qualitative questions appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire so that respondents were more likely to provide thorough answers (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009).

In order to address this study's nine research questions, the questionnaire included specific items. Table 1 illustrates, for example, that the first item on the questionnaire—"Are you aware that other institutions have recently asked (or are considering asking) potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application for college admission?"—related specifically to the first research question: "Are members of the Organization aware that other institutions have recently asked, or are considering asking, potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for college admission?" The last nine items on the questionnaire measured the respondents' demographics, which included four general areas: (a) the size, location, and organizational structure of the respondent's institution; (b) the respondent's LGBT experience in higher education; (c) the respondent's duration of membership within the Organization; and (d) the respondent's current position, such as a director or coordinator, and length of tenure. As Table 1 also indicates, these institutional demographics were important to the ninth research question: "Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, for a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?" Thus, demographics measured, for instance, if private institutions were more likely to endorse a sexual-orientation policy, or if those individuals who worked within an LGBT office were more enthusiastic about such a policy.

Table 1

Research Questions and Their Relationship to the Questionnaire

Research Questions to Examine Quantifying Sexual-Orientation	Correspondent Question(s) on Questionnaire
Are members of the Organization aware that other institutions have recently asked, or are considering asking, potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for college admission?	1
How many institutions represented by the Organization have considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission?	2
Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *at their own institutions*?	3
What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for such a policy *at their own institutions*?	4
Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *within academe in general*?	5
What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for such a policy *within academe in general*?	6
Do members believe that their institutions would support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?	7
What reasons do members give to explain their institutions' willingness, or lack of willingness, to support such a policy?	8
Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general? These demographics include: institutional enrollment, Carnegie classification, administrative structure, geographic location, type of position, duration of position, function of position, duration of LGBT experience, and duration of membership within the Organization.	9-17

Pilot Study

Before the questionnaire was submitted to the Organization's members, a pilot study was conducted with two different groups. The first group consisted of non-randomly selected faculty members who worked within a department of English at a regional university. Asked to consider legibility and readability, twelve individuals received the questionnaire through their university's email system, and eight responded and participated in the pilot study. Because of their expertise with English grammar and syntax, these eight individuals offered much constructive feedback. They suggested alternate words with stronger connotations (such as changing "urges," previously found in questions 3 and 5, to "encourages"), provided minor editorial revisions (such as punctuation and capitalization), and highlighted organizational problems, which included three important alterations to the original questionnaire: (a) reordering Questions 16 and 17; (b) inserting "very likely" into the options for Questions 3, 5, and 7; and (c) adding "don't know" to Question 7.

The pilot study's second group contained individuals who were members of an LGBT faculty organization at the same regional university. This group included approximately twenty members, representing a variety of academic disciplines. Whereas the first group examined the questionnaire's legibility and readability, the second group inspected the questionnaire's LGBT nomenclature and serviceability to the LGBT community. Their goal, as participants within the pilot study, was to address the following question: Could fellow LGBT administrators determine the questionnaire's ultimate purpose—to uncover attitudes surrounding a designation for sexual orientation within a college application? Six randomly-selected individuals received the questionnaire through their university's email system, and three responded and contributed to the pilot study. The respondents concurred that the questionnaire was serviceable, easy-to-

understand, and offered sufficient options; they also issued comments such as "[it provides] very useful information" and "it is obvious what you are asking." Furthermore, all three respondents agreed that the questionnaire took only a short time to complete—well under the advertised ten-minute timeframe, which was based upon research conducted by Galesic and Bosnjak (2009), who documented that on-line questionnaires advertised to take less than 10 minutes to complete received a higher return than those described to take 30 minutes. After participating in the pilot study, one respondent wondered: "Do you need *all* of the questions?" This lone comment, however, did not result in changes to the questionnaire as the respondent was not initially informed of the study's numerous, individual objectives.

Although this pilot study could not account for reliability, it did address internal validity. Both groups who examined the questionnaire determined that each question measured what it purported to measure and that each question provided appropriate and adequate options. Moreover, the individuals who participated in the pilot study addressed the particular purpose of the pilot study itself: to examine legibility, readability, serviceability, and time-to-complete.

Questionnaire Delivery

Following the pilot study, members of the Organization participated within the study during the final week of August and throughout September 2013. Having gained permission to utilize the Organization's on-line forum, this researcher used the Organization's listserv in order to access members' campus-based email accounts and to invite participation. An initial mass email was sent on August 25, 2013, which included a brief overview of the study along with a link to the on-line forum. After clicking the link, members were then able to read a detailed description of the study, along with informed consent, and to access the on-line questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data began with a discussion of response rate (RR) and response representativeness. The RR was calculated by looking at the Organization's total membership (as of August 2013) along with the number of members who subscribed to the Organization's listserv and who therefore received various invitations to participate within this study. Response representativeness was measured by assessing (a) the breadth of the respondents' positions, which included, for instance, director, assistant director, faculty member, program coordinator, or graduate assistant; and (b) other demographical delineations found within the questionnaire.

Next, the study's first eight research questions were addressed by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire (see Table 1). The questionnaire's quantitative questions (1-3, 5, 7, and 9-17) were analyzed via frequency distribution, percent distribution, and disaggregation. The questionnaire's qualitative questions (4, 6, and 8) relied upon coded assessment, a process derived from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To accomplish this task, this researcher, along with a colleague who worked in higher education, separately coded each response, determining, for example, that a respondent did not support a demographic for sexual orientation because of confidentiality or possible ill-intent toward the LGBT applicant during the admissions process. Next, a comparison was made between both coders to determine if similar patterns had emerged. Once an agreement had been reached, quantitative data was identified, categorized, and exemplified in tabular format; it was then described with descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, percent distribution, and disaggregation).

Additionally, non-parametric testing answered the ninth research question: "Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation on an application for admission within

academe in general? (These demographics include (institutional enrollment, Carnegie classification, administrative structure, geographic location, type of position, duration of position, function of position, duration of LGBT experience, and duration of membership within the Organization.)" The results from these non-parametric tests were analyzed further through cross tabulations, and the results appeared with tabular format.

Results

Response Rate

The organization consisted of approximately 700 members as of August 2013, according to one of the current Co-Chairs. To use this number to gauge the response rate (RR), however, was somewhat problematic. The first reason centered upon indeterminate figures: The listserv did not provide access to every member since only between 604 and 610 members received various emails throughout the duration of the study. (This situation could have been the result of confidentiality: Some members probably chose not to share their contact information with the listserv.) Another problem involved the previous assumption that, for instance, $N = 610$. Indeed, a series of emails were delivered to 610 members, yet following each mass email, a few dozen emails were returned, flagged either as "undeliverable" or "out-of-office." As a result, this researcher felt comfortable issuing a final population estimated at 550 members, all of whom likely viewed at least one of the solicitations to participate in this study. With this final population, assuming that $N \leq 550$ and with 106 respondents, the RR was 19.3%.

The RR of 19.3% occurred after using Baruch and Holtom's (2008) best-practice methods for response-rate analysis: to pre-notify participant, publicize the survey, and establish survey importance; to design the survey and manage length; to provide ample response

opportunities, and to monitor survey response and foster survey commitment. These best-practice methods are largely similar to those of Thomas (2004) and Tourangeau, Conrad, and Couper (2013). The research surrounding RR and web-based questionnaires, however, indicates that they might be less effective than mail-based surveys:

> The proliferation of surveys makes it harder for potential respondents to distinguish good surveys from bad ones and legitimate survey requests from less worthwhile ones. Coupled with the general rise in email traffic, the rise in the number of web surveys may mean that we have saturated the market. Evidence for this can be seen in the increasing number of survey requests to op-in panel members and the corresponding decline in response rates. There may simply be too many surveys chasing too few respondents. The very qualities that led to the rapid adoption of web surveys—their low cost and high convenience—may now be their downfall. (Tourangeau et al., 2013, p. 55)

When researchers add these concerns to those that surround the identification of a serviceable LGBT population—a problem often due to the psychological and professional effects of social marginalization and stigmatization (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)—a precise response-rate analysis becomes difficult to conduct. With an estimated RR of at least 19.3%, the questionnaire nonetheless offered a wealth of qualitative and qualitative data for a descriptive study that was "directed toward clarifying a phenomenon's appearance or nature" (Anastas, 1999, p. 125).

Response Representativeness

Although this population, $N \leq 550$, was not representative of the entire national network of LGBT professionals in higher education, the results indicated that respondents ($N = 106$) were a diverse group. Tables 2 and 3 show that these individuals represented a variety of demographics found within higher education: institutional enrollment, Carnegie classification, administrative structure, geographic location, type of position, duration of position, function of position, and duration of LGBT experience. For instance, Table 3 illustrates that the respondents held the following kinds of positions within their institutions: graduate assistant, LGBT office ($n = 7$, 7.0%); specialist, LGBT office ($n = 1$, 1.0%); coordinator, LGBT office ($n =$

16, 15%); assistant director, LGBT office (*n* = 3, 3.0%); associate director, LGBT office (*n* = 2, 2.0%); director, LGBT office (*n* = 31, 29.0%); faculty member (*n* = 4, 4.0%); and other administrator (*n* = 42, 40.0%). Upon further inspection, Tables 2 and 3 might suggest a group of respondents that was less diverse—especially those who worked at religious institutions (*n* = 5, 5.0%), who had less than two years of experience (*n* = 42, 40.0%), and who worked in certain geographic regions: Northwest (*n* = 6, 6.0%); Midwest (*n* = 6, 6.0%); South Central (*n* = 2, 2.0%); and Mid-Atlantic (*n* = 9, 8.0%). Aside from these slight reservations, respondents as a whole effectively represented a national collective of LGBT administrators, all of whom provided practical, knowledgeable advice about self-reporting sexual orientation during the application process.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Questions 9, 10, 11, and 12: Respondents' Institutional Demographics

Quantitative Questions on Survey	Options for Answers	$N = 106$	Percentage
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment? ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 2.11$, minimum value begins with first option)	up to 4,999	13	12.0
	5,000 to 9,999	13	12.0
	10,000 to 14,999	19	18.0
	15,000 to 19,999	12	11.0
	20,000 to 24,999	13	12.0
	25,000 to 29,999	10	9.0
	30,000 plus	26	25.0
Q10: To the best of your knowledge, what is the generalized Carnegie classification of your institution? ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .90$, minimum value begins with first option)	associate's	2	2.0
	baccalaureate	27	25.0
	master's	22	21.0
	doctoral	55	52.0
Q11: What is the overall structure of your institution? ($M = 1.50$, $SD = .84$, minimum value begins with first option)	public	76	72.0
	private, religious	5	5.0
	private, secular	24	23.0
	other	0[a]	0.0
Q12: Within which region is your institution located? ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 2.01$, minimum value begins with first option)	Northwest	6	6.0
	Midwest	6	6.0
	Great Lakes	27	25.0
	Northeast	19	18.0
	Southwest	16	15.0
	South Central	2	2.0
	South	21	20.0
	Mid-Atlantic	9	8.0

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

[a] Only 105 respondents answered Q11.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Questions 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17: Respondents' Demographics

Quantitative Questions on Survey	Options for Answers	$N = 106$	Percentage
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position? ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 2.23$, minimum value begins with first option)	Graduate Asst. (LGBT office)	7	7.0
	Specialist (LGBT office)	1	1.0
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	16	15.0
	Asst. Director (LGBT office)	3	3.0
	Assoc. Director (LGBT office)	2	2.0
	Director (LGBT office)	31	29.0
	Faculty Member	4	4.0
	Other Administrator	42	40.0
Q14: How long have you held this position? ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .97$, minimum value begins with first option)	less than 2 years	42	40.0
	2 to 5 years	35	33.0
	6 to 10 years	20	19.0
	11 or more years	9	8.0
Q15: Which of the following statements best describes the institutional function of your position within LGBT education and outreach? ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.67$, minimum value begins with first option)	within an LGBT office	34	32.0
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	2	2.0
	within inclusivity initiatives	24	23.0
	within student affairs	30	28.0
	within an academic department	4	4.0
	within another office on campus	12	11.0
Q16: How would you classify your participation within the Organization? ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.31$, minimum value begins with first option)	member only	60	58.0
	member with committee work	9	9.0
	member with leadership	8	8.0
	member with committee work and leadership experience	27[a]	26.0

Table 3 continues on next page.

Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations in higher education?	less than 2 years	8	8.0
	2 to 5 years	36	34.0
	6 to 10 years	37	35.0
	11 or more years	25	24.0
(M = 2.75, SD = .91, minimum value begins with first option)			

[a] Only 104 respondents answered Q16.

Quantitative Research Questions and Results

This study was guided by nine research questions, five of which were quantitative in nature:

1. Are members of the Organization aware that other institutions have recently asked, or are considering asking, potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for college admission?
2. How many institutions represented by the Organization have considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission?
3. Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *at their own institutions*?
5. Would members support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission *within academe in general*?
7. Do members believe that their institutions would support a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?

These five research questions were addressed individually within this study's questionnaire: The first research question corresponded to Q1, the second to Q2, and so on (see Table 1).

Table 4 illustrates that the first research question (Q1 within the questionnaire) was answered by 106 respondents, 95 of whom, or 90%, were aware that other institutions have considered asking potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application, while 11 respondents, or 10.0%, were not aware. The second research question (Q2 within the questionnaire) was also answered by 106 respondents: (a) 41, or 39.0%, reported that their institutions had considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to their application; (b) 38, or 36.0%, said that their institutions had not considered such a demographic; and (c) 27, or 25.0%, did not know. The third research question (Q3 within the questionnaire) asked each respondent if s/he would support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application to his/her institution. Answers came from 106 respondents, who said: not at all (n = 12, 11.0%); somewhat likely (n = 25, 24.0%); more than likely (n = 17, 16.0%); very likely (n = 22, 21.0%); or entirely (n = 30, 28.0%). The fifth research question (Q5 within the questionnaire) posed the following hypothetical situation: Would respondents support the selfsame policy within academe in general? The respondents (N = 106) categorized their varying degrees of support: not at all (n = 17, 16.0%); somewhat likely (n = 22, 21.0%); more than likely (n = 22, 21.0%); very likely (n = 24, 23.0%); or entirely (n = 21, 20.0%). The seventh research question (Q7 within the questionnaire) slightly altered the wording of the previous two questions and measured whether each respondent thought that his/her own institution would support such a policy. On this occasion answers came from only 105 respondents, who indicated: not at all (n = 30, 29.0%); somewhat likely (n = 30, 29.0%); more than likely (n = 14, 13.0%); very likely (n = 15, 14.0%); entirely (n = 5, 5.0%); or don't know (n = 11, 10.0%).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7: Respondents' Consideration of Self-Reporting Sexual Orientation During the Admissions Process

	Quantitative Questions on Survey	Options for Answers	$N = 106$	Percentage
Q1:	Are you aware that other institutions have recently asked (or are considering asking) potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application for college admission?	yes	95	90.0
		no	11	10.0
	($M = 1.10$, $SD = .31$, minimum value begins with first option)			
Q2:	Has your institution considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission?	yes	41	39.0
		no	38	36.0
		don't know	27	25.0
	($M = 1.87$, $SD = .79$, minimum value begins with first option)			
Q3:	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution?	not at all	12	11.0
		somewhat likely	25	24.0
		more than likely	17	16.0
		very likely	22	21.0
		entirely	30	28.0
	($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.40$, minimum value begins with first option)			
Q5:	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?	not at all	17	16.0
		somewhat likely	22	21.0
		more than likely	22	21.0
		very likely	24	23.0
		entirely	21	20.0
	($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.37$, minimum value begins with first option)			

Table 4 continues on next page.

Q7: Do you think that your institution is likely to support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission? (M = 2.70, SD = 1.62, minimum value begins with first option)	not at all	30	29.0
	somewhat likely	30	29.0
	more than likely	14	13.0
	very likely	15	14.0
	entirely	5	5.0
	don't know	11[a]	10.0

[a] Only 105 respondents answered Q7.

Qualitative Research Questions and Results

This study included three qualitative research questions, which respondents addressed by offering written response to open-ended questions on the questionnaire. The three qualitative research questions were:

4. What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for a policy that quantifies sexual orientation *at their own institutions*?

6. What reasons do members provide to explain their support, or lack of support, for such a policy *within academe in general*?

8. What reasons do members give to explain their institutions' willingness, or lack of willingness, to support such a policy?

To investigate these three questions, this researcher relied upon grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), a process through which social scientists observe, categorize, and then define abstract phenomena in order to explain a particular group's justification for doing something or believing in a certain way. This process originates from an initial procedure known as coding, wherein the researcher collects qualitative data from the group and looks for repetitive explanations (when relying, say, upon a questionnaire), detecting key words, phrases, and descriptions. Additionally, the process requires the researcher to develop categories from the

various codes in order to craft definitions of the abstractions found within the qualitative data. Finally, the categories themselves indicate possible theories—or rather, explanations—of the group's beliefs and/or behaviors, signifying how subsequent observations can be interpreted consistently. Thus, the process of grounded theory allows a researcher to theorize, for instance, why LGBT students should (not) self-report sexual orientation within a college application.

Grounded theory greatly influenced the qualitative aspect of this study, and it involved the following steps: after respondents gave written responses to Questions 4, 6, and 8, this researcher along with a colleague who specializes in English composition and textual investigation, a scholarly subclass of qualitative analysis, coded the explanations independently. During this time, each researcher looked for noticeable evidence of specific words, phrases, and explanations that indicated particular reasons that supported, or did not support, an LGBT admissions policy. Together the researchers then compared their individualized codes, discussing at length each similarity and difference, eventually agreeing upon a fixed number of categories that effectively summarized respondents' answers to the qualitative questions. Coding and categorizing occurred over a one-month period (October 2013), and the researchers met weekly to discuss their progress, reservations, recommendations, and conclusions. Finally, the categories for Questions 4, 6, and 8 were reconciled, identified, defined, and demonstrated through various tables (see Tables 5, 7, and 9) and descriptive statistics (see Tables 6, 8, and 10).

Table 5 presents the categories that answered the fourth research question (Q4 within the questionnaire): What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution? Four positive reasons emerged: (a) tracking of LGBT students, (b) educational outreach for LGBT students, (c) funding justification for LGBT resources, and (d) advocacy for

LGBT students. Additionally, four negative reasons appeared: (a) confidentiality of LGBT students' records, (b) possible ill-intent toward LGBT students, (c) relevance of an LGBT admissions policy, and (d) lawfulness of an LGBT admissions policy. Table 6 illustrates the descriptive statistics for these eight reasons, where $N = 131$ (see footnote for Table 6): tracking ($n = 29$, 22.1%), educational outreach ($n = 24$, 18.3%), confidentiality ($n = 18$, 13.7%), funding justification ($n = 13$, 9.9%), possible ill-intent ($n = 13$, 9.9%), miscellaneous ($n = 13$, 9.9%), advocacy ($n = 12$, 9.1%), relevance ($n = 7$, 5.3%), and lawfulness ($n = 2$, 1.5%).

Table 5

Categorization of Responses to Question 4: What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution?

Reason	Explanation of Reason (Implied Yes/No)	Example of Reason from Respondent within Question 4
Tracking of LGBT students	Yes, because data would allow the institution (a) to measure matriculation, retention, and graduation rates for LGBT students (as well as other such figures); and/or (b) to assess these students in comparison to their peers.	We need data to determine if our GLBT students are recruited, persist, and graduate at the same rates as our non-GLBT students. We can't address any potential problems for this population if we have no data on them. [For an additional explanation of the LGBT acronym and how it can be altered—e.g., *GLBT*—see (a) List of Abbreviations and (b) Terminology, Chapter One.]
Educational outreach for LGBT students	Yes, because data would allow the institution to connect LGBT students to campus resources that address their various needs, such as an LGBT center, extracurricular activities, and counseling.	Being able to connect admitted students to various resources based off of demographic information that is disclosed during their application process would be a great step to ensure that they are aware of valuable information/people/resources pertinent to them as an individual, especially during the first 6 weeks of their campus experience.
Funding justification for LGBT resources	Yes, because data would allow LGBT administrators to justify expenditures associated with LGBT resources, such as an LGBT center, extra-curricular activities, and counseling.	In the increasing age of assessment and proving worth, having finite numbers around underrepresented populations helps keep vital resources for LGBT students on campus.
Advocacy for LGBT students	Yes, because data would encourage the institution (a) to identify, create, and promote pro-LGBT initiatives and resources; and/or (b) to recognize and validate LGBT students.	It often feels as though the administration believes there is a lack of an LGBT presence on campus. The data our institution would get from such a question would be enlightening to our faculty, staff, and administrators, and would lead to better serving the LGBT students who are often forgotten about.

Table 5 continues on next page.

Confidentiality of LGBT students' records	No, because data would jeopardize the LGBT applicant's privacy should a parent, family member, or other person gain access to application materials. (See also Ethical Matters: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Chapter 2.)	I think that students should not feel obligated to disclose their sexual orientation to the university. We don't know whether the institution will use this in consideration of the student's admission or not. It can also put students on the spot if they have their parents helping them fill out the application and they are not out yet. So even if these questions to identify their sexual orientation were included, we might not be able to receive accurate results because some students might have to lie or just not feel comfortable disclosing that information.
Possible ill-intent toward LGBT students	No, because data might lead the institution to make discriminatory decisions that would negatively impact the application process and harm the LGBT applicant.	I would be concerned about how institutions might use this information. Would it be merely for demographics info? To justify inclusive policies? To discriminate?
Relevance of an LGBT admissions policy	No, because data would be irrelevant during the application process.	I don't think that it is needed. I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community and I would not answer that question.
Lawfulness of an LGBT admissions policy	No, because data would create legal problems in light of FERPA, HIPAA, and "applicant representativeness"—*i.e.*, using sexual orientation, like race and sex, as a factor in the admissions process.	I would not support asking questions of sexual orientation at time of application; I would however support asking such questions at time of matriculation when the information would become protected under FERPA. Until matriculation, parents have access to information submitted by their students, putting the student in danger of outing themselves inadvertently to family members, a potentially dangerous circumstance.
Miscellaneous responses	An answer that does not entirely answer the question.	I work with students who would feel comfort-able disclosing their identity. Additionally, my institution has a long history of student activism and LGBTQ history on campus and community.
Blank responses	An answer left blank.	No example is available.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Question 4: What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution?

Reason to (Not) Support Policy (Implied Yes/No)	$N = 131$	Percentage
Tracking of LGBT students (yes)	29	22.1
Educational outreach for LGBT students (yes)	24	18.3
Confidentiality of LGBT students' records (no)	18	13.7
Funding justification for LGBT resources (yes)	13	9.9
Possible ill-intent toward LGBT students (no)	13	9.9
Miscellaneous responses	13	9.9
Advocacy for LGBT students (yes)	12	9.1
Relevance of an LGBT admissions policy (no)	7	5.3
Lawfulness of an LGBT admissions policy (no)	2	1.5[a]

Note. Although 106 respondents completed the questionnaire, only 104 respondents answered Question 4, which asked them to explain a *primary reason* for supporting a policy that encourages students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to their institution. Inevitably, however, many respondents readily provided *multiple reasons*. Thus, Question 4 generated 131 reasons as many respondents explained two, three, and even four reasons. Moreover, the descriptive statistics for this figure ($N = 131$) do not include the two blank responses.

[a] The percentages add to only 99.7 percent due to rounding.

Tables 7 and 8 address the sixth research question (Q6 within the questionnaire): What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general? The answers to this question were more comprehensive, simply because respondents were considering the topic of discussion more broadly: higher education in its entirety. For this question, seven positive reasons materialized, and they appear within Table 8: (a) tracking of

LGBT students, (b) educational outreach for LGBT students, (c) funding justification for LGBT resources, (d) advocacy for LGBT students, (e) self-actualization for LGBT students, (f) diversity initiatives that increase LGBT students, and (g) self-prevention of harm by LGBT students. Inversely, five negative reasons were found, and they also appear within Table 7: (a) confidentiality of LGBT students' records, (b) possible ill-intent toward LGBT students, (c) relevance of an LGBT admissions policy, (d) sociopolitical forces that affect LGBT students, and (e) lawfulness of an LGBT admissions policy. Table 8 displays the descriptive statistics for these twelve reasons, where $N = 134$ (see footnote for Table 10): tracking ($n = 24$, 17.9%), possible ill-intent ($n = 20$, 14.9%), confidentiality ($n = 20$, 14.9%), advocacy ($n = 20$, 14.9%), miscellaneous ($n = 14$; 10.4%), funding justification ($n = 10$, 7.5%), educational outreach ($n = 7$, 5.2%), relevance ($n = 7$, 5.2%), sociopolitical forces ($n = 5$, 3.7%), self-actualization ($n = 3$, 2.2%), diversity initiatives ($n = 2$, 1.5%), lawfulness ($n = 1$, 0.7%), and self-prevention of harm ($n = 1$, 0.7%).

Table 7

Categorization of Responses to Question 6: What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?

Reason to Support Policy	Explanation of Reason (Implied Yes/No)	Example of Reason from Respondent within Question 6
Tracking of LGBT students	Yes, because data would allow the institution (a) to measure matriculation, retention, and graduation rates for LGBT students (as well as other such figures); and/or (b) to assess these students in comparison to their peers.	I think that it is important for us to be able to quantify the numbers of LGB students we have on campus so that we can track their perceptions of climate, as well as enrollment and retention rates.
Educational outreach for LGBT students	Yes, because data would allow the institution to connect LGBT students to campus resources that address their various needs, such as an LGBT center, extracurricular activities, and counseling.	My school is supportive of LGBTQ students and their full inclusion and we are among the schools fortunate enough to have an office dedicated to advocating for the needs of LGBTQ students. Within the framework of this advocacy, we are sensitive to the kinds of complications around asking students, some of whom are minors, and most of whom are still dependent on their parents financially to consider revealing their LGBTQ identity on an application could be anxiety producing and off putting.
Funding justification for LGBT resources	Yes, because data would allow LGBT administrators to justify expenditures associated with LGBT resources, such as an LGBT center, extra-curricular activities, and counseling.	Higher Education uses data to justify the existence of things like LGBT centers, gender neutral housing and other programs geared towards certain populations. Without knowing if there are LGBT students/faculty/staff on campus (of course we know there are but often upper administration likes to pretend there isn't) we can't get the funding needed to truly support the LGBT community.

Table 7 continues on next page.

Advocacy for LGBT students	Yes, because data would encourage the institution (a) to identify, create, and promote pro-LGBT initiatives and resources; and/or (b) to recognize and validate LGBT students.	I believe that it is important for LGB+ students to feel included and safe. I would support the decision to ask students about their sexual orientation because that helps institutions provide unique services catered to LGB+ community. It also removes the stigma and oppression around "not asking" others about their sexual orientation and adding to the "shame" they experience. This will also help track discrimination and oppression faced by the students and will provide them with special scholarships and support.
Self-actualization for LGBT students	Yes, because the institutional atmosphere could encourage LGBT students to reach their full potential, in terms of educational, social, and psychological development.	I think it is another sign of the times. Students are coming to college expecting this not to be a big deal, and then it still is. In many cases they have been out since middle school. Our colleges are forcing them to go back into the closet. Plus, having it on the application form normalizes it for all other students.
Diversity initiatives that increase LGBT students	Yes, because diversity is essential for a critical mass of life experiences and ideas to occur within an institution.	Sexual orientation falls into the realm of diversity, although it seems that most institutions focus on racial diversity. Diversity of thoughts and ideas is essential to academe. One way to ensure diversity of thought is to ensure diversity of the institution's population. Also, from personal experience applying to graduate school, I would have liked to explicitly indicate my LGBT identity to my program. I had felt very isolated as an LGBT person in my program, and found that the few other LGBT students in my program felt the same way. Perhaps revealing our sexual orientation in an application for admission would have helped with this.

Table 7 continues on next page.

Self-prevention of harm by LGBT students	Yes, because data that reflects a negative LGBT climate would prevent other LGBT students from applying to any unsafe institution.	Even in the case of a school using the question to discriminate against a student, the student might be better off if they are rejected based on that information given the fact that the climate would likely be very hostile. I know there was an effort to get a question on the common application and that hasn't yet succeeded. I don't know which schools use the common app but I am in favor of adding it to the common app since it is widely used and it would eliminate individual schools having to argue why it should be added.
Confidentiality of LGBT students' records	No, because data would jeopardize the LGBT applicant's privacy should a parent, family member, or other person gain access to application materials. (See also Ethical Matters: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Chapter 2.)	Sexual orientation is private (although, should not have to be hidden); and, there is no need to encourage potential students to out themselves. I'd rather show them that they are encouraged to be who they are (or find who they are) without the pressure of verbally communicating it to others.
Possible ill-intent toward LGBT students	No, because data might lead the institution to make discriminatory decisions that would negatively impact the application process and harm the LGBT applicant.	I would be fearful that this information would bias admissions officers against applicants.
Relevance of an LGBT admissions policy	No, because data would be irrelevant during the application process.	Why does it matter?

Table 7 continues on next page.

Sociopolitical forces that affect LGBT students	No, because some institutions are located in more conservative geographic areas that are shaped by social and political forces, such as state governments, boards of trustees, religious groups, and/or citizens at large.	The social and political context changes from institution to institution.
Lawfulness of an LGBT admissions policy	No, because data would create legal problems in light of FERPA, HIPAA, and "applicant representativeness"—*i.e.*, using sexual orientation, like race and sex, as a factor in the admissions process.	I've heard people say, in resistance to adopting the practice of asking about sexuality, that they are afraid that if a student checks a non-hetero box and is not admitted that they would try to sue the institution for discrimination. If people seriously have that fear, they are missing the point entirely. Students should feel empowered to sue institutions for discrimination—as it is already happening all of the time. It is the institution's responsibility to assess the ways in which they already enact discriminatory policies and practices so that they are inclusive, follow federal policy, live up to their missions, and not face lawsuits.
Miscellaneous responses	An answer that does not entirely answer the question.	I would rather consider requesting this information on intent to register and/or during the regular annual updating of student records. This would curb the thought potential students may have about discrimination and would also provide an avenue for fluidity and changes to how a student identifies.
Blank responses	An answer left blank.	No example is available.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Question 6: What is the primary reason that you would (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?

Reason to (Not) Support Policy (Implied Yes/No)	$N = 134$	Percentage
Tracking of LGBT students (yes)	24	17.9
Possible ill-intent toward LGBT students (no)	20	14.9
Confidentiality of LGBT students' records (no)	20	14.9
Advocacy for LGBT students (yes)	20	14.9
Miscellaneous responses	14	10.4
Funding justification for LGBT resources (yes)	10	7.5
Educational outreach for LGBT students (yes)	7	5.2
Relevance of an LGBT admissions policy (no)	7	5.2
Sociopolitical forces that affect LGBT students (no)	5	3.7
Self-actualization for LGBT students (yes)	3	2.2
Diversity initiatives that increase LGBT students (yes)	2	1.5
Lawfulness of an LGBT policy (no)	1	0.7
Self-prevention of harm by LGBT students (yes)	1	0.7[a]

Note. Although 106 respondents completed the questionnaire, only 97 respondents answered Question 6, which asked them to explain a *primary reason* for supporting a policy that encourages students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general. Inevitably, however, many respondents readily provided *multiple reasons*. Thus, Question 6 generated 134 reasons as many respondents explained two, three, and even four reasons. Moreover, the descriptive statistics for this figure ($N = 134$) do not include the nine blank responses.

[a] The percentages add to only 99.7 percent due to rounding.

Tables 9 and 10 address the eighth research question (Q8 within the questionnaire): Why would your institution (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission? Whereas Questions 4 and 6 generated similar reasons, Question 8 provided a distinctly different set of categories as respondents had to consider their own institutional climates regarding LGBT outreach and even homophobia. Despite the speculative nature of Question 8, however, each respondent indicated a noticeable understanding of his/her institution and how it addressed LGBT issues—or how it approached them apathetically or without notice. Table 9 reveals that respondents believed that their institutions would (not) support the quantification of sexual orientation due to the following six reasons: (a) administrative interest, (b) administrative challenges, (c) positive campus climate, (d) negative campus climate, (e) geographic location, and (f) issues surrounding the Common Application or a standardized state-wide application. Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics for these six reasons, where $N = 96$ (see footnote for Table 10): administrative challenges (n = 32, 33.3%), administrative interest (n = 26, 27.1%), positive campus climate (n = 14, 14.6%), geographic location (n = 8, 8.3%), issues surrounding the Common Application or standardized state-wide application (n = 7; 7.3%), negative campus climate (n = 5, 5.2%), and miscellaneous (n = 4, 4.2%).

Table 9

Categorization of Responses to Question 8: Why would your institution (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?

Reason to (Not) Support Policy	Explanation of Reason	Example of Reason from Respondent within Question 8
Administrative interest	The administration is considering reasons (a) that would benefit LGBT students, such as tracking, diversity, self-actualization, and educational best practices; and/or (b) that would require institutional attention, such as the application process itself and technological upgrades for the admissions office.	They are considering adding this question on the admission application because LGBT-inclusion is important at each level of administration, other institutions are doing it, and enrollment management dialogue would have added value with LGBT retention data.
Administrative challenges	The administration (a) appears apathetic, homophobic, or unaware; (b) only considers possible negative consequences for LGBT students, such as confidentiality, lawfulness, relevance, and ill-intent; and/or (c) resists institutional change.	Presently, I don't believe that there is enough of an institutional motivation to go through the process of collecting that information. I don't know that the people who are in charge of making that kind of decision are even aware that it's something that may be of value to collect, or that they would want to go through the trouble of making waves to do so.
Positive campus climate	The institution, *apart from the administration*, is visibly committed to pro-LGBT policies and practices.	My institution has a very strong LGBT Center Director who has advocated for many LGBT-inclusive policies and practices on campus. We were marked one of the Top LGBT friendly higher education institutions. My institution also does well to ensure a very diverse student population.

Table 9 continues on next page.

Negative campus climate	The institution, *apart from the administration*, is *not* visibly committed to pro-LGBT policies and practices.	I work in a Jesuit institution and believe the institution already has difficulty addressing questions of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. There is a culture in my institution that highly discourages open discussion about sexuality and gender expression.
Geographic	The institution is located in a conservative geographic area shaped by social and political forces, such as state governments, boards of trustees, religious groups, and/or citizens at large.	As a state chartered flagship university, my institution has strong ties to a highly conservative legislative constituency that has, in the past, worked to directly oppose issues of interest to the queer community. I cannot imagine that that would change anytime soon in ways that would sway support for this particular group of students.
Common Application or standardized state-wide application	The Common Application or any standardized application (for states with multi-campus institutions) does not provide a demographic that measures sexual orientation; this situation effectively strongholds the individual institution from altering the status quo regarding LGBT applicants and students.	I work at a very liberal institution, but we use the common application so unless that is changed then it is less likely that it will be added at my institution. Our supplement to common app doesn't ask any demographic information or information about extra-curricular activities so I don't see how this question would fit well on the supplement either. The school might be willing, but the question would make more sense on the common app where other demographic information is asked.
Miscellaneous responses	The answer does not entirely answer the question.	I do not know of any plans to begin this process; however I don't know that it is not happening either.
Blank responses	The answer is left blank.	No example is available.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Question 8: Why would your institution (not) support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?

Institutional Reason to (Not) Support Policy (Implied Yes/No)	*N* = 96	Percentage
Administrative challenge (no)	32	33.3
Administrative interest (yes)	26	27.1
Positive campus climate (yes)	14	14.6
Geographic (no)	8	8.3
Common Application or standardized state-wide application (no)	7	7.3
Negative campus climate (no)	5	5.2
Miscellaneous	4	4.2

Note. Although 106 respondents completed the questionnaire, only 96 respondents answered Question 8. Moreover, the descriptive statistics for this figure (*N* = 96) do not include the ten blank responses.

Demographics of the Organization and Quantifying Sexual Orientation

The ninth research question asked: Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general? These demographics included: institutional enrollment, Carnegie classification, administrative structure, geographic location, type of position, duration of position, function of position, duration of LGBT experience, and duration of membership within the Organization. To identify if, in fact, certain demographics revealed significant conclusions, this researcher compared Questions 1-3, 5, and 7 (those that measured a respondent's awareness and support of the policy) to Questions 9-17

(those that quantified the Organization's demographics). These comparisons were made with cross tabulations prepared through Qualtrics, the on-line webhost for the study.

Tables 11 and 12 examine which groups of respondents were aware that other institutions have quantified sexual orientation during the admissions process. Groups that appeared less aware were those who worked within the Organization's southern region, those who did not work within an LGBT office, and those who held varying degrees of experience within the Organization. Chi Square values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities for each question were: Q9 ($\chi^2 = 7.43$, $df = 6$, $p = .28$), Q10 ($\chi^2 = 3.53$, $df = 3$, $p = .32$), Q11 ($\chi^2 = .85$, $df = 3$, $p = .84$), Q12 ($\chi^2 = 8.37$, $df = 7$, $p = .30$), Q13 ($\chi^2 = 10.67$, $df = 7$, $p = .15$), Q14 ($\chi^2 = 6.57$, $df = 3$, $p = .09$), Q15 ($\chi^2 = 17.38$, $df = 5$, $p = .003$), Q16 ($\chi^2 = 14.32$, $df = 3$, $p = .003$), and Q17 ($\chi^2 = 2.87$, $df = 3$, $p = .41$). Out of all the previous comparisons, only two were statistically significant ($p \leq .05$): Q15 ("Where is your position located on campus?") and Q16 ("How would you classify your experience with the Organization?"), both of which happened within less than a .05 chance of random occurrence.

Table 11

Cross Tabulations for Question 1 and Questions 9 through 12

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Are you aware that other institutions have recently asked potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application? Yes	No	Total
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment?	up to 4,999	12	1	**13**
	5,000 to 9,999	13	0	**13**
	10,000 to 14,999	17	2	**19**
	15,000 to 19,999	11	1	**12**
	20,000 to 24,999	12	1	**13**
	25,000 to 29,999	10	0	**10**
	30,000 plus	20	6	**26**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**
Q10: What is the Carnegie classification of your institution?	associate's	1	1	**2**
	baccalaureate	24	3	**27**
	master's	20	2	**22**
	doctoral	50	5	**55**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**
Q 11: What is the overall structure of your institution?	public	67	9	**76**
	private, religious	5	0	**5**
	private, secular	22	2	**24**
	other	0	0	**0**
	Total	**94**	**11**	**105**
Q12: Within which region is your institution located?	Northwest	5	1	**6**
	Midwest	5	1	**6**
	Great Lakes	24	3	**27**
	Northeast	19	0	**19**
	Southwest	15	1	**16**
	South Central	2	0	**2**
	South	16	5	**21**
	Mid-Atlantic	9	0	**9**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

Table 12

Cross Tabulations for Question 1 and Questions 13 through 17

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Are you aware that other institutions have recently asked potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application? Yes	No	Total
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position?	Graduate Assistant (LGBT office)	6	1	**7**
	Specialist (LGBT office)	1	0	**1**
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	15	1	**16**
	Assistant Director (LGBT office)	3	0	**3**
	Associate Director (LGBT office)	2	0	**2**
	Director (LGTBT office)	31	0	**31**
	Faculty Member	4	0	**4**
	Other Administrator	33	9	**42**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**
Q14: How long have you held this position?	less than two years	34	8	**42**
	2 to 5 years	34	1	**35**
	6 to 10 years	18	2	**20**
	11 or more years	9	0	**9**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**
Q15: Where is your position located on campus?	within an LGBT office	34	0	**34**
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	1	1	**2**
	within inclusivity initiatives	26	1	**24**
	within student affairs	22	8	**30**
	within an academic department	4	0	**4**
	within another office on campus	11	1	**12**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**
Q16: How would you classify your participation with the organization?	member only	56	4	**60**
	member with committee work	5	4	**9**
	member with leadership	7	1	**8**
	member with committee work and leadership experience	26	1	**27**
	Total	**94**	**10**	**104**
Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations in higher education?	less than two years	7	1	**8**
	2 to 5 years	30	6	**36**
	6 to 10 years	34	3	**37**
	11 or more years	24	1	**25**
	Total	**95**	**11**	**106**

Tables 13 and 14 investigate which institutions have considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation; in particular Table 14 demonstrates the effect of professional socialization: Groups who worked within an LGBT office had considered this matter, and those who worked elsewhere (e.g., in student affairs or as a faculty member) had not. Chi Square values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities for each question were: Q9 ($\chi^2 = 5.93$, $df = 12$, $p = .92$), Q10 ($\chi^2 = 5.67$, $df = 6$, $p = .46$), Q11 ($\chi^2 = 1.13$, $df = 6$, $p = .98$), Q12 ($\chi^2 = 16.30$, $df = 14$, $p = .30$), Q13 ($\chi^2 = 35.02$, $df = 14$, $p = .001$), Q14 ($\chi^2 = 5.99$, $df = 6$, $p = .42$), Q15 ($\chi^2 = 32.18$, $df = 10$, $p = .001$), Q16 ($\chi^2 = 8.39$, $df = 6$, $p = .21$), and Q17 ($\chi^2 = 5.17$, $df = 6$, $p = .52$). Out of all the previous comparisons, only two were statistically significant ($p \leq .05$): Q13 ("Which of the following titles best describes your position?") and Q15 ("Where is your position located?"), both of which happened within less than a .05 chance of random occurrence.

Table 13

Cross Tabulations for Question 2 and Questions 9 through 12

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Has your institution considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission? Yes	No	DK	Total
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment?	up to 4,999	5	4	4	**13**
	5,000 to 9,999	6	3	4	**13**
	10,000 to 14,999	7	7	5	**19**
	15,000 to 19,999	4	5	3	**12**
	20,000 to 24,999	4	6	3	**13**
	25,000 to 29,999	5	5	0	**10**
	30,000 plus	10	8	8	**26**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***
Q10: What is the Carnegie classification of your institution?	associate's	0	2	0	**2**
	baccalaureate	10	10	7	**27**
	master's	7	7	8	**22**
	doctoral	24	19	12	**55**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***
Q 11: What is the overall structure of your institution?	public	29	29	18	**76**
	private, religious	2	1	2	**5**
	private, secular	9	8	7	**24**
	other	0	0	0	**0**
	Total	**40**	**38**	**27**	**105***
Q12: Within which region is your institution located?	Northwest	4	1	1	**6**
	Midwest	2	3	1	**6**
	Great Lakes	7	10	10	**27**
	Northeast	11	4	4	**19**
	Southwest	9	4	3	**16**
	South Central	0	2	0	**2**
	South	5	10	6	**21**
	Mid-Atlantic**	3	4	2	**9**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

Table 14

Cross Tabulations for Question 2 and Questions 13 through 17

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Has your institution considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation to its application for admission? Yes	No	DK	Total
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position?	Graduate Assistant (LGBT office)	2	2	3	**7**
	Specialist (LGBT office)	1	0	0	**1**
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	7	5	4	**16**
	Assistant Director (LGBT office)	2	1	0	**3**
	Associate Director (LGBT office)	2	0	0	**2**
	Director (LGTBT office)	20	10	1	**31**
	Faculty Member	1	3	0	**4**
	Other Administrator	6	17	19	**42**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***
Q14: How long have you held this position?	less than two years	12	15	15	**42**
	2 to 5 years	14	14	7	**35**
	6 to 10 years	11	6	3	**20**
	11 or more years	4	3	2	**9**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***
Q15: Where is your position located on campus?	within an LGBT office	21	11	2	**34**
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	0	1	1	**2**
	within inclusivity initiatives	13	9	2	**24**
	within student affairs	4	11	15	**30**
	within an academic department	0	2	2	**4**
	within another office on campus	3	4	5	**12**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***
Q16: How would you classify your participation with the organization?	member only	23	21	16	**60**
	member with committee work	2	2	5	**9**
	member with leadership	2	3	3	**8**
	member with committee work and leadership experience	14	10	3	**27**
	Total	**41**	**36**	**27**	**104***
Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations in higher education?	less than two years	4	2	2	**8**
	2 to 5 years	12	11	13	**36**
	6 to 10 years	14	14	9	**37**
	11 or more years	11	11	3	**25**
	Total	**41**	**38**	**27**	**106***

Tables 15 and 16 compare the respondents' level of support for the policy at their own institutions (e.g., not at all, somewhat likely, etc.) to institutional demographics: Respondents who worked at larger, public, doctoral-granting institutions and those who had more LGBT experience (e.g., as a Director of an LGBT office or as a member of the Organization with leadership practice) were more likely to support an LGBT admissions policy at their own institutions. Chi Square values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities for each question were: Q9 ($\chi^2 = 26.67$, $df = 24$, $p = .32$), Q10 ($\chi^2 = 9.58$, $df = 12$, $p = .65$), Q11 ($\chi^2 = 9.28$, $df = 12$, $p = .68$), Q12 ($\chi^2 = 20.57$, $df = 28$, $p = .84$), Q13 ($\chi^2 = 35.67$, $df = 28$, $p = .15$), Q14 ($\chi^2 = 8.78$, $df = 12$, $p = .72$), Q15 ($\chi^2 = 24.27$, $df = 20$, $p = .23$), Q16 ($\chi^2 = 8.23$, $df = 12$, $p = .77$), and Q17 ($\chi^2 = 8.86$, $df = 12$, $p = .71$). No tests were found to be statistically significant ($p \leq .05$).

Table 15

Cross Tabulations For Question 3 and Questions 9 through 12

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution?					
		Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Total
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment?	up to 4,999	2	5	4	1	1	**13**
	5,000 to 9,999	2	2	2	2	5	**13**
	10,000 to 14,999	1	8	2	4	4	**19**
	15,000 to 19,999	1	3	1	2	5	**12**
	20,000 to 24,999	1	0	3	7	2	**13**
	25,000 to 29,999	1	2	2	1	4	**10**
	30,000 plus	4	5	3	5	9	**26**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**
Q10: What is the Carnegie classification of your institution?	associate's	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
	baccalaureate	4	9	5	4	5	**27**
	master's	2	5	4	5	6	**22**
	doctoral	5	10	8	13	19	**55**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**
Q11: What is the overall structure of your institution?	public	8	14	12	19	23	**76**
	private, religious	0	3	1	1	0	**5**
	private, secular	4	7	4	2	7	**24**
	other	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	Total	**12**	**24**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**105**
Q12: Within which region is your institution located?	Northwest	0	1	2	1	2	**6**
	Midwest	1	2	0	2	1	**6**
	Great Lakes	2	6	6	6	7	**27**
	Northeast	2	6	1	3	7	**19**
	Southwest	1	3	3	2	7	**16**
	South Central	1	0	0	0	1	**2**
	South	3	5	4	7	2	**21**
	Mid-Atlantic**	2	2	1	1	3	**9**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

Table 16

Cross Tabulations For Question 3 and Questions 13 through 17

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission to your institution? Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Total
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position?	Graduate Asst. (LGBT office)	2	1	2	2	0	**7**
	Specialist (LGBT office)	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	0	3	3	5	5	**16**
	Asst. Director (LGBT office)	0	0	1	1	1	**3**
	Assoc. Director (LGBT office)	0	1	0	1	0	**2**
	Director (LGBT office)	0	7	4	5	15	**31**
	Faculty Member	0	0	1	1	2	**4**
	Other Administrator	10	13	6	7	6	**42**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**
Q14: How long have you held this position?	less than 2 years	7	12	7	7	9	**42**
	2 to 5 years	2	7	5	10	11	**35**
	6 to 10 years	1	5	4	4	6	**20**
	11 or more years	2	1	1	1	4	**9**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**
Q15: Where is your position located on campus?	within an LGBT office	0	5	6	9	14	**34**
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
	within inclusivity initiatives	2	5	4	5	8	**24**
	within student affairs	5	10	5	6	4	**30**
	within an academic department	1	2	1	0	0	**4**
	within another office on campus	4	2	1	2	3	**12**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**
Q16: How would you classify your participation within the Organization?	member only	6	14	9	14	17	**60**
	member with committee work	2	2	2	2	1	**9**
	member with leadership	1	4	1	1	1	**8**
	member with committee work and leadership experience	3	4	4	5	11	**27**
	Total	**12**	**24**	**16**	**22**	**30**	**104**
Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations?	less than 2 years	1	3	1	1	2	**8**
	2 to 5 years	2	8	6	11	9	**36**
	6 to 10 years	7	8	4	7	11	**37**
	11 or more years	2	6	6	3	8	**25**
	Total	**12**	**25**	**17**	**22**	**30**	**106**

Tables 17 and 18 report the extent of the respondents' level of support for the policy within academe in general (e.g., not at all, somewhat likely, etc.) to institutional demographics. These tables, however, present inconclusive results: When respondents were asked if they would want potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within any application at any institution, they (the respondents) seemed evenly divided, although most were "more than likely" to support such a policy. Chi Square values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities for each question were: Q9 ($\chi^2 = 18.84$, $df = 24$, $p = .76$), Q10 ($\chi^2 = 7.80$, $df = 12$, $p = .80$), Q11 ($\chi^2 = 5.29$, $df = 12$, $p = .94$), Q12 ($\chi^2 = 22.57$, $df = 28$, $p = .75$), Q13 ($\chi^2 = 37.47$, $df = 28$, $p = .11$), Q14 ($\chi^2 = 16.70$, $df = 12$, $p = .16$), Q15 ($\chi^2 = 28.10$, $df = 20$, $p = .11$), Q16 ($\chi^2 = 15.47$, $df = 12$, $p = .22$), and Q17 ($\chi^2 = 6.23$, $df = 12$, $p = .90$). No tests were found to be statistically significant ($p \leq .05$).

Table 17

Cross Tabulations For Question 5 and Questions 9 through 12

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?					
		Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Total
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment?	up to 4,999	3	4	2	1	3	**13**
	5,000 to 9,999	3	2	1	3	4	**13**
	10,000 to 14,999	2	6	3	6	2	**19**
	15,000 to 19,999	2	3	1	4	2	**12**
	20,000 to 24,999	1	0	5	4	3	**13**
	25,000 to 29,999	1	2	2	3	2	**10**
	30,000 plus	5	5	8	3	5	**26**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**
Q10: What is the Carnegie classification of your institution?	associate's	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
	baccalaureate	6	7	5	5	4	**27**
	master's	3	4	3	6	6	**22**
	doctoral	7	10	14	13	11	**55**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**
Q11: What is the overall structure of your institution?	public	12	12	18	19	15	**76**
	private, religious	0	2	1	1	1	**5**
	private, secular	5	7	3	4	5	**24**
	other	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	Total	**17**	**21**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**105**
Q12: Within which region is your institution located?	Northwest	1	1	0	1	3	**6**
	Midwest	1	1	0	3	1	**6**
	Great Lakes	4	6	8	4	5	**27**
	Northeast	2	4	3	4	6	**19**
	Southwest	2	3	5	3	3	**16**
	South Central	1	0	0	0	1	**2**
	South	3	6	4	7	1	**21**
	Mid-Atlantic**	3	1	2	2	1	**9**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

Table 18

Cross Tabulations For Question 5 and Questions 13 through 17

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Would you support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?					
		Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Total
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position?	Graduate Asst. (LGBT office)	3	1	2	1	0	**7**
	Specialist (LGBT office)	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	0	3	5	6	2	**16**
	Asst. Director (LGBT office)	0	0	1	0	2	**3**
	Assoc. Director (LGBT office)	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
	Director (LGBT office)	2	6	7	6	10	**31**
	Faculty Member	0	0	2	1	1	**4**
	Other Administrator	12	11	5	9	5	**42**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**
Q14: How long have you held this position?	less than 2 years	11	7	8	9	7	**42**
	2 to 5 years	3	8	10	8	6	**35**
	6 to 10 years	2	5	3	7	3	**20**
	11 or more years	1	2	1	0	5	**9**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**
Q15: Where is your position located on campus?	within an LGBT office	1	6	12	8	7	**34**
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
	within inclusivity initiatives	3	4	3	9	5	**24**
	within student affairs	6	9	4	6	5	**30**
	within an academic department	2	1	1	0	0	**4**
	within another office on campus	5	1	2	1	3	**12**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**
Q16: How would you classify your participation within the Organization?	member only	10	9	16	15	10	**60**
	member with committee work	2	4	1	2	0	**9**
	member with leadership	1	3	2	0	2	**8**
	member with committee work and leadership experience	4	5	2	7	9	**27**
	Total	**17**	**21**	**21**	**24**	**21**	**104**
Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations?	less than 2 years	2	2	2	1	1	**8**
	2 to 5 years	5	6	8	9	8	**36**
	6 to 10 years	8	6	8	9	6	**37**
	11 or more years	2	8	4	5	6	**25**
	Total	**17**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**21**	**106**

Lastly, Tables 19 and 20 compare the respondents' assessment of their own institutions (i.e., how likely would it be to support an LGBT policy) to institutional demographics. Clearly, most institutions, regardless of size, would be less likely to support a policy that measures sexual orientation, and most respondents agree, despite their level of experience. Chi Square values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities for each question were: Q9 ($\chi^2 = 26.01$, $df = 30$, $p = .67$), Q10 ($\chi^2 = 13.41$, $df = 15$, $p = .57$), Q11 ($\chi^2 = 9.16$, $df = 15$, $p = .87$), Q12 ($\chi^2 = 50.55$, $df = 35$, $p = .04$), Q13 ($\chi^2 = 38.53$, $df = 35$, $p = .31$), Q14 ($\chi^2 = 14.55$, $df = 15$, $p = .48$), Q15 ($\chi^2 = 28.41$, $df = 25$, $p = .29$), Q16 ($\chi^2 = 17.70$, $df = 15$, $p = .28$), and Q17 ($\chi^2 = 17.86$, $df = 15$, $p = .27$). Out of all the previous comparisons, only one was statistically significant ($p \leq .05$): Q12 ("Within which region is your institution located?"), which happened within less than a .05 chance of random occurrence.

Table 19

Cross Tabulations For Question 7 and Questions 9 through 12

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Do you think that your institution is likely to support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?						
		Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Don't Know	Total
Q9: What is your institution's approximate enrollment?	up to 4,999	3	4	3	0	1	2	**13**
	5,000 to 9,999	3	6	1	3	0	0	**13**
	10,000 to 14,999	7	4	2	1	1	3	**18**
	15,000 to 19,999	2	3	2	3	1	1	**12**
	20,000 to 24,999	6	2	3	0	1	1	**13**
	25,000 to 29,999	3	4	1	1	1	0	**10**
	30,000 plus	6	7	2	7	0	4	**26**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**
Q10: What is the Carnegie classification of your institution?	associate's	1	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
	baccalaureate	6	8	3	2	2	6	**27**
	master's	8	4	3	6	0	1	**22**
	doctoral	15	17	8	7	3	4	**55**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**
Q11: What is the overall structure of your institution?	public	21	19	11	12	3	10	**76**
	private, religious	3	1	0	0	0	1	**5**
	private, secular	6	9	3	3	2	0	**23**
	other	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	Total	**30**	**29**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**104**
Q12: Within which region is your institution located?	Northwest	1	2	0	1	2	0	**6**
	Midwest	3	0	0	1	0	1	**6**
	Great Lakes	8	5	4	3	3	4	**27**
	Northeast	2	12	4	1	0	0	**19**
	Southwest	3	3	4	5	0	1	**16**
	South Central	1	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
	South	9	4	1	3	0	4	**21**
	Mid-Atlantic**	3	3	1	1	0	1	**9**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**

Note. Each region includes specific states and territories, as defined by the Organization: Northwest (Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming); Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ontario, Rhode Island, Vermont); Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Utah); South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas); South (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia); and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania).

Table 20

Cross Tabulations For Question 7 and Questions 13 through 17

Quantitative Questions	Options for Answers	Do you think that your institution is likely to support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission?						
		Not at All	Some-what Likely	More Than Likely	Very Likely	Entirely	Don't Know	Total
Q13: Which of the following titles best describes your position?	Graduate Asst. (LGBT office)	3	0	1	2	0	1	**7**
	Specialist (LGBT office)	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Coordinator (LGBT office)	4	5	2	3	1	1	**16**
	Asst. Director (LGBT office)	0	1	2	0	0	0	**3**
	Assoc. Director (LGBT office)	0	2	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Director (LGBT office)	8	12	5	4	2	0	**31**
	Faculty Member	1	2	0	1	0	0	**4**
	Other Administrator	14	8	4	4	2	9	**41**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**
Q14: How long have you held this position?	less than 2 years	12	11	4	6	3	6	**42**
	2 to 5 years	13	7	8	4	0	3	**35**
	6 to 10 years	3	9	2	4	1	1	**20**
	11 or more years	2	3	0	1	1	1	**8**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**
Q15: Where is your position located on campus?	within an LGBT office	6	14	4	9	0	1	**34**
	within women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies	1	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
	within inclusivity initiatives	7	6	4	3	2	2	**24**
	within student affairs	12	4	3	1	3	6	**29**
	within an academic department	1	1	0	1	0	1	**4**
	within another office on campus	3	4	3	1	0	1	**12**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**
Q16: How would you classify your work with the Organiza-tion?	member only	19	14	8	11	2	6	**60**
	member with committee work	3	2	0	1	0	3	**9**
	member with leadership	2	4	2	0	0	0	**8**
	member with committee work and leadership experience	4	10	4	3	3	2	**26**
	Total	**28**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**103**
Q17: How long have you worked with LGBT populations?	less than 2 years	3	1	0	1	1	2	**8**
	2 to 5 years	11	6	6	7	2	4	**36**
	6 to 10 years	10	15	7	4	0	1	**37**
	11 or more years	6	8	1	3	2	4	**24**
	Total	**30**	**30**	**14**	**15**	**5**	**11**	**105**

Summary of Results in Relation to the Nine Research Questions

Following a 19.3% RR, wherein $N \leq 550$ and $n = 106$, this descriptive study provided answers to nine research questions (see Table 1). The primary findings from this study were:

1. Ninety percent ($N = 106$, $n = 95$) of respondents were aware that other institutions had recently asked, or had considered asking, potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application.
2. Thirty-nine percent ($N = 106$, $n = 41$) of respondents said that their institutions had considered adding a demographic for sexual orientation, 36% ($n = 38$) said no, and 25% ($n = 27$) did not know.
3. When asked if they would support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application to their own institution, respondents lacked a clear consensus: Twenty-eight percent ($N = 106$, $n = 30$) would be "entirely" supportive, whereas the other respondents were largely divided among the remaining four options within the Likert scale.
4. When asked for the primary reason behind the answer to the previous question, respondents shared a variety of reasons through written responses: Tracking of LGBT students (22.1%, $N = 131$, $n = 29$) was the most positive reason, and confidentiality of LGBT students' records (13.7%, $N = 131$, $n = 18$) was the most negative.
5. When asked if they would support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application to any institution, respondents again lacked a clear consensus: This time, only 20% ($N = 106$, $n = 21$) would be "entirely" supportive.
6. When asked for the primary reason behind the answer to the previous question, respondents again shared a variety of reasons through written responses: Tracking of

LGBT students (17.9%, $N = 134$, $n = 24$) was the most positive reason, yet confidentiality of LGBT students' records (14.9%, $N = 134$, $n = 20$) as well as possible ill-intent toward LGBT students (14.9%, $N = 134$, $n = 20$) were equally the most negative.

7. When asked if they thought that their institutions would likely support a policy that encourages potential students to reveal their sexual orientation during the application process, respondents provided an unenthusiastic assessment of their own academic environments: Only 5% ($N = 106$, $n = 5$) thought their institutions would be "entirely" supportive, and 29% ($n = 30$) speculated that their institutions would be "not at all" supportive.

8. When asked for the primary reason behind the answer to the previous question, respondents had to assess their institution's climate regarding LGBT matters. In written responses, they identified six reasons why their institutions would or would not add an LGBT demographic to any existing application. The most popular reason, wrote respondents, was administrative interest (27.1%, $N = 96$, $n = 26$), an area that acknowledged certain benefits for LGBT students, such as tracking, diversity, self-actualization, and educational best practices. The most negative reason, added respondents, was administrative challenges (33.3%, $N = 96$, $n = 32$), an area that included the following concerns: a perception of an apathetic, homophobic administration; a resistance toward institutional change; and any hypothetical confidentiality issue that might comprise an LGBT student's academic records.

9. The final research question was: Do certain demographics within the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?

Tables 13-22 revealed various inferences about the demographics of the Organization. A sampling of these inferences were: (a) groups that appeared less aware of the trend started by Elmhurst College were those who worked within the Organization's southern region, those who did not work within an LGBT office, and those who held varying degrees of experience within the Organization; (b) groups that had considered implementing this trend at their own institutions were more likely to be found within an LGBT office; and (c) groups that were located in certain geographic reasons were less likely to believe that their institutions would support the trend.

Discussion of the Results

Printed words evoke different emotions, even when read within sanitized instructional manuals and promotional publications (Mehta, 2010), such as those distributed by a university's admissions office. Words that denote sexual orientation and gender identity are even more semantically charged, especially when potential students investigate educational publications for written evidence of an institution's pro-LGBT policies (Baum, 2012; Ceglar, 2012; Young, 2011). Unfortunately, LGBT applicants find very little notice of themselves when viewing highly-edited stock photos of happy-go-lucky students within a brochure, webpage, or catalogue. Although applicants might discover that diversity—race, sex, ethnicity—is readily apparent, sexual orientation, they learn, is clearly absent—which, to be fair, could mean that an institution only wishes to avoid pernicious stereotypes by dodging any particularly thorny queer visibility.

A handful of institutions, however, have made a concerted effort to address LGBT inclusivity—either by using their applications to identify specifically LGBT students, as do Elmhurst College and the University of Iowa (UI), or by using alternate methods, as do, for

instance, Dartmouth College, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Southern California (Ceglar, 2012). Figure 1 demonstrates the visual, emotional impact of these kinds of recruitment efforts at Elmhurst and UI, illustrating that words even *associated* with sexual orientation hold marked connotative value:

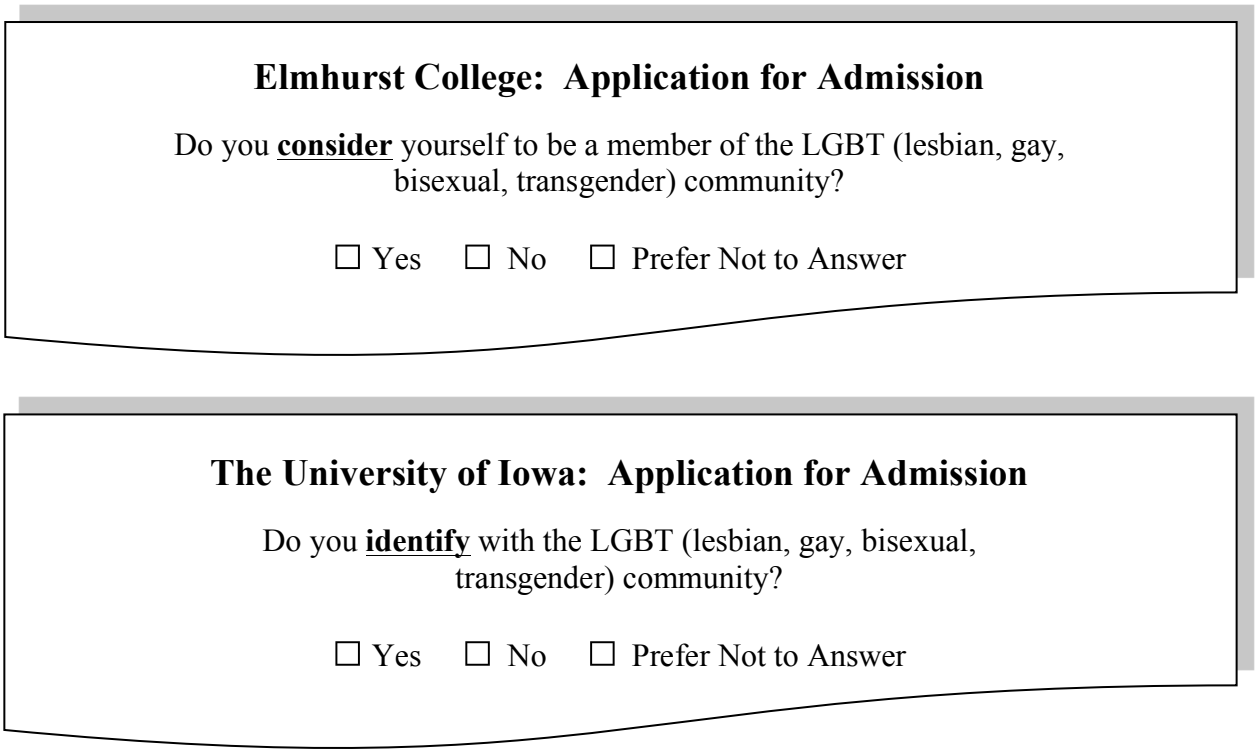

Figure 1. Identifying LGBT Applicants: Elmhurst College and the University of Iowa. Adapted from (a) "Elmhurst College: Application for Admission," 2012, retrieved from http://media.elmhurst.edu/documents/Elmhurst_Application_2012.pdf ; and (b) "University of Iowa Will Ask Applicants if They Identify with Gay Community," by E. Hoover, 2012, *Chronicle of Higher Education, 59*(17), p. 11.

In Figure 1, the verbs *consider* and *identify* speak directly to potential students: "Iowa does not pose the question so directly: To say you 'identify' with the LGBT community doesn't necessarily mean you belong to it" (Hoover, 2012, p. 11). It is precisely these kinds of efforts—a deliberative choice of words within an application, a determined commitment to LGBT

diversity, even an apathetic reaction to the LGBT community—that give importance to this study: to explain what the quantification of sexual orientation means for those who work with LGBT students in higher education.

Interpretation of the Findings

The most important finding in this study centered upon the concept of tracking: Without an LGBT demographic, an institution cannot measure matriculation, retention, and graduation rates for LGBT students, nor can it assess these students in comparison to their peers. Respondents consistently wrote about tracking when answering the qualitative questions (Q4, Q6, and Q8), and they shared similar concerns:

> I would love to have this information so we can identify these students early in their college careers, give them targeted information about services that can aid in their success in college and truly assess our retention efforts.
>
> Otherwise we have no way to track these students' retention and graduation rates, provide targeted services, [and] inform students about services.
>
> It will help us know the fuller picture of LGBTQAAIP students' experiences on college campus, i.e., retention, GPA, involvement—raw data rather than relying on anecdotal evidence. [The standard LGBT acronym appears differently in some of the responses about tracking. For an additional explanation of the LGBT acronym and how it can be altered—e.g., *LGBTQAAIP*—see (a) List of Abbreviations and (b) Terminology, Chapter One.
>
> We need data to determine if GLBT students are recruited, persist, and graduate at the same rates as non-GLBT students. Institutions can't address any potential problems for this population if they have no data on them.
>
> [I am] curious as to who[m] our population is and how we can better serve them [and] would like to know if we are retaining our LGBTQ population.
>
> It would be beneficial to track achievement, engagement, and all other issues in the same way we track other students.
>
> [Tracking] has been part of a national conversation about what is useful information to gather. [Institutions are] thinking about how [they] may use this data.

> If we know the sexual orientation and gender identity demographics of our entering students, we can track their academic progress in relation to the campus climate and make adjustments should there be graduation disparities. Moreover, we can track those intersecting identities, such as queer Latinas, and again get clearer on how these folks are experiencing our university. Also, we can track which majors and fields LGBT students trend towards and why. For those campuses that conduct ongoing assessment of the student experience we can track any rise or fall in the numbers of LGBT folks and perhaps even be able to track who graduates and who is leaving/stopping out, etc. Basically, if we don't collect data we are doing a disservice to LGBT students and more broadly to society—besides the census is starting to do a better job of collecting this data so why wouldn't a university? [For ease of reading this response has been slightly edited.]

In fact, tracking was the most popular answer to Q4 (why would you [not] support an LGBT demographic at your own institution?) as well as to Q6 (why would you [not] support an LGBT demographic within academe in general?); and it was the second most popular answer to Q8 (why would your institution [not] support an LGBT demographic?). Descriptive statistics for tracking were: Q4 (N = 131, n = 29, 22.1%); Q6 (N = 134, n = 24, 17.9%); and Q8 (N = 96, n = 26, 27.1%). These figures also suggested another conclusion: Institutions (see Q8) seemed to value tracking slightly more than LGBT administrators (see Q4 and Q6). This previous conclusion is nonetheless highly speculative, even though it supports the popularized notion of a data-driven administration (e.g.,Picciano, 2012; Voorhees, 2008).

Tracking also allows institutions to determine which demographic groups drop-out, stop-out, and/or transfer; what grades they make; and to what degree they meet regularly with an advisor, select particular majors/minors, apply for graduate programs, and enroll in developmental, honors, or on-line courses. By not quantifying sexual orientation, institutions cannot determine—other than conducting anecdotal observations—if LGBT students are academically (un)successful, cognitively (un)prepared, psychosocially (mal)adjusted, or professionally (ill-)equipped. Institutions also cannot calculate LGBT students' graduation rates, draw statistical comparisons between these students and their peers, or codify any other

systematic LGBT figure over time (e.g., Baum, 2012; Ceglar, 2012; Windmeyer, Humphrey, & Baker, 2013). On most campuses, LGBT students are demographically invisible—or "relatively unknown" (Ceglar, 2012, p. 22)—and these problems only compound when issues surrounding intersectionality arise (Abes, 2012; Cheshire, 2013; Patton et al., 2010; Poynter & Washington, 2005).

Despite these limitations, the Education Resources Information Center, or ERIC, reveals that researchers have recently made significant discoveries about tracking when studying the following demographic groups: African Americans (Baker & Robnett, 2012; Chandler, 2011; Grier-Reed, Ehlert, & Dade, 2011; Grier-Reed, Madyun, & Buckley, 2008; Palmer, Maramba, & Dancy, 2011); Latinos (Perez, 2010; Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Chopra, 2011); women (Bliss, Webb, & St. Andre, 2012; Ong, Wright, Espinosa, & Orfield, 2011); and adult learners (Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood, & Wright-Porter, 2011). In all of these studies, researchers identified their populations by accessing institutional databases, in which the demography of the student body depended upon a sustained quantification of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and even religious affiliation during the application process. Conspicuously absent in this previous list, of course, is an LGBT demographic. Windmeyer et al. (2013) share this concern: "Currently there is not any other known standard LGBT identity-based practice being used for tracking retention and matriculation of LGBT students at other colleges [aside from Elmhurst and UI]" (p. 4).

Another important finding within this study focused on *fluctuating LGBT support*—a phrase that denotes how respondents, as LGBT administrators, issued conflicting statements about their commitment to LGBT diversity. This finding was quite remarkable considering that 56.6% of respondents ($N = 106$, $n = 60$) worked within an LGBT on-campus office and that 92.0% ($N = 106$, $n = 98$) had worked two or more years with LGBT students (see Table 3).

Numerous examples of *fluctuating LGBT support* were found within the quantitative and qualitative data, yet a discussion of only two instances appears within this final chapter.

The first example came from various reasons that were collectively identified by the respondents in Q4 (why would you [not] support an LGBT demographic at your own institution?) and Q6 (why would you [not] support an LGBT demographic within academe in general?). In one instance, respondents determined that demographic data gleaned from quantification might lead institutions to make discriminatory decisions that would negatively impact the application process and harm the LGBT applicant (see Tables 5-8). One respondent effectively summarized the concern: "I would be fearful that this information would bias admissions officers against applicants." What was interesting about respondents' reservation toward quantification was that they, as a whole, regulated their support when providing written responses to Q4 and Q6: Only 9.9% ($N = 131$, $n = 13$) thought that discriminatory decisions might happen at their own institutions, whereas 14.9% ($N = 134$, $n = 20$) feared that discriminatory decisions might happen on other campuses. (See Tables 6 and 8 for a comparison of other categories, particularly *educational outreach for LGBT students* and *advocacy for LGBT students*.) Nevertheless, an alternate explanation could be coaxed from these results: that respondents would err on the side of caution—or strive to protect any LGBT student far removed from their secure domain.

The second example of *fluctuating LGBT support* appeared within Q3 and Q5—a situation in which respondents again regulated their support, rating more favorably their own institutions over others (see Table 4). When answering Q3 (would you support an LGBT demographic at your own institution?), respondents replied: not at all (11.0%, $N = 106$, $n = 12$); somewhat likely (24.0%, $N = 106$, $n = 25$); more than likely (16.0%, $N = 106$, $n = 17$); very

likely (21.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 22); or entirely (28.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 30). When answering Q5 (would you support an LGBT demographic within academe in general?), respondents replied differently: not at all (16.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 17); somewhat likely (21.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 22); more than likely (21.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 22); very likely (23.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 24); or entirely (20.0%, *N* = 106, *n* = 21). Thus, the notion of *fluctuating LGBT support* was readily apparent here as well, most noticeably within two options: (a) the fifth—i.e., "I would be *entirely* supportive of an LGBT demographic"—which generated 28.0% for Q3 (own institution) but only 20.0% for Q5 (other institutions); and (b) the first—i.e., "I would be *not at all* supportive"—which prompted only 11.0% for Q3 (own institution) but 16% for Q5 (other institutions). The differences in the previous examples were slight, but they nonetheless indicated a *fluctuating-LGBT-support* matrix: In general, assessment of the LGBT climate was more favorable whenever respondents assessed their own workplaces and less so whenever they imagined unfamiliar locales.

Schmidt, Githens, Rocco, and Kormanik (2012) offer a possible rationalization for respondents' *fluctuating LGBT support*: "For LGBT employees, career development is challenging due to the dilemma of [how to manage] identity in a multitude of work-related interactions [either real or imagined]. Identity has to be managed for LGBT people at the same time individuals are developing their identities as [members of the] LGBT [community]" (p. 339). Identity synthesis—as noted by Cass (1984), Coleman (1981), and Troiden (1979)—is an ongoing process that continues throughout adulthood for "out" gay men and lesbians as they maneuver familiar and unfamiliar territories—even within academe (Halpin & Allen, 2004). For allies of the LGBT community who work with LGBT students—and it cannot be assumed that every respondent was undoubtedly gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender—the lingering effects of homophobia and heterosexism may have influenced the degree of support (Ayres & Brown,

2005; DiStefano, Croteau, Anderson, Kampa-Kokesch, & Bullard, 2000; Evans & Broido, 2005; Watt, 2007). In any event, identity synthesis, internal homophobia, external homophobia, and heterosexism are inextricably bound, and they appeared to affect respondents' fluctuating attitudes about the quantification of sexual orientation.

Recommendations for LGBT Researchers and Administrators

The first recommendation references the LGBT lexicon, which includes certain words that can impede communication. The terms *sexual orientation*, *gender identity*, *homosexuality*, *heterosexuality*, *bisexuality*, *sexuality*, *transgender, cisgender*, and *LGBT* hold specific denotations—and LGBT professionals understand each term's precise psychosexual, semantic context. However, this study possibly included contradictory nomenclature within the questionnaire's primary question: "Are you aware that other institutions have recently asked (or are considering asking) potential students to reveal their sexual orientation within an application for college admission? (A possible question to students on an application might read: Would you consider yourself a member of the LGBT community?)." Most respondents easily answered the question, yet one respondent rightly noted that *sexual orientation* does not apply to the *T* (transgender) within the LGBT acronym:

> I . . . think that the question should be worded so that we are asking about sexual orientation, not the LGBT community. The 'T' should be separate from sexual orientation [because it distinctly references gender identity] and the question should include heterosexual orientation as well. This way everyone is being asked the [same] question, not just the LGB population.

This explanation, in effect, summarizes the first recommendation: Researchers should add *gender identity* to any LGBT study that examines demographic specialization. Thus, a potential question to respondents might read: "Are you aware that other institutions have asked students

to reveal their sexual orientation *and gender identity* within an application for college admission?" The addition of *gender identity* also serves another purpose: to recognize an institution's transgender students, who are often overlooked within LGB(T) scholarship and by society at large (Newhouse, 2013; Stryker, 2008).

This researcher, however, does not recommend adding *heterosexual* to a potential questionnaire or to an application: (a) heterosexual orientation is implied should a student mark "no"—as in: *I am* not *a member of the LGBT community*; (b) the term itself, like the word *homosexual*, is often pejorative; and (c) too many terms would simply obfuscate both students and researchers. At any rate, the discussion about the LGBT lexicon is not limited merely to this study; it pervades LGBT scholarship and outreach, especially when the traditional acronym expands, like LGBTQQIAAPPG (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, polyamorous, pansexual, and genderqueer), and/or departs, like SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity).

The second recommendation is directed toward LGBT administrators who work in LGBT centers: The quantification of sexual orientation (and gender identity) would provide these centers with quantifiable data—e.g., "we have 452 LGBT students at XYZ State University"—that would, in turn, strengthen intra-institutional assessment: e.g., "During the fall semester, we provided services to 78.0% of our LGBT population." This recommendation comes from findings within Tables 8 and 10—both of which revealed that funding was an important reason for quantifying sexual orientation: Q4 (9.9%, $N = 131$, $n = 13$) and Q6 (7.5%, $N = 134$, $n = 10$). One respondent noted: "In order to continue getting financial resources for LGBT initiatives, data must be collected to count students." In fact, justification for funding is an integral component of student affairs, and research reveals how data, along with other measures, affect

the availability and quality of diversity initiatives (Bresciani, 2010; Hernandez & Hernandez, 2011; Plageman, 2011; Rames, 2000).

The third recommendation also addresses LGBT administrators, as well as their colleagues in admissions offices: Although many institutions recognize the benefits of quantifying sexual orientation, along with gender identity, they should first determine if such a practice is feasible in light of available LGBT resources. At schools with LGBT centers, these resources are plentiful—even prototypical—offering LGBT students the following kinds of opportunities: social interaction, gender-neutral housing, internships, counseling, colloquia, academic enrichment through LGBT fields of study and scholarships, and specialized curricula, like Safe Zone, Lavender Graduation, and hate-crime prevention (e.g., Ryan, 2005; Sanlo, 2005). Fine (2012) presents a similar conclusion: "[C]ampuses that have greater person resources—that is, a larger student body with more diverse needs to serve—may be more inclined to create an LGBT resource center [e.g., to quantify sexual orientation] to serve sexual minorities" (pp. 294-295).

At other schools, however, LGBT resources are conceptual, scarce, absent, or even expressly forbidden—and the feasibility of quantifying sexual orientation is further complicated by various religious, institutional, and geopolitical forces (e.g., Cramer & Ford, 2011; Falcone, 2011; Garcia, 2013; Hermann, 2010; Robertson, 2010). Realizing these circumstances, a few respondents wrote about geopolitical feasibility when answering the questionnaire's open-ended prompts and argued, for instance, that "[we could not quantify sexual orientation because we] are a flagship public university in the Southeast with a very conservative state legislature." One respondent, however, addressed feasibility further: "[I'm] not sure we are ready to deal with this information once we collect it." This statement also brings to light another concern with

feasibility: Despite abundant LGBT resources, an institution might not be able to examine LGBT data accurately and meaningfully—or connect LGBT students adequately to various programs. Thus, feasibility is a crucial component of the LGBT-quantification mix, and LGBT administrators should reconsider their institutional responsibilities: (a) to continue (or begin) implementing LGBT resources; (b) to educate their stakeholders, naysayers and confederates alike; and (c) to consult campus climate surveys that identify evolving attitudes surrounding sexual orientation (e.g., Brown & Gortmaker, 2009; Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger, & Hope, 2013; Vaccaro, 2012).

The final recommendation considers a paradox. The quantification of sexual orientation would improve future scholarship by giving researchers categorical access to LGBT populations gathered from a single campus, a specific region, or a collection of similar schools (e.g., urban, suburban, rural, private, religious, land-grant, liberal arts, junior colleges, athletic conference, Carnegie classification, or Ivy League). As it now stands, researchers must repeatedly identify these populations through nonprobability methodologies, such as convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and purposive sampling, and must generally abandon equal-probability methodologies, such as cluster sampling and systematic sampling (see also Population, Chapter Three). When writing a meta-analysis of contemporary LGBT scholarship, Renn (2010) identifies a similar concern: "[E]xisting studies of LGBT issues in higher education too frequently rely on convenience samples, limited data, and unsophisticated data analysis and/or interpretation [of trivial qualitative studies involving too few subjects]" (p. 137). The catch-22, of course, becomes manifestly obvious: Without an LGBT demographic, LGBT scholarship cannot adequately address the LGBT demographic. This final recommendation, therefore, is a call for sustained deliberation —for LGBT administrators to recognize that the quantification of

sexual orientation can generate valuable, quantitative scholarship along with educational best practices for LGBT students.

Suggestions for Additional Research

The first suggestion focuses on the ongoing deliberation over an LGBT demographic, a situation that often presents a single viewpoint: The debate is dominated by LGBT administrators and their sympathizers, playing out within mainstream academic publications like *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* (e.g., Almeida-Neveu, 2010; DeSantis, 2012; Hoover, 2011, 2012; Jaschik, 2010, 2011; Johnson, 2013; Kahlenberg, 2011; Ray, 2011), as well as within this very study. Three other groups, however, have rarely shared their recommendations and reservations about an LGBT demographic—groups that include LGBT students, students in general, and admissions officers (e.g., Carillo, 2012; Mannion, 2011; Montes, 2011). Students have the most to gain, or lose, when declaring their sexual orientation—heterosexual or otherwise—and their opinions have provided institutions with additional considerations about possible pro-LGBT policies (e.g., Young, 2011) along with a better understanding of LGBT self-actualization, homonegativity, homophobia, and heterosexism within a college environment (Chonody, Siebert, & Rutledge, 2009; Crama, Miller, Amacker, & Burks, 2013; Furrow, 2012; Iconis, 2010; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008; Ripley, Anderson, McCormack, & Rockett, 2012; Rogers, McRee, & Arntz, 2009; Schmidt, Miles, & Welsh, 2011; Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008). These social paradigms, however, could also influence students' (un)willingness to declare their sexual orientation within an application—and current research needs to explore this matter further. Moreover, admissions officers have remained collectively silent within the existing literature, yet three officers have previously offered professional advice within the *Journal of College Admissions*, published by

the National Association for College Admission in Counseling, addressing the recruitment of LGBT students in general (Baum, 2012; Ceglar, 2012) and of transgender students (Newhouse, 2013). Therefore, researchers must address these groups if they are to understand fully the implications of quantifying sexual orientation (and gender identity).

The second suggestion focuses on this study's inconclusive results. Any descriptive study seeks only to describe a particular phenomenon—not to make predictions, confirm hypotheses, or uncover causality and correlations; consequently, the findings support only a preliminary framework, often indicating plausible conclusions and raising further questions. This descriptive study produced similar effects, and its findings lead this researcher to suggest that the quantification of sexual orientation needs further investigation. This advice speaks to two inconclusive results: (a) the reasons for *fluctuating LGBT support*; and (b) the data for the ninth research question (Do certain demographics with the Organization indicate support, or lack of support, of a policy that urges potential students to reveal their sexual orientation in an application for admission within academe in general?). First, researchers should determine why LGBT administrators regulated their advocacy for the quantification of sexual orientation by rating their own campuses more LGBT-friendly and academe less so. Secondly, researchers should identify specifically those LGBT administrators—as indicated through demographical demarcations (e.g., place of work, type of position, tenure of LGBT experience)—who are more likely (not) to support the quantification of sexual orientation. It should be noted here that demographical research, for instance, has previously revealed the prevalence of LGBT centers within certain geographic regions (Fine, 2012). By further examining these two areas—*fluctuating LGBT support* and demographical demarcations—the LGBT establishment can

provide a cogent, educative response to hesitant colleagues, who mistrust the advantages of quantification, and to other administrators and stakeholders.

Conclusion

Elmhurst College made a brave decision in 2011—to ask potential students if they considered themselves members of the LGBT community—and many institutions wondered: *What are we doing to identify our LGBT students*? *Should we follow Elmhurst's lead? Or just observe the aftermath cautiously—even dodge the matter altogether?* Easy answers, however, were not to be found, and a contentious debate ensued, within both the mass media and academe. The reason for this controversy undoubtedly centered upon the very foundation of the debate: Forty-five years after Stonewall, sexual orientation remains a divisive issue, even within progressive places like metropolitan Chicago, where Elmhurst is located, and on college campuses, where open-minded faculty and staff drive innovative policy and pedagogy.

Today, three years after Elmhurst's bold move, institutions are still wondering and waiting. Their reluctance to follow Elmhurst is tied largely to influential polemics—those who wish to protect LGBT students and those who want to avoid them—yet there are numerous supporters who recognize the benefits of asking students to reveal their sexual orientation within a college application. Not surprisingly, one of these supporters is the president of Elmhurst, S. Alan Ray, who recently reiterated the institution's commitment to diversity when addressing alumni within *FYI Magazine*:

> By constructively engaging very different perspectives—be they religious, political, gender, geographical or sexual orientation, to name a few—our students become informed, self-critical advocates for certain values over others because they've seen the alternatives and consciously selected the ones they will operate out of. That can only be done if you've had the opportunity in college to dialogue with other people, maybe argue with them, and maybe be converted to their points of view. If you've had that kind of

> dress rehearsal in college, you're better prepared to engage a complex world. (Santella, 2013, para. 11)

Progressive viewpoints like these propel the evolution and proliferation of LGBT outreach within higher education, and LGBT-friendly institutions continue to adapt to a rapidly changing society, where inclusivity depends upon a sustained, deliberative recognition of demographical diversification.

Still, Elmhurst only initiated the national dialogue about quantification—and LGBT administrators must diligently carry the conversation forward, working collaboratively to ensure that LGBT students can declare confidently their sexual orientation and gender identity during the application process. This researcher suggests that LGBT administrators consider three goals as they continue to talk with stakeholders and among themselves. The first goal is educative in nature: to identify which institutions and colleagues need additional information and support. This study, for instance, revealed that faculty members and non-LGBT administrators are less likely to be aware of what happened at Elmhurst or if their own institutions have considered quantifying sexual orientation during the application process. These individuals, however, often significantly influence decision-making when working with cross-campus committees, faculty senates, and professional organizations; and their collective efforts would encourage additional constructive dialogue. The second goal is to provide the Common Application with current research and anecdotal observations, persuasively illustrating that the quantification of sexual orientation leads to positive results—for instance, tracking LGBT students indicates that they differ academically and socially from their non-LGBT peers and that they need additional support in order to stay in school and to graduate. The third goal is for all LGBT administrators to enter into an immediate conversation with their institutions about LGBT students and the application process. This study, for instance, showed that almost two thirds of respondents

reported either that their institutions had not considered such a policy or that they (respondents) did not know of any considerations. This conclusion was quite telling: If approximately a mere third of respondents revealed an awareness of talks at their own institutions, then few discussions about quantification are actually taking place. By accomplishing these previous goals, LGBT administrators can develop an application process (generally speaking) that recognizes and validates LGBT applicants, whose rich personal experiences and academic contributions, upon matriculation, will continue to diversify each institution's demography.

This study identified many of the considerations that surrounded the quantification of sexual orientation: to determine the number of institutions that have considered implementing such a policy, to identify the advantages and disadvantages of such a policy (e.g., tracking LGBT students throughout their academic tenure and recognizing sociopolitical forces that might harm them), to provide recommendations for institutions to consider further, and to suggest new areas of research involving LGBT students and admissions officers. Although asking students to self-report their sexual orientation might issue ethical and administrative concerns, the benefits, stress this researcher, far exceed possible risks. Therefore, institutions should begin to identify potential LGBT students during the application process—or at least to deliberate the matter voluntarily, swiftly, thoroughly, and without homophobic prejudice. To reject the idea entirely would indicate that an institution does not value its LGBT constituents—students, faculty members, staff, and alumni—and that it does not studiously observe the ever-evolving socio-academic community.

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