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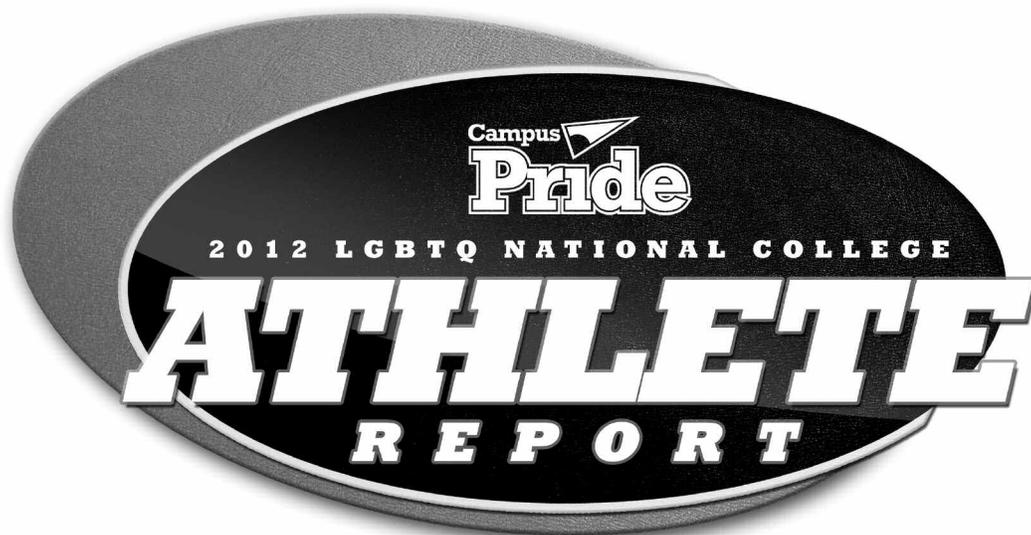
2012 LGBTQ NATIONAL COLLEGE

ATHLETE

REPORT

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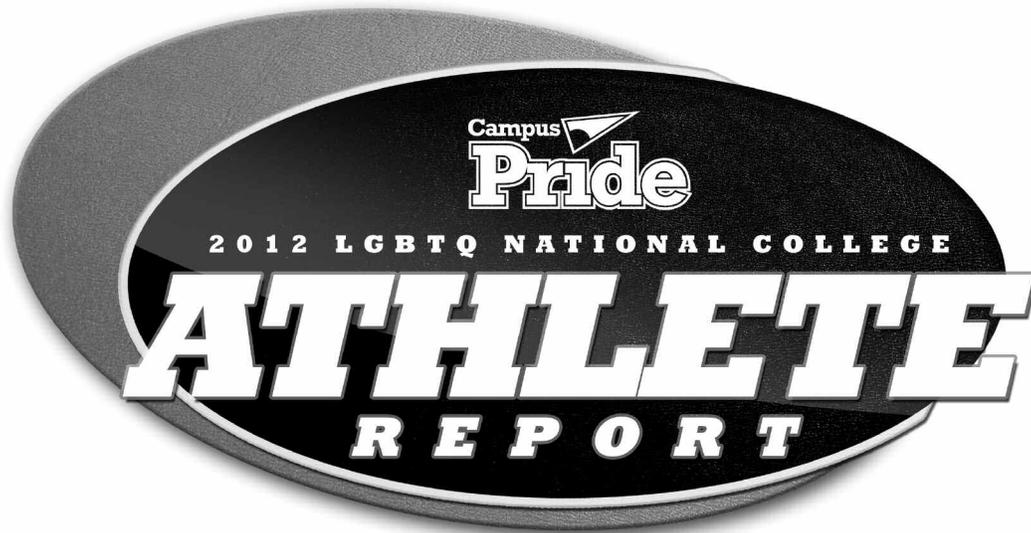
STAND UP
FOUNDATION



Campus
Pride

2012 LGBTQ NATIONAL COLLEGE

ATHLETE
REPORT



Susan (Sue) Rankin

Daniel Merson



2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report

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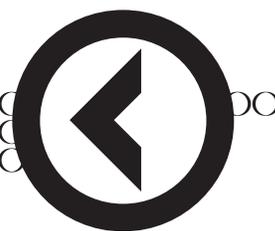
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PREFACE



Playing to Win: The Changing Face of College Sports

by Shane L. Windmeyer

Executive Director/Founder, Campus Pride

In every sport, athletes strive for success in being the absolute best they can be in order to win the game. It takes an investment in training and preparation working toward a set of goals for an individual, or a team, to achieve success – and ultimately win.

When it comes to LGBTQ issues within sports, the same holds true. It takes an investment to enact real change. Our national organization, Campus Pride, which works to create safer, more welcoming college campuses for LGBTQ students, is doing just that in college sports.

This past May, Campus Pride in partnership with Compete Magazine released the first-ever “Top 10 LGBT-Friendly List for College Athletics” across the country. The list was compiled from nominations received nationwide and reflects the LGBTQ progress that is currently happening in college athletics. This progress includes players and coaches coming out, measures to deal with anti-LGBTQ bias in sports and specific LGBTQ-inclusive sports trainings for athletics players and staff. The campuses listed include Bates College, Bowdoin College, Bucknell University, Columbia University, Indiana University, Ithaca College, Kennesaw State University, New York University, Stanford University and Whitman College.

When it comes to LGBTQ issues in college athletics, there is still much work to be done. LGBTQ students today are more out than ever before and those who are athletes deserve to know which schools and which athletic programs will respect them for who they are. This requires colleges and universities to make an investment and work toward future action and progress.

Up until now, most campuses did not have a playbook to better understand the issues, to learn about the LGBTQ athlete experience or to know what to do on LGBTQ issues in sports. Now they do. The *Campus Pride 2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report* is the first national collegiate research sharing the experiences of nearly 400 self-identified LGBTQ athletes and providing campuses with the necessary resources for further progress on LGBTQ issues in college athletics.

The Campus Pride national research study clearly documents what it is like to be LGBTQ as a college athlete today. This report goes into detail on how LGBQ student-athletes generally experience a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers in terms of discrimination and campus climate. As a result, the LGBQ student-athletes tend to report lower levels of academic success and are less likely to think that the athletic department will address such anti-LGBQ bias and

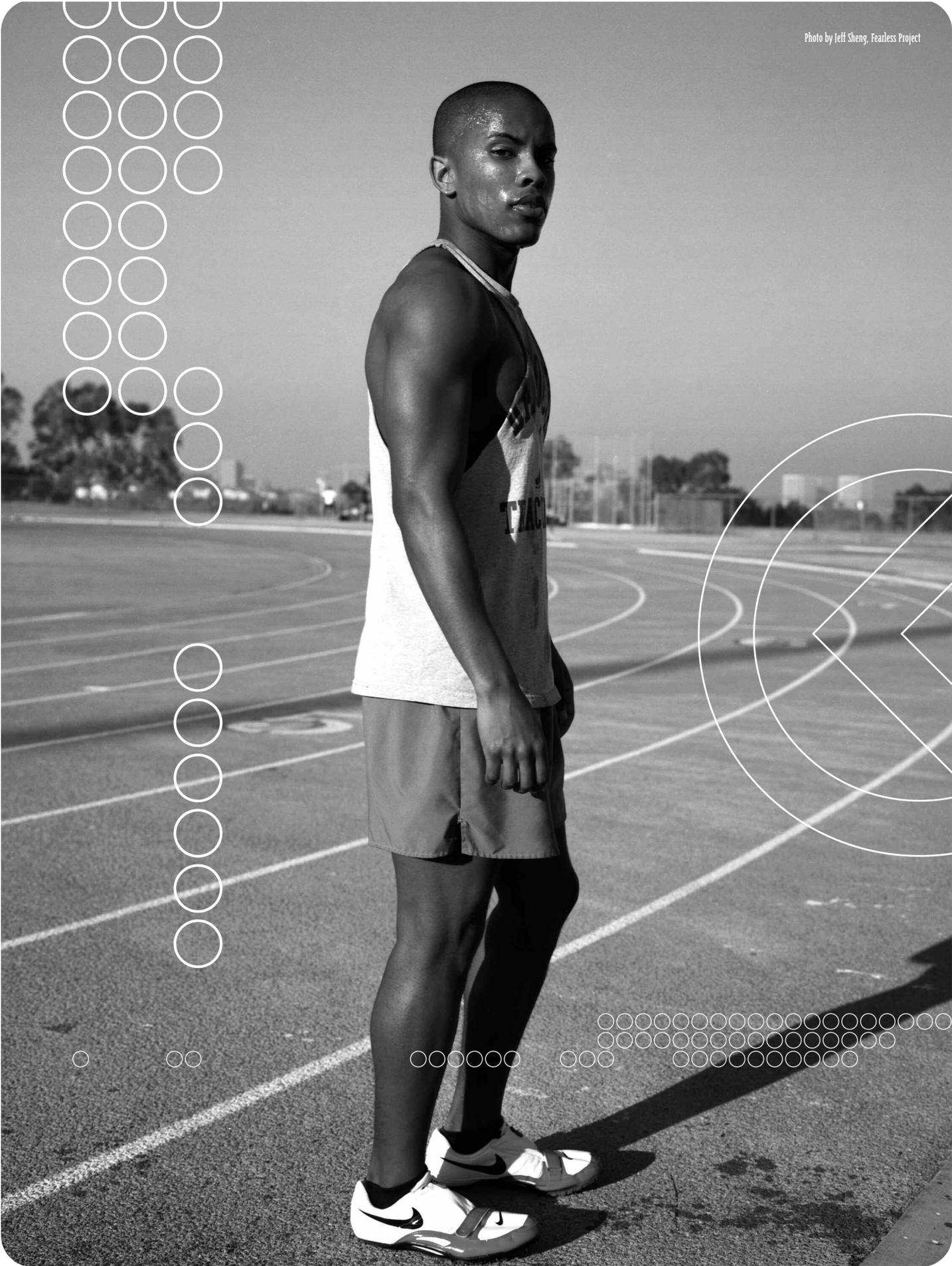
discrimination, which in turn negatively affects their athletic identity and potential performance. The LGBTQ student-athletes also share being deliberately ignored or excluded more so than their heterosexual peers due to their sexual identity from fellow players, coaches, athletic staff and administrators. The low number of transgender respondents limits the analysis on their experiences; however, transgender student-athlete anecdotes throughout the report establish clear areas for improvement and warrant needed attention.

Campus Pride's national report provides the research, best practices and necessary resources to do better. All students deserve the assurance of safety and inclusion both in the classroom and on the field. We must make an investment in college athletics and be informed in decision-making around LGBTQ-inclusion in policy, program and practice. Athletic staff, administrators and other key stakeholders must use these research findings as a guide and as a reason to move the bar up a notch for real systemic change to occur in college sports.

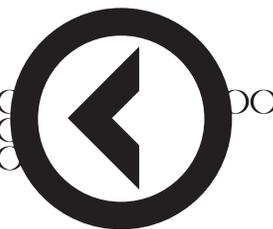
Now is the time for all campuses to play to win. LGBTQ inclusion does not just benefit the LGBTQ student-athletes, coaches and fans. It benefits everyone in college sports.

.....
BUY NOW

Purchase your copy of the *Campus Pride 2012 LGBTQ Athlete Report* online at
www.CampusPride.org/athlete



Executive Summary



The settings of college campuses have improved for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ¹) students over the years. Yet when research examines the experiences of LGBTQ students, one group routinely absent from studies is student-athletes. Campus Pride was interested in the unique experiences of student-athletes who identified as LGBT and supported this project to offer some insight into their experiences.

The *Campus Pride 2012 LGBTQ National College Athlete Report* is the most comprehensive national research study of its kind to date. It is based on a secondary analysis of data from the 2009 Student-Athlete Climate Study (SACS).² That study included 8,481 student-athletes enrolled in United States universities representing all intercollegiate divisions and all NCAA sports. The SACS study examined climate at the campus level, as well as within student-athletes' athletic departments and teams.

The purpose of this project is to examine the climate for the 401 self-identified LGBTQ student-athletes in the SACS project. We explored how the climate (campus, departmental, team) influences LGBTQ student-athletes' identity and success. The findings from this study prove there is a need for athletic coaches, administrators, and health staff to implement strategic initiatives that address the needs and concerns of their LGBTQ student-athletes.

Participants³

A total of 8,481 surveys were submitted from student-athletes at 164 NCAA member institutions. The equivalent total is 8,018 student-athletes after weighting the dataset so it accurately represents these institutions:

- Three thousand four hundred eighty (43%) student-athletes in this study identify as women and 4,531 (57%) identify as men. Seven respondents identified as transgender.
- Transgender student-athletes were much more likely to report being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (LGBQ) (63% vs. 5%) than were cisgender student-athletes. There were no other significant differences in relation to race, GPA, featured sport status, or NCAA Division (most likely due to the small numbers in the analyses), but all of the transgender student-athletes played in non-featured sports and five of the seven were in Division III.
- Ninety-five percent (n = 7,625) of the sample identify as heterosexual student-athletes while 5% (n = 394) identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (LGBQ).
- A higher proportion of women student-athletes identified as LGBQ (8%) as opposed to men (3%).
- The same was true for student-athletes of color⁴ (7%) as compared to white student-athletes (4%).

¹ Refer to the "Terminology" section of the "Influence of Climate on Student-Athlete Success" for an explanation of the terminology used in this report.

² The SACS project was supported by a grant from the NCAA.

³ The sample sizes (n) reported across statistical analyses may vary due to missing data, weighting, and/or rounding.

- Compared to the rest of the student-athletes, a lower portion of student-athletes identified as LGBQ in seven sports, while a higher portion identified in nine sports.
- Only 18% of LGBQ student-athletes participated in a featured sport⁵ compared to 27% of heterosexual student-athletes.
- LGBQ student-athletes were more than twice as likely to be among the 619 student-athletes who reported having a disability (16% vs. 7%), including a physical condition (4% vs. 1%), a learning disability (7% vs. 3%), or a psychological condition such as ADHD, PTSD, depression, etc. (8% vs. 4%).
- A higher proportion of LGBQ student-athletes identified with a spiritual/religious affiliation other than Christian (19%) or specified no affiliation (26%) compared to heterosexual student-athletes (8% and 17%, respectively).
- In terms of supporting their college education, LGBQ student-athletes were less likely to pay for college using family contributions (49%) than heterosexual student-athletes (55%).

The Influence of Climate on LGBQ Student-Athletes' Educational and Sport-Related Outcomes

We evaluated the influence of climate on the outcomes for both LGBQ and heterosexual student-athletes.

- LGBQ student-athletes generally experienced a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers, which adversely influenced their athletic identities and reports of academic success.
- LGBQ student-athletes reported lower scores on four climate variables: Perceptions of Climate, Perceptions of Respect, Athletic Department Addresses Discrimination, and Diversity Leadership from Athletic Personnel.
- Overall, compared to all other subgroups (student-athletes of color, women student-athletes, etc.), climate's influence on athletic identity was most profound for LGBQ student-athletes.
- Athletic identity tended to be less strong for LGBQ student-athletes as a result of their lower tendency to report that the athletic department addresses discrimination.
- As a result of LGBQ student-athletes' lower perceptions of respect and of climate, they tended to report lower levels of academic success.
- LGBQ student-athletes generally experience a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers and although sexual identity is not a direct predictor of the outcomes, the way LGBQ student-athletes experience the climate indirectly affects their academic success as well as their athletic identity.

Student-Athletes' Experiences with Harassment

Nine percent of all respondents reported they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus (hereafter referred to as *harassment*)⁶ within the past year.

- Twice the proportion of LGBQ student-athletes reported such harassment than their straight counterparts (18% compared to 9%).
- Athletic performance (34%) was the most cited reason for harassment in the overall sample, with the basis for

⁴ While the authors recognize the vastly different experiences of people of various racial identities (e.g., Chicano versus African American or Latino(a) versus Asian American), and those experiences within these identity categories, we collapsed these categories into Student-Athletes of Color or White, non-Hispanic for many of the analyses due to the small numbers in individual race and ethnicity categories.

⁵ In literature that explores the difference between sport teams, teams are most often categorized as "high-profile" and "low-profile" or "revenue-generating" and "non-revenue-generating." With the aim of considering the unique characteristics of participating institutions' respective programs, the research team asked each institutional contact to provide a list of its institution's "featured" and "non-featured" sport teams.

⁶ Under the United States Code Title 18 Subsection 1514(c)1 harassment is defined as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose" (<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>). In higher education, legal issues discussions define harassment as any conduct that unreasonably interferes with one's ability to work or learn on campus. The questions used in this survey to uncover participants' personal and observed experiences with harassment were designed using these definitions.

harassment most often related to the respondents' participation in sport. But for LGBQ student-athletes, their sexual identity (39%) was most cited, whereas it was almost nonexistent among heterosexual student-athletes (1%). Athletic performance (34%), athletic identity (32%), and weight or other physical attributes (22%) were the next most reported basis for harassment according to LGBQ student-athletes⁷. Thirty percent of all respondents, and 25% of LGBQ student-athletes, reported they were unsure what the basis was for the harassment they experienced.

- Harassment tended to take the form of coaches playing favorites (43%), being deliberately ignored or excluded (42%), and being subjected to verbal derogatory remarks (38%) for the overall sample. In contrast, LGBQ student-athletes reported being deliberately ignored or excluded (51%) more so than their heterosexual counterparts (41%). They also reported being the target of derogatory remarks via electronic means almost twice as frequently (21% vs. 12%), being pressured to be silent about their identity over four times as much (25% vs. 6%), and being singled out as the resident authority due to their identity almost six times as frequently (17% vs. 3%) as heterosexual student-athletes.
- For all of the student-athletes, harassment occurred most frequently at practice (64%) or during a competition (28%). However, LGBQ student-athletes reported more harassment than their heterosexual counterparts in on-campus housing (26% vs. 9%), in an off-campus setting (22% vs. 7%), and at an opponent's venue (19% vs. 10%).
- Coaches and other student-athletes were most often the perpetrators of the harassing behavior reported by the general sample of all student-athletes. LGBQ student-athletes also reported sources of harassment as a student on campus (not an athlete) (14%), a student-athlete at a different institution (14%), or Campus Security/Police (4%). These rates were all higher than their straight counterparts.
- Few student-athletes in the overall sample accessed university resources in the aftermath of the incident(s). They most frequently reported simply telling a friend or roommate (50%). However, a large proportion considered leaving the team (49%) or the university (33%). Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, it's not known how many student-athletes actually left their team or university as a result of harassment. LGBQ student-athletes were less likely to consider leaving the university (23% vs. 35%) and were more likely to talk to a coach (31% vs. 21%) or make a formal complaint to a university official (21% vs. 11%).

Summary

The dataset collected for this project is comprehensive and diverse. It includes responses from student-athletes of varied demographics and from all geographic areas, sports, and NCAA divisions. Demographically, LGBQ student-athletes often share other marginalized identities more frequently than heterosexual student-athletes, including being women, student-athletes of color, having a disability, not having a Christian spiritual affiliation, and playing in a non-featured sport. Although there were only seven student-athletes who identified as transgender, we can say that they are much more likely to identify as LGBQ, all of them play in non-featured sports, and five of the seven are in Division III.

It is clear that climate affects LGBQ student-athletes' academic and athletic outcomes. LGBQ student-athletes generally experience and perceive a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers in relation to four climate variables: Perceptions of Climate, Perceptions of Respect, Athletic Department Addresses Discrimination, and Diversity Leadership from Athletic Personnel. These negative experiences with climate adversely influence their athletic identities and reports of academic success. In general, LGBQ student-athletes experience a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers and although sexual identity is not a direct predictor of the outcomes, the way LGBQ student-athletes experience the climate indirectly affects their academic success as well as their athletic identity.

These results indicate that experiences and perceptions of climate affect student-athlete well-being. And student-athletes do

⁷ Percentages do not sum to 100% because participants could mark more than one response item.

experience harassment—LGBQ student-athletes twice as much as their heterosexual peers. In general, LGBQ student-athletes' experience with harassment parallels the overall sample in that it is based on sport-related reasons and is usually perpetrated by coaches and other student-athletes, most frequently at practice. However, there are many less frequent circumstances that were disproportionately reported by LGBQ student-athletes. They are almost 28 times more likely to report that harassment is based on their sexual identity. They are also pressured to be silent about their identity over four times as much, and are singled out as the resident authority on their sexual identity almost six times as frequently as heterosexual student-athletes.

The proportion of LGBQ student-athletes reporting harassment in on-campus housing or in an off-campus setting is three times that of heterosexual student-athletes. In addition, the percentage who report that the source of harassment is a student on campus (not an athlete), a student-athlete at a different institution, or Campus Security/Police, is two to four times higher. LGBQ student-athletes are less likely to consider leaving the university and are more likely to talk to a coach or make a formal complaint to a university official.

It's clear that, while many of the experiences of LGBQ student athletes are similar to the general population, there are several ways in which their lives are very different from their heterosexual peers. Overall, "in-house" harassment, whether intentional or not, is the most prevalent kind experienced by our respondents. It follows, therefore, that athletic departments have the power to improve the collegiate experiences of the student-athletes in their charge through cooperation with athletic personnel, student-athletes, and faculty members at their institutions.

However, in order to effectively address the experiences of LGBQ student-athletes in particular, it behooves athletic personnel to look beyond the obvious and attend to the myriad of ways in which LGBQ student-athletes encounter discrimination and harassment as they strive to achieve both academic and athletic success.

Best Practices

Following is a summary of best practices that athletic departments might consider to assist their LGBTQ student-athletes in maximizing their academic and athletic potential. More details and resources are provided at the end of the full report to create inclusive athletic communities.

Use Inclusive Language

As reflected in the results, many participants did not fit the socially constructed definitions of gender identity, sexual identity, and gender expression. Their comments suggested they are either pathologized or forced to develop a "different" sense of identity. In shaping our outlook, language instills and reinforces cultural values, thereby helping to maintain social hierarchies. While definitions facilitate discussion and the sharing of information, terminology remains subject to both cultural contexts and individual interpretation. As a result, the terminology that people use to describe themselves and their communities is often not universally accepted by everyone within these communities. Therefore, it is recommended that we value the voices of those within our campus communities and use language that reflects their unique experiences. Learn and use terminology respectful of the LGBTQ population and avoid words with negative connotations. For example, avoid referring to men student-athletes as "ladies" in order to motivate or criticize and avoid using derogatory terms such as "dyke" or "fag."

Offer a Visible and Supportive Presence

There are multiple venues where intercollegiate athletics can offer a visible and supportive presence (e.g., National Coming Out Day, Day of Silence, LGBT Pride Week). This serves two goals: (1) to let the LGBT community know that intercollegiate athletics at your institution is knowledgeable of the issues/concerns facing the LGBT community and stand as allies in the fight against homophobia and heterosexism, and (2) provides an environment for LGBT student-athletes and athletic personnel to feel safe and supported in acknowledging their sexual and/or gender identities.

Develop Inclusive Policies

Be sure the policies in your student-athlete handbook are inclusive of sexual and gender identity. Implement NCAA policies that are inclusive of sexual and gender identity, such as the 2011 NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion (see the Resources section of this report). Policies that explicitly welcome LGBTQ student-athletes, coaches, and athletic personnel powerfully express the commitment of an athletic department and, based on the results of this project, will add to team success... winning! Individuals will be more likely to be open about their sexual identity or gender identity when they know that the institution is supportive. When individuals do not have to expend energy hiding aspects of their identity, they tend to be more productive.

Increase Awareness of LGBTQ Issues/Concerns

As both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ individuals are socialized into a homophobic and heterosexist society, athletic community members need the space to question and to examine unfounded attitudes and beliefs. Acknowledging the contributions of LGBTQ former athletes/coaches in the sports arena is important to fully integrate LGBTQ concerns and experiences into the athletic community. Some examples include: bringing positive LGBTQ speakers to campus (for example, see “Athlete Ally” and “IMEnough” in the Resources section), partnering with the campus LGBTQ resource center to include athletes in programs and student recognitions, showing a movie such as *Out: The Glenn Burke Story* or *Outside the Lines: The World of the Gay Athlete*, and provide the publication *On the Team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student-Athletes* (see Resources section). The omission of such topics from athletics dehistoricizes LGBTQ experiences and paints a false picture of the world in which we live.

Respond Appropriately to Anti-LGBTQ Incidents/Bias

As long as anti-LGBTQ bias persists in athletics as evidenced in our results, LGBTQ student-athletes and athletic personnel will need to feel safe and supported by their departments when acts of anti-LGBTQ intolerance occur. Develop and advertise a clear and visible procedure for reporting LGBTQ-related bias incidents. Respond appropriately to such behavior as dictated by athletic department, institutional, and NCAA policy. If no specific policy pertaining to anti-LGBTQ incidents exists, approach the incident as you would any other identity-based behavior (such as gender or race). LGBTQ student-athletes and athletic personnel should be able to speak and act without fear of homophobic reprisal.

Offer Comprehensive Counseling and Healthcare

LGBTQ people who experienced harassment had the lowest overall well-being as compared to respondents who did not experience any harassment. Given that our results indicate many LGBTQ student-athletes experience heterosexist climates, the need for counseling support is evident. Further, more students are “coming out” as transgender in intercollegiate athletics. Although this growing population has unique needs related to physical and mental health care, most colleges and universities offer little or no support for transgender students (Beemyn et al., 2005). Advocate with the institution for comprehensive health plans for athletic personnel and students that include counseling and assistance with gender confirming medical procedures. Provide training for team physicians, trainers, and other medical staff to increase their awareness of and sensitivity to the healthcare needs of LGBTQ people.

Increase Awareness of Transgender Issues/Concerns

In 2010 the NCAA reported that its national office had received 30 inquiries in the previous two years about how colleges should address concerns related to transgender athletes. NCAA officials offer that the number of inquiries related to transgender athletes could continue to increase given that more people than in the past are identifying themselves as transgender, more are doing so at younger ages than in the past, and a growing number of colleges have anti-bias policies that cover gender identity. A report titled *On the Team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student-Athletes* argued that in this environment, the lack of a national standard is unfair both to transgender students and to all athletes. In 2011, the NCAA clarified its policies on transgender student-athletes with the *2011 NCAA Policy on Transgender Inclusion*. The new policy ensures that student-athletes are allowed to participate on male or female teams as long as they adhere to two key rules. The policy required no new legislation but rather clarified two pieces of existing legislation regarding banned substances – namely, testosterone – and a team’s official “status,” determined by the gender of its players. As transgender athletes become more visible in not only intercollegiate, but also professional and Olympic athletics, policies and practices regarding playing and eligibility will continue to be developed.

