



DRAFT

**Oregon State Board of Higher Education  
Student Participation and Completion Committee**

November 13, 2008, 1-4:30 P.M.

Location: Linn-Benton Community College

**MEETING NOTES**

**Attendance**

Dalton Miller-Jones, Chris Cronin (phone), Eda Davis-Lowe, Brian Fox, Jackie Grant (phone), Agnes Hoffman (phone), Lew Frederick, Jon Joiner, Patricia Martinez-Orozco, David McDonald, Nan Poppe, Rosemary Powers, Larry Roper, Hilda Rosselli (phone), Alex Sanchez, Joanne Sorte, Diana Sloane (phone), Gayle Yamasaki (phone), Di Saunders (phone), Joe Holliday, Endi Hartigan, Bridget Burns, Stephanie Carnahan, Ruth Keele, Mark Endsley (phone).

**Meeting notes:** Endi Hartigan

**Welcome and introductions:**

Dalton Miller-Jones welcomed committee members and participants, and everyone present and on the phone provided introductions.

Miller-Jones introduced the first topic, the Board of Higher Education Diversity Report. The goal was to discuss what key results committee would like see achieved by the institutions, to help guide recommendations to the Board. Miller-Jones said that the critical issues raised by this report received close attention by the Board, and were discussed over the course of two meetings. The task for the committee is to reflect on desired outcomes. The committee's input, in combination with input and discussions with the president and the Board, will result in recommendations at the January Board retreat.

First, Miller-Jones asked for open comments on the report. David McDonald said that if the Board and the System does what is typically done with discussions on diversity, which is to talk about it then move on, it will accomplish nothing. We really need to get some pointed action items, whether for policy, funding, or support. If the campuses are serious about diversity then we as a group need to set expectations for minimal actions. It's in our interest at an institutional level as well as social interest that universities truly open their doors to students of all backgrounds. Miller-Jones agreed that we want to talk about concrete actions, assigned responsibilities, and points of accountability, rather than go through the numbers again.

Larry Ropers said that after the legal decision regarding University of Massachusetts, universities could not use race as a criteria for scholarships, and each institution had to craft their own policy. After this, there was a lot of unevenness and not much guidance on how to go about doing that. At OSU, the university decided to take U-Mass and other scholarship money and to put it in a diversity achievement

## DRAFT

scholarship pool, with very broad criteria, which included also low-income as well as under-represented minorities, students with disabilities, and students who had demonstrated engagement with underrepresented communities. As a university system, we haven't broadly endorsed a broad discussion on what encompasses diversity. Whatever we do, we need to figure out how to create some shared beliefs on the type of diversity we need and for which we need support. We may not go back to a university-wide scholarship program but it seems as if we could come up with some guidance about expectations for institutions, and challenge them or require them to honor what these expectations.

Miller-Jones added that this needs to be specific, and an ongoing mechanism. He reviewed the charge of this committee with respect to underrepresented groups, and said that the diversity report gives us pause with respect to the numbers. We need to look at quantitative accountability. We need to look at the programs that have been charged with this, and make sure they are reporting on it. Then there is the difficult issue of identifying the practices that works.

David McDonald added that we can't afford to worry about coming up with the perfect definition of diversity instead of the actions that lead to that definition. There is no definition that will work for everybody. Especially in a tough economic period we have to make it clear that limited budget does not mean we should not do this. If we are committed to this we should make it a priority now. At WOU, they have doubled the diversity scholarships in the last year and are hiring bilingual staff. McDonald said if we want to look at instant measures we can look at campus success rates at retaining students of color because this is one place we can take initial steps right now, and resources can have an impact now.

Miller-Jones commended WOU for manifesting a commitment by monitoring, targeted initiatives, and working with existing budgets. He said campuses can realign expenditures and budgets to match those goals.

McDonald said that 20% of the entering class this year and last year at WOU were students of color; they are launching a Latino success initiative. The Latino populations are growing the fastest and having the least amount of success K-16, so WOU is putting money into play here and monitoring this regularly.

Chris Cronin asked, when the diversity report is presented to the Board of Higher Education, whether progress on diversity for each campus is part of the required reporting. Miller-Jones clarified that it is a required line for reporting but there has not been a mandate that goals be set and that these goals be reached. That is the purpose of these conversations today. For example, at WOU there is a commitment from the president, provost, vice presidents, etc. to engage in a specific set of practices and establish goals to report on whether these are met. The policy piece for this would mean for us to recommend to the Board that each campus in presenting its annual reports around its portfolio state its goals for recruitment, and state its intent to meet those goals through a specifically stated set of practices. Then we could ask them to tell us in some report, a year or two year, how well they are doing in terms of meeting that. Other people have said that there should be a policy statement for each campus. Another statement is that campuses should identify how they make this commitment manifest in terms of reporting responsibility and specific features of programs they might engage in.

## DRAFT

Joanne Sorte said she appreciates the concept of targeted goals; we have an arrangement in which each institution can be bumping against each other. People generally go to college in their own parameter. To change those demographics, universities will need to go to students out of their geographic areas. Each university's region is different and they have drawing strengths that are different. Whereas Sorte doesn't think the Board should answer this for each college and university, there are opportunities we can miss to provide easy access for students to apply to all universities. We need some type of umbrella agreement as a state that is broad, focused, and makes it easy for students.

Miller-Jones clarified Sorte's suggestion to have students apply, not to a specific campus but to the entire system, including to community colleges. If there was a general application that was shared and students indicated their preference for a campus, it would facilitate things in a lot of ways.

Sorte added that she was also encouraging focused activities at the institutions that would be individualized and targeted to specific communities, and group of students, to fit the character of the particular institution. She would like to see a statewide philosophy of higher education that is an invitation to Oregonians to pursue college. The Board or Chancellor could make a statement statewide that all students are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Jackie Grant said she wants to weigh in on the conversation on what developments of the Oregon Indian Coalition for Postsecondary Education, on what they developed as a working draft at the Indian Education Summit. Grant said they have a set of things that they think are specific to Native American students, while others specific to all students. They want to bring awareness and knowledge as it relates to cultural fraud for Indian and Alaskan native students, the impact this has on campus resources, and on students in the system. This is going on where students may feel they have more autonomy; if they claim Native American status they might be eligible for aid. They also want to support pipeline programs that help students to gain the skills to become successful, such as early outreach, summer bridge, etc. They would like to see the OUS Chancellor's Office develop memorandums of agreement between institutions across the state, and to put into place key positions at the institutions working together for Native American students across all campuses. Grant said that they are learning a lot from what Native American leaders have accomplished in neighboring states, Idaho and Washington, and Oregon is far behind in this area.

Mark Endsley said that on the common application situation, this has been discussed at some length at the ICAR group, and they have serious concerns. A steering of students toward a campus of adult choice may be a misrepresentation of students' best interest; when students are applying to individual campuses after doing a search that may imply a careful evaluation of what that college represents to them. For example, when the University of California campus routes students, it may be more in the university's interest than in the student's. We need to be cautious about who we are serving.

Miller-Jones cautioned that he doesn't want this to turn into a detailed analysis and critique but wants overall input.

Lew Frederick said that he didn't hear anyone suggest that we were talking about adults routing students; a general application would just mean you wouldn't have to go through individual institutions.

## DRAFT

We could make it a point that routing would not be appropriate. He reiterated Dave McDonald's comments about the retention aspect. Improving retention encourage future groups to attend particular institutions; what happens is if a student comes home saying they are getting support, the younger folks listen to that. That will increase the numbers going to the school and also provide a sense of what they are missing at the K-12 level.

Agnes Hoffman asked about the role of the POP with respect to implementing these changes.

Miller-Jones said that the POP if funded would allocate resources but does not have mandates for allocation of responsibility. The POP gives us some domains to think about elaborating policy, and Miller-Jones has been toying with the idea about what should be expectations. One of the things we need to is the percentage of African-Americans and Native students who graduated from high school last year, who we ought to be seeing show up at the university. We can worry a bit here about EOU being in a community that doesn't have many African American students, etc., but this is the crux.

Joe Holliday asks what importance the committee sees to diversifying the faculty and staff at the universities.

Alex Sanchez said that he teaches a course at OSU on leadership at community colleges, and one thing he emphasizes is that the tone is set at the top. If you are talking about a state system, we should consider, is there some way beside the policy or part of the policy that the Chancellor would hold each college president accountable for meeting these goals? Part of these would be diversification of faculty and staff; there certainly ought to be an emphasis on faculty and staff as well as students because this relates to retention and completion. There is a very active program at OSU bringing faculty of color in and involving those faculty in interacting with students of color; the state can and should show leadership in this.

Sorte said that diversification of faculty and staff is hard work, when you live in a state that is not particularly diverse and we have very few urban areas. At OSU they bring fabulous people to campus to interview, and they get selected elsewhere. I know there are a lot of good efforts going on, and people are interested in having a more diverse collegial group but it is hard work.

Miller-Jones asked if faculty recruitment is easier than staff recruitment.

McDonald said yes, but recruiting if you are not in Portland are carries its own challenges. At WOU, we may be very successful in recruiting younger professionals, but then they go to the next step. It is hard to long term sustain that nucleus of faculty/staff of color. The challenges are dynamic but that doesn't mean that we can't hold universities accountable for making a strong effort, but we need to be realistic about measuring success.

Jackie Grant said that regarding the challenges of retaining faculty and staff of color, and investing in those folks who were invested in Oregon and bringing those into this circle of academia and education. There was movement there but she doesn't know where that discussion went.

## DRAFT

Miller-Jones said that we need to investigate past practices, and practices in other states, since this is not unique to Oregon. We need to look at who has succeeded in this, or who has made it part of their implicit goals.

Dr. Rosemary Powers said that on diversifying faculty and staff, we could also hold universities accountable to how well we diversify our knowledge about these issues among ourselves, including professional development among faculty. We can have some goals for that, i.e., how much diversity do you have in your curriculum, etc.

Dalton Miller-Jones invited those who did not have time to respond to the discussion item on diversity recommendations to send that by e-mail.

Larry Roper said that one of the things he has found working with senior leaders is that while they may have had a commitment they didn't have the capacity to lead in these areas. They may need help to describe the future they want to work toward. One thing we can be helpful in is to describe the future toward which we think this state university system should be working. We need to give the person a picture of the leadership we want to see in this regard, rather than just asking the Chancellor or other leaders to figure it out.

Dalton Miller-Jones said that we need to have pulled these items together for the January board retreat meeting. Yvette Webber-Davis has a growing list of possible policy items that she is trying to frame. This is exciting given what our mission is as a committee and where the Board and the presidents are; they seem ready to do something meaningful.

### **Panel: LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning) Student Barriers and Best Practices**

Dalton Miller-Jones noted that the main agenda item today is to hear from a panel as a forum to understand the kinds of barriers and limiting experiences that students and faculty and staff experience that limit the degree to which they are represented in postsecondary education. Today we want to focus on LGBTQ student barriers and best practices. Dalton welcomed and thanked the panelists for taking the time to present.

### **Chicora Martin, Director, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Education and Support Services, Assistant Director, Office of Student Life, University of Oregon**

Chicora Martin introduced herself, noting that she came out to Oregon specifically to do LGBTQ work, and came from the Southeast. She has experience with conservative campuses with tension on these issues, and was excited to come to Oregon to deal with same things in different ways. Martin emphasized that it is important to say every name and every letter in LGBTQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning. The issues are different for everyone who comes into this "group" and many students meet multiple categories. One of the most important things we've talked about at UO is on how students learn. We know some campuses in the K-12 system are preparing many students for college. Nevertheless, many students come, asking, "is this going to be on the test?" Now we are looking at more transformative learning models that assume that students must be engaged as complete people to really learn. Chicora said that the barriers and hurdles to students learning who

## DRAFT

identify as LGBTQ are not just to their completion but to their learning; if we are not addressing these issues, they are not learning.

For students of any marginalized group if they don't identify a sense of community they are not going to be engaged. A good majority of their first year students may not be out. If the university does not show them there is a community of allies, they are not going to participate. This means addressing bias on these issues to show what our community value share.

Academic Integration is very important. Martin suggested that we have an academic component that includes LGBTQ topics in every classroom. In math, one of the greatest mathematicians was a gay man. Classroom standards are important. We also need to acknowledge that the study of queer issues is an academic discipline.

The financial hurdles are also intense. We have students who come out to parents and are cut off all the time. They say if you're going to study things like that I'm not going to pay for your college. Students are also worried about where they are going to work; one student leader was worried about applying internationally and listing the valuable work this person has done with queer issues on campus. As a graduate student Chicora was told she should do some other internship because she wouldn't get paid for this work.

We need to support students' emotional development. These students live in a culture of homophobia; we need to address their emotional barriers or they are not going to succeed. Often they just want someone who knows they won't treat them like they are weird. We need to make sure our counseling and health student are providing those emotional issues. Transgender students are asking for hormone therapy, safe places to live, and safe places to go to the bathroom.

### **Julie Williams, Health and PE teacher, Corvallis High School, Advisor to the Corvallis H.S. Gay/Straight Student Alliance**

Julie Williams has been the advisor for the longest running Gay-Student Alliance in Oregon. She said that students exiting Corvallis high school right now are light years ahead of people in this. However, a few miles down the road, those students are light years behind people in this room. The kids from Corvallis High school are used to honoring GLBTQ history month in October. On November 12 they do a die-in and take on the persona of a transgendered person who has died, and have a day of silence. When these students get to campus, they will seek out resources that service them. They'll look at how the campus has addressed violence. They'll look at student guidelines. These students are used to being activists and are very vocal.

Just three miles down the road, students are used to hiding, and waiting to come out. They are waiting to get out of town, and looking for safety. They look to being cut off from family resources when they do come out. We make sure there is a safe zone cloister in every campus. Is every person willing to post something to this silent minority to say you are accepted here? People have learned the closet and will stay in it until they know they are safe to come out. Another importance thing is that there are positive role models. Students at Corvallis High School see that there are staff that are out, people just like them leading a normal happy life. Their parents tell them they'll not be happy, but they have other

## DRAFT

examples. Just allowing campus professorial staff to be free to come out is important. Counselors should also be trained with the issues of coming out. A student from OSU just got outed at home and her parents called her; she had to have a discussion over the phone that was not her timing. On our campus, we have a “beyond Corvallis high school” room, where students can explore their next steps. The person there is incredible about contacting Julie about all the scholarships that come in with regard to gay and lesbian students so that we pass those out at meetings. Our campus right now is probably the exception to the rule. There is a vast difference of exposure and empowerment for students coming in.

### **Steven J. Leider, Coordinator, Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Outreach & Services, Oregon State University**

Steven Leider introduced himself, noting that he came from UCLA where he worked with Dr. Ronni L. Sanlo, one of the leaders in this area, and has been at OSU for three years. He supports the two student coordinators who run the Pride Center at OSU. Student fee dollars go to student jobs and the OSU Office of LGBT Outreach & Services trains student leaders the para-professional level to do much of the work normally done by student affairs professionals on other campuses. This model produces amazing leaders who lead campus and go out into world to do professional level work. Leider noted that we are at a crossroads in that on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 the new Oregon *Oregon Family Fairness Act* and *Oregon Equality Act* took effect that mandates protection against discrimination. This allows us to do more than we had previously done. Previously, we did not have this protection in doing work publicly. In many ways, barriers for students are very similar. We need stable financing, and reliable student lending programs. The expansion at OSU and UO of financial aid has been amazing. Affordable textbooks are important.

With nondiscrimination policies now being statewide law, these are applicable to vendors that come on campus. This also applies to organizations that do business with the university. Many other states have enacted these policies. San Francisco brought a lawsuit against United Airlines and the California Supreme Court held that in CA they are required to not discriminate. We can demonstrate that we have lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and ally students in mind, and show that they are expected and anticipated. We can make sure forms are gender neutral or transgender friendly. Can students say they are “other/self –identified” than female or male? There are also changes in administration taking place nationally in ROTC programs; we have been forced under the Solomon Amendment to acquiesce to the U.S military’s “don’t ask don’t tell” policy. The incoming president has made it clear he does not support those circumstances. We may see a legislative order changing that. We don’t want to be caught flat-footed if and when ROTC suddenly needs to provide positions for openly LGBTQ students. Another area where discrimination is actively allowed is in blood-drives. The university allows vendors to come on campus, and potential blood donors are not told they can’t donate if they are men who have engaged in homosexual sex since 1978. When we fail to provide that info ahead of time, we force these students to “out” themselves in front of other donors without consent. {new Paragraph]This new set of laws allows us an opportunity to start gathering demographic data of LGBTQ students on our campus, as part of the normalizing of the fact that they are welcome and anticipated. Many of our students come from very rural conservative areas and this may be the first opportunity that they meet somebody of a different sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We need to prepare them ahead of time that they are going to be in the class with LGBTQ students. There is no way now

## DRAFT

for actually determining the number on our campuses of LGBTQ students because all students are at some different point in the coming out process. Part of their developmental process is to come to that realization...this can be a profoundly disturbing set of circumstances for some. For one student, the debilitating fear of parental rejection that he went through was incredibly painful just to watch; fortunately, the parents had already come to the understanding that he was gay and were OK with it. The student's fear of dealing with this prevented him from making progress in school. We need an OUS-wide set of procedures and policies for standardized response for students who are dispossessed or financially cut off by their parents or guardians when they are outed or come out to their family, and who consequently need additional financial aid. They need to be formally declared financially independent of their parents by the campus financial aid office to qualify for additional assistance. One possibility is creating a central funding source that students in that position could access in that emergency. [new paragraph] The Board and the OUS system can mandate a system of outreach to potential LGBT college students through the state wide Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) network maintained by the Oregon chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).. GLSEN's GSA network has an amazingly useful network in high schools across Oregon; we can recruit these potential LGBT college students through these already existing organizations; moreover, because their multiple identities cut across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic boundaries, we can fulfill two goals: recruiting more people of color and underrepresented populations to attend college, as well as potential LGBT college students. We can provide funds to help OUS system admissions offices to actively recruit these students, which would serve multiple purposes.[new paragraph] Finally, transgender students need a meaningful student health plan on all OUS campuses that provides not just a letter to have access to hormone therapy through student health services on campus, but also provides for other needed medical treatment. We don't have a system that serves any students real needs with regard to student health insurance. Some UC campuses, including UC San Diego, provide up to \$25,000 or more for students who are transitioning gender; that is not nearly enough, but is better than nothing which is what we have in Oregon at present.

Dalton Miller-Jones said he is very interested in the health issues that have been generated here, and asked for written comments on this.

### **Mike Prendergast, student, President of the Gay Student Alliance, Eastern Oregon University (by phone)**

Mike Prendergast said he is a resident assistant and member of LGBTQ community at EOU. He came to EOU from Portland area. He was slightly hesitant because of the conservative beliefs in the region. He has lived in the region previously but not prior to coming out. Prior to EOU, he had some conversations with family and many tried to sway him from his position, because they feared for his general well being, including acts of violence, etc. Against their judgment, he came and decided to face the fear of rejection.

Once he got here, he was faced with a lot of stereotyping, lack of LGBTQ resources easily found or advertised, and a large lack of acceptance in the general community itself. By winter, he had applied to UO and was planning on transferring. But in winter, he found another gay and lesbian and they started their own alliance without knowing there was one on campus. It was in this small group that he found some safety. He found it on campus which really surprised him because he thought the campus was all

## DRAFT

rural kids and that everyone would be closed minded. The first term he spent a lot of time off-campus. When he spent more time on campus and got to know other kids, he realized that even though LaGrande is not the most accepting place, EOU has a lot of people who are open-minded. It is not necessarily the college campus but the area outside of it. LaGrande is heterosexual and Caucasian-focused; but it's even worse in the outer areas. Just 45 minutes away in Baker City, he has had eggs thrown at his car. He had a friend who recently came out and when he was in Baker City he was actually attacked.

In the last year, he has also found that there are more resources on campus than he had originally thought. Once he and his friends decided to look further into it, they found that they had a GSA on campus. Prendergast became the president of that. They offer a gay studies course; last year he took the class and it is very educational. Even as someone who grew up in a liberal urban area, he learned a lot about the history of the LGBTQ movement. He plans on teaching the class this Spring term. In rural areas, students face stereotyping, exclusion, and fear of violence. Prendergast's friend grew up here in LaGrande and was constantly afraid he would be shot or beat. He waited 10 years to come out even though he knew when he was 15. Work opportunities are also hard if you are openly LGBTQ.

One of the biggest issues that not only EOU students face, but also friends at other campuses, is they do not know where to find the resources. We need to better promote what resources we have on campuses. Through there are a lot of barriers of being cut off from a family, the fear of coming out in rural Oregon, etc., all can be broken down by promoting and finding a way to further fund organizations such as GSA, and at EOU the multicultural center, since at EOU all these groups work together. We need to try to help those who are not sure where to find help. If we could further fund such orgs it would really cut down on the barriers and help LGBTQ and the other minorities to find their own niche. That is a lot of the struggle Prendergast faced coming into college. It's not so much the fact that it's a conservative area. Unless you put yourself out there, it's really hard for people to see past the stereotypes. Prendergast has a lot of conservative boys in his residence hallway; it wasn't until he told them he was gay that they could see past the stereotypes. We need to get ourselves out there and promote diversity training for faculty/staff members. In order to learn you have to be comfortable in your learning environment. If your professor is a homophobe, you feel you are looked down upon.

### **Debra Porta, student, Portland State University, transfer from Portland Community College, ASPSU Equal Rights Advocate**

Debra Porta said a lot of the experiences that students have had she has not had since she returned to school at 36 and was already active in the GLBTQ community. She was at PCC for four years and found it very different from PSU. If she was a traditional age student the changes would be even more drastic. At PCC, the first time she walked on campus, the first thing she saw on the door was "this is an open accepting celebratory campus and this is a safe place." Debra felt very safe in that campus. For the first two years there it didn't occur to her that it's not an open/safe place. Faculty and staff play a big role, being open. In her 3<sup>rd</sup> year, incidents happened, such as name calling, and swastikas. The GLBT club realized they needed to do something. They met with the administration to get action. This was at a time when the campus population pretty much doubled. A few years before, they had a skinhead population in that area. Their solution was to bring a program called "stop the hate" that was very successful. PCC Cascades is the most diverse campus in the state because they are very physical in

## DRAFT

stating it is open and diverse place. People knew it was unacceptable to do otherwise. There are active people who help with this diversity focus, including the dean of students, the dean of the faculty and staff, and those who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Porta transferred to PSU knowing she wanted to stay in Portland because of the reputation of the rest of Oregon. PSU has an open, diverse reputation. Once she got there, she realized that a lot of that reputation is not earned. There is a lot of effort, especially on the staff's part, and by people who are not at the top of the ladder, but it is not a top down process. There are concerns among students regarding where diversity stands as a priority with the incoming change in the administration. Porta is the equal rights advocate at PSU, and this is only the third year the position has existed. Her constituencies include students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, first generation, students, women, and anyone that is not in the multicultural division. She has noticed that there is a queer resource center, a women's resource center, and a disabilities center, but all three of these are non-accessible physically. The disability center was moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the student union. Women's Resource Center has a place in Montgomery Hall that is much hidden with no disabilities ramp. The Queer Resource Center is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Smith, in a stairwell, behind a fire-door. On the positive side, she was happy to come to PSU and realize the diversity is so non-representative of the rest of the state. Also on insurance, PSU as of this year changed insurance providers, and provides as full services as is available for transgender students.

Chicora Martin commented that they are considering at looking at the PEBB board on insurance issues. Porta said that at PSU this was a student initiative. The organization, the OSA, has a co-board, the Oregon students' equal rights alliance, which formed to address LBTQU issues on campuses across Oregon. They are working on anti-bullying legislation that is coming out. This is the network the schools are using to work together. There is an equivalent organization for students of color. With many of the questions being asked, these folks have been working on for years. PSU is releasing a climate survey winter term that will show the reputation for diversity does not match students' lives. More than half of students who responded witnessed a bashing of some kind. Plus, up to 80% of the time, anyone who intervened was not a staff/faculty member. There's not a lot of outreach on the campuses that Porta has seen. The idea is to wait for students to get the resources instead of taking resources to students. The students that we have now, especially incoming students, have a lot of fear and nervousness but also a lot more confidence amongst themselves. They have peer communication that is strong. They are creating the resources for themselves if they don't get it.

### **Public Comments:**

**Rocky Parker**, a PhD student at OSU in the audience, was invited to comment next. Parker introduced himself as a gay man who grew up in Arkansas. He said that most of the students at middle/high schools that act out in a negative way, or are verbally or physically abusive, tend to end up somewhere along this continuum of queer people. We don't have any way of helping them deal with their issues, which is a neglected area of research. We need to help them out of their hate. Also, he said panelists gave an excellent summary, especially with respect to transgender issues which is the frontier. There are real transgender issues that are completely different than anything gay men or lesbians experience. He doubts that there are many gays or lesbians who can say they know what it is like to be transgender. In the current political climate, we now live in a very honest political climate, so people are

## DRAFT

honest about their hatred. People post you tube videos, and receive hateful comments. We are dealing with a very marginalized part of the population and so many people neglect to realize that. We deal with a society that still thinks as a whole that this is a choice and it is not. Parker is working on gender expression in vertebrates in my research. Homosexuality is spread throughout the animal kingdom; this is not something people are choosing. We need to have the rights and privileges that we are being denied right now. Oregon is on the outskirts and is light-years ahead of the majority of the country, and yet even we have issues of violence. A transgender student was assaulted on the OSU campus and didn't report it. Some are not even out, and are verbally assaulted. If this was based on race, there would be major outcry. But it concerns gender identity and sexual orientation. Queer students need role models and we need to think about diversity in these role models. Joan Roughgarden (sp?) is an excellent one, a male to female transgender professor at Stanford University and an advocate for transgender issues. Parker wanted to be part of this meeting today because he is involved with OSU's pride panels, and shares issues on this to different courses, such as sexual education on campus, residence halls, etc. Sex education is grossly undervalued at the college level. People assume that safe sex and safe sex practices are known. However, if students change sexual orientation, their practices change. Just giving them the name of the queer center is not enough. With the HIV and AIDS academic, this is scary.

### Questions and Discussion:

Hilda Rosselli and Joanne Sorte thanked for the panelists for their informative remarks. Sorte remarked that some of these suggestions are very concrete, and achieving them would be a great start, like putting up the safe zone signs on doorways.

Chris Cronin shared that when she was sent the meeting notice for the meeting today, because her email goes through a school district, it did not get to her because the agenda items themselves must have been read as pornography by the spam filter. They were all lost and quarantined. This is somehow symbolic of the challenges students and faculty face.

Chicora Martin commented that we have this "until we have to deal with it it's not there." Libraries in conservative communities block out these ideas. We have fallen trap to so many of the same situations, and not asked, why do we do this? She said she was just taking a survey for a national organization, and saw Male/Female/Other. She is not willing to be an Other.

Jackie Grant thanked the panel. She said that every institution should begin to seriously examine the institutional racism that exists that is systemic. If we did that in an open manor, we would bring some of these things to light.

Miller-Jones asked if there is a highly recommended set of categories with regard to forms. Chicora Martin said that the UO housing forms are "gender and aligned". The **Consortium of Higher Education Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Professionals (The Consortium)** recommends that the most inclusive option is "gender and aligned." Also, they are working with the university of Indiana champagne, which allows Banner to show a nickname on class rosters which is a big issue. Leider said that the proprietary owners of programs like Banner are resistant to info on including anything outside of what they need, but state wide university systems such as OUS and the

## DRAFT

UC system should be asking that they tailor to our needs. Martin said that we have a commitment to do the work we do, but we have a responsibility to sibling institutions as well.

Joe Holliday asked if there is data that can inform us somewhere about these barriers faced by the community/communities. Leider said that we don't have the data that can help us determine this. The *Higher Education Research Institute* (HERI) at UCLA has thousands of institutions participating in an annual "Freshmen Survey". In 1998 the Consortium asked them if they could stop the leading, negative questions, such as, do you think it's ok for gay people to have civil rights? They started framing the questions differently. However, the consortium also asked them if they could start asking about sexual orientation and gender identity. They said no, because the survey instrument has student identifiers and they were afraid that the instruments may be used against them by their institutions of origin, especially for those students at religiously affiliated institutions. That can be overcome through the use of "piggybacked" questionnaires that don't contain student identifiers, but because they didn't want religiously oriented institutions from stopping their participation in the survey they decided not to make the requested changes. Statewide systems such as OUS could ask them to do something similar.

Chicora Martin passed around a report on campus climate for LBBTQ students by Susan Rankin. She said data is a difficult question because many do not like to be labeled with hot-button identifiers. To ask about behaviors may be an easier and gentler way to gather that info.

Debra Porta said that the number of LGBTQ students at PSU comes from the partnership between OSERA and Basic Rights Oregon. About 20% of the population could fall in this area. There are organizations doing this work, and we may be able to tap into that.

Miller-Jones asked Prendergast about homophobia in the classroom, and asked what advice he can give the committee on how we can advocate for this kind of inclusiveness. Prendergast said that the only show of a safe campus at EOU is the GSA signs for their meeting. On the faculty level, they have a gay rights advocate on our campus. Jeffery Johnson has been a published gay marriage advocate. We were shocked to see we have someone so passionate on equal rights on campus. Prendergast has a friend who takes classes in Baker City, and he feels like a lot of the time he'll just take a test and leave because doesn't want to be looked down upon. At EOU campus, some faculty members do tend to look down upon it. We need to have faculty go through a diversity training course; as a residence asst I had to go through 3 different diversity trainings, personality types, etc. It would be helpful for our faculty to go through such a course.

Lew Frederick said that when he moved to the Portland schools as a communications person, they had a sexual orientation task force that provided course work that may work for that purpose. It was designed primarily for high schools but would fit very well within something like that. One of the people to write that curriculum was Steve Newcomber, a principal at Marshall, and it was very effective given the antagonism we encountered among staff members, and general public efforts.

Chicora Martin has spoken with some community colleges to their faculty/staff. We need to look at this commitment at OUS. She has talked with faculty/staff who are terrified to be out; there is a real reality that we have students coming from the community college system, and from the K-12 system, and our

## DRAFT

students are coming out earlier and earlier. Martin's son is 14 years old and one of his friends just came out. The community colleges and the OUS system are not ready for him.

Lew Frederick said the PPS training was done on a very simple basis. We had a series of situations, and wanted to make sure our students were safe. We had a significant curriculum set up to do that that included video and other things. We also had the same problem that you mentioned at PCC; not just the signage but turnover in staff. We need a training that occurs repeatedly, not just a fad. It has been going through the Portland schools since '94 or '95, and came about because a number of suicides. He would encourage you to look at that, as there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Leider added that the [Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition](http://www.oregonsafeschools.org/) has their entire 105 page training manual on the web at <http://www.oregonsafeschools.org/> in three downloadable .pdf documents.

Joanne Sorte said there are a lot of comments here and other conversations about how the college years are very important for social and emotional development. Julie Williams said that for the student who harbors negativity and is willing to express it, we don't do them a service through silence. Leadership is the key, as it gives permission to teachers to say it's not OK.

Miller-Jones said that we are going to have to deal with the issue of religious aspects of beliefs and attitudes, and schools that have religious affiliation.

Patricia Martinez commented on the issue of leadership. She said diversity becomes more and more of a common conversation in schools and teacher education programs; the communication to the community and problem solving with the community is necessary.

Chicora Martin spoke to the religious issue, telling a story of someone who called her to "talk about the homosexuals." This was on the "No on 9" time period, and this person didn't want their religious views disbelieved. Martin asked, how does your religion feel about respect? Would you want us to step in if someone was disrespecting your child because they are Christian? We don't have policies in place that create civility and respect. We don't even teach them that it's ok to be who you are. She said she would be the first person on those steps if they were mistreated. People say you're spending public money supporting LGBTQ thing, but we are also teaching world history, ethnic studies, etc. The last time Martin talked to this person, she asked for more info on how Christians can be more supportive of everyone. Martin added that universities have the responsibility to be on the cutting edge.

Lew Frederick said it is important to be very clear and direct about respect and safety, and that we have a community and a culture that is not in one narrow section of beliefs. Frederick says he responded to Lars Larsen on a regular basis regarding this. Frederick had a superintendent call and say "how dare you talk about respect for homosexuals?" Frederick responded that he's going to talk about respect for people.

Jon Joiner asked how have high school changed generally? Julie Williams said it's in sprinkled. The enrollment of GSAs keeps growing. People are doing this for themselves more often. We just had a civil liberties audit at our school; they interviewed students. The discussion and dialog that we had on LGBTQ issues blossomed into a school that is welcoming to everyone. However what happens at our school was not from the top, it came from the GSA.

## DRAFT

Rocky Parker noted that Corvallis has the highest per capita education rate in the country and yet even here they encounter a lot of “no, not in my kid’s school.”

Larry Roper said that the challenge is how do you create environments? In some cases you do it an incident at a time, other times you consider, what leaps of faith are we going to take? For example, several years ago, OSU voted in a document called “a cultural covenant.” You have to understand our history to understand why do things that are heroic in order to be successful. When conflict happens on our campus the way it is resolved is not a traditional way. We have an approach to meaningful dialogue instead of the heavy hand approach. Each campus needs to figure out their ethos. You can dictate it, but eventually it’s the temperament of the people in this environment, and their ability to sustain themselves over time. At OSU that there is a level of sincerity about getting better that he has not encountered elsewhere. The level of ignorance is the same as anywhere.

David McDonald commented on the success at WOU. He said what makes WOU different is size. The community revolves around the student body that is one third of the local community. Because we are one and the same with the community the community has largely embraced what we have put in place; we also have a president who has been very open and regular in statements and actions in support of an inclusive community. At WOU, a student leader’s opportunity to make a difference is very visible. Those who want to move forward with this agenda know that they have support.

McDonald said he does not have information on how WOU is doing with regard to safety for people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Martin said she guarantees that there is a problem at every institution. When we say the word diversity or multicultural center, not many students hear LGBTQ. Silence is a sign that something is wrong.

Leider said that OSU has reorganized student affairs and has moved the Office of LGBT Outreach & Services from the supervision of the Dean of Student Life to the newly formed Department of Intercultural Student Services. All student leaders are trained together to run the six cultural and resource centers, and work together to co-program events. The training we do is inclusive of all of the students’ identities. Larry Roper calls it social justice training for all student leaders.

Debra Porter said that these issues can’t be discussed in a vacuum; no one sees themselves as only an LGBTQ person. It needs to be a multi-faceted approach so it is not just this separate thing.

Alex Sanchez said this comes down to the issue of diversity for me; it’s not just a problem to be solved or a program to be run; it’s part of our mission. We are there to turn out educated citizens that will be productive, and get along with each other. If we don’t do that, we are not being true to our mission, whether it be gender, racial, or other kinds of diversity, until we start looking at it as part of our mission. This needs to be the foundation for the report that needs to go to the OUS and the board.

Lew Frederick is pleased to hear what is going on at OSU. He is concerned about a preaching to the choir approach. If you have a leadership group showing up, that’s good, but his experience has been preaching to the choir in terms of who showed up. As OUS thinks about this we need strategies to bring all in. Leider said they are in the beginning stages of this, and would like to bring other student leadership organizations in such as the Greek community. Miller-Jones said the question is whether

## DRAFT

this is an invitation versus a requirement. Lew Frederick said he gave a presentation like this 12-15 years ago and the people present could only understand difference in terms of Greeks and non-Greeks. He has seen this preaching to the choir in a number of situations. Dalton Miller-Jones said that this is a matter of will; and a structural set of issues around preaching to the choir. OSU has done everything within their latitude to mandate, but not within faculty.

Jon Joiner asked, how do you get faculty to join this effort, when there is internal opposition? Roper responded that if we talk about “fixing faculty” we won’t get any support. If we call this a broad comprehensive initiative of professional development, then they will support it. If we say that in order to be effective you need a broad range of skills, then we have a better chance of being successful.

Chicora Martin said we can ask anyone to attend a meeting on safety. What is the floor to safety? We have to raise that floor for LGBTQ students and all of our students.

Rosemary Powers said that she was reading the campus climate survey. The generic policies do not protect students any more than no policies. As we develop policies for the Board, we need to present a vision for people.

Dalton Miller-Jones asked if the panelists have tried to connect these issues of hate speech around sexual harassment policies. Chicora Martin said that when you mandate training, people don’t learn. This is not about tolerance; it’s about appreciation and welcoming.

Dalton Miller-Jones said this is an area in which we need to work with one another; another leverage point is learning outcomes and assessment for higher education. He said that tomorrow at PSU there will be a meeting that our OUS system has been developing. It sets diversity and intercultural knowledge as one of the outcomes for each campus. Just as our faculty has had to come to grips with specifying goals; each department needs to increasingly specify these things. We have a chance to fold this understanding into an opportunity for faculty to be more effective in reaching university goals.

Sorte said that every student has to take a course on power and discrimination; it would be an appropriate time to think of diversity in a broad perspective.

Julie Williams said she has seen policy protect every level; teachers know how to step in when there is a policy telling them to do so. She described an example of an army recruiter saying a harassing statement, and there being repercussions as a result of it.

David McDonald asked if the panelists would mind their contact information shared. They did not.

Miller-Jones thanked all participants and thanked Linn-Benton Community College for their hospitality.