DIFFERENCES IN USE OF CAMPUS RESOURCES
FOR GENDER TRANSITION AND SUPPORT
BY TRANS COLLEGE STUDENTS:
A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

In the decade of empirical research on the experiences of trans students in higher education, little work has examined differences among trans students of different gender identities and experiences, as well as other intersectional positionalities such as racial identity. This mixed-methods study explored in-group differences among trans students by comparing respondent experiences with campus resources for gender transition by gender identity, assigned sex, race, and status as an undergraduate or graduate student. Significant findings indicate differences between genderqueer respondents and those who are not genderqueer, between female-assigned and male-assigned respondents, and between undergraduate and graduate respondents. Implications of this study suggest that further examination of and attention to in-group differences of experience among trans students in higher education is needed. Practitioners across functional areas are encouraged to use the findings of this study to inform assessment of their institution's particular needs.

Dedicated to the staff, faculty, mentors, friends, family, peers, and members of the LGBTQ community who helped me to stay in college during my transition and to succeed in my academic, career, and change-making goals. It is my hope that this thesis inspires others to be similar sources of support to the trans students in their lives.

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INTRODUCTION

While studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues in higher education have been conducted for decades, little research has focused on trans students in higher education, with the majority of work focusing on theory or best practices (Beemyn, 2003, 2005, 2012; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Beemyn, Domingue, Pettitt, & Smith, 2005; Carter, 2000; Lees, 1998; Marine, 2011; Nakamura, 1998). Although the literature is growing, there is still considerable information to learn, especially by extending sampling to “hard-to-access subgroups” (Seelman, 2014a, p. 632) of trans students (Bilodeau, 2005; Seelman, 2014b; Seelman et al., 2012) and by asking more open-ended questions to gauge lived experiences of these students (Catalano, 2015; Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012; Goodrich, 2012; Seelman 2014a). Despite these gaps in the research, there is agreement on overarching themes: trans students experience considerable discrimination in institutions of higher education; perceive a lack of support and resources related to gender transition; and, across several areas, differ in the experience of these problems from the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students with whom they are often categorized (Dugan et al., 2012; Garvey & Rankin, 2015; Goodrich, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Seelman 2014a; Seelman 2014b; Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2013). With this study, I fill some gaps in the research, contributing to a deeper understanding of practices that can alleviate the problems trans students face throughout institutions of

higher education.

Addressing particular calls to expand the diversity of trans students in research literature (Seelman, 2014a), my primary objective was to explore whether the needs for and access to campus resources differ for trans students of different gender identities, transition histories, and other intersectional experiences. This research is important because much of the previous research has been conducted with students who are just beginning to explore their gender identity or pursue their desired transition plans (Bilodeau, 2005; Goodrich, 2012; Pusch, 2005; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005; Singh et al., 2013). Previous research also often included only White students (Goodrich 2012; Pryor, 2015) or did not ask about racial identity (Krum et al., 2013; McKinney, 2005; Pusch, 2005). It is imperative that, as more institutions work toward trans inclusion, the diversity of the trans community be reflected in that work.

A Note on Language

Language referring to the trans community is relatively new and continually evolving (Carter, 2000; Inselman, 2012). Because of the vast array of terminology used by and for persons subsumed by the trans umbrella, it is difficult to discuss issues pertaining to the trans community in ways that feel inclusive to all.

In this study, *trans* and *transgender* refer broadly to persons identifying as a sex and/or gender different than from the one assigned at a birth, as well as to persons identifying with the term for other reasons, such as "refus[ing] to be limited by gender" (Bilodeau, 2005, p. 33). After conducting data analysis, I chose to use the shorter form of *trans* throughout this paper rather than *transgender* because it was used by study

respondents 2.5 times more frequently. Even though *transgender* is frequently used as a catch-all term and in more formal settings than *trans* (Stryker & Currah, 2014), I decided that it is important to reflect the language used by today's trans students and community in this paper. That said, in instances where the word *transgender* was used in a referenced study or other materials (e.g., the survey for this study), I will use that term to accurately represent the source material. Additionally, in some direct quotes throughout the paper *trans** will be used, a term sometimes referred to as "trans asterisk." *Trans** is used as an intentional and visible signifier that the trans umbrella is inclusive of identities such as "genderqueer, [neutrois], intersex, agender, two-spirit, cross-dresser, and genderfluid" (Tompkins, 2014, p. 27). However, because *trans** is a contested term with an ambiguous history (Hill-Meyer, 2015; Ryan, 2014; Serano, 2015), I use it only in direct quotes and in respondents' self-described identities.

Many trans people desire to *transition*, taking intentional steps toward living as another gender or changing their body's sex characteristics. *Stages of transition* is the term I have chosen to refer to these steps, which may include changing one's name and pronouns, hormone therapy, and/or surgical procedures (Coleman et al., 2012). Although both "steps" and "stages" may evoke a sense of a linear process, it is not my intention to imply that decisions that trans individuals make about their personal transitions should occur in a certain order or with any prerequisites, nor do I intend to imply that trans individuals must take any steps at all. While many trans people follow a certain path, and thus a utility to the word "stage" remains, that is becoming less frequent as more people customize their transitions to their needs, especially among younger and nonbinary trans people (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Coleman et al., 2012).

Throughout this paper, I refer to the sex designated at birth (what someone is "born as") as *assigned sex*. When specifying sex assignment, I use the phrases *female-assigned* and *male-assigned*. Although some trans people view these phrases as inaccurate (Serano, 2013), I find them to be more inclusive of the broad range of experiences that trans people may identify with than using phrases like "trans male" or "transfeminine" for all trans people of the same assigned sex. For instance, a term like "transmasculine" may pose a problem when referring to female-assigned trans people who do not consider themselves masculine in their identity or expression; however, "female-assigned" notes simply the sex designation at birth and provides no assumption of identity or expression. I refer to the sex or gender with which a person identifies internally or transitions to as *affirmed gender* or *gender identity*. Additionally, I often refer to a person's *trans status*, a term I use to encompass all persons with a trans experience or history of gender transition, regardless of identifying with trans terminology personally.

Other terminology used throughout this paper may be unfamiliar to the reader or used in various ways by different writers. In this paper, *cis* or *cisgender* refers to people who are not transgender. I primarily use *cis* as the corollary to *trans* to acknowledge both as umbrella terms with complementary meanings. *Sex* when distinguished from gender refers to physical attributes that carry a sexed or gendered meaning within a culture; *gender* refers to the social attributes that carry a sexed or gendered meaning. For example, "male" as referring to physical attributes such as primary and secondary sex characteristics like a penis and androgenic hair would be *sex*, while "man" as referring to a social role commonly inhabited by people assigned male at birth would be *gender*. This

distinction between sex and gender is not universal within trans literature or in the trans community, and certainly is not without faults (Inselman, 2012).

Finally, throughout this paper many respondents are referred to with the singular pronoun set *they/them/theirs*. I did not ask for respondents' pronouns in the study's survey, and therefore only those who noted their gender pronouns within open-ended responses or emphasized living strictly as a man or woman will be referred to with pronouns different from they/them/theirs. While some respondents did note that they use they/them/theirs as their gender pronoun, not all trans people do, and it is important to recognize that my use of they/them/theirs in this paper is due to not knowing what many respondents do use, rather than implying that all trans people would be comfortable with this set. This was an oversight in my research design that future researchers should be prudent not to miss.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Research on trans students has primarily been conducted in the last decade, with the first empirical studies focusing on this population published in 2005 (Bilodeau, 2005; McKinney, 2005; Pusch, 2005). Because this study specifically addresses gaps within the existing literature, the following review explores these early studies and the developments since then, paying particular attention to where gaps exist. I examine the importance of addressing these gaps by highlighting the unique nature of trans experiences compared to cis LGBQ experiences using the example of disclosure. Finally, I review various campus areas in which trans concerns may arise, discussing what is currently known about trans student interactions with these areas.

The Need for Trans-Specific Research

There are distinguishing differences between trans students and their cis LGBQ peers[1]. Dugan et al. (2012) quantified differences between cis LGB and trans students by comparing 91 trans respondents to the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership to matched cohorts of 91 LGB and 91 straight cis respondents. Despite similar engagement in

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[1] Trans people, like cis people, may identify as LGBQ or straight, or another sexual orientation entirely. See Carter (2000) for further discussion on the inclusion of the "T" in LGBT.

campus opportunities and overall collegiate experience, trans students perceived campus climate less favorably and "reported more frequent encounters with harassment and discrimination as well as a significantly lower sense of belonging within the campus community" (Dugan et al., 2012, p. 732). This is consistent with findings in K-12 schools, where trans and gender nonconforming students face more hostile school climates than cis LGB students, as well as restrictive policies specifically targeting their abilities to present and be referred to as their true selves (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). These dissimilar and less welcoming experiences in the educational environment demonstrate a need to examine more thoroughly what is happening for trans students in comparison to both their LGB and straight cis peers, a call also supported by the theoretical literature (Carter, 2000; Marine, 2011; Scott, Belke, & Barfield, 2011).

An increasing number of trans people coming out and transitioning gender early in life also leads to the need for colleges and universities to be prepared to serve more trans students with a range of experiences and needs (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Results of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) biennial National School Climate Surveys show an increase of 20.1% in trans-identifying middle and high school students between 2001 and 2013, with transgender, genderqueer, and nonbinary youth composing 24.4% of the survey sample in 2013 (Kosciw & Cullen, 2002; Kosciw et al., 2014). Additionally, increasing numbers of youth find their parents supportive of gender transition at a young age (Ehrensaft, 2013; Milrod, 2014), and over the past 15 years, puberty suppression has become an accepted treatment protocol for gender dysphoria in youth (de Vries et al., 2014). These changing trends mean that college-bound trans youth will have many different precollege experiences; as more

young adults transition as minors, more trans students will enter institutions at various stages of transition and will have a range of medical, legal, and social needs. While some research has shown a possible connection between greater use of campus health resources by trans graduate students who may be further along in gender transition than traditionally-aged undergraduate students (McKinney, 2005), a review of the literature found no evidence that the needs of trans students in higher education at different stages of gender transition has been studied. It is imperative that colleges and universities become aware of these needs and how to adequately and proactively meet them.

Additionally, in-group diversity among trans students has only begun to be explored (Catalano, 2015; Dugan et al., 2012), as with in-group diversity in the trans population as a whole (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Grant et al., 2011; Rosser, Oakes, Bockting, & Miner, 2007). Some previous research did not ask about or analyze sexual orientation (Goodrich, 2012; Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2013; Pryor, 2015; Pusch, 2005; Seelman et al, 2012; Seelman, 2014b), race (Krum et al., 2013; McKinney, 2005; Pusch, 2005), or even the specific gender identity of trans respondents, simply aggregating all trans students together in one category (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Additionally, some studies only included White students in their sample (Goodrich, 2012; Pryor, 2015). This trend problematically draws from "the assumption that all trans* people share similar experiences" (Catalano, 2015, p. 420), which has been found to be untrue when in-group diversity is examined. Beemyn and Rankin (2011) found in their groundbreaking study on trans identity development that there were markedly different experiences between male-assigned and female-assigned trans people, as well as between trans people of different gender identities. This has not been explored in depth with trans students. It is

important to determine whether the needs of trans students of different assigned sexes and gender identities differ to the point of needing multiple or more specific approaches to inclusion efforts.

Research specifically on trans students in higher education has primarily been conducted in the past decade. McKinney (2005) and Pusch (2005) both conducted qualitative studies asking general questions about campus life: programming, faculty interactions, and healthcare, among other pertinent areas. McKinney (2005) found that both undergraduate and graduate students felt that faculty and staff were uneducated on trans issues, that there was a lack of programming and resources, and there was an inability to access adequate counseling and healthcare on campus. This, along with Pusch's (2005) findings concerning a lack of support on campus, affirms the earlier theoretical literature describing a lack of programming and resources (e.g., Beemyn, 2003; Carter, 2000; Lees, 1998).

Many have cited Bilodeau's (2005) case study of two transgender undergraduates as a groundbreaking study for this population because of its inclusion of a proposed trans-specific model of identity development (e.g., Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Using an adapted version of D'Augelli's (1994) lifespan model for sexual orientation identity development (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005), Bilodeau interviewed two student leaders who identified as transgender, but who did not fit into a traditional narrative of intending to transition to another gender.[2] Although he emphasizes that his

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[2] This "traditional narrative" of trans experiences has been highlighted by many writers, including Serano (2016), who describes a "canonical transsexual story" (n.p.) wherein the trans person has always known they were a different gender and transitions socially, medically, and legally to that gender. Nicolazzo (2016) describes this as the

intention is to focus on this genderqueer and gender transgressive population, noting that these students "have largely been overlooked in transgender and student development research" (Bilodeau, 2005, p. 42), Bilodeau unintentionally left out the more "traditional" trans experience, which has *also* been overlooked in student development research. Additional criticism has pointed out that this study was "confounded with assumptions, because researchers used the identity models under study as a frame of reference for the participants being studied" (Goodrich, 2012, p. 215). Although the current study does not focus on identity development, future research must address this discrepancy by including trans students of a diverse range of experiences and using grounded theory (see Goodrich, 2012) to construct a model to compare to D'Augelli's (1994) lifespan model and Bilodeau's (2005) proposed adaptation of it. Beemyn and Rankin's (2011) study identified a developmental theory grounded in mixed-methods research on trans experiences from over 3,000 respondents, and serves as a model for future identity development work in this population. What is noteworthy about Beemyn and Rankin's (2011) model is the identification of developmental milestones for four groups: trans men, trans women, crossdressers, and genderqueer trans people. While there are shared milestones among these four groups, there are also differences, and all four are distinct from gay and lesbian identity development models.

In surveying the early literature, Goodrich (2012) noted that "little is known about the needs of the transgender population according to the population itself" (p. 216). To

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"trans*-as-transsexual trope" (p. 2), highlighting that though many people only recognize this traditional narrative, trans experiences can vary greatly and not all trans people fit into this one experience.

address this gap, Goodrich (2012) conducted a qualitative study using grounded theory and identified a research-based theoretical map of trans student persistence, focusing on an “expressed hierarchy of needs” (p. 224). In sum, the emergent model demonstrates that a student’s ability to excel academically and their decision to persist in their education depends on a level of comfort, safety, and support. To underscore the importance of this, Goodrich pointed out that “each participant mentioned that the ideal situation would have been to transition before leaving for college” (2012, p. 224). Transitioning before enrolling in college would enable a student to live as their affirmed gender without disclosing their trans status throughout their experience in higher education, a state commonly referred to as *stealth* (see Edelman, 2009). Every participant in Goodrich’s study defined stealth as “having others not ever know that they identified as transgender and being able to pass as their identified gender without question or issue from others” (2012, p. 223). One of Pusch’s (2005) participants described that he felt most comfortable when others “forget that [he is] trans,” noting that he did not hide his status, and lived only “kinda stealth” (p. 58). Although out to others, like Goodrich’s (2012) participants, his emphasis on others forgetting his trans status comes back to not having his gender history be an issue.

Because stealth is a uniquely trans experience, I examine it here to demonstrate further the importance of understanding and researching in-group diversity of trans students. Disclosure has not been explored much in either theoretical literature or empirical research on trans people, and has rarely even been mentioned in research literature on trans students. When stealth is referenced, it is, in my view, often simplified or misunderstood.

Edelman's (2009) qualitative study of stealth female-to-male (FTM) individuals offers insight into the complexity and uniqueness of stealth for trans people. Edelman defines stealth as simply "the non-disclosure of one's trans history" (2009, p. 165), but examines how this can take many forms, and involves negotiating differing gender paradigms when an individual makes the decision to live stealth. As he describes for one participant, "stealth [was] not a denial of truth, but rather the avoidance of unnecessary, and unwelcome, confusion" (2009, p. 171). This is because the participant "sees himself as authentically male and to position himself as lying or as trying to pretend would be untrue" (p. 172). Thus, similar to Goodrich (2012) and Pusch's (2005) respondents described above, Edelman (2009) found that stealth can be a choice made to live authentically in one's affirmed gender when that individual's authenticity does not include trans status.

It is important to reaffirm here that not all students desire to live stealth. The two students in Bilodeau's (2005) case study came into their trans identities through a path very different from those in Goodrich's (2012) research, and, reflecting the diversity in the larger trans population, described intentional plans to *not* transition, and to be out and loud about their identities. Other studies found similar responses from participants regarding individual decisions and agency with regard to their transitions (McKinney, 2005; Pusch, 2005; Singh et al., 2013). Catalano (2015) discussed how one student's outness was interpreted by the staff at his institution to be an opportunity to educate residence hall staff, and thus his agency in determining what disclosure looked like to him was ignored in favor of being a "convenience to others" (p. 426).

What matters concerning future research and the current study is that, when data

collection began for the current study, no published studies of trans students in higher education explicitly noted inclusion of students who have "completed" transition or who live as stealth, and these "traditionally" trans students therefore went unrecognized in the studies that inform practice for serving the trans student population. Catalano (2015) noted that "not all [of his] participants wanted or desired to have others know" about their trans status (p. 431), hinting throughout his analysis that some participants may currently live as stealth. This is different from Goodrich's (2012) study wherein the participants who desired to live stealth were not at a point in transition to do so; two instead chose to leave school to transition before returning. However, because Catalano (2015) only hints that some participants may be stealth rather than indicating if any actually are, there is still a large gap in the research.

Although difference in experience between out and stealth trans students has not been studied, Gortmaker and Brown (2006) did examine differences in collegiate experience between out and closeted gay and lesbian students. While both groups were found to experience similar levels of unfair treatment on campus, "out students perceived the climate more negatively than closeted students, whereas closeted students felt more need to hide their identity" (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006, p. 616). Additionally, each group prioritized different needs. When asked what was most necessary to help meet their needs on campus, out students identified policy changes and closeted students said library books (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006). Findings of this nature demonstrate the need to assess perceptions of students who do not disclose their LGBTQ status.

Understanding through this discussion of disclosure that the experiences and needs of students who do not disclose LGBTQ identity can be different from those who

do, it is now important to examine specific arenas in which trans identity can influence student experiences in higher education. The following section details the literature on trans student experiences on college campuses.

Campus Experiences and Resources

Experiences on campus, especially with resources offered to LGBTQ students, have been a focus of literature on trans students from early on (e.g., Beemyn, 2003). The need to provide services to trans students, indeed to ensure inclusion and an opportunity to succeed that is comparable to that of cis students, is in keeping with the foundation of student affairs, which calls for supporting the whole student (Carter, 2000). Major aspects of campus life that have been explored empirically are outlined below, based on the areas and themes outlined by Beemyn, Domingue, et al. (2005) and Seelman et al. (2012). For many students these aspects intersect, and thus it should be noted that this is simply one way to conceptualize these areas of focus.

Programming, training, and support. Many students call for increased campus-wide training around and awareness of what trans means and who trans people are (Seelman, 2014a), especially for faculty and staff (Singh et al., 2013). There is also a distinct lack of trans-specific programming, especially programs planned by entities other than students themselves (McKinney, 2005). Additionally, students, faculty, and staff appear to rely on trans students to provide this kind of training (Catalano, 2015; Pryor, 2015; Pusch, 2005).

Classrooms and academics. Experiences in trans students' academic lives can take a toll on life both inside and outside of the classroom. In the study conducted by

Singh et al. (2013), students "believed teachers played a large role in shaping overall campus climate" (p. 215). One participant described that "teachers need education about trans stuff. … Bullying is a big thing that's being talked about right now, but we're not talking about the fact that teachers do the bullying" (2013, p. 216). Blatant discrimination by faculty against trans individuals was reported by many participants in the study by Seelman et al. (2012). This was the case for Goodrich's (2012) participants as well; for each of them, "college staff and faculty continued [the] cycle of negative reinforcement, so it is not surprising that only one of the four students persisted at their chosen school" (p. 227).

Negative experiences with faculty and staff are a consistent trend throughout the research. McKinney (2005) found that both undergraduate and graduate trans students "feel that faculty and staff are not educated about transgender issues" (p. 67). One graduate student shared, "I have spent a lot of energy wanting to be heard. That energy would have been better spent on my coursework" (p. 70). All four students in Goodrich's (2012) study experienced academic difficulty. Pryor's (2015) study focusing on the classroom environment confirms these earlier findings; his "participants reported a lack of inclusive pedagogical approaches or appropriate responses to support students" (p. 452).

Even when faculty are educated on trans issues, and coursework is LGBTQ-inclusive, there is still room for improvement. As Seelman (2014a) notes, "For there to be significant visibility of gender content in curricula, such content needs to be infused throughout coursework and across classes, rather than split into small, one-time portions" (p. 624). This would allow students to see themselves reflected in multiple spaces, rather

than only in LGBTQ spaces (Bilodeau, 2005).

Records and documents. For students who pursue transition, changing their name, pronoun, and gender marker can be important steps. However, higher education institutions often have confusing or overly complicated processes for changing these (Catalano, 2015; Pryor, 2015; Seelman, 2014a; Seelman et al., 2012), or students may not have the legal documentation necessary to change the records (Seelman, 2014a; Singh et al., 2013). Catalano (2015) points out that not all records even need to document gender.

One area in which documentation has become increasingly pertinent is in admissions to single-sex colleges, usually “historically women’s colleges” (Martin, 2016). Because these colleges have been only open to women, admitting students who may be legally male or who identify as men or nonbinary can be a challenge. As trans acceptance has spread and these colleges have created policies regarding admission of trans students, a checkerboard of policy foci spans from admission based on identity to admission based on legal sex (Kett, 2015).

Healthcare and counseling. Singh et al. (2013) found that students “were adamant that a college campus seeking to support the resilience of trans students would advocate for trans-affirming health care” (p. 219). What constitutes trans-affirming healthcare ranges from counseling, to trans-competent primary care staff, to health insurance policies covering hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgeries[3]. Even as more institutions offer insurance plans that help students pay for medical transition (Rue,

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[3] In references to medical transition options I have used terminology from the most recent World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care (Coleman et al., 2012) due to the large variety of terms used in the trans community for these treatments and procedures.

2014; see also Beemyn, n.d.), there are clear findings that students do not have adequate physical or mental healthcare options on campuses (Catalano, 2015; Goodrich, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014a; Singh et al., 2013). For some students, this can mean stopping out of college until after transitioning, or dropping out altogether (Goodrich, 2012).

Restrooms, locker rooms, and residence halls. Gender-segregated spaces can be huge obstacles for trans people (Beemyn, Curtis, et al., 2005). An everyday gender-segregated space trans people frequently encounter is the restroom. From simply being uncomfortable, difficult to locate, or complex to navigate which facility is appropriate (Catalano, 2015; Singh et al., 2013) to being sites of severe discrimination (Grant et al., 2011; Seelman, 2014b; Seelman et al., 2012), spaces like restrooms and locker rooms need attention to become inclusive and safe for trans people. Seelman (2014a) is clear: often, changes require reconfiguring the physical space by changing signage or building new facilities that are intentionally gender-inclusive, a consideration that institutions should include whenever planning major construction projects.

Residence halls are another significant gender-segregated space in which trans students have encountered difficulty (Catalano, 2015; Seelman, 2014a; Seelman, 2014b; Seelman et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2013). A rapid increase in institutions offering gender-inclusive housing (GIH) options "better accommodate[s] transgender and gender-nonconforming students, who may feel uncomfortable or be unsafe rooming with students of their legal sex" (Krum et al., 2013, p. 65). When Krum et al. (2013) surveyed traditional-aged students, they found that while GIH has been implemented in many forms, the one most preferred by transgender students is an apartment-style living space

with private bedrooms and a shared common space with a single-occupancy restroom. This was an important finding because some GIH options still create scenarios that could out a student as trans (e.g., requiring roommate pairings within an apartment's different rooms based on assigned sex), or create additional barriers for students seeking access, such as requiring that residents in these rooms be second-year or other returning students (Krum et al., 2013).

Public inclusion and sense of community. An overarching theme in the literature is the importance of community and support for students—a sense of belonging and feeling one is a valuable part of the campus. Unfortunately, trans students often experience a "lower sense of belonging within the campus community" despite participating in meaningful campus experiences at the same rate as their peers (Dugan et al., 2012, p. 732). Although the cause of such a feeling can vary, Goodrich's (2012) respondents spoke about "the feeling that they were the only transgender person at their institution and … fear of how others would react" (p. 222) if they disclosed their trans status.

LGBTQ student organizations were often pertinent for student respondents to in qualitative studies; particularly the degree to which trans students had to educate their peers and make spaces inclusive for themselves (Bilodeau, 2005; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014a; Seelman et al, 2012). McKinney (2005) found this especially common for graduate students, who "rarely [had] opportunities to meet and get to know other transgender graduate students" (p. 72). For those who were able to join or create organizations, "participation as a student leader in an identity-based setting connected them to critical social supports and enabled them to persist in other campus endeavors,

including academics, work, and athletics" (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Pryor (2015) emphasizes that participation in the LGBTQ community on campus, particularly on educational panels as speakers, was beneficial for students.

Despite these challenges, trans students who found a community of supportive peers benefited enormously from it (Bilodeau, 2005; Catalano, 2015; Pryor, 2015; Pusch, 2005; Singh et al, 2013). As Singh et al. (2013) note, the allies that students found not only helped them feel included but also to "brainstorm strategies of self-advocacy on campus" (p. 218). When students were able to achieve "a sense of normalcy" in their lives (Pusch, 2005, p. 60), by finding supportive friends and creating community, "overall they were able to have good experiences in college" (Singh et al., 2013, p. 218).

Additional campus experiences. By no means are the aforementioned areas encompassing of all interactions trans students have with their institutions. Additional encounters that are difficult for students include athletics (Griffin & Carroll, 2011; Seelman et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2013), recruitment and admissions (Cegler, 2012; Newhouse, 2013; Seelman, 2014a), and policies, particularly nondiscrimination policies and hate crime response policies (Seelman, 2014a; Seelman et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2013). Catalano (2015) emphasizes that unclear communication across all of these areas was a concern for many respondents, who made simple requests such as providing places "where you can go to find out good accurate information" (p. 427).

It is imperative that researchers and practitioners alike investigate all facets of the student experience for trans inclusion. Goodrich (2012) found that "each participant appeared to engage in a cost-benefit analysis regarding [their] persistence at college, weighing the benefits of a college education versus the reality of the academic, financial,

social, and emotional costs" (p. 226). For two of the four participants in his study, those benefits did not outweigh the costs, and they stopped out. Without an inclusive campus, without support systems, and without necessary transition resources, persistence can be difficult for trans students.

Recent Developments in the Literature

Since this study began in early 2015, significant new studies about trans students in higher education have been published (e.g., Jourian, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2017). Similar to the current study, these studies focused on the gap in prior research concerning diversity *within* the trans student population. Two notable studies have addressed this gap by focusing on the unique experiences of trans men and transmasculine students (Catalano, 2015; Jourian, 2017). Many of these recent studies additionally use a lens of critical trans politics (Catalano, 2017; Jourian, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2017) which influences the methodology in ways that seek to capture the complexity of trans experience and evade imperfect categorization of dynamic individuals; this methodological decision to queer the study of trans students brings a focus to the self-described experiences of trans students in a way that prior studies, and the current study, have not done to a similar degree.

While this recent literature was published too late in the current study's development to provide insight into the study design and data analysis, I have taken care to bring it into the discussion and implications of the current study. This growing body of empirical data, a new development in literature on trans students and how to meet their needs (Catalano, 2017), is inspiring and signals not just hope for substantial positive

changes for trans students in higher education, but perhaps evidence that such a level of change is already underway.

Current Study

As the literature demonstrates, trans students face significant disparities on college campuses. However, few studies have looked at how these disparities affect different trans students, such as trans women compared to trans men, or trans undergraduates compared to trans graduate students. Thus, the current study is framed around the following question:

> Are there differences in how trans college and university students of different gender identities and other intersecting identities utilize resources for gender transition provided by their institutions?

The current study focuses on in-group diversity of trans students, particularly campus experiences such as access to resources for community and gender transition. The focus on in-group diversity fills a gap in past research on trans students. Dugan et al. (2012) found few meaningful differences in experiential outcomes across trans identities; however, the only in-group categories defined and explored in their study were self-identification as female-to-male, male-to-female, intersex, or "prefer not to say" (p. 723). The current study refines grouping such as this to recognize genderqueer and other nonbinary students. While Dugan et al. (2012) suggest that "transgender students appear to have more in common with one another than they differ" (p. 729), Seelman (2014a) found that "some gender subgroups … offered different recommendations [to improve campus climate] from others" (p. 632). McKinney's finding that "graduate students who

seek to transition may be further along in the process than like-minded undergraduates" (2005, p. 73) and therefore seek healthcare resources at a higher rate creates the impetus for the detailed level of in-group disaggregation in the current study. Furthermore, existing studies that have collected information on stage of transition focused almost exclusively on students who are still closeted, newly out, or who may not even intend to transition (Bilodeau, 2005; Goodrich, 2012; Pusch, 2005; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005; Singh et al., 2013), and others did not collect any information on stage of transition (Dugan et al., 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014; Krum et al., 2013; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014b). Determining action steps and best practices for a population whose needs can vary over time requires research that addresses those different stages and needs.

By understanding more about the diversity of experience among trans students with different gender identities and experiences, including access to and use of campus resources relevant to their trans status, I set a foundation of empirical evidence that serves the growing population of trans students, and provides data-driven practice recommendations for campuses to increase support of trans students. The following sections further explore the research question, study methods, findings, and finally discussion and implications for future research and practice.

METHODS

The current study utilized a convergent mixed-methods research design influenced by feminism and constructivism. As explained by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), convergent parallel design draws upon the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to explore "to what extent … the quantitative and qualitative results converge" (p. 166). Utilizing mixed methods also provides a way to offset the respective weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods and, according to Jayaratne and Stewart (2008), creates more robust findings for research grounded in feminism.

Convergent design provides the best model for integrating calls from previous research for further quantitative study (Dugan et al., 2012; Goodrich, 2012; Seelman, 2014b) as well as exploration of open-ended questions that allow participants to share experiences not covered in a closed-ended survey (Dugan et al., 2012; Goodrich, 2012; Seelman, 2014a). By collecting quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, this study also draws from the data-validation variant of convergent design, wherein "the open-ended questions are used to confirm or validate the results from the closed-ended questions" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 81). This process of confirmation is further detailed in the data analysis section.

Researcher Subjectivity and Theoretical Frameworks

Before proceeding, it is important to note the position and lenses I bring to this study as researcher by establishing my subjectivity within this study (Hays & Singh, 2012). As someone who identifies as trans myself, specifically as FTM,[4] I am familiar with this community and have worked within it as a community leader and advocate for over a decade. I was intimately involved in policy changes, peer education, and staff training at my alma mater when I was an undergraduate student and transitioning socially, medically, and legally. To put it plainly, my own student experience was thoroughly a trans student experience, where my transition and trans identity was inextricable from my life as a student. Such an experience was also the case for many personal friends and peers I met through student groups and community leadership. This personal experience certainly influences my subjectivity toward this study, and rather than try to diminish it, I endeavor to use my familiarity with the experience to more deeply understand the survey responses.

In my community leadership, I have become acquainted with trans people from many backgrounds, and with widely varying ideas and conceptions of sex, gender, and transness. As an advocate, I make sure that my approach includes clear and transparent ownership of how my experience has been similar to or different from others', and as a researcher, I seek to do the same by making clear the theoretical and conceptual understandings that inform my research design.

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[4] The term *FTM*, or female-to-male, is seen by some as medicalized or outdated; I prefer to use it as I find it to be the best descriptor for the nuances and complexity in my own trans identity.

First, I approached the current study through an intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) feminist perspective. With a research focus on in-group diversity, it is important to understand that systems of power in society "do not simply marginalise minorities but also marginalise subcategories among these minorities" (Staunæ & Søndergaard, 2011, p. 52). For trans people, this means that the systems that marginalize them for their transness are not the only systems that marginalize them if they have other minoritized identities. For example, previous research has found disparities among racial and socioeconomic groups of trans people, as well as between trans women and trans men (Grant et al., 2011). Therefore, it is necessary for my analysis of in-group diversity to highlight the compounded marginalization that minorities *within* the trans population may face, such as trans women and trans people of color, as well as other minority groups that emerge from the responses. To compare among groups, this study uses an intercategorical approach to intersectionality within the trans student population. McCall (2005) explains that the intercategorical approach "begins with the observation that there are relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups, as imperfect and ever changing as they are, and takes those relationships as the center of analysis" (pp. 1784-85). This means that in the current study's data analysis, I sought not only to analyze social categories such as gender identity, race, and so forth independently, but also to explore them together—for example, to look not only at differences between trans students of color and White students, but also to look at the differences between students identifying as trans women of color and genderqueer students of color.

Research is feminist when it is approached with a "commitment to producing knowledge useful in opposing the many varieties of gender injustice" (Jagger, 2008, p.

ix). Historically, a problem in social science research has been androcentricity, which Eichler (1988) describes as "the maintenance of male over female interests" (p. 20). Women have therefore often been characterized as abnormal in society (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003) and in academic research (Letherby, 2003). In research on trans people, androcentricity can even occur in a manner that appears paradoxical, where cis interest in trans people and issues focuses on male-assigned participants, contributing both to the misgendering of trans women and to the lack of visibility of trans men and nonbinary people (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Bilodeau, 2005; Catalano, 2015). In this regard, it is important that my feminist perspective also move beyond cisnormativity, or the social assumption that it is normal for people to be cis, and therefore abnormal to be trans (Bauer et al., 2009; see also "cissexism" as defined in Eisner, 2013, and Serano, 2007, and "institutional cisgenderism" as defined in Seelman, 2014a). By leaving both androcentricity and cisnormativity behind, this study centers the experiences of those marginalized by gender norms, told as much as possible in terminology from their own community or in their own words.

This focus on trans experiences within a feminist lens could be referred to as a type of transfeminism (Koyama, 2003; Serano, 2013)—that is, feminism that intentionally centers trans people and their experiences. In *The Transfeminist Manifesto*, Koyama (2003) emphasizes that transfeminism is not a replacement for feminism, rather that it:

> …extends and advances feminism as a whole through [trans women's] own liberation and coalition work with all others. It stands up for trans and non-trans women alike, and asks non-trans women to stand up for trans women in return. *Transfeminism* embodies feminist coalition politics in which women from different backgrounds stand up for each other, because if we do not stand for each other, nobody will. (p. 2)

Although *The Transfeminist Manifesto* focuses on trans women, Koyama later added that trans men and genderqueer people have "unique struggles" as well that need to be included in feminism (2003, p. 10). Trans people, particularly trans women, have been historically left out of movements to fight sexism and patriarchy (Serano, 2013), so it is important to emphasize their inclusion moving forward. Thus, a transfeminist lens ensures that uniquely trans experiences with sexism and gender oppression are not ignored or made invisible.

Finally, it is important to note the ways in which I draw from social constructionism, particularly when it comes to understanding the nature of sex and gender identity. Sex and gender are both cultural ideas (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Even when relying on what are seen as essential biological facts, a cultural lens of gender determines "what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place" (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p. 3). Because of this, what is understood by *woman*, *man*, *female*, and *male* in the present-day United States may be different than at other times or places; this is the social construction of sex and gender. In addition, understandings of those terms and concepts may also vary within cultures in the present-day United States and among individuals; I refer to this as the constructivist nature of sex and gender. This study relied on the self-identification of participants as transgender, and, as explained in the following pages, asked for assigned sex at birth and current gender identity as a way to assess trans status. However, because differences between men and women, and male and female, are socially constructed, and a personal gender identity may also be said to be individually constructed, the personal definition of each person as identifying as transgender or not is also, ultimately, constructed.

While my methodology draws from both constructionism and constructivism, the difference between the two is important to note. According to Lee (2011), social constructionism “focuses on collective generation of meaning” and constructivism “suggests that the individual mind is active exclusively in the meaning-making activity” (p. 405). These can be viewed together by understanding that the way individuals construct understanding of their lives is encompassed in constructivism, while the way that social systems (comprised of these individuals) create norms and paradigms is encompassed in constructionism. Both are important and related concepts to be aware of when dealing with socially-defined and culturally-dependent ideas such as sex and gender.

In research design, constructivism is important for recognizing that individuals have multiple ways to understand their lives and experiences which are “always linked to perspective and context” (Drisko, 2013, p. 82). As Creswell (2009) explains, when constructivism is applied to research it means recognizing one’s own paradigms that shape interpretation, and looking for the meaning that participants in research have for their own lives and selves. In terms of trans experiences, this means remaining open to a plethora of gender paradigms and ways of understanding not just personal gender identity, but also the meaning and social organization of sex and gender as a whole to each individual seeking to understand the vastness of sex and gender.

Sample

In order to effectively gauge diversity in trans student experiences, this study sought people who (a) identify as transgender or have lived full-time in a gender role

different from the one assigned at birth while enrolled in a higher education institution,[5] (b) have attended at least one year of higher education in the past five years in the United States, and (c) are at least 18 years of age. Extending the time horizon for respondents' enrollment in higher education increased the number of eligible participants in order to achieve a sample larger than the samples in prior qualitative studies on trans students that ranged from two participants to 75 (e.g., Bilodeau, 2005; Goodrich, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Seelman et al., 2012).

Recruitment of participants took place using snowball sampling (Hays & Singh, 2012), which was chosen due to the "hidden" nature of the trans community, as well as the lack of a sampling frame due to the unknown size of the trans population (Rosser et al., 2007). To minimize replicating bias in earlier studies on trans students, purposeful recruitment language was included to encourage responses from people who (a) have lived full-time in a gender role different from the one assigned at birth for at least six months while enrolled in a higher education institution and (b) have been on hormone therapy for gender transition for at least six months and/or had any form of sex reassignment surgery at least six months prior to the latest date of being enrolled at a higher education institution. By reaching out specifically to people who have experienced these stages of transition, my goal was to be able to better compare differences in experience with regard to disclosing trans status and accessing additional campus resources (such as healthcare), filling a major gap in existing literature. Although the current study did not include this comparison, the data will be used in a future analysis in

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[5] The term *transgender* was used in all calls for participants as well as throughout the survey itself.

order to meet this goal. For the current study, the inclusion of respondents who have experienced these stages of transition within the analyses conducted still filled a gap due to the low number of such respondents in prior research.

Sampling began in June 2015 by reaching out to existing networks of students and alumni informally through my colleagues and peers in the trans community, formally through national and university-based LGBTQ email lists pertaining to higher education, and over social media including trans and higher education Facebook groups. On social media, the call for participants was posted a maximum of three times in selected groups, with the last call in September 2015. During recruitment and data collection, the study was branded as "Beyond the 'Tipping Point':[6] A New Era of Transgender Student Experiences in Higher Education," and was also marketed using the hashtag #TransHESA (see Inselman, 2015). With each posting, individuals were encouraged to share the call and survey link with their own friends and networks. For the language used in the call, see Appendix A.

Participants were informed in the call and after completing the survey that they could optionally enter to win a $20 Amazon gift card as incentive for participating. The entry form was separate from the survey, and collected only name and email for the optional drawing and for participants to optionally receive updates pertaining to the study. The drawing was completed using a random number generator.

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[6] The "tipping point" reference in this title is to the *TIME* article "The Transgender Tipping Point" (Steinmetz, 2014).

Internet Survey Methodology

Primary data were collected through an internet survey hosted on SurveyMonkey with both closed and open-ended questions (for the full survey see Appendix B). An online survey was chosen intentionally due to the “hidden” nature of the trans community, particularly those who may be living as stealth or who identify as post-transition. Despite concerns with the reliability of internet methodology (Creswell, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2012), prior research has found that there is little reason to worry about accuracy when using online methods to reach the trans community (Alessi & Martin, 2010; Rosser et al., 2007). Alessi and Martin (2010) emphasize that for LGBTQ populations, the anonymity of an internet survey can be particularly useful because of the desire of some individuals to keep their identity, behavior, and experiences secret. Rosser et al. (2007) also discuss how integral the internet has been in trans community-building, a phenomenon also noted by Goodrich (2012) and Nicolazzo (2017).

Data and Measurement

To address the study aims of exploring what may differ in the campus experiences of trans students from different identities, I gathered data spanning the following categories: demographics, transition and disclosure, and campus resources and experiences. In demographics, it was important to not only collect assigned sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, but also age and race as these attributes can impact the intersectionality of a trans person’s experience (Roen, 2006; Seelman, 2014b). With regard to transition and disclosure, I sought to gain an understanding of how a student’s campus experience is impacted by experiencing different stages of transition or being

open about their trans status to more or fewer people. Lastly, awareness and use of campus resources, or lack thereof, is an important dependent variable through which to compare trans students with different demographics and transition experiences, and better inform implications and best practices for campus professionals.

The questions on the survey instrument were based on surveys and interview questions from previous studies of trans people (Grant et al., 2011; McKinney, 2005; Seelman et al., 2012). The following section details the decision process used to create the survey.

Demographics. The primary demographic information gathered is trans status and gender identity. Since differences in educational attainment, employment, and experience of violence have already been observed within the general population of trans men, trans women, and nonbinary people (Grant et al., 2011), exploring differences between trans students' higher education experiences is necessary to no longer treat trans students as a monolithic category which has not been shown to exist. In order to analyze both assigned sex and gender identity, I used the two-step approach suggested by Conron, Lombardi, and Reisner (2014). This approach has been found to be accurate in both cisgender and transgender adult populations and "the items to be easy to understand and the response options acceptable" (Conron et al., 2014, p. 11). The first question asks for assigned sex (male or female) and the second question asks for current gender identity (male, female, trans male, trans female, genderqueer, or other), allowing respondents to choose those that are most salient. For some, this may not include the word trans; for example, a survey respondent may select an assigned sex of female and a gender identity of male.

Following Seelman's (2014b) call for considering intersectionality in future research, additional demographic data included age, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Socioeconomic status data were intentionally not gathered due to the complexity of assessing and defining it (Cowan et al., 2012). Future researchers may wish to ask trans students about finances related to school, such as how financial support may have changed during transition, and what kinds of financial means they use to pay for school and personal expenses.

In addition to information about participants' identities, the survey included items related to educational experience, including institutions attended during or after gender transition. Participants were asked to categorize their institution as a community college, public college or university, or private college or university. This question, combined with the institution name, is included to generate data to illuminate differences in the experiences of trans community college students (Beemyn, 2012; Garvey, Taylor, & Rankin, 2015) or students in different regions or types of four-year institutions. I also asked whether participants were undergraduate or graduate students, to supplement the sparse research that addresses graduate students (McKinney, 2005; Pryor, 2015; Pusch, 2005) and that compares undergraduate and graduate student experiences (McKinney, 2005).

Transition and disclosure on campus. A significant gap in the research literature is related to the impact of stage of transition on the experiences of trans students in higher education. Therefore, I chose to include questions based on the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (Grant et al., 2011) to assess the stage of medical, social, and legal transition, as well as disclosure of trans status to others. These questions

included quantitative and qualitative elements, and this study's analysis utilized the qualitative elements.

The timetable of transition—whether a person transitioned before or during their time as a student—was assessed by asking if the student lived full-time in their affirmed gender or another gender during college. An additional matrix exploring transition-related healthcare was included to assess both transition stage and disclosure. A student who has only received counseling is likely to have a different campus experience than a student who started hormone therapy and had a transition-related surgery before beginning college. I also included options in this matrix to assess availability of healthcare options through campus resources such as student insurance or an on-campus healthcare center.

The study by Seelman et al. (2012) found that respondents encountered challenges when updating student records with their preferred name, or with a new legal name and gender marker. For many students, there was an additional challenge of changing their records in multiple campus systems, what Singh et al. (2013) point out as "the extent to which a campus [being] centralized or decentralized affect[s] trans students' experiences" (p. 217). Therefore, in this study I asked students whether they were able to change any of their records or documents such as a student ID card, as well as what was required for them to do so.

Campus experiences and resources. The third component of the survey asked open-ended questions regarding campus resources and experiences. Based primarily on existing qualitative studies (McKinney, 2005; Seelman et al., 2012), the purpose of these questions was to allow respondents to share more about their experiences in their own

words and without the presumption of what resources are important for any given trans student (see Goodrich, 2012). To move away from the deficit model often present in research on marginalized populations and move toward inquiry into resilience (Singh et al., 2013), the open-ended questions were constructed to offer an opportunity for students to focus on both positive and negative experiences, as well as support from others and self-advocacy.

Data Analysis

Using a convergent mixed-methods design, data analysis occurred in two parallel strands (see Figure 1). The quantitative analysis focused primarily on descriptive statistics and means analyses (Creswell, 2008) and the qualitative analysis utilized coding methods based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2012). Throughout this process, I maintained a reflexive journal, tracking how I was impacted by the data and preliminary findings, as a method of maximizing trustworthiness (Drisko, 2013; Hays & Singh, 2012).

First, the single dataset of all responses was cleaned to ensure that there were no duplicates and no ineligible responses. The total number of respondents to the survey was 209. After cleaning the data to ensure that only eligible responses remained, the total was reduced to 166. Omitted responses were missing data confirming that the respondent was transgender or had attended college or graduate school in the United States in the past five years. Because not all participants shared open-ended responses, the number of participants for both the qualitative and merged analyses was 135.

For the quantitative analysis, I first verified close-ended responses by using the

open-ended responses, for example verifying participant descriptions of institutional type by checking their stated institution's Carnegie classification. I used SPSS 23 software to analyze descriptive statistics to assess the demographic makeup of my sample, particularly gender identity, assigned sex, age, race, student status, and institutional type. I compared participant demographics by operationalizing assigned sex, gender identity, and race as independent variables, and student status and institutional type as dependent variables.

For the qualitative analysis, a coding method based on grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2012) was chosen to ensure that attention was focused on details in each open-ended response, and that codes and themes emerged from the data rather than being established beforehand. After the data were cleaned and separated into the quantitative and qualitative components, the combined qualitative data were read and then coded. Subsequently the codes were organized into larger categories and themes. While there were emergent themes in the qualitative analysis, the predominant findings detailed in this paper are resource categories. These categories are distinct from themes since they are resources which a campus provides, rather than illustrative of a student's overall experience of campus. Once identified, the categories were operationalized as dependent variables when merged with the quantitative data in order to compare experiences of trans students with different identities.

After completing the qualitative coding of the questions pertaining to knowledge and use of campus resources and experiences, the resource variables that emerged were coded to denote participant access, use, and positive or negative experiences. I then

merged the quantitative and qualitative findings to compare participant discussion of resource use and evaluate whether any significant differences were present. To do so, I operationalized assigned sex, gender identity, genderqueer identity, race, graduate student status, and institutional type as independent variables, and resource knowledge and access as dependent variables, and ran cross-tab analyses.

Limitations

There were some limitations in this study's design. One of particular note was the extended time horizon which includes respondents who have been out of college or graduate school for up to five years. Because not every respondent is a current student, some responses may reflect only a participant's stronger memories, or detail resources and situations that have since changed on a given campus.

Although snowball sampling, which is used in this study, is commonly used with marginalized populations, it is important to recognize the limitations that arise from this sampling method. Particularly, as a female-assigned trans person myself, I had access to closed spaces for networking with trans men and other female-assigned trans individuals, but did not have access to spaces for trans women and other male-assigned trans individuals. Similarly, as a White person, I did not have access to trans spaces exclusive to people of color. These limitations could impact the variation within my sample because I had to rely on the chain effect inherent to this sampling method to reach eligible participants, rather than contacting them directly. Additionally, as noted by Schilt (2010), some trans people live in "deep stealth"—maintaining little if any contact with the trans community and not disclosing their trans status to anyone. Even with snowball

sampling it is unlikely that these individuals would be reached; therefore, the study results contain a bias toward people who are connected to the community, however slight that connection may be.

As noted previously, this survey did not ask about pronouns or socioeconomic status. The absence of a space for respondents to provide their pronouns was an oversight on my part, and future researchers should include an open-ended question where respondents can share the pronouns they use. I intentionally did not ask about socioeconomic status because, while important, it is difficult to assess (Cowan et al., 2012). Future researchers may wish to examine financial needs that trans students experience, the influence of social class in trans students' experiences, or other intersections of socioeconomic status that may be more fully explored in a study specifically examining this intersection.

Scope of the Current Paper

The current study consisted of a large, comprehensive survey designed to fill gaps in the existing literature on trans college students. However, I limited the scope of this paper to looking at differences among trans students in resource access, usage, and the experiences thereof, with comparisons primarily between assigned sex and gender identity. Because comparisons between trans college students of different identities were previously unexplored (except by Dugan et al., 2012), the question of how different students within the trans community access resources is compelling for student affairs practitioners and future researchers interested in improving the higher education

experience for trans students. Ongoing analysis of survey data will result in future research projects that extend beyond the scope of this paper.

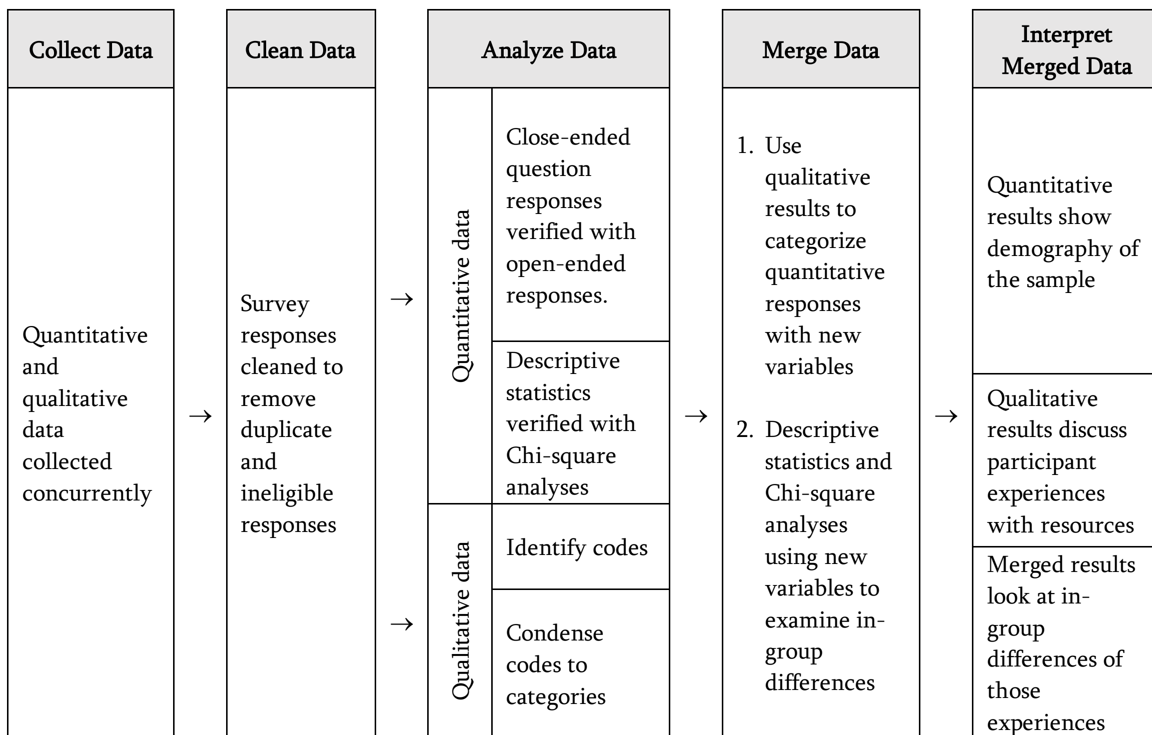

Figure 1. Parallel strands of the data analysis.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The quantitative findings in this study include participant demographics across assigned sex and gender identity, sexual orientation, race, age, and institutional type, as well as findings pertaining to graduation and retention. These findings are explored in this section, with emphasis on those that are significant.

The quantitative data were separated from the qualitative data and cleaned in Excel, then imported into SPSS 23 for analysis. In order to understand and describe the demographics of the sample, descriptive statistics (frequencies and means) were used to examine gender identity, assigned sex, sexual orientation, race, student status, and institutional type. Relationships between these categories, for example sexual orientation and gender identity, were verified with Chi-square analyses to provide p-values.

There were 166 total respondents meeting the eligibility criteria, and 135 respondents who answered the open-ended survey questions. The following section detailing quantitative results includes all 166 respondents. As noted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), sample sizes in the two strands of a convergent parallel study can be different. In the current study, the closed-ended questions describe demographics, and using the full sample allows for a more comprehensive portrait of the makeup of today's trans student population.

Assigned Sex and Gender Identity

A primary goal of this study was to examine differences within the trans student community, including differences between trans people who have different gender identities and histories. Therefore, a number of analyses identify similarities and differences along assigned sex and gender identity. To facilitate these analyses, respondents were coded and sorted into categories.

Similar to the categorization used by Beemyn and Rankin (2011), I divided respondents into four categories: female-to-male (FTM), male-to-female (MTF), female-to-genderqueer/different gender (FTX), and male-to-genderqueer/different gender (MTX). These labels are not intended to reflect any given respondent's personal terminology for their identity, nor do I use these labels to definitively assign any life experience of sex or gender to respondents. In a community full of ever-evolving language that "is often not universally accepted by everyone" (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011, p. 17), I used what I determined to be the most utilitarian terminology to describe categories of people with similar reported identities and experiences. While one woman shared that the use of "MTF" in the survey "implies that as a trans woman I was ever male, which is something that I strongly disagree with," the MTF categorization of this respondent and others who made similar comments about their identities is not a reflection of their self-conceptions. Rather, this classification describes the similarities they have with other respondents assigned male at birth and identifying, wholly or partially, as women or female. Since my research question sought comparison across both assigned sex and gender identity, these four categories—FTM, MTF, FTX, and MTX—allow the ability to examine similarities and differences that exist along both spectra.

Additionally, these categories do not seek to flatten the dynamic identities of participants, and as such it is important to note the multiple identities that may be encompassed in each of the four categories (see Table 1). Of the 166 survey respondents, 121 were assigned female at birth and 45 were assigned male at birth. Seventy-seven fall into the category of FTM, 35 into MTF, 44 in FTX, and 10 MTX (see Table 1).

Because many respondents self-identify with various terms, further analysis examined the specific language respondents used. Seventy-eight respondents (47%) identified as genderqueer or another nonbinary label, 48 of those using one of these labels in addition to others such as "trans male." For brevity in the remainder of this paper, these 78 respondents are referred to under the umbrella of genderqueer respondents, contrasted with the 88 respondents (53%) who did not identify as genderqueer or another nonbinary label. Eight respondents (5%) identified exclusively with other labels or terms such as "genderfluid" and "Two-Spirit." Additionally, 20 respondents (12%) identified as *only* female or male, with no qualifier such as in the phrase "trans female."

Race

The majority of respondents (n = 133) identified as White (see Table 2). Because the question of race allowed respondents to check more than one box, any who selected two or more boxes were coded as multiracial (n = 24). Due to the low numbers of people of color (POC) in the survey sample, detecting statistical significance is only possible if POC were coded as a group rather than by each individual racial identity. Proportionally, gender identity is distributed about the same for White respondents and respondents of color, and differences in gender identity are not statistically significant. There is no major

difference in identifying as genderqueer by race.

Sexual Orientation

Of all respondents, 55.4% identified themselves as bisexual, pansexual, or queer. Of the remaining respondents, 15.7% self-identified as gay or lesbian, 12% as straight, and 15.1% as a range of asexual identities, including asexual, gray-A, or demisexual. Additionally, regardless of other sexual orientation identities noted, 55.4% of respondents identified with the term “queer.”

Identification with specific sexual orientation identities did not differ significantly by gender identity or assigned sex. However, female-assigned respondents and genderqueer respondents were significantly more likely to identify as queer (see Table 2).

Also of note is the finding that MTF-classified respondents are much more likely to identify as gay or lesbian compared to FTM-classified respondents, at 31.4% compared to 13%. The inverse is also present, with 20.8% of FTM respondents identifying as straight compared to 8.6% of MTF respondents. When comparing identification as straight or another sexual orientation by assigned sex, the differences were not statistically significant, possibly suggesting that gender identity may play a greater role in sexual orientation identification than assigned sex. The most significant indicator of identifying as straight or as another sexual orientation was identifying as genderqueer; 2.6% of genderqueer respondents identified as straight compared to 20.5% of respondents who were not genderqueer (see Table 2).

Age

The mean age of all respondents who reported it (n = 153) was 26.5, with male-assigned respondents being slightly older than female-assigned respondents (27.7 compared to 26). Respondents who identify as genderqueer (either alone or in conjunction with other identities) were on average younger than those who do not, at a mean of 25.7 compared to 27.3. The youngest respondents were 18 (n = 4) and the oldest respondent was 51. Among currently enrolled students who reported their age (n = 88), the mean age of undergraduates was 23, and the mean age of graduates was 28.8. The oldest undergraduate respondent (who was also currently enrolled) was 39.

Institutional Type

Study respondents attended a range of institutions throughout the United States. Looking at the most recently attended institution, the majority of respondents (64.5%) attended public four-year colleges or universities and private four-year colleges or universities (24.1%). Fifteen respondents, 9% of the sample, attended a community college, and four respondents, 2.4% of the sample, attended a for-profit institution.

There are no major differences in enrollment by gender identity, except among the 10 MTX-classified respondents, who were nearly exclusively enrolled in public four-year institutions. Another difference is found in assigned sex, where among respondents at four-year institutions there is a higher proportion of female-assigned respondents at private institutions (31.5% compared to 15.4% of male-assigned respondents). Additionally, a slightly higher majority of genderqueer respondents (n = 72, or 92.3%) attended four-year institutions than those who were not genderqueer (n = 75, or 85.2%).

Graduation and Persistence

The survey instrument included the opportunity for respondents to enter information from up to three institutions attended. Fifty respondents entered information from two institutions (two of whom are concurrently enrolled at two institutions), and seven entered information from three institutions. Due to the low number of respondents who reported information from a third institution, only data from the first and second institutions reported were analyzed in the current study. These data provided the opportunity to explore persistence and whether respondents stopped out or transferred institutions, and what correlation this may have, if any, with their gender identity and transition.

Nearly 10% of respondents (n = 16) reported stopping out or dropping out of their most recent institution. Two additional FTM students indicated that they are taking temporary medical leaves to attend to transition needs. A distressing gender gap emerged among those who reported stopping out. Of all respondents not currently enrolled in school (n = 74), significantly more female-assigned respondents had graduated compared to male-assigned respondents (see Table 3). In fact, 42.1% of the male-assigned respondents not currently enrolled stopped out of college or graduate school, with only 57.9% indicating that they have graduated from their most recent institution. Of female-assigned respondents who were not currently enrolled, 83.6% had graduated from their most recent institution.

The survey included students who reported attending a second institution in the past (n = 48). Looking at the second institution data for these students—that is, the institution attended prior to the current or most recent institution reported—78.4% of

female-assigned respondents (n = 29) had graduated compared to 27.3% of male-assigned respondents (n = 3). While these numbers are too low to assess statistical significance, it does appear that male-assigned respondents were less likely to complete their degree, in this case transferring to another institution.

Summary of Quantitative Results

In summary, the respondents to this study are more likely to be assigned female at birth, more likely to be White, and more likely to attend a public, four-year institution. While quantitative analysis did reveal that some respondent positionalities were too small to explore in a statistically significant way (e.g., MTX respondents and respondents of color), the diversity captured in this sample paints a more detailed picture of who trans students in higher education are compared to prior studies. For instance, by examining in-group diversity in the trans student population, this study has demonstrated significant disparity in graduation and persistence for students who were assigned male at birth compared to those assigned female. The next section explores the qualitative findings, which are then combined with the quantitative findings to explore how demographics may or may not affect trans student experiences with institutional resources.

Table 1

Categorization of Respondents by Assigned Sex and Gender Identity

Category	n	%	Definition
Assigned Sex			
Total female-assigned	121	72.9	
Total male-assigned	45	27.1	
Total	166	100	
Gender Identity			
FTM	77	46.4	Includes all female-assigned male and trans male respondents regardless of other responses, which may include genderqueer or other self-identified responses.
MTF	44	26.5	Includes all male-assigned female and trans female respondents regardless of other responses, which may include genderqueer or other self-identified responses.
FTX	35	21.1	Includes only female-assigned respondents that did *not* check female, male, trans female, or trans male.
MTX	10	6	Includes only male-assigned respondents that did *not* check female, male, trans female, or trans male.
Total	166	100	

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics by Assigned Sex and Gender Identity

Demographic Trait	Female-assigned	Male-assigned	FTM	MTF	FTX	MTX	Genderqueer	Not Genderqueer	Total	
Racial Identity	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	n
White	82.6	73.3	81.8	71.4	84.1	80	80.8	79.5	80.1	133
Multiracial	11.6	22.2	10.4	22.9	13.6	20^{+}	16.7	12.5	14.5	24
Black	0.8^{+}	4.4^{+}	1.3^{+}	5.7^{+}	--	--	--	3.4^{+}	1.8	3
Latino/a	2.5^{+}	--	2.6^{+}	--	2.3^{+}	--	1.3^{+}	2.3^{+}	1.8	3
Asian-American	1.7^{+}	--	2.6^{+}	--	--	--	--	2.3^{+}	1.2	2
Middle Eastern	0.8^{+}	--	1.3^{+}	--	--	--	1.3^{+}	--	0.6	1
Sexual Orientation										
Percent straight	14	6.7^{+}	20.8	8.6^{+}	2.3^{+}	--	2.6^{+}	20.5	12	
Percent LGBQ or asexual	83.5*	91.1*	77.9	91.4	93.2	90	97.4**	79.5**	85.6	
Percent gay or lesbian	10.7*	28.9*	13	31.4	6.8^{+}	20^{+}	11.5**	17**	15.7	
Percent bisexual, pansexual, or queer	58.7*	44.4*	54.5	42.9	65.9	50	57.7**	52.3**	54.8	
Percent asexual	14*	17.8*	10.4	17.1	20.5	20^{+}	24.4**	6.8**	15.1	
Percent identify with the term *queer*	65.3**	28.9**	64.9	31.4	65.9	20^{+}	64.1*	47.7*	55.4	
Age (mean)	26	27.7	26.7	28	24.9	26.9	25.7	27.3	26.4	
Institutional Type (percent attending)										
Public four-year	61.2	73.3	59.7	68.6	63.6	90	70.5	59.1	64.5	
Private four-year	31.5	15.4	28.6	14.3	27.3	10^{+}	21.8	26.1	24.1	
Community college	9.1	8.9^{+}	9.1	11.4^{+}	9.1^{+}	--	6.4	11.4	9	
For-profit institution	1.7^{+}	4.4^{+}	2.6^{+}	5.7^{+}	--	--	1.3^{+}	3.4^{+}	2.4	

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .003$, $^{+}$ cell sizes were too small to test for statistical significance

Table 3

Persistence of Respondents Not Currently Enrolled
by Assigned Sex

	Female-Assigned	Male-Assigned
Percent Graduated	83.6*	57.9*
Percent Stopped Out	16.4*	42.1*

Note: *p < .05

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

I began qualitative analysis by looking at the core question of what resources students used or did not use. Two survey instrument questions provided data for answering this question:

A. What resources, programming, courses, or policies are/were at your school related to being transgender or transitioning? Please describe which of these you DID use or attend.

and:

B. Are you aware of resources, programming, courses, or policies at your school related to being transgender or transitioning that you DID NOT use? If so, please describe them and your reason for not using them.

I engaged in qualitative coding based on grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Hays & Singh, 2012) for these two questions, resulting in two primary findings: an understanding of the resources important to students, and the overarching themes that impact access to resources. Of the total 166 respondents, 135 answered open-ended questions. Due to the convergent parallel design in the current study, the qualitative strand has a different sample size than the quantitative strand (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The following section details qualitative findings.

Although the survey questions concerning resources used on campus were based

on prior research (Beemyn, Domingue, et al., 2005; Seelman et al., 2012), I identified a different conceptualization of how respondents viewed resources through the process of qualitative coding. As the coding progressed, it became clear that given the differences in how campuses were organized, it was difficult to make comparisons between particular resources across campuses. Should an LGBTQ Center with multiple full-time staff be considered the same kind of resource as an LGBTQ coordinator housed in a larger diversity center? Should a peer-led LGBTQ group be considered the same kind of resource as a sponsored LGBTQ group led by a therapist or social worker? Often, such distinctions were not shared by students, who referred to resources in the way they understood them on their campuses and in their experiences. Using respondents' descriptions of resources, I organized them into "clusters" of resources that describe how students navigated being trans on their campuses. In order of presentation in this section, these clusters are:

1. Groups
2. Counseling, Healthcare, and Student Insurance
3. LGBTQ Centers
4. Gendered and Gender-Neutral Facilities
5. Policies and Procedures
6. Programming
7. Inclusive Classes
8. People
9. Off-Campus Resources

Below, for each cluster subsection, I detail what the resource includes as well as what it

meant to the respondents. In some cases, respondents found beneficial support from the resource. In other instances, the resource was a source of stress or even distress due to the lack of trans inclusion.

Groups

Groups refer to student organizations and other peer or support groups for LGBTQ students or specifically for trans students. Repeatedly, students referred to groups that were helpful to them in finding community and support as they navigated their gender identity development and transition (whatever that meant to them individually) on campus. Although specifics related to group purpose and structure were sometimes not shared, common elements did emerge. Some groups were student-led social groups focused on the LGBTQ community as a whole or the trans community specifically, such as one group described as “a social/support group for people who identify as neither male nor female.” Other groups were explicitly support groups, either student-led or facilitated by “a licensed counselor” through the institution’s counseling services or LGBTQ center.

For students who utilized groups, they were often beneficial. One genderfluid respondent wrote about a social group at zyr university open only to trans-identifying students, stating that “this group was very helpful and an important step for me in becoming comfortable with my identity.” However, others reported that sometimes groups focused too much on White, gay, cisgender men. Discussing a recent change from this focus, one student shared that “this upcoming semester [is] the first time in the years I’ve been there that a trans student was part of the leaders” of the school’s Gay-Straight

Alliance (GSA).

While groups were important to undergraduate students, graduate students had a different experience of them. Many graduate students shared that peer groups felt like spaces they could not utilize. One genderqueer, MTX respondent shared that while the transgender student organization "does not exclude graduate students, [it] had only undergrads and so I did not feel comfortable attending." Other graduate students described being responsible for running groups for each other, or for undergraduates. Due to this leadership role, one respondent said, "I never received much support in my own identity."

While groups, both informal and formal, provide much support to trans students, another major source of support is formal counseling. This, along with healthcare and insurance, is detailed in the next section.

Counseling, Healthcare, and Student Insurance

Another area that emerged as significant for respondents was counseling and healthcare, including student health insurance available through the college or university. Often, respondents shared negative experiences with these services. However, respondents who reported positive experiences were grateful for them, some discussing utilizing the services and benefits while they were in school because of potentially not having similar access to transition care in the future.

Counseling. Students frequently shared negative experiences with accessing counseling services at their institutions. Sometimes respondents chose to not pursue on-campus counseling services due to, as one "anti-label" student put it, "reports by other

students" that there were no counselors competent with trans issues on their campuses.

One multiracial non-binary respondent shared, "The counseling center is, in theory, available to talk about being queer and trans* but [I] have heard … they don't have training to help lgbt [*sic*] students." This sentiment was echoed by many in describing counselors or centers interested in being helpful, but falling short. This trans* masculine respondent wrote, "Counseling was trans* friendly, but extremely unhelpful and not knowledgable [*sic*]." An MTF-classified respondent shared that she "tried using their counseling services a few times, which are ostensibly trans-friendly, but they had little understanding of my issues or identity, they used the wrong pronouns."

As students' experiences with specific resources are communicated through a campus community, the negative perception can influence decisions of whether or not utilizing campus counseling services is worthwhile. As one FTM-classified respondent shared, "I wasn't interested in trying to seek out counseling services at my school because I wasn't convinced that they would be as effective as going to see a therapist in the outside community."

On a positive note, a few students reported that their institution's counseling center had a trans specialist on staff or hosted a trans support or therapy group. One genderqueer respondent shared that "the Counseling Center has a Gender [*sic*] program that assists folks in transition related processes." Other respondents noted that LGBTQ therapy groups were available. "There is a (trans-affirming) semesterly LGBTQ support group offered through the Counseling Center that I attended," shared another genderqueer respondent. Even without LGBTQ-specific services, the accessibility of on-campus services was a positive factor for some, as this respondent shared: "I know of several

people who's [*sic*] only option for their necessary transition counseling[7] were [community college]'s services. For students it was only $10 a session."

Healthcare and student insurance. For those students who were able to utilize healthcare services on campus, experiences were positive for some and very negative for others. One MTF-classified student shared, "The doctors in the health center treat me like a bizarre specimen and are sometimes reluctant to write me notes, like the 'gender change' form for my passport application. Like I'm trying to scam them!" Students who had positive experiences largely reported these in terms of listing what they were able to access, such as receiving hormone therapy prescriptions from a physician on campus, or even, in one respondent's case, the option to receive "hyst[erectomy], meta[oidioplasty], and top" surgeries "through the [university] hospital."

Respondents' lists of accessible services sometimes conflated what was actually offered on campus and what was covered by the student health insurance plan. For those who elaborated on insurance coverage, the inclusion was clearly beneficial. One man shared:

> I took advantage of the insurance coverage for graduate assistants, which covered 90% of transgender surgery costs. I had not considered having a surgery while in graduate school but when the insurance coverage changed to allow this, I jumped at the opportunity! I may not ever see that percentage of coverage for a surgery ever again.

While insurance coverage was added at a beneficial time for this student, this was not

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[7] The "necessary transition counseling" this respondent referred to is a common, but not universal, requirement that trans patients beginning hormone therapy or scheduling surgery have a referral from a mental health professional (see Coleman et al., 2012). A more recent model of informed consent for hormone therapy is removing this barrier for trans people who may have had negative experiences with or lack of access to mental healthcare (Urquhart, 2016; see also Davidson et al., 2013).

always the case. Another student shared that their institution's "health insurance eventually covered hormones/SRS[8]. However, by the time they did I already paid for a mastectomy out-of-pocket." Other respondents shared similar experiences, such as this graduate who noted that "student insurance at my school now covers some surgery," but was added after they had graduated.

While many respondents demonstrate the benefits of inclusive counseling, healthcare, and insurance, some emphasized difficulty in access and a need to provide more than a marginal benefit. "The student health center had one practitioner who had become knowledgeable in trans issues and became the go-to provider for transition related care at the University. It was not publicized but spread through word of mouth in the trans community," explained one respondent. Elaborating on insurance coverage, another student shared that "my health insurance covered hormone therapy, though the savings compared with paying out of pocket was marginal." Another respondent wrote, "If you're poor, you can't even use the insurance for certain major surgeries, because there are no doctors in network and you would have to pay out of pocket. Very few services in the area." This meant that the trans inclusivity was largely in name only.

Overall, counseling, healthcare, and student insurance are important resources for students, especially when services offered through their institution are the only ones available or feasible to access. The positive benefit of these resources for some respondents affirms that for those who did not have positive experiences, making changes to ensure that they do can be beneficial.

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[8] Sex reassignment surgery.

LGBTQ Centers

One of the top resources for respondents was the LGBTQ center or coordinator. In discussing this resource, it is prudent to keep in mind that some institutions have a paid staff person serving the community, but do not have a physical center or multiple staff. The importance of the LGBTQ center or coordinator was apparent in many responses that listed simply "LGBT Resource Center" or similar titles. One student who is "still hiding" their identity noted their campus's center as "the LGBT Resource Center where i [*sic*] was finally able to be more me." A graduate student who took advantage of new insurance coverage shared, "luckily, I [learned] about the coverage change from the director of the lgbtqa [*sic*] resource center on campus, whom [*sic*] was one of the very few people on campus who I was out to." Coordinators and directors were particularly important; respondents often mentioned them by name when asked about campus support networks. "The LGBT Center and the director there were amazingly helpful and supportive and basically helped me know what services and policies were in place and how they could help me," wrote an FTM-classified respondent.

Not all responses about LGBTQ centers or coordinators were positive. One genderqueer MTF-classified respondent wrote, "the glbt [*sic*] office wasn't a safe space for trans people. the [*sic*] cis gay men who congregated their [*sic*] had created a reputation of transphobia and cissexism. […] even the trans people i [*sic*] knew on the staff said it wasn't a safe place for us and most of them ended up quitting after a short time." This respondent's experience emphasizes the important role that information shared by other trans people plays in shaping students' perception of campus resources and the decision to access or not access them.

Some respondents simply did not utilize the available LGBTQ center. Reasons varied from feeling out of place among the other students to not feeling that the LGBTQ center was pertinent to their needs. One respondent shared:

> I found myself feeling out of place as someone much older than other college students and as a trans person who had begun transition over four years ago and feels stable in regards to my gender identity. I think the focus on youth is important, but it doesn't necessarily feel like a space for me a lot of the time.

Age and stage in life can be a major factor in utilizing an LGBTQ center, as it was shared by others, particularly graduate students. However, within the trans community, personal gender identity and sexual orientation can also play a role in feeling part of the LGBTQ campus community or in feeling a need to access LGBTQ resources. A Black, straight-identifying respondent who views his trans status as "private medical information" wrote, "I did not use them [the LGBTQ center] for privacy reasons and because I do not identify as LGBT."

LGBTQ centers serve as organizational hubs for many of the resources in other clusters. "The [LGBTQ center] does a lot of work to have the university bring in guest speakers such as Janet Mock or Laverne Cox," shared one student. Another respondent noted that their campus's center "offers discussion groups, local resources related to trans identity and transition, name change help, [and] advocacy for gender neutral restrooms." The impact of these centers is felt across campus, particularly in those resources and facilities that they advocate for on behalf of students. Facilities such as restrooms are detailed in the following section.

Gendered and Gender-Neutral Facilities

Gendered facilities such as housing, restrooms, and locker rooms were frequently mentioned by respondents, specifically when discussing the lack of gender-neutral options or options that accommodated their gender identity. Particularly of note were gender-neutral restrooms and gender-inclusive housing (GIH).

Gender-neutral restrooms. An important resource that respondents often noted was a list or map of gender-neutral restrooms on campus. One respondent noted that this map was meant "to show where safe bathroom[s] are on campus." Many respondents, however, noted the lack of gender-neutral restrooms on their campuses, asking for "more bathrooms/changing rooms" and "more gender-neutral and/or single-stall bathrooms." Others indicated the lack by noting specific restrooms on their campuses, such as this androgyne student who shared that "the library has one singular gender neutral restroom. [Building] has one gender neutral restroom that I've been able to find." A stealth, FTM-classified respondent noted that they "used the family locker room at the campus gym as a gender neutral [*sic*] locker/bath room."

While gender-neutral restrooms were the primary concern for respondents, some discussed inclusion in gendered facilities, that is, women's and men's restrooms and locker rooms. A woman studying dance shared:

> Initially, the women's locker room in the dance department seemed absolutely terrifying to me. Getting naked, I feared that cis female students might harass or even attack me. That feeling has never completely gone away, and on days when I'm anxious for other reasons it can be a little exhausting to be in the locker room, but when I started to have conversations with other dancers in there, I realized that people were treating me like I belonged in this women's space and it was very gender affirming. I think it's important to have gender neutral spaces, but also to acknowledge that not all trans people will want to use them.

As this student shared, although gender-neutral spaces are important for many trans

students, so is inclusion in gendered spaces, which can make these spaces not only safe, but also affirming and validating.

Gender-inclusive housing. Unlike gender-neutral restrooms, GIH was not discussed frequently by respondents in their descriptions of available campus resources. Where it was more frequently mentioned was in response to the question: "What do you wish had been available at your school related to being transgender or transitioning? What would you like to see changed at your school?"

GIH had a positive impact on those who were able to use it. This stealth trans man shared that he chose his undergraduate institution because:

> I was trans and at the time (2008), they were one of the only schools in the area that had gender non-conforming housing and a known trans-person on staff. Those resources allowed me to graduate, as I went to the school in the middle of my transition and needed a lot of support at the time. [The] environment allowed for that to happen.

For trans students who live on campus, GIH is more than a resource that can affirm their identity, but the means to what one respondent referred to as a "safe living situation."

Sometimes when housing accommodations were available, they were not necessarily ideal. One respondent shared that they wished their institution could "actually have fair housing for trans students, not just the most expensive options." Another had a similar concern: "I'm a commuter student and couldn't afford the on-campus housing, but would have made use of the gender inclusive housing had I had the funds."

For respondents who had already graduated or were close to completing, the addition of GIH came too late. "The gender neutral [*sic*] housing policy started the semester I graduated," shared one respondent. "I wish that gender-affirming housing had been available at [college] while I attended there. They have that now," wrote another.

When done right, GIH is an important resource that provides not only an inclusive environment, but also a safe one.

Policies and Procedures

Respondents placed a noticeable emphasis on institutional policies and procedures. Two types of policies were mentioned by many respondents: nondiscrimination policies and name change policies and procedures.

Nondiscrimination policies. Nondiscrimination policies that include transgender people, usually through the phrase "gender identity and gender expression," offer protection and recourse for students who experience discrimination on campus. As one student described:

> There are explicit policies that prohibit discrimination on gender and sex, and in [state] law, that means gender expression and identity as well. Yesterday the Title IX office even emailed out a statement saying that gender identity and expression are protected statuses and had the numbers of a few Title IX staff members at the school to contact if we suspect that our rights have been violated.

At some institutions, the nondiscrimination policy may be the only support that students perceive is available. "There really isn't anything the only thing we have is the non discrimination [*sic*] policy," shared one respondent. "Aside from non-discrimination [*sic*] protection, my university has no resources," noted another. "The non discrimination [*sic*] policy is inclusive but it ends there. I recently found out I was outed by faculty and they gossip to students," wrote a third. The importance placed on these policies and the frequency with which they were discussed, indeed the discussion of these policies as a *resource*, emphasizes the role they play for trans students in the perception of an inclusive campus.

Nondiscrimination policies were not universally viewed as positive. One respondent shared this perspective: “I think non-discrimination [*sic*] policies are BULLSHIT. Both institutions state that they do not discriminate yet, they have exclusions for transition and gender confirming healthcare. That is discrimination.” An MTF-classified respondent who “dropped out due to [the institution’s] discrimination” noted that they wished that their institution offered legal services in addition to policies:

> I have a mound of documented cases of legal discrimination however as someone who can not [*sic*] afford legal aid I have no recourse. I think it is very important that we remember that policy/law must come with repercussion for its violators it does us little good if the only recourse is to have the financial means to hire a lawyer.

The need for an inclusive policy with institutional follow-through was also discussed by this FTM-classified respondent who said they wished there could be “a ‘whistleblower’ type protection for [when faculty] were openly transphobic and discriminatory. Students should have a way to anonymously report a professor when they feel unsafe without fearing retaliation in grading.” For these respondents, the nondiscrimination policy was only helpful to the extent that they were able to utilize it to seek recourse for discrimination or create a more inclusive campus. This theme occurred for other policies as well, such as name change policies.

Name change policies and procedures. When respondents described changing their name, or difficulty doing so, only about half specified whether this was a legal name change or a change that added their preferred name to their student records in some form or another. Therefore, I discuss both legal and preferred name changes as one category.

Changing their name on campus appeared to be easier for respondents who specified that they had completed a legal name change. Asked what was required to

change one's name, one respondent simply wrote: "legal name change form." An FTM respondent shared, "I had to submit my new license reflecting the legal change to the administration office and they took care of changing it." However, not all legal name changes went smoothly. A respondent who identifies as a transgenderqueer woman explained:

> I had to have a court order, and I had to learn that all the systems didn't talk to each other. The registrar didn't talk with financial aid, which didn't talk with HR, which didn't talk with IT/email access. I had to search out each office and go through the process over and over again. Some were pleasant, some refused until I got help from the [LGBTQ center].

Navigating this decentralized and complex system was difficult for other respondents as well. Even with a policy in place, it can be difficult. "Not every staff member seems to know of the school's policy on trans people for when it comes to changing name or gender on student records and what not," shared one MTF-classified student. "I found it much easier to change my name and gender marker with the courts, Social Security, and the DMV than at the university," noted one respondent who completed a legal name change as an employee after graduating.

Changing their name on campus without a legal name change was more difficult: respondents often found their institutions unwilling or unable to make use of different names without the legal change. "I was not allowed to [change my name] unless a legal name change was done which I can/could not afford financially," shared one respondent. An FTM-classified respondent wrote:

> Even when it appeared there were minor resources, they often were not acted upon. For example, there was a 'preferred name' option on [the] student account, but it could not be edited through the student portal, and the registrar would not put that name on the student record or ID without a court order.

An MTF-classified student shared, "I had a hard time changing my name in their system,

and had to out myself to all my professors each semester to make sure they didn't use the wrong name in class. They didn't always respect that."

It is important that systems for nonlegal name changes function properly, because not all students can or want to access a legal name change. Legal name changes are expensive and time consuming. One student explained that "it is very difficult managing the expenses of transition." Requiring a legal name change creates a barrier for those who, like this student, have "had to work a lot" to keep up with the costs of transitioning. Additionally, requiring a legal name change creates a barrier for those who simply do not wish to obtain a legal name change. A two-spirit respondent wrote, "I have not and will not legally change my name due to Native American traditions … in my tribe."

The difficulty in noting a preferred name within an institution's system led to challenges across campus for some students. "HR made me use an email with my assigned name for months after I came out to them until I could afford to get it changed through the courts," shared a respondent who identifies as transtomboy/transfemme. "A lot of the databases are very segmented and I still get e-mails with my birth name even though it has been almost a year since I changed it," shared another respondent. A similar problem occurred for this graduate student, who shared, "My name is still not correct on my online portal, even after 4 years, but it does show up correctly on class rosters. I have given up on it ever being correct." A genderqueer, FTM-classified student who has attended a women's college and an institution open to all genders reported: "I've had administrative staff accuse me of stealing another person's ID (name is feminine, masculine presenting). So, when I go get a new school ID, file important forms et cetera they assume that I am trying to be dishonest." Another respondent shared, "Mail services

took issue with me using a name that was not legally mine on my correspondence. I told mail services that I would not use my false name."

The difficulties in name change processes were often felt in the classroom. Many students described taking a proactive approach with their professors, knowing that the roster would list a name they no longer use. One respondent wrote: "I emailed my professors to explain that I'm nonbinary and ask them to use my preferred name and pronouns instead of the name on the roster." However, this method does not always work:

> It was frustrating to have to listen to my old name be called in role [*sic*] and to pretend I was a different student until I could talk to the teacher after class. In art school, most professors do not check their e-mail, particularly their school e-mail [...] and there's no time to catch them before. That's all I really cared about, was to not have to explain myself and my name over and over every semester.

For graduate students who taught courses, there was often the added necessity of outing themselves to their entire class. As one genderqueer graduate student succinctly put it: "As a student, my teachers see my full legal name, and as an instructor, my students see my full legal name." An MTF-classified respondent noted that they "taught my first year with the wrong name showing up on all my emails to my students and to all my teachers and classmates. Was very frustrating."

Not all institutions lacked name change solutions for students. One respondent described changing their name without a legal name change as a "huge thing!" Another described their name change process as such: "I was able to quickly and without much question get my display name changed on my campus email without having to provide anything to get it changed. Was able to submit a preferred name in our primary online services software of which faculty pull their class roster from." One binary, male-

identifying respondent shared a unique experience of his college's affirmation of his name: "I was printed an unofficial diploma for display purposes with my preferred name (to go with the official diploma with my legal name, which had not been changed)."

Policies and procedures affect students' interactions with systems across the institution, from addressing discrimination, to printing ID cards, to being addressed correctly in the classroom. Ensuring that policies are clear, accessible, and work for students regardless of their stage of transition or any legal changes is important.

Programming

Formal programming in the form of events about trans topics was another cluster that emerged. Events largely fell into two categories: educational programming about trans issues and trans-inclusive programming that was not focused on educating about trans issues. Respondents overwhelmingly referred to educational programming, such as "Trans 101 workshops" or "Transgender Awareness Week," as resources available to them on campus, with only occasional mentions of programming focused on entertainment or creating a trans celebratory space such as drag shows and Lavender Graduation ceremonies.

Educational programming. Educational programming included any events where the primary purpose was to educate a group about what transgender is. These often took the form of workshops and panels, or larger events which contained multiple educational opportunities, like an awareness week which "included a guest panel and the sharing of personal transgender experiences." One program described in detail involved "student talking panels where campus entities (faculty, admin offices, etc [*sic*]) can

request a panel of 5-7 lgbtqa-identified [*sic*] students to answer questions about being an LGBTQA student/person."

Many students took on leadership roles on campus by filling the role of educator. As one genderqueer respondent shared, "I participated in guest panels for pre medical [*sic*] students (to help raise their awareness before they become doctors), interviewed with the campus paper a couple of times, spoke openly in class when it was relevant, etc." These leadership roles are positive for some students, such as this respondent who shared that "through my advocacy, I have gathered enough strength to transition medically and come to realise [*sic*] that self-advocacy can be empowering." For others, however, such leadership can lead to burnout. A student involved in a number of leadership roles explained this burnout in detail when asked about whether they advocated for themselves:

> I don't really consider myself an advocate because I know people who are brave and dedicate their lives to making a difference for trans people, and I don't give all of myself to being an advocate. There are times when I want to not educate people and not deal with everyone, and I just don't. I know I could do a lot more if I chose to. I have no excuse for not being a better advocate and a better ally. It's hard to do that all the time and you have to give a lot, and there's no reason people like me can't. There's also no reason people like me should have to, but that's a different issue.

This student clearly feels a struggle between wanting to advocate more and also recognizes that the pressure to advocate at all is an unfair burden. Another respondent shared: "I am constantly called on to educate people and advocate for basic needs of transgender students, faculty and staff. It is exhausting to feel like I am constantly 'on call' and to have what I say be so easily dismissed or ignored." This pressure to be "on call" creates an unfair situation for the student, who then must navigate campus as an educator in addition to their role as a student.

Relying on trans people and trans students as educators has many problems, such as misinformation and exhaustion faced by students who hold the burden of educating others. One respondent discussed helping to organize:

> …a panel of transgender women to present to medical students on their experiences. It actually ended up being pretty awful, as the panel members were not very representative of the entire trans community, and one panel member in particular dominated the conversation and spoke a lot of misinformation about the standards of care.[9]

As this story illustrates, not all trans people are necessarily "experts" on trans issues, and relying on individual trans people can lead to educational panels spreading incorrect information.

While these educational spaces were affirming and resilience-building for many participants, the emphasis on educational programming also reifies the idea of trans people being a misunderstood, complicated topic on which people need to be educated. For respondents who felt that educational events projected this exotifying image of trans people, other types of programming provided the affirming spaces they sought.

Inclusive programming. Any programming that centered trans people (or, broadly, LGBTQ people) *without* the primary purpose of educating others about trans issues and concerns is described here as inclusive programming. Events that respondents discussed include trans celebrity guest speakers, "Pride Week," "one drag show," and "a 'Lavender Graduation' that is specifically to honor LGBTQ students." An additional event mentioned by a few students is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), which memorializes victims of transphobic violence annually.

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[9] The "standards of care" the respondent is referring to here are the WPATH Standards of Care (Coleman et al., 2012).

A student at a large state university shared that "there was a lot of programming during my last year directed towards trans students including Janet Mock, Laura Jane Grace, and Laverne Cox coming to campus, and a panel on being queer and trans and entering the work force." Another respondent at the same university also listed the guest speakers, and noted that "I think getting to see those kind of events can be a powerful opportunity for trans students."

Unfortunately, inclusive programming is not the norm. "Trans/gender identity programming is primarily educational, not social," shared one first-generation student. A two-spirit student noted that "social programming is improving (we had Laverne Cox speak this year), but [there are] no transgender peer groups on campus," referring to the lack of a primarily social space in which to connect with other trans people.

Overall, respondents reported more educational programming than inclusive programming. While both were beneficial, the lack of programming that was meant as a celebration of transness or as a safe space for trans students was clear.

Inclusive Classes

Academics, specifically classes in women's and gender studies (WGST) or LGBTQ studies, was another important cluster that emerged from the data. Trans inclusion within course content was important for those who took classes in these academic areas. To distinguish these courses from those in other disciplines, I labeled this cluster as "inclusive classes," similar to inclusive programming above; this label signals respondents' common assumption or expectation that WGST and LGBTQ disciplines would be inclusive of trans people, history, and concerns. When asked broadly about

resources on campus, one respondent wrote: "There were a few gender and sexuality studies courses that were amazing." Another mentioned that "there are LGBTQ-specific courses throughout the campus and ally and queer-identified professors who teach them, which I would consider a resource for queer, questioning, and ally students." An androgyne student shared that "the Trans* Studies class was helpful."

The positive impact of these courses included helping some respondents learn about trans identities for the first time, and were noted in some respondents' descriptions of their transition or coming out. One respondent shared: "I discovered various trans identities and studied gender when I became exposed to feminism and Women's [*sic*] studies. I realized fully how I've always been gender different, realizing I probably wasn't cis, and took time to figure out my gender with better understanding."

Sometimes, students had negative experiences with courses in WGST or LGBTQ studies. One MTF-classified student wrote, "I wish that feminist courses would have some indication of whether or not they would acknowledge and teach on the intersections of sexism and transmisogyny[10] in their course descriptions, because otherwise they are potentially quite triggering for me." Another MTF-classified respondent described an experience where they "talked about trans stuff in my women's study online class. they [*sic*] all thought it was awesome.... until i [*sic*] brought up cissexism and transphobia in the women's movement... then [*sic*] they were all over it." These descriptions demonstrate that while some respondents found support and validation within WGST

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[10] Transmisogyny is "the way cissexism and misogyny intersect in the lives of trans women and others on the trans female/feminine spectrum" (Serano, 2013, pp. 45-46).

departments and classes, others found them to be yet another source of ostracization.

People

Individual staff and faculty often played crucial roles for respondents, from being the point of contact for accessing campus resources to being a role model or support through the process of coming out and beginning gender transition. The experience of one Deaf, FTM-classified student especially highlights this: “I had two mentors from my Disability Studies program, one queer woman and one trans masculine identified person. The trans masculine person was someone I was able to turn to for both academic and individual (transition-related) support and questions about gender and masculinity.” Not only was having a mentor meaningful for this student, but particularly finding a mentor who shared both academic interests and a similar trans identity and history.

When asked about who was supportive on campus, in addition to naming friends or offices, many respondents named specific individuals who worked at their institutions. In addition to LGBTQ center directors or coordinators, some of the individuals mentioned held roles such as “director of [the] Minority Engineering Program,” “my advisor,” “the head of the Writing Program,” “the Campus Minister,” “the associate chair of my department,” and “the Dean of Students.” One student shared, “One of my prof’s is an ally and sends me articles and asks for my opinion. My boss is a [supporter] and my friend the security guard is also a supporter.” These responses demonstrate that trans students find support for their transition and for persisting in college from a variety of sources on their campuses.

Sometimes, this support is in lieu of peer support, as demonstrated in this

student's response: "I did not really tell any classmates. I did tell a few teachers. One teacher in particular was a lesbian and I came out to her. She was really supportive." For whichever reason this respondent chose to disclose to teachers rather than classmates, they were able to connect with teachers not only by finding support, but also finding camaraderie in a teacher who was also part of the LGBTQ community. Another respondent pointed out, "I'm not a very social person so it's hard to make friends, but all of my teachers so far have been very welcoming and supportive. I feel as though I could go to any one of them for help if I needed guidance." Having a network of teachers to turn to in lieu of friends may have been a useful source of support. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that not all faculty are understanding, as this respondent points out: "I found other students and staff to be most supportive. I find faculty to be less supportive, or at least to be more oblivious to the NEED for blatant support." The support that some respondents were able to find was not available for all respondents.

Off-Campus Resources

A final important source of support and community was off-campus groups and events, including at other higher education institutions in the area. One FTM-classified respondent shared that their campus has "multiple different LGBTQA student groups […] none particular to transgender students, but [other university] hosts a transgender group that [respondent's college] students (and the community) are welcome to."

It is also important to note here that the surrounding, off-campus climate can also be a factor impacting overall student experience. As one genderqueer respondent shared, "I think that in [large metropolitan area] there was also a greater

understanding/resources/community of non-binary identities. While I pursued a 'male' transition, I never felt limited to disavowing my androgynous identity to access the resources or be understood by my peers." A respondent identifying their gender as simply "queer" noted the negative impact of their surrounding area, sharing that "part of the struggle for me is that here in [city] police brutality against transgender women of color is insanely high. […] So a big part of the struggle is less about university support and more about the struggle against state and colonial violence." Whether supportive or dangerous, the off-campus climate does not lose influence the moment a student steps foot on campus, and can impact their experiences not just as a person living in the area, but as a student at their institution as well.

Further Resources

The resource clusters explored above are not exhaustive of the interactions respondents shared with their campuses, and represent those shared frequently in responses to the survey. Other campus resources were mentioned by a few respondents who experienced impacts of their trans identity in interactions with these other resources. For example, some participants also discussed hassles with financial aid offices, with one respondent sharing that:

> I struggled to secure federal financial aid because I never registered for the draft (I was unable to because I was female at that age). It took the government several months to process my draft exemption paperwork and I almost missed registration for my second quarter for nonpayment.

This respondent's negative experience with financial aid is one that could impact other trans students if a financial aid office is not proficient in the unique needs and concerns of trans students. Due to additional experiences like this one and the implications they can

have, it is crucial to not consider the findings of this study a complete representation of the experiences of trans students.

Summary of Qualitative Results

As demonstrated through the findings above, respondents found importance and salience in the resources of groups; counseling, healthcare, and student insurance; LGBTQ centers; gendered and gender-neutral facilities; policies and procedures; programming; inclusive classes; people; and off-campus resources. Although not every experience with these clusters of resources was positive, the existence of trans-inclusive iterations of these resources is (or would be) a powerful source of support for trans students as they navigate their undergraduate and graduate studies. In summary, respondents reported a mix of support and negative experiences across their institutions. In the next section, responses concerning experiences with these resources are compared using demographic information from the quantitative findings.

MERGED FINDINGS

Following the qualitative coding through which I identified resource cluster categories used by respondents, I coded and quantified each response to compare use of these resource clusters to participant demographics (see Table 4). Using the resource clusters, I reviewed all open-ended responses and coded whether the respondent indicated that the type of resource was not available at their institution (coded as 1), was available but that they did not use it (coded as 2), or whether the resource was available and they did use it (coded as 3-6). If a respondent indicated that an experience was positive (e.g., "lots of support from the [LGBTQ] center director") or negative (e.g., "this led to a dangerous situation for me") that was also coded (using codes 6 and 4, respectively). The last code (5) indicated whether a given resource was described as having both positives and negatives or if a resource was experienced differently at different institutions by a single respondent. After responses were coded, I conducted descriptive statistics comparing the experiences across assigned sex, identity as genderqueer or not, status as an undergraduate or graduate student, and comparing White respondents to respondents of color. For each of these analyses, the percentage reported in Table 5 reflect the percentage of respondents out of the total included in that analysis; for example, the percentage of respondents reported as using a resource are out of the total number who also reported that that resource was available to them, and does not include students who

did not indicate that the resource was available in their open-ended responses.

As in this previous section on qualitative findings, this section is presented in the following order:

1. Groups
2. Counseling, Healthcare, and Student Insurance
3. LGBTQ Centers
4. Gendered and Gender-Neutral Facilities
5. Policies and Procedures
6. Programming
7. Off-Campus Resources

In each subsection, significant findings pertaining to the use of and experience of the given resource cluster by different demographic categories of respondents is detailed. In some instances, no statistically significant differences were found, such as in the resource clusters of inclusive classes and people.

Groups

Related to peer groups (either sponsored by a campus entity such as an LGBTQ center or independently organized by students), a number of respondents noted that they knew about but did not attend these groups. Of the 76 respondents who had access to groups of some sort at their institutions, 31.6% (n = 24) knew about them but did not attend. Reasons included scheduling, lack of information, and perceptions of not fitting in either as a graduate student or older student, or finding the group hostile to their identities. A neutrois student shared that “I heard there was a transgender support group

… but it met so infrequently I never made it to a meeting.” One respondent described the only resource they knew about on their campus: “There is a GLBT group, but it has been and continues to be mostly exclusive to cisgender gay men and that culture. Transgender students haven’t really been welcomed.”

FTM-classified respondents were the most likely of the four categories of respondents (FTM, MTF, FTX, and MTX) to talk about the absence of groups on their campuses, making up 68.8% of respondents who mentioned that groups were not available at their institutions. Only one male-assigned respondent noted specifically that groups were not available. Four respondents (3 FTM, 1 MTF) explicitly indicated negative experiences with groups. Respondents who did not identify as genderqueer or another nonbinary label (referred to in the following sections as *non-genderqueer*) who mentioned groups were more likely to indicate that one was not available (22.7%) compared to genderqueer respondents (12.5%). Finally, graduate students were less likely to mention groups than undergraduate students. Overall, this means that the notable differences in experiences pertaining to groups is around the respondents who noted a lack of groups on campus: FTM-classified respondents, non-genderqueer respondents, and undergraduate respondents. For these respondents, groups may be more important resources than they are for other respondents.

A stark difference in experience emerged between White respondents and respondents of color. Of those who utilized peer groups at their institutions, 66.7% of respondents of color shared negative experiences, compared to only 9.3% of White respondents. Although the low number does not allow for assessing statistical significance, the discrepancy is striking and affirms the qualitative data in which

respondents shared that they encountered racism in student organizations.

Counseling, Healthcare, and Student Insurance

As illustrated in the qualitative findings, counseling, healthcare, and student insurance plans were a source of fear, stress, and worry for many respondents. The following subsections detail significant differences in experiences with these resources between trans students of different demographics.

Counseling. On-campus mental health counseling is an area of concern for many respondents, with a range from wishing that it were offered at their institution (n = 15) to noting explicitly that they avoided or had negative experiences with counseling. One-third of those who had access to counseling did not utilize it. Of the respondents who discussed utilizing on-campus counseling (n = 44), 43.2% shared negative experiences and only 34.1% mentioned positive experiences.

Respondents identifying as genderqueer were more likely to mention counseling than respondents who did not identify as genderqueer. Both genderqueer and non-genderqueer respondents who utilized counseling were similarly likely to describe their experiences as negative (46.4% of genderqueer and 37.5% of non-genderqueer respondents). Non-genderqueer respondents were more likely to mention that counseling was not available to them, at 30.6% compared to 8.9% of genderqueer respondents. Graduate students were less likely to mention counseling than undergraduate students. There are no apparent differences in the use or experience of counseling among respondents of different racial identities.

Healthcare and student insurance. Like counseling, on-campus healthcare and

insurance plans for students were areas of concern. Of those who mentioned healthcare or health insurance in their open-ended responses, 32.6% indicated that healthcare or health insurance was not available. This may have been in reference to trans-specific care and coverage, but that was often not specified. Of the remaining 58 respondents who had healthcare and/or health insurance available to them, 36.2% did not use it; of those who did use these resources, 62.2% reported negative experiences and 40.5% indicated positive experiences.

There were notable differences in discussion of healthcare and student insurance between graduate students and undergraduates. Graduate students were more likely to mention and use healthcare and student insurance, and significantly more likely to mention it as an available resource than undergraduates (see Table 5). When comparing students by assigned sex, genderqueer identity, and race, there were no statistically significant differences in the use of or experiences with healthcare and student insurance.

LGBTQ Centers

Analysis of respondents' experiences with LGBTQ centers includes LGBTQ coordinators who are part of a larger diversity or multicultural office. Of the 69 participants who indicated that their institution had an LGBTQ center or coordinator, 18.8 % (n = 13) chose not to utilize it. While there is insufficient data to compare by gender identity, there was a noticeable difference in the use of an LGBTQ center by assigned sex. More female-assigned respondents noted access to an LGBTQ center than male-assigned respondents, at 91.1% compared to 78.3%. Of the 51 female-assigned respondents who noted access to an LGBTQ center, only 13.7% did not use it. Of those

who did, 15.9% reported negative experiences. Of the 18 male-assigned respondents who mentioned access to an LGBTQ center, one-third did not use it. Of the two-thirds who did, three (25%) reported negative experiences. However, respondents who solely noted their experiences with an LGBTQ center were positive (n = 23) exceed the number of respondents who solely noted their experiences were negative (n = 8).

Comparing genderqueer with non-genderqueer respondents, a stark contrast appeared in perception of LGBTQ centers. While only one non-genderqueer respondent mentioned a negative experience with an LGBTQ center, nine (28.1%) genderqueer respondents did, with eight of those mentioning *only* negative experiences. Respondents of color were less likely to mention an LGBTQ center in their open-ended responses than White respondents, at 45.8% of respondents of color compared to 61.3% of White respondents. Because of the low number of respondents of color, no further analyses on their experiences with LGBTQ centers were statistically significant.

Gendered and Gender-Neutral Facilities

The presence of gender-neutral restrooms is important for students; many noted that they wished their campuses had "more gender neutral [*sic*] bathrooms." As seen in Table 5, there were respondents who reported positive and negative experiences with facilities such as restrooms. For the analysis, positive experiences included discussion of maps or lists of gender-neutral restrooms on campus, as well as comments such as this one from a trans man at a religious institution: "I was specifically shown the gender neutral [*sic*] bathrooms on campus and it was stated that they are for anyone, identifying any way." Negative experiences included comments such as: "I also would like to have

more gender neutral [*sic*] bathrooms on campus. As a gender non-conforming [*sic*] non-binary individual having to pick a gendered bathroom is a stressful situation." In cases such as this, the negative experience was not with a gender-neutral restroom itself; however, the lack of ample facilities resulted in a negative experience with accessing restrooms while on campus.

Thirty-three respondents indicated that their campus had gender-neutral restrooms, while 26 noted that their campus lacked gender-neutral restrooms (either entirely or in terms of signage) or lacked enough of them. Self-identified genderqueer respondents were much more likely to mention gender-neutral restrooms, at 58.7% compared to 30.6% of non-genderqueer respondents. There were no statistically significant differences in the availability or experience of gender-neutral restrooms for those genderqueer and non-genderqueer respondents who mentioned them. There were no significant differences in responses that mentioned gender-neutral restrooms by race.

Gender-inclusive housing (GIH) was not examined in the merged analysis due to the majority of respondents discussing GIH in response to the question: "What do you wish had been available at your school related to being transgender or transitioning? What would you like to see changed at your school?" Because the current study focused on resource use and access, this question was not coded in the same manner as questions asking about available resources. Additionally, as one respondent pointed out, "my university did not have on campus housing—it was a commuter school. So, no [gender inclusive housing] does not mean that they had housing and it wasn't inclusive, it just means that they didn't offer housing." The inability for respondents to note whether or not their institution offered housing at all was an oversight in the study design that

impacts the ability to conduct quantitative analysis around the question of GIH.

Policies and Procedures

For the merged analysis, coding for policies and procedures included mention and use of both nondiscrimination and name change policies (including legal name, preferred name, or unspecified name policies). Sixteen participants noted that there were no policies of this kind at their institution, whereas 56 noted that there were nondiscrimination and/or name change policies at their institution. Genderqueer respondents were much more likely to mention that their campus lacked policies or procedures of some nature; 31.4% indicated that policies were not available compared to only 13.5% of non-genderqueer respondents. Of respondents who discussed availability of policies and procedures at their institution, genderqueer respondents were more likely to have had negative experiences compared to non-genderqueer respondents.

Programming

Programming refers to both educational programming about trans people and issues as well as inclusive social programs and other programming not primarily concerning LGBTQ topics. Overall, self-identified genderqueer respondents were more likely to mention any type of programming than non-genderqueer respondents.

Educational programming. Though numbers by gender identity classification are too small to assess for statistical significance, it is noteworthy that FTX-classified respondents were the most likely of the four categories of respondents (FTM, MTF, FTX, and MTX) to mention educational programming, and also the most likely to have utilized

or participated in it. In turn, female-assigned respondents in general were overwhelmingly more likely to have participated in educational programming; 90.3% of female-assigned respondents indicated attending or participating in educational programming, compared to 66.7% of male-assigned respondents.

While students of color and White students mentioned and accessed educational programming at similar rates, the only explicitly positive comment about educational programming was from a student of color, and the only negative comments about educational programming were from White students. However, the majority of respondents who mentioned accessing educational programming did not describe their experiences at all, resulting in little data to assess the impact of this type of programming across different groups of trans students.

Inclusive programming. Few students (n = 27) mentioned programming that was not primarily educational, and therefore analyzing for differences in experience is unlikely to render statistically significant results. However, it can be noted that no students who mentioned social or other programming that did not primarily have an educational purpose indicated a negative experience with it. In fact, one-fourth of the respondents who attended social or other programming explicitly indicated that it was a positive experience.

Off-Campus Resources

Due to the fact that these resources were discussed by the fewest respondents, there are insufficient data to run statistically significant merged analysis on them. That said, it is pertinent that 23 respondents mentioned off-campus resources such as a

community LGBTQ center or another college's trans groups in their open-ended responses. Of these 23, six FTM-classified respondents also indicated that the off-campus resources were positive. Female-assigned respondents were far more likely to mention off-campus resources, comprising 19 of the 23 who did. Three of these respondents, all White, indicated that there were no off-campus resources available; as one FTM respondent shared, "there aren't any general LGBT services locally. The closest support group was an hours [*sic*] drive away." For students with no local off-campus services, the lack of institutional services could pose a problem.

Summary of Merged Analysis

In summary, the merged analysis demonstrates significant differences in the responses and experiences of genderqueer and non-genderqueer respondents, and few significant differences between respondents in other intersections of identity. The areas in which significant differences emerged were counseling, LGBTQ centers, and gendered and gender-neutral facilities. Additional notable differences emerged concerning peer groups and educational programming. These differences, and their contributions to research around trans college students, are explored further in the following discussion of the overall findings of the study.

Summary of All Findings

Several findings emerged from the data in this study. First, the quantitative analysis demonstrated that significant differences exist among trans students in the intersectional, demographic makeup of study respondents. These differences include the

significantly higher rate of graduation among female-assigned respondents and the significantly higher rate of stopping out among male-assigned respondents. Second, a set of resource “clusters” emerged through the qualitative analysis that captures the sources of support and important places of interaction with campus according to the respondents. These clusters were identified as: groups; counseling, healthcare, and student insurance; LGBTQ centers; gendered and gender-neutral facilities; policies and procedures; programming; inclusive classes; people; and off-campus resources. Third, in combining the quantitative and qualitative data significant differences in experiences of these resources by identity emerged. Among these are differences in the experiences of genderqueer respondents and respondents who are not genderqueer, differences between trans women and other trans respondents, differences between undergraduate and graduate students, and disparities affecting trans students of color. These are further explored in the following discussion and implications.

Table 4

Codes Utilized in the Merged Analysis

Experience with the Resource as Shared in Open-Ended Responses	Code	Experiences Analyzed	Codes Included in the Analysis	
			Yes	No
No mention	0	Respondent mentioned the resource	1,2,3,4,5,6	0
Resource not offered	1	The resource was available to the respondent	2,3,4,5,6	1
Resource not used	2	Respondent used the resource	3,4,5,6	2
Resource used; no comment	3	Respondent used the resource and had negative experiences	4,5	3,6
Resource used; negative comments only	4	Respondent used the resource and had positive experiences	5,6	3,4
Resource used; mixed comments	5			
Resource used; positive comments only	6			

Table 5

Differences in Experience of Campus Resources

Experience	Female-assigned	Male-assigned	Genderqueer	Not Genderqueer	Undergraduate	Graduate	White	Respondents of Color	Total
Groups									
Percent mentioned the resource	70.4	62.2	76.2	61.1	74	60.3	66.7	75	68.1
Percent had this resource at their institution	78.3	95.7	87.5	77.3	84.2	80	82.4	83.3	82.6
Percent used the resource	70.4	63.6	73.8	61.8	70.8	64.3	70.5	60	68.4
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	23.7	7.1⁺	19.4	19	23.5	11.1⁺	9.3⁺	66.7	19.2
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	28.9	28.6⁺	29	28.6	29.4	27.8	27.9	33.3⁺	28.8
Counseling									
Percent mentioned the resource	64.3	48.6	71.4*	50*	67.5*	50*	57.7	70.8	60
Percent had this resource at their institution	81	83.3	91.1*	69.4*	84.6	75.9	81.3	82.4	81.5
Percent used the resource	70.6	53.3	68.3	64	68.2	63.6	65.4	71.4	66.7
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	38.9	62.5	46.4	37.5	36.7	57.1	50	20⁺	43.2
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	36.1	25⁺	35.7	31.3	33.3	35.7	35.3	30⁺	34.1
Healthcare & Student Insurance									
Percent mentioned the resource	66.3	56.8	61.9	65.3	58.4	70.7	64	62.5	63.7
Percent had this resource at their institution	70.8	57.1	69.2	66	57.8*	78*	64.8	80	67.4

Table 5 continued

Experience	Female-assigned	Male-assigned	Genderqueer	Not Genderqueer	Undergraduate	Graduate	White	Respondents of Color	Total
Healthcare & Student Insurance continued									
Percent used the resource	65.2	58.3	70.4	58.1	53.8	71.9	63	66.7	63.8
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	60	71.4	68.4	55.6	57.1	65.2	65.5	50⁺	62.2
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	43.3	28.6	26.3	55.6	50	34.8	34.5	62.5	40.5
LGBTQ Center									
Percent mentioned the resource	57.1	62.2	69.8*	48.6*	54.5	63.8	61.3	45.8	58.5
Percent had this resource at their institution	91.1	78.3	86.4	88.6	92.9	81.1	86.8	90.9	87.3
Percent used the resource	86.3	66.7	84.2	77.4	84.6	76.7	81.4	80	81.2
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	15.9	25⁺	28.1	4.2⁺	18.2	17.4	16.7	25⁺	17.9
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	43.2	50	43.8	45.8	45.5	43.5	47.9	25⁺	44.6
Gendered and Gender-Neutral Restrooms									
Percent mentioned the resource	45.9	37.8	58.7**	30.6**	41.6	46.6	45	37.5	43.7
Percent had this resource at their institution	57.8	50	51.4	63.6	59.4	51.9	58	44.4⁺	55.9
Percent used the resource	92.3	85.7	94.7	85.7	89.5	92.9	89.7	100⁺	90.9
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	41.7	16.7⁺	44.4	25⁺	41.2	30.8	34.6	50⁺	36.7

Table 5 continued

Experience	Female-assigned	Male-assigned	Genderqueer	Not Genderqueer	Undergraduate	Graduate	White	Respondents of Color	Total
Gendered and Gender-Neutral Restrooms continued									
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	29.2	50^{+}	38.9	25^{+}	29.4	38.5	34.6	25^{+}	33.3
Policies and Procedures									
Percent mentioned the resource	53.1	54.1	55.6	51.4	53.2	53.4	54.1	50	53.3
Percent had this resource at their institution	76.9	80	68.6	86.5	80.5	74.2	80	66.7	77.8
Percent used the resource	85	93.8	79.2	93.8	87.9	87	85.4	100	87.5
Percent used the resource and had negative experiences	47.1	60	68.4	40	51.7	50	51.2	50^{+}	51
Percent used the resource and had positive experiences	35.3	60	52.6	36.7	48.3	35	41.5	50^{+}	42.9
Educational Programming									
Percent mentioned the resource	39.8	24.3	38.1	33.3	32.5	39.7	34.2	41.7	35.6
Percent had this resource at their institution	79.5	66.7	87.5	66.7	72	82.6	78.9	70	77.1
Percent used the resource	90.3	66.7^{+}	90.5	81.3	94.4	78.9	90	71.4	86.5

Note: $*p < .05$, $**p < .003$, $^{+}$ cell sizes were too small to test for statistical significance

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

This study produced numerous findings previously unexplored in published articles about trans students. Significant or notable among these are differences in the college experiences of nonbinary and genderqueer students from trans students who identified as male or female; differences in the college experiences of female-assigned and male-assigned trans students, specifically for trans women; and distinct needs of graduate students that differ from those of undergraduates.

Unique experiences of genderqueer students. The most significant observed differences in access to, use of, and experiences with campus resources were between genderqueer and nonbinary respondents and those who did not identify as genderqueer. Overall, genderqueer respondents who discussed resources in their open-ended responses appear more likely to have access to resources such as peer groups, counseling, educational programming about trans people, and an LGBTQ center. However, access to resources does not guarantee an inclusive and positive experience. FTX-classified respondents were slightly more likely to have negative experiences with healthcare and student insurance, and genderqueer respondents were slightly more likely to have negative experiences with an LGBTQ center than non-genderqueer respondents. All nonbinary respondents (genderqueer, FTX, MTX) were more likely to mention the lack

of gender-neutral restrooms and the lack of policies or effective procedures, often referring to a dearth of ways to indicate their preferred name in campus systems.

These findings are not surprising given the more recent awareness of nonbinary gender identities. Although genderqueer and nonbinary students have been included in student affairs research on trans students since the beginning (Bilodeau, 2005), more recent studies have begun to explore genderqueer and nonbinary experiences as distinct from other trans experiences (Nicolazzo, 2017). The negative experiences of respondents in the current study and lack of prior attention to genderqueer and nonbinary needs in areas such as healthcare and student records demonstrates that basic measures to help even those trans students who are not genderqueer are lacking and thus affect trans students of many identities. The findings of the current study highlight concretely the need to consider the diverse needs within the trans student population when developing policies and resources.

Lower resource use and negative experiences among trans women. Particular areas in which trans women and other male-assigned respondents did not use resources to the same extent as female-assigned respondents include: peer groups, LGBTQ centers, and educational programming. Areas in which male-assigned respondents reported more negative experiences include: healthcare and student insurance, LGBTQ centers, and inclusive classes. With the exception of healthcare and student insurance, how I interpret this finding is that even in LGBTQ or trans-specific spaces, trans women and other male-assigned trans individuals do not feel as included or safe as trans men and other female-assigned trans individuals. This points to the presence of transmisogyny in LGBTQ spaces in higher education.

Overall, trans women and other male-assigned respondents were least likely to persist in their post-secondary education, more likely to transfer, more likely to be enrolled in public institutions, and more likely to discuss negative experiences utilizing campus resources. Given the lower number of total responses from male-assigned people, I began to suspect a pattern like this would appear in the data. However, I was surprised that the data reflected such a large discrepancy. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) found that trans men attained higher levels of education than trans women (Grant et al., 2011), and perhaps the discrepancy in the current study is a reflection of that. Another explanation may be the later age at which trans women typically transition (Rosser et al., 2007); that is, there could simply be fewer male-assigned trans people in college if many trans women realize their identities or decide to come out later on. Regardless of the explanation, this remains: higher education institutions must do more to retain trans women.

Different needs and experiences of graduate students. Fifty-eight graduate student respondents and 77 undergraduate student respondents answered open-ended questions and were compared in the merged analysis. For the purposes of comparing graduate students and undergraduate students, responses of all students who indicated being a graduate student, even if attending the same institution they attended for their undergraduate degree, were classified together. Because of this, graduate student responses could have described resources utilized during their undergraduate career at a particular institution. However, since open-ended responses often described experiences at multiple institutions for those who attended more than one college or university (undergraduate or graduate), to truly understand the differences between graduate and

undergraduate experiences would require a more detailed level of analysis than that used in the current study.

That said, there were some significant differences between graduate and undergraduate students. Graduate students were less likely to discuss counseling and more likely to discuss healthcare and student insurance, suggesting, as did McKinney (2005), that older students may be at a later stage of transition than undergraduates. Graduate students also brought up conflicting roles when working as staff or instructors in addition to being students. These conflicting roles more often than not limited their access to resources such as counseling and student groups.

Possible barriers for students of color. The number of respondents of color in the sample was too small to assess statistically significant differences. However, unlike prior studies, the findings of the current study had sufficient respondents to provide quantitative evidence for the possibility of significant disparate experiences of trans students of color compared to White trans students. Most notably, the finding that two-thirds of respondents of color had negative experiences with peer groups, compared to only 9.3% of White respondents, demonstrates that racial disparities within the LGBTQ community may prevent trans students of color from accessing one of the most important resources for trans students. Future research must build upon this finding by including race in the analysis and addressing factors that affect the experiences of trans students of color.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study present numerous implications for practice and support for recommendations from prior studies. As with several prior studies (Catalano, 2015; Dugan et al., 2012; Pryor, 2015; Seelman et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2013), using the findings of the current study to support and further detail suggestions for practitioners contributes concretely to ending injustices that trans students face in higher education. Implications are detailed using the resource clusters identified in the qualitative and merged analyses.

Groups. Peer support groups, therapy groups, social organizations, and other formal or informal spaces where trans students could meet each other and receive support, information, and validation were clearly important to study participants. This affirms the findings of Bilodeau (2005) who described the developmental process of "entering a transgender community" (p. 40) and Nicolazzo (2017) who articulated the importance of "kinship networks" (p. 5). Pryor (2015) emphasized that informal "peer groups appeared to provide a space and opportunity for students to explore their identity, find friendship, and become actively engaged on campus" (p. 453). It is recommended that institutions not only support the existence of such groups or sponsor such groups, but also communicate to students their availability. Several respondents missed out on joining groups because they could not find accurate information about them, if they found any information at all. Conducting assessments to discover whether there are students who wish to attend but cannot can also help to alleviate the barrier of time and other conflicts. As some respondents indicated, they were connected to the LGBTQ community on their campus or had reached out. Starting with these students who wish to become

more involved but cannot is a way to begin to survey a hidden campus population.

Although the sample was too small to assess statistical significance, the finding that many more respondents of color shared negative experiences with peer groups than White respondents signals that further attention to the experiences of trans students of color must be made a priority. The challenges faced by trans students of color has also been explored by Nicolazzo (2016; 2017), who found that Black trans students may face the challenge of not feeling completely accepted in both the Black student community and the LGBTQ student community. Professionals can use these findings as a starting point to explore more deeply the needs and experiences of trans students of color on their campuses.

Counseling, healthcare, and student insurance. The negative experiences that respondents shared when accessing counseling and healthcare outweighed the positive experiences, and, as previous studies have indicated, this needs to change (Catalano, 2015; Goodrich, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014a; Singh et al, 2013). In terms of recommendations, one trans woman recent graduate shared, "I think it would be great having at least one counselor certified/educated on gender-identity [*sic*]. I don't know if that's realistic, but it would make things a lot easier. I was lucky enough to find a gender-therapist [*sic*] in town." Given the present dearth of education on LGBTQ issues in formal counselor and healthcare provider preparatory programs (Farmer, 2011; Obedin-Maliver et al., 2011), it is simply unlikely that every institution in the country would be able to hire a specialist in both counseling and in primary care who has already been trained in trans issues. A realistic option for colleges and universities to consider is routinely educating counseling and healthcare staff on trans inclusion, and ensuring that

professional development opportunities to continue this education are shared with and encouraged for these personnel. In the meantime, if there is already a practitioner familiar with trans-specific needs, it would be prudent for counseling and health centers to publicize this information, so that trans students do not need to rely on word of mouth as several respondents discussed.

Updated and vetted off-campus referrals can also serve as useful supports for trans students, provided that they are financially and logistically as accessible as on-campus options. As one nonbinary student noted, "I've attempted to see a gender therapist, but I don't have a car so getting there was impossible." With the majority of respondents to this study utilizing counseling and healthcare resources, access is crucial, no matter who provides it.

As indicated by the current study's findings, there is especially a need for more counseling staff to be aware of and sensitive to issues of genderqueer and nonbinary identities. These students are seeking out counseling on campus, but report negative experiences with the services. Additionally, there is a need for increased access to transition-related healthcare and student insurance for graduate students, who were more likely to discuss accessing or desiring medical transition care through their institution.

LGBTQ centers. The discrepancies in use of LGBTQ centers affirms that such centers, indeed all student affairs offices and resources, need to be proactively, visibly, and vocally trans-inclusive. Not only do trans students need to feel welcome as part of the LGBTQ umbrella, but the diversity of trans students—genderqueer, binary, stealth, out, questioning, and many more—needs to be welcomed within the trans umbrella. The findings of this study indicate that trans women and other male-assigned trans students

feel less welcome in LGBTQ centers than other trans students. This is similar to Garvey and Rankin's (2015) finding that "LGBTQ-specific campus areas" appear to be less comfortable or appealing to men and trans or gender nonconforming students (p. 384). A place for LGBTQ centers to start is by working with these particular student populations to determine what would make a center a more welcoming place for them. As part of this process, practitioners can examine the impacts of oppressive systems such as racism and transmisogyny within the campus LGBTQ community. Jourian (2017) notes in particular that LGBTQ centers can "benefit from adopting a queer- and trans*-centered intersectional anti-oppressive framework in their approaches to working with students" (p. 262). It is recommended that LGBTQ coordinators and center staff assess the unique context and climates on their campuses, and use the findings of this study as guidance to ensure that trans students, especially trans women and other male-assigned trans students, are included and heard in any evaluations and plans of action.

Gendered and gender-neutral facilities. Many respondents, particularly genderqueer and nonbinary respondents, pointed out that campuses need more gender-neutral restrooms. Providing one or two on campus is insufficient to meet the needs of students who feel unsafe or experience discrimination and harassment in gendered restrooms, as well as to meet the needs of students who do not identify within the gender binary. Additionally, gender-neutral locker rooms are important in recreation facilities such as gyms and pools. One student indicated, "there were no gender non-conforming locker rooms, even for the pool (where you have to change)." When asked about negative experiences on campus, a stealth respondent wrote: "The locker rooms. The locker rooms! I love swimming, but could barely swim when I was there because I was

unwilling to drop my pants in front of others." Gender neutral restrooms and locker rooms are not simply a matter of convenience and privacy, but a matter of equal access to an institution's physical spaces; providing equal access ensures that trans students have the option to participate fully. Calls for more gender-neutral facilities on campuses have been made for over a decade (Beemyn, 2003). It is clear from the findings of this study that the need to create more of these facilities continues to exist for today's trans students, particularly genderqueer and nonbinary students.

While the difficulties with gendered housing is not a new finding (Catalano, 2015; Seelman, 2014a; Seelman 2014b; Seelman et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2013), many respondents in the current study indicated that gender-inclusive housing (GIH) was added after they graduated and therefore they were unable to benefit from this inclusive practice. Thus, for professionals working on implementing GIH options at their institutions, it is important to emphasize the positive impact that GIH has on trans students, and expedite the process to ensure it is available as soon as possible for those who wish to take advantage of it. Additionally, as noted by Krum et al. (2013), it is important to solicit input on GIH options from prospective students and students who do not currently reside on campus, in order to gauge what may be dissuading potential residents from applying to on-campus housing. As the current study has demonstrated, including alumni input can also be beneficial to decide on the best GIH options for a given institution. Additionally, as GIH options expand and are implemented on more campuses, future researchers should examine any differences among trans students of different intersectional identities in attitudes toward GIH as well as differences in preferred options.

Policies and procedures. Policies and procedures include both nondiscrimination and name change policies. For institutions that do not yet include gender identity and gender expression in their nondiscrimination statements, it is imperative that this be added, regardless of state-level or other local protections. The perception of these policies as a resource to respondents in this study underscores the vital role they play in helping trans students feel included and safe at their institutions. For some respondents, these policies were perceived as the only resource available to them, which points to Taylor, Dockendorff, and Inselman's (2017) finding that nondiscrimination policies are "necessary, but not sufficient" (p. 11). As this study has demonstrated, trans inclusion does not stop at the addition of a nondiscrimination policy. In fact, inclusion barely starts with the addition of these policies due to the inability for some students to utilize them when targeted by discrimination. All that said, if adding these classes to the nondiscrimination statement is not possible or would be difficult, ensuring that existing local protections are described in visible and accessible places is important so that students are aware of available recourse if they face discrimination. An LGBTQ coordinator or student legal services could also be a source of support in helping students report discrimination and ensuring that it is addressed.

Name change procedures need to be easier to access for students seeking both legal and preferred name changes. Centralized systems can help with this process, as can having clear guidance available such as a checklist or an advocate who can help with ensuring that the name change is processed across campus. For preferred name changes, ensuring that the option is not just present, but accessible and utilized is important. As one student shared, "I have no idea why it's on there if no one even sees it." Respondents

to prior studies (Catalano, 2015; Seelman et al., 2012) have discussed the necessity of resources to be useful, to be more than just for show. As this student's statement demonstrates, follow-through with actions taken to support trans students is necessary.

Programming. Educational programming about trans issues was present on many, but not all, campuses. Students who attended institutions with few resources often asked for educational programming to help staff, faculty, and fellow students better understand what trans is and how to avoid discriminating. While institutions without programming may be tempted to ask students to plan and provide this type of education, staff educators or trans consultants need to be the primary facilitators of it. Some respondents were eager to provide education to their peers and campus community, and students seeking this leadership opportunity should continue to be supported in developing their skills as educators. However, other respondents felt burdened by a responsibility that they may not have sought out in the first place, and experienced burnout when taking on the necessary task of educating others in addition to being a student. Shifting the burden of education to staff or consultants may also help students have the opportunity to create more inclusive programming opportunities, events, and spaces that center and celebrate trans students without focusing on educating others about what trans means. This study found that there was a disproportionate focus on educational programming, even as students described enjoying the more social inclusive programming and desiring more of it.

Inclusive classes. Coursework in women's and gender studies (WGST) and LGBTQ studies was not always trans-inclusive. Faculty in these departments are encouraged to add trans topics to the curriculum, and to ensure that trans voices and

concerns are discussed in classes. While all subject areas and departments on campus need to be affirming spaces for trans students, respondents particularly expected these departments related to gender to be familiar with trans identities and issues. However, too often, they were unwelcoming to trans people or insensitive to the intersections of trans identities and trans community history with gender, feminism, and the larger LGBTQ community, to the disappointment of respondents who interacted with these subject areas. This was a particular concern for trans women who were negatively impacted by experiencing transmisogyny in WGST courses.

Outside of WGST and LGBTQ studies, it is imperative that faculty consider the needs of trans students in their classes. As Pryor (2015) found, trans students can have negative classroom experiences ranging from "indifference [to] blatant discrimination" from faculty (p. 454). The current study included respondents from a variety of majors and graduate programs; it is important that faculty across the board take the needs of their trans students to be respected and included seriously when taking roll call, addressing students in class, discussing gender as part of the curriculum across disciplines, and otherwise engaging with students on gender or LGBTQ issues.

People. Supportive staff and faculty were vital resources for respondents to this study. While some respondents noted the informal connections with LGBTQ and allied staff and faculty, others noted individuals who held visible roles related to the LGBTQ community, such as an LGBTQ coordinator. Related to the vital role played by LGBTQ and allied staff and faculty, a major finding of the current study is that is that trans students define a variety of individuals on campus as part of their support network. Professionals and faculty should feel empowered in the supportive role they play for

these students, and, if they are interested, be unafraid of being a source of guidance for trans students as they transition and navigate their college years. The number of individuals who can take on this support or mentoring role can be increased through further staff and faculty training on trans sensitivity, regardless of role or functional area. Nicolazzo (2017) described the importance of people and community in hir findings on kinship networks. Supporting the development of informal connections and networks can be invaluable to trans student resilience.

Off-campus resources. Especially in more rural or conservative areas, off-campus resources, including those at neighboring institutions, were important for respondents. This was also the case for Nicolazzo's (2017) participants who created kinship networks that encompassed off-campus community as well as on-campus. To better publicize off-campus resources and opportunities, they can be aggregated into a list and published online or distributed in resource offices like an LGBTQ center or counseling center. Another possible way to connect students to off-campus resources is through partnering on programming, groups, or advocacy.

Other implications for practice. Certainly, this list is not exhaustive, and other functional areas in higher education can also make changes to work toward further inclusion for trans students. Staff, faculty, and other professionals working with students should examine the ways in which gender shows up in their work (Inselman & Dries, 2016). As Nicolazzo (2017) describes, "from the mundane and tacit to the provocative and explicit, educators must ask themselves questions about how gender influences their actions, attitudes, behaviors, dress, policies, and practices" (p. 144). After examining where gender occurs in their work, staff and faculty should then consider how those ways

are inclusive or not inclusive to trans students, and make adjustments to ensure easier and more inclusive access to and use of services and resources provided.

Implications for Research

Both my own research process and the findings of this study present implications for future research. Primarily, the presence of differences in experience affirms that future research needs to take into account the in-group diversity of trans students, especially of genderqueer students and trans students who are not genderqueer. The current study also provides data to support the need for future research to utilize intersectionality and examine further the experiences of trans students of color and trans women, echoing the similar calls of Jourian (2017) and Nicolazzo (2017). Secondly, future research needs to have large sample sizes of a diversity of identities and positionalities to better compare amongst trans students of different gender histories and experiences, as well as to better explore the disparities and unique experiences of trans students of color. Although the size of the trans population is still unknown, there are newer estimates (Flores, Herman, Gates, & Brown, 2016) and nationwide studies (e.g., James et al., 2016) that can help future researchers establish sample size parameters as well as understand better what the population of trans students looks like compared to the broader trans population. Because of the low sample sizes for some groups in this study (such as people of color and MTX-classified respondents), I was unable to conduct the level of intercategorical analysis originally planned.

An additional implication for future research is to consider methodological decisions that are sensitive to the in-group diversity of the trans community and the

effects of new and rapidly-changing terminology. As I noted earlier, some respondents took issue with terminology used in the survey instrument, and I have no doubt that some readers will take issue with the terminology I have used within this paper. Recent studies have moved away from providing definitions for trans terminology due to potential of erasing nuances captured by individual identity labels (Catalano, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2017), as well as the observation that "administrative gender classification … is a major vector of violence" toward trans people (Spade, 2011). Future researchers, especially those using online survey methods or quantitative methods, would benefit from carefully examining language choices, or perhaps even waiting to conduct research with potentially "reductive" methods until there is more exploratory data on which to base future research (Catalano, 2017, p. 237).

The purpose of this study was to examine differences in resource use and access, primarily by assigned sex and gender identity. The findings demonstrate an observable difference in campus experiences of trans students of different identities and positionalities. Further research using these data will examine this difference by exploring the impact of stage of transition, disclosure, and other experiential lenses that respondents to this study shared. This future research will make use of quantitative data unexplored in the current study as well as further analysis of the qualitative data along these additional vectors.

Conclusion

With the current study I sought to explore differences in access to, use of, and experiences with campus resources by trans students of different identities. Data from the

mixed-methods survey showed that there were significant differences of experience within the trans student population; specifically, between genderqueer and non-genderqueer students, trans women and other trans students, undergraduate and graduate students, and students of color and White students. Based on these findings recommendations for practice and for future research have been made.

The findings in this study provide a basis for continued research into the diversity of trans students, and thus fill an important gap in the research on this student population. More and more trans students are discovering who they are, coming out, transitioning, and living as their authentic selves every day. From students who transitioned as young children, to students who realized they were neither a woman nor a man during one of their college courses, to students who view their transition primarily as a medical concern, to students who hold a deeply spiritual and cultural gender identity, trans students span a vast diversity of experiences. To best serve the needs of these students during their time in college and graduate school, and to improve the experiences of trans students in higher education, it is more important than ever to be attentive to this diversity.

APPENDIX A

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Seeking Participants for Transgender College/Graduate School Experiences Study

I am conducting research on the experiences of transgender and transitioning students in college and graduate school in the United States. The study seeks to fill gaps in research by looking at students of different stages of transition and their experiences at their campuses.

If you identify as transgender, transsexual, or as a gender different from your gender assigned at birth, and have attended a college or university in the United States within the past 5 years, I invite you to participate by filling out this online questionnaire: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TransHESA**. Those who complete the questionnaire will have the opportunity to enter to win a $20 Amazon gift card.

People who have lived full-time in a gender different from their gender assigned at birth for at least six months while in college or graduate school, who have been in the process of medical gender transition for at least six months while in college or graduate school, or who consider themselves stealth, are especially encouraged to participate to help fill this gap in research.

If you have any questions you are welcome to contact me at kinselman@sa.utah.edu.

Kyle Inselman

Graduate Student, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership &Policy

University of Utah

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Statement of Consent

The purpose of this research study is to assess the if student experiences on college campuses vary among transgender students based on the stage of gender transition and level of disclosure of their transgender status. I am doing this study because existing research has not assessed this kind of detail about transgender students, and doing so will better inform higher education professionals in making campuses more welcoming and inclusive of transgender students.

For this study, *transgender* refers broadly to persons identifying as a sex and/or gender different than that assigned at birth (what sex and/or gender they were "born as"). This includes people who desire to transition gender or are in the process of gender transition, taking intentional steps toward living socially as another gender, being legally recognized as another gender, or medically changing the body's sex characteristics.

To be eligible for this study, you must a) be 18 years of age or older, b) have been a student in college or graduate school in the United States within the past five years, and c) have identified as transgender, transsexual, or as a gender different from your gender assigned at birth during part or all of your time in college or

graduate school.

If you are eligible for this study, I would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire to share your experiences in higher education. The risks involved in this study are minimal. After completing the questionnaire you will have an opportunity to enter to win a $20 Amazon gift card for your participation.

All of the data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the researcher. Any published data and results will be de- identified and made anonymous.

If you have any questions, comments, or complaints, or if you feel you have been harmed by this research please contact Kyle Inselman, Department of Educational Leadership & Policy, University of Utah, at (801) 585-5032 or by email at kinselman@sa.utah.edu.

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu.

It should take about 20-40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to take part. You can choose not to finish the questionnaire or omit any question you prefer not to answer without penalty or loss of benefits. By beginning this questionnaire, you are giving your consent to participate.

Thank you so much for participating in this study. Your participation is important and will benefit transgender and transitioning students across the country.

* I affirm that I:

- am 18 years old or over,
- meet the above eligibility requirements,
- and consent to participate in this study.

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
    - Male
    - Female
3. What is your current gender identity? (Check all that apply)
    - Male
    - Female
    - Trans male/Trans man
    - Trans female/Trans woman
    - Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
    - Different identity (please state): _____
4. What is your sexual orientation? (Check all that apply)
    - Gay/lesbian/same-gender attraction
    - Bisexual/pansexual
    - Queer
    - Straight/heterosexual
    - Asexual
    - Different identity (please state): _____

5. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)
   - Black or African American
   - American Indian or Native American or Alaska Native
   - Asian or Pacific Islander
   - Latino/a or Hispanic or Chicano/a
   - White or European American
   - Arab or Middle Eastern
   - Multiracial or mixed race
6. Before I began college, at least one of my parents:
   - earned a bachelor's degree or higher
   - completed some college but did not earn a bachelor's degree
   - My parents did not attend any college
   - Unsure/don't know
7. Please list any other identities that are important to you: _____

Experiences in Higher Education

For the remainder of the survey, you will be asked questions about your experiences in college or graduate school. Questions will say "college" to refer to both undergraduate and graduate-level degrees. Remember that information collected is kept confidential and anonymous.

If you attended more than one college or university in the past five years, you will have the opportunity to answer questions for up to three schools. You only need to answer questions about the colleges or universities that you attended while transitioning

or while identifying as transgender. Please keep answers on each page focused on the school you list at the top.

If you have already graduated, please answer questions on the remainder of the survey thinking about when you were a student.

8. Name of your college or university: _____
9. What type of institution is the school listed above?
    - Community college
    - Public college or university
    - Private college or university
    - Other (please specify): _____
10. What is the most recent year that you attended the school listed above?
    - Currently enrolled
    - 2015 (not currently enrolled)
    - 2014
    - 2013
    - 2012
    - 2011
11. At the school listed above, I am/was:
    - an undergraduate student
    - a graduate student
    - I have been both an undergraduate student and a graduate student at this school
12. At the school listed above, I majored in or studied: _____

13. Does/did the school listed above offer any of the following?

	Yes	No	Unsure/Don't Know
"Gender identity" and/or "gender expression" in the nondiscrimination policy	○	○	○
GLBT office or center	○	○	○
Gender-inclusive or gender-affirming housing options	○	○	○
Transgender peer groups or social programming	○	○	○
Counseling services for gender transition	○	○	○
Student insurance coverage for hormones and/or transition surgery	○	○	○

Please share any details or comments. _____

14. Did you graduate from the school listed above?

- I am currently enrolled.
- Yes, I graduated from this school.
- No, I transferred to another school (right away or after a break). No, I stopped attending school altogether and have not graduated.

Please share any details or comments: _____

15. Did you attend any other colleges or universities in the past five years?

- Yes [Selecting this option led to the same "Experiences in Higher Education" section for a second institution and, if selected again, a third institution.]
- No

Campus Experiences

The following questions ask about your experiences accessing resources on campus. When thinking about resources, consider anything available to students on campus, provided by the school or by fellow students. These may include, but are not limited to: counseling, healthcare, insurance, support, student groups, social events,

academic courses or programs, name or gender forms, housing, restrooms, locker rooms, and so forth.

If you attended more than one college or university, feel free to specify which school you are referring to when answering the following questions, and to compare and contrast your experiences at each school.

16. What resources, programming, courses, or policies are/were at your school related to being transgender or transitioning? Please describe which of these you DID use or attend.
17. Are you aware of resources, programming, courses, or policies at your school related to being transgender or transitioning that you DID NOT use? If so, please describe them and your reason for not using them.
18. What do you wish had been available at your school related to being transgender or transitioning? What would you like to see changed at your school?

The next two questions ask about general campus resources. These may include, but are not limited to: registrar, library, financial aid, student union, career services, Greek life, multicultural center, and so forth.

19. Please describe any POSITIVE experiences accessing general campus resources as a transgender person.
20. Please describe any NEGATIVE experiences accessing general campus resources as a transgender person.

Transition Information

Little research has been done on the experiences of transgender students at different stages of gender transition. The questions on this page will help the researcher learn more about different experiences of transgender students at different stages of transition. Questions will say "college" to refer to both undergraduate and graduate-level degrees.

If you have already graduated, please think about when you were a student when answering these questions.

21. Please describe your transition during college or graduate school in your own words. This can include when you came out, any changes in your identity or how you labeled yourself, medical steps you took, or anything else important to you.
22. How often do/did you agree with this statement? "Being transgender is an important part of my identity."
    - Always
    - Most of the time
    - Sometimes
    - Occasionally
    - Never
    - Unsure/don't know

    Please share any details or comments. ______
23. When did you begin to live full-time in a gender that is different from your gender assigned at birth?
    - I began to live full-time before college.

- I began to live full-time during college, and remained at the same school when I transitioned.
- I began to live full-time during college, and switched to a different school when I transitioned.
- I did not live full-time in college.

24. If you changed your name or gender on campus records or ID in college, please describe this process, including what, if anything, was required for you to obtain in order to make this change.
25. Please mark below what healthcare, if any, you have received related to gender transition. (Check all that apply)

	Had it before college	Had it while in college	Wanted it while in college, but did not have it in college	Do not want it	N/A
Counseling	○	○	○	○	○
Gender-related health care (annual exams, Pap smears, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Hormone treatment	○	○	○	○	○
Laser hair removal or electrolysis	○	○	○	○	○
Top/chest/breast surgery (chest reduction, enlargement, or reconstruction)	○	○	○	○	○
Female-to-male hysterectomy	○	○	○	○	○
Male-to-female facial feminization surgery	○	○	○	○	○
Male-to-female bottom/genital surgery (removal of testes, creation of vagina, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Female-to-male bottom/genital surgery (clitoral release, creation of penis, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○

Please share any details or comments. _____

26. For the above healthcare, what, if anything, were you able to receive using on-campus healthcare or student insurance?

- Counseling
- Gender-related healthcare (annual exams, Pap smears, etc.)
- Hormone treatment
- Laser hair removal or electrolysis
- Top/chest/breast surgery
- Hysterectomy
- Facial feminization surgery
- Bottom/genital surgery
- I was unable to receive any of the above using on-campus healthcare or student insurance I did not seek any of the above healthcare in college

Please share any comments or details. _____

27. Is there anything else you would like to share about your gender identity or transition experiences as a student?

Talking About Being Transgender

Little research has looked at who students tell about their gender transitions, or why they tell some people but not others. The questions on this page will help the researcher learn more about different experiences of transgender students who have come out to different people. Questions will say “college” to refer to both undergraduate and graduate-level degrees.

If you have already graduated, please think about when you were a student when answering these questions.

28. How many people do/did you tell that you're transgender?

    Please select N/A ONLY if the category does not apply, e.g. if you did not have classes outside of your department, or did not have an on-campus job.

	All	Most	Some	None	N/A
People who are close friends	○	○	○	○	○
Casual friends or classmates	○	○	○	○	○
People in the LGBT community at my school	○	○	○	○	○
My roommates (on or off campus)	○	○	○	○	○
Other students in my residence hall	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty or professors (outside of my department)	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty or professors (in my department)	○	○	○	○	○
Administrative staff (e.g. registrar, housing staff, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Counselors or mental healthcare staff	○	○	○	○	○
Medical healthcare staff	○	○	○	○	○
Coworkers or work colleagues at my on-campus job	○	○	○	○	○
Immediate family (e.g. parents, siblings, grandparents, caretakers)	○	○	○	○	○

Please share any details or comments. _____

29. What is/was your primary reason to TELL some people that you're transgender?

30. What is/was your primary reason to NOT TELL some people that you're transgender?

31. Do/did some people perceive you as transgender even if you didn't tell them?

32. If you have not already, please share if reasons to tell or not tell some people that you're transgender changed as you transitioned or changed from one school to another.

Final Thoughts

Thank you so much for your participation in this study so far! These last three questions ask you to reflect on your overall experiences in college or graduate school as a transgender student.

If you attended more than one college or university, feel free to specify which school you are referring to when answering the following questions, and to compare and contrast your experiences at each school.

33. Have you ever advocated for yourself as a student? Please describe any experiences with self- advocacy.
34. What have you found supportive on campus? Who do/did you consider part of your support network?
35. Do you have any additional comments you would like to share regarding your experiences as a student?

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