

COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON



An Assessment of the College of Charleston's
LGBTQ Campus Climate in Comparison to Its
Peer & Aspirational Peer Institutions

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I. Abstract

According to a survey by Charleston YOUth Count conducted in 2017, 18% of the student body at the College of Charleston self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).

This present report compares the campus climate for LGBTQ faculty, staff, and students with the College's peer and aspirational peer institutions, using data collected by a 2017 College study, and information compiled through research of our peer and aspirational peer institutions. This report uses three points of comparison: *dedicated staff* serving LGBTQ students, *dedicated physical space* for the LGBTQ student population, and an *LGBTQ major and minor*. The research conducted for this report demonstrates that, in comparison with our peer and aspirational peer institutions, the College is average or below average in its support of this population when it comes to funding, programming, and other kinds of support.

This report is authored by Rebecca Thayer and Brandon Reid ('16), staffers funded entirely by grant and donor raised funds in support of the SC LGBTQ: Oral Histories, Archives, and Outreach project.

The Numbers:

- African American students:
(approximately 8% of the student body)
- Jewish students:
(approximately 10%)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ):
(approximately 18% of student body self-identify)
- See appendix for additional information

Institutional Peers

- Appalachian State University
 - Elon University
- James Madison University
- University of Mary Washington
- University of North Carolina Wilmington
 - University of Tampa

Aspirational Peer Institutions

- Boston College
- College of William and Mary
 - Miami University
- University of New Hampshire

II. Dedicated Physical Space

Four institutions, Appalachian State, Elon University, James Madison University, and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, have physical spaces where students can gather. These spaces range greatly in size but give LGBTQ student a place to feel safe and comfortable, to seek resources, and to host meetings. Despite having an office of only 400 square feet, UNCW's LGBTQIA Resource Office coordinator reported that having a physical space is important to students and that she receives about 100 visits to the center every day. The College currently has the Gender and Sexuality Equity Center (GSEC), which does provide students with a meeting space. Unlike our four other peer institutions, the center does not have regular hours when students know they can find resources and information. The door is locked and requires a code for entry and lacks a window or any other indication that the office might be open. The office is also located directly across from Public Safety. Members of the LGBTQ community have historically had a difficult relationship with law enforcement, and some students may feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in a space across from the Public Safety office. On the other hand, the location, right next to uniformed officers, may suggest that there is some danger in identifying as LGBTQ.

III. Dedicated Staff

Four of our peer institutions have staff members dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ population on campus: UNC-Wilmington, James Madison University, Appalachian State University, and Elon University. These staff members reported being responsible for education including SafeZone trainings and class presentations, advocacy, like serving on academic committees and finding housing for transgender students, and student support, like hosting discussion groups, social activities, and cultural events. Currently the College *has no paid staff member dedicated to serving the LGBTQ community*, and the responsibilities above are either taken on by volunteer faculty or students or are not addressed at all. In our aspirational peer institutions, three of the four (Miami University-Oxford, University of New Hampshire-Main Campus, and Boston College) all have a paid staff member dedicated to serving the LGBTQ campus community. Clearly, the College is behind both our peer and aspirational peer institutions in lacking a paid staff member for LGBTQ issues. The closest thing that the College has to a full-time staff member dedicated to LGBTQ issues is the staff of the grant-funded SC LGBTQ: Oral Histories, Archives, and Outreach project, composed of a library faculty member who gives a percentage of his time to it, a full-time grant-funded archivist and a part-time oral history program manager. Through their work, they have achieved some changes, as has the student-driven Out Front initiative.

The Numbers

- 18% of CofC students self-identify as LGBTQ
- 2/3 of peer institutions have dedicated staff serving LGBTQ students
- 3/4 of aspirational institutions have dedicated staff serving LGBTQ students

Due to the work of the documentation project, centered in the library, the College *for the first time* had representation at the annual post-parade Pride Festival; the College *for the first time* advertised in the Pride Guide; and the College will send delegates to, or host a table *for the first time* at the AFFA (Alliance for Full Acceptance) annual Gala, as other schools, such as the Citadel and MUSC, do. This small “archivally-centered” group has been responsible for the College designing an LGBTQ logo, for having pro-LGBTQ signs posted around campus and for helping to see to the inclusion of LGBTQ materials in orientation packets. While it has not been the mission of this project to change campus climate, it has done so, working with the Out Front initiative, proving what dedicated staff *can* achieve. In fact, without this project, this report would not have been compiled.

IV. LGBTQ Studies Academic Discipline

CofC has no official academic program for students to study sexuality or LGBTQ/queer studies. Women & Gender Studies (WGS) is available as a major and minor, and that program does offer classes on LGBTQ topics, but the study of sexuality is not specifically mentioned in the program title.

Out of our six peers institutions, only one (Appalachian State University’s Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies program) has an academic major that includes the study of sexuality. Two out of the six have an academic minor that studies sexuality; Appalachian State’s program is LGBT Studies, while Elon University’s is Women’s Gender, and Sexualities Studies.

Half of our aspirational institutions have academic disciplines that allow undergraduates to focus on gender and sexuality studies as a major or a minor. The College of William & Mary offers Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies, and Miami University-Oxford offers Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

While the names vary, all of these programs are more inclusive by specifically naming human sexuality as an area of study in addition to gender. CofC has all the necessary components for an LGBTQ or Queer studies concentration within its existing Women & Gender Studies program that could draw on existing LGBTQ related courses being offered by WGS, and other departments. This would make CofC a more inclusive campus by simply better utilizing existing programs and courses.

VII. Summary

As the College of Charleston enters its 250th year, the institution can use its advantage of being located in a rapidly growing city that is welcoming to members of the LGBTQ community. The College has already benefited from this positive change in the Charleston community, and LGBTQ student enrolment reflects that. LGBTQ students are currently the largest minority group on the College of Charleston campus, and this occurred *without the institution actively recruiting or targeting these students in a meaningful way*. In fact, a 2016 report, attached in the appendix, notes that the College lacks even basic data on recruitment and retention of this minority group and should begin work in these areas

The Numbers

- **1/3 of peer institutions have academic minors on the study of sexuality**
- **1/2 of aspirational peer institutions have academic majors and minors on the study of sexuality**

Members of the LGBTQ community encompass every race, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. This community and the diversity that it represents is an asset to this institution. This diversity should be built upon and nurtured. However, as the research above has shown, the College is falling behind its institutional and aspirational peers on the most fundamentally issues facing this community. It is failing to provide dedicated staff and adequate space dedicated to LGBTQ students, as well as failing to provide inclusive courses or programs for these students. LGBTQ students comprise 18% the institutions student body, yet the allocation of resources to meet the needs of this group is not reflected in the comparative findings of this report. As the College of Charleston enters its 250th year, it is a good time to reflect on how far the institution has come, and where it needs to go. LGBTQ people have been written out of this institution's past. Members of the community have always been a part of the campus community (many buildings and spaces bear the names of LGBTQ people), and the time is now to make a better, brighter and more inclusive future for LGBTQ students, staff and faculty.

On a related note, it is necessary to report that the LGBTQ Documentation Project that has begun to change the campus climate and which has received much positive media attention, is in danger of ending. With no more grant funding on the horizon, and with no institutional support, it will grind to a halt in 2020. The College, which has proudly claimed this program as the only type of its kind in the area, will lose its leadership position in this field. The archival program at the Avery Research Center supports African American students and Studies and is used as a recruiting tool for African American students. The Jewish Heritage Collection within Special Collections at Addlestone Library supports Jewish Studies and students and is used in recruiting Jewish students as well. An LGBTQ archive and oral history project could fulfil similar purposes for the College of Charleston.

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Appendix

1. Summary Chart

Institutions	LGBTQ Major	LGBTQ Minor	Physical Space	Dedicated Staff
College of Charleston	No	Women & Gender studies	Shared	No
Appalachian State	Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies	LGBT studies	Yes	Graduate assistant
Elon University	No	Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies	Yes	2 full-time, 12 student
James Madison University	No	Women's and Gender Studies	Shared	1 full-time, 3 student
University of Mary Washington	Women & Gender studies	No	No	No
University of North Carolina-Wilmington	No	Women & Gender studies	Yes	Coordinator
University of Tampa	No	Women & Gender studies	No	No
College of William & Mary	Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies	Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies	No	No
Miami University-Oxford	Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	Yes	Associate Director
University of New Hampshire-Main Campus	Women's Studies	Women's Studies	No	Associate Director of OMSA & LGBTQA+ Initiatives
Boston College*	No	Women & Gender studies	No	Graduate Assistant for LGBTQ+ Student Outreach & Support
*BC is a Catholic Jesuit school				

Information found in the chart above was compiled through research of each of institution as well as contacting faculty and staff at several of these institutions.

**2. Gender and Sexuality Equity Center (GSEC)
College of Charleston**

Fall 2016

**College of Charleston "Campus Pride Index":
LGBTQ+ Review, Analysis, and Recommendations**

**Dr. Hollis France, Director of GSEC Meredith
Jackson, GSEC Intern**

Introduction and Overview

GSEC's Mission

The College of Charleston's Gender and Sexuality Equity Center (GSEC) is an institutional entity concerned with fostering an environment of equality and diversity for all members of the campus community, specifically in regards to gender, gender identity, and sexuality. One way in which GSEC attempts to do this is through regular reviews of existing campus policy, structures, and activities to ensure their alignment with the philosophy and practice of gender equality.

Purpose of Review

Between July and August 2016 GSEC's Director Dr. Hollis France and Intern Meredith Jackson completed the Campus Pride Audit for the College of Charleston. The purpose of the audit was to conduct an inventory of the College's LGBTQ+ policies, structures and activities and to assess how well they aligned with the philosophy and practices of gender equity. The information gathered during the audit was acquired through extensive research of campus policy, official College of Charleston internet resources, and through correspondence and information provided by: the Office of Admissions, Housing & Residence Life, Student Health Services, Public Safety, the Dean of Students, New Student Programs, the Addlestone Library, the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Counseling Services, the Office of Victim Services, the Office of Financial Assistance, Human Resources, the Alumni Association, the Provost, Prevention Education Initiatives, the Department of Athletics, the Multicultural Center, the Campus Activities Board, Career Services, Fraternity & Sorority Life, Disability Services, and the Center for Civic Engagement. The information collected was then submitted to Campus Pride in late August 2016, and the results were returned one month later in late September.

Campus Pride is an organization founded in 2001 that works to create more inclusive and welcoming environments in higher education for the LGBTQ+ community.

They offer a number of services to colleges and universities, including the Campus Pride Index. From the report,

"The Campus Pride Index is a national assessment tool assisting campuses in improving safety and campus climate for people who are LGBTQ and ultimately shape the educational experience to be more inclusive, welcoming and respectful of LGBTQ and ally people. The index is owned and operated by Campus Pride (<http://campuspride.org>) and overseen by a team of national LGBTQ researchers which includes Genny Beemyn, Ph.D, Susan R. Rankin, Ph.D. and Shane L. Windmeyer, M.S, Ed. The advisory board also includes individual(s) students and staff volunteers from Campus Pride and the Consortium of LGBTQ Resources in Higher Education."

Methodology

This service provides a survey, consisting of a series of questions, for the participating college or university to complete that is divided into eight (8) broad categories of evaluation: "Policy Inclusion", "Support & Institutional Commitment", "Academic Life", "Student Life", "Housing & Residence Life", "Campus Safety", "Counseling & Health", and "Recruitment & Retention".

Within each category, there are numerous specific questions regarding the exact policies, services, organizations, trainings, employees, and practices of the College of Charleston with regards to its LGBTQ+ community.

When completed, the survey is evaluated by experts at Campus Pride and assigned ratings between 0 and 5 stars, with 5 being the ideal score. Each category is given its own rating, and the overall report is given three ratings, one on sexual orientation, one on gender identity/ expression, and one average Campus Pride Score for the entire report.

Layout of Report

This project reviews the results from College of Charleston's Campus Pride Index Survey. To begin, the overall scores for the College of Charleston will be discussed and analyzed. This will be followed by a presentation and an analysis of each individual category score, indicating areas of progress and areas for improvement in each. In conclusion, a list of feasible recommendations and suggestions based on these findings will be provided. We hope that implementation of and commitment to these suggestions will help our school achieve a 5 star rating in years to come, indicating our campus's affirmation, inclusion of and respect for the LGBTQ+ community.

Summary & Analysis of Overall Report Scores: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression

The College of Charleston received a 3.5 out of 5 stars for our overall Campus Pride Score. Though this is not ideal, it is worth noting that schools with scores of 3 stars or higher are placed on the "Honor Roll" of institutions. We received 3.5 stars for Sexual Orientation (67%) and 3.5 stars for Gender Identity/ Expression (63%). Below is the commentary on the overall score drawn from the report:

"Due to your overall rating of 3.5 Stars, it is recommended that your campus prioritize areas of improvement through a realistic action plan based on the needs of your LGBTQ & ally community. It is recommended that you pay particular attention to making this commitment visible and encourage support from campus administrators as well as other members of the campus community. In addition, Campus Pride encourages all campuses to continue monitoring the quality of LGBTQ life by listening and responding to the needs of your LGBTQ population as well as conducting regular assessments of attitudes and perceptions of the campus community toward LGBTQ people. Use this report as a way to continue to build support and to further examine what you can do for positive LGBTQ change over the next year." (3)

In other words, our school already has mechanisms in place that are working towards a welcoming and safe environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, but these need to be improved or supplemented in order to fully actualize our cause. This score seems to emphasize the need for visibility of our campus's initiatives towards the LGBTQ+ community, as well as for routine discussions with individuals of the community and assessments of our progress. Though our school is not an undesirable environment for

LGBTQ+ individuals, it is certainly not an ideal one. This must be addressed if we are to adhere to our values of diversity, **oaa** inclusion and equity.

The two sub-scores of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression indicate the broad areas in which we succeed and/or falter. Though their star values are identical (3.5 stars each), the percentage score in Sexual Orientation (67%) is slightly higher than that of Gender Identity/Expression (63%). This demonstrates that we need to broaden and increase our efforts to address issues of gender identity with the same deliberate actions as those for sexual orientation. Regardless, these rather underwhelming scores should be a sign that we need to take proactive steps towards improving our campus's acceptance of all individuals in and associated with the LGBTQ+ community.

Summary & Analysis of Scores in the Eight (8) Broad Categories

1. LGBTQ Policy Inclusion: 3.5/5 Stars

This section deals with our institution's official policies concerning LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality. This is the predominant area campus administrations are able to make direct and visible changes in regards to LGBTQ+ inclusion. The report reads,

"Campus Pride congratulates your campus on having affirming LGBTQ policies and encourages further examination of the needs of your LGBTQ community based on your responses. Campus Pride advocates that campuses have equitable treatment of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression issues within policies." (5)

Much like our overall score, the report indicates that we do have existing policies that promote a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, but that we still have areas in need of improvement and continual review.

Areas of Progress:

- our official, explicit prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- our institution's recognition of same-sex marriages, and healthcare for married same-sex couples;
- allowing for applicants to self-identify their sexual orientations and gender identities on admissions applications and post-enrollment forms as of 2016;
- Transgender students and employees without a legal name change may still change their names on identification cards, class rosters, electronic and print directory listings, and official email;
- specific representations of LGBTQ issues and individuals in our school's grievance procedures, housing guidelines, and admissions application materials.

However, there are clear areas of policy that require expansion if we are to foster a truly welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Areas for Improvement:

- LGBTQ+ individuals may not self-identify their sexual orientation or gender identity on housing applications, student health intake forms, or alumni enrollment forms;

- Transgender students may not change their gender designation or preferred pronouns on campus records and documents (with the exception campus counseling center records).
- current lack of representations of LGBTQ+ issues or individuals in health center forms or in alumni materials and publications;

2. LGBTQ Support & Institutional Commitment: 3.5/5 stars

This section describes the College's official, overall attitude towards the LGBTQ+ community. The report says,

"Your score indicates that there are areas for improvement in order to maximize the campus commitment and institutional support for LGBTQ & ally people. Campus Pride recommends that campuses place importance on having a visible LGBTQ commitment and institutional support mechanisms for LGBTQ & ally people. Such improvements will not only benefit LGBTQ & ally people but also work to fulfill the academic mission of preparing students for a diverse workforce and society." (10)

Generally speaking, this category refers to campus climate and visible attitudes toward the LGBTQ+ community. Again, our score indicates that we do have some measures already in place to foster a sense of institutional support of LGBTQ+ individuals, but there is still work to be done in many areas.

Areas of Progress:

- existence of GSEC as an LGBTQ+ resource and support center and as a reporter to senior administration;
- ongoing Safe Zone training programs;
- a visible network of LGBTQ+ individuals, allies, and advocates;
- maintenance of diversity- oriented hiring practices;
- LGBTQ+ questions on campus climate surveys;
- requirement for gender-inclusive restrooms in all new or renovated buildings on campus (In fact, over half of all buildings on campus have at least one gender- inclusive restroom);
- Senior administrators commonly attending LGBTQ+ events on campus and explicitly using terminology regarding sexual orientation and gender identity publicly;
- private locker and shower rooms available to transgender students in recreational sports facilities and fitness centers on campus.

Though these are undeniably positive and affirming aspects of our campus, we lack this affirmation in several other respects.

Areas for Improvement:

- lack of a full-time employee whose job is to support LGBTQ+ students and educate on issues and concerns of the community;
- lack of an active LGBTQ alumni group;
- lack of a map or list of all gender-inclusive restrooms on campus

- lack of private locker and shower rooms for transgender students involved in intercollegiate athletics.

3. LGBTQ Academic Life: 5/5 stars

This category concerns the academic environment and curriculum of the College with respect to LGBTQ+ inclusivity. The College of Charleston scored nearly perfect (91%) in this category, demonstrating our school's commendable academic environment. The report states,

"The score is based on responses to questions in the Campus Pride Index for LGBTQ Academic Life. All students have the right to a safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive classroom. Such an academic environment supports the individual learning outcomes of every student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Your score demonstrates your commitment to an LGBTQ inclusive academic experience. Campus Pride applauds your academic efforts and for your role in preparing faculty to be responsive to LGBTQ student populations." (14)

Many factors contribute to our exceptional score in this area.

Areas of Progress:

- the existence of the Women's and Gender Studies Department that offers a major, minor, and courses relevant to LGBTQ+ issues;
- Our library has a vibrant and ample collection of books and journals that deal with LGBTQ, non-binary gender, and asexual issues;
- subscription to several specifically LGBTQ+ academic journals;
- Offering training for new employees on topics of sexuality and gender identity;
- an LGBTQA Faculty-Staff Coalition that meets throughout the academic year;
- campus supports and actively recruits faculty who are engaged in LGBTQ- focused research.

Though we excelled in this category, there remains one fault.

Area for Improvement:

- lack of academically focused LGBTQ+ student organizations. Though we have one LGBTQ+ student group on campus, it is not specific to a field of academic study. For example, an "LGBTQ+ Students of Science Club" or a "LGBTQ+ in the Arts" group.

4. LGBTQ Student Life: 3/5 Stars

The Student Life category deals with opportunities and activities to promote an LGBTQ+ friendly environment outside the classroom. Under this section includes clubs, campus events including lectures, film showings, etc., opportunities for student involvement and so on. The report reads,

"One important aspect to having a welcoming, LGBTQ-friendly campus is having diverse educational and social opportunities outside the classroom to offer LGBTQ & ally students. Campus Pride acknowledges your LGBTQ student involvement opportunities and outreach

efforts. Since many of these questions are highly subjective in nature, we encourage follow-up with your LGBTQ & ally students when it comes to asking their perspectives and needs for student involvement, social activities, educational events, etc. Campus Pride also recognizes that it is not always practical for campuses to have a student organization/club for different needs; however, we strongly recommend outreach in LGBTQ efforts for students of color, people of religious faith/spirituality, persons with disabilities and other often underrepresented populations." (17)

Our score in this section is one of the lowest of all the categories at 51%. The reasons become apparent when analyzing student life at the College of Charleston. Though the student body is not overwhelmingly involved in campus clubs and activities generally speaking, the reality is even more dismal when specifically observing opportunities for on-campus LGBTQ+ engagement.

Areas of Progress:

- regular campus activities that address the experiences of lesbians and gay men and social events specifically for LGBTQ+ students;
- some visible LGBTQ+ representation in a few fraternities and on the Cougar Activities Board,
- some visible LGBTQ+ representation in the Office of Institutional Diversity, Intramural sports, leadership programs, health programs, Admissions, Orientation programs, and Residence Life;
- the Gay-Straight Alliance as an active, recognized club on campus, (but it is our
- only officially recognized student organization focused on the LGBTQ+ community and allies);
- regularly offered LGBTQ+ awareness training for professional and student staff in: the Office of Institutional Diversity, Greek Life, the Honor Board, Student Health, and Public Safety;

Despite this seemingly long list of existing factors that contribute to a welcoming student life for LGBTQ+ individuals, there is still much work to be done in this area to create a truly inclusive and friendly campus environment.

Areas for Improvement:

- a notable lack of regular events surrounding bisexual, transgender, gender non- binary, or asexual issues or experiences (This is clearly neglecting a huge portion of the LGBTQ+ community from visibility and inclusion in on-campus extracurricular activities);
- lack of visible LGBTQ+ representation or leadership, as well as regular LGBTQ+ awareness trainings for staff in all the following organizations: student of color groups, faith-based groups, Greek Life, international student groups, intercollegiate athletics, student government, Career Services, and Disability Services;
- lack of funding for students to attend regional and/or national LGBTQ+ training or conferences;

- no recognized organizations that serve the needs or concerns of Transgender students or LGBTQ+ students of color;
- no recognized graduate student organization for LGBTQ+ individuals;
- no campus clubs or activities that address intersectional LGBTQ+ identities, such as LGBTQ+ people of color or people with disabilities;
- lack of resources for students in search of LGBTQ+ friendly employment opportunities.

5. LGBTQ Housing & Residence Life: 3.5/5 Stars

This category deals with equality and accessibility for LGBTQ+ individuals in on-campus housing. We scored a 66% in this category, again keeping with the trend that though we have some beneficial practices and policies in place, we could take certain measures that would improve the housing environment for LGBTQ+ students. The report states,

"When students feel comfortable in their home and welcome on campus, they are more likely to succeed academically and in other aspects of their college life. The concern for safety and security is particularly an issue for LGBTQ students in campus housing and residence life. Your score illustrates steady progress from the campus in meeting the needs of LGBTQ and Ally students in housing and residence life. Campus Pride recommends your campus continue to improve and evaluate housing options and inclusive LGBTQ policies. Specific attention should be paid to the development of trans-sensitive housing accommodations and equitable policies to support LGBTQ people." (23)

Areas of Progress:

- Residence Life's inclusion of our gender-inclusive housing option at 2 Bull St.;
- allowance for same-sex couples in Residence Life staff to live together;
- annual training to Residence Life staff on LGBTQ+ issues and concerns;
- Housing and Residence Life also offers regular activities and events to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ experiences and issues;
- Over half of our on-campus housing features gender inclusive restrooms.

Areas for Improvement:

- Residence Life does not provide a way for LGBTQ+ students to be matched with LGBTQ+ friendly roommates;
- There are no gender inclusive or private shower facilities in any on-campus housing;
- There is no reporting option for specifically LGBTQ+ related roommate issues, (though there is a reporting system for all issues generally);

6. LGBTQ Campus Safety: 3.5/5 Stars

This section concerns the actual and perceived safety of LGBTQ+ students on campus. Our campus scored 69%, meaning,

"Your score highlights the need to further examine your efforts to address the safety concerns of LGBTQ people. Campus Pride supports your efforts to build and maintain a positive, visible

relationship between campus safety and the LGBTQ campus community. All students require a campus climate unobstructed by harassment, violence and other negative behaviors. There is a long history of distrust and fear from LGBTQ people toward law enforcement. Campus Pride recommends campus safety develop an outreach plan consisting of a LGBTQ liaison and specific training to support LGBTQ people and other marginalized communities." (26)

In accordance with the earlier pattern, our score reveals the need to improve or add to our existing campus safety practices.

Areas of Progress:

- regular training on hate crime identification and prevention and on LGB safety concerns by Public Safety;
- Public Safety's use of an anonymous bias/ hate crime reporting system;
- Public Safety's annual outreach to LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations and actively seeks to employ diverse officers, including out LGBTQ+ individuals;
- Office of Victim Services provides support for victims of same-gender sexual violence and intimate partner violence.

Areas for Improvement:

- Lack of a LGBTQ+ specific incident reporting procedure that is distinct from generic crime reporting procedures;
- Public Safety's lack of specialized training for violence or crime against transgender people

7. LGBTQ Counseling & Health: 3.5/5 Stars

The Counseling & Health section of the report covers the school's attention to LGBTQ+ individuals' emotional and physical health. Our score of 66% indicates again that we have made steps toward fostering sexual and gender equality in our counseling and health services, but that there are still areas in need of improvement. The report says,

"LGBTQ students face unique challenges related to emotional and physical health care concerns. Campuses must be equipped to deal with these specific LGBTQ issues with appropriate counseling and health services. Your score indicates the need to improve campus efforts to address LGBTQ emotional and physical health needs. Campus Pride encourages ongoing examination of LGBTQ counseling and health concerns, particularly the emotional and physical concerns of students coming out and transgender populations." (28)

Our campus already has in place counseling services that are trained and supportive of LGBTQ+ related concerns.

Areas of Progress:

- Our Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant has focused on LGBTQ+ individuals over the past three years;
- Health Services provides free condoms and information on STIs;

- Campus regularly holds free, anonymous HIV testing;
- Health services offers specific educational materials for LGBTQ+ students on STI prevention, mental health, healthy relationships, and intimate partner violence;
- Health center staff are trained annually on the specific health care needs of LGBTQ+ students;

However, our school lacks several crucial elements that would support the mental and physical health needs specific to LGBTQ+ students.

Areas for Improvement:

- our campus has no recognized support groups to help individuals through the coming out process;
- Employee insurance plans do not cover ongoing counseling services for transgender policy holders nor for transgender dependents of policy holders;
- no health services associated with transitioning are covered by the insurance policies provided by the College;

8. LGBTQ Recruitment & Retention: 3/5 Stars

This score is also one of the two lowest of all the categories, with only 51%. This score reflects the College's image to prospective LGBTQ+ students and their strategies for retaining LGBTQ+ students. The report reads,

"The first generation of out LGBTQ students are now making their way to campus. These out students are looking for campuses that are not only LGBTQ-friendly but who also actively recruit and retain LGBTQ people as an important component to the campus community. Campus Pride recognizes your work recruiting and retaining LGBTQ & ally students and recommends continued growth in this area -- specifically by developing outreach and retention programs that target LGBTQ & ally communities (e.g., LGBTQ mentorship program, attending LGBTQ admission fairs)." (31)

In this area, there is much to do to improve. However, we already have some beneficial practices in place.

Areas of Progress:

- special training of Admission's Office employees to respond to LGBTQ+ related concerns;
- inclusion of the rainbow flag on Admissions marketing materials;
- annual Lavender Graduation for LGBTQ+ students;
- LGBTQ+ mentoring program for new students;
- inclusion of sexual orientation topics in orientation programs;
- LGBTQ+ students with abusive or absent parents may also receive a "dependency override" on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Areas for Improvement:

- lack of methods to identify LGBTQ+ students on an institutional level (so it has been difficult to implement a specific means for retaining them);
- lack of institutional scholarships specifically for LGBTQ+ students;
- lack of emergency funding for students whose parents revoke financial support when they come out;
- lack of consistency regarding gender identity as a topic in orientation programming;
- lack of Admissions brochure or website that highlights LGBTQ+ programs and services at the College;
- decision by the school not to participate in fairs that specifically target prospective LGBTQ+ students.

Concluding Observations for this Section

When appraising the individual categorical scores as a whole, the College's broad strengths and weaknesses are illuminated.

Strengths

- Our top score, 5/5, was in Academic Environment, signaling that our academics support an equal and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ students and faculty.
- We scored 3.5/5 in the categories of Policy Inclusion, Support & Institutional Commitment, Housing & Residence Life, Campus Safety, and Counseling & Health. Though this is an above average rating, it is one that signifies there is a significant amount of work to be done in all of these categories if we are to facilitate a truly welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ individuals on campus.

Weaknesses

- We scored 3/5 in Student Life and Recruitment & Retention. These areas require immediate and serious changes if we are to provide the best possible environment for LGBTQ+ individuals.

GSEC's Recommendations

While the eight (8) broad categories discussed above highlight areas for improvement regarding meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ community on campus, there are additional actions that are required. To create the most welcoming and affirming campus for LGBTQ+ individuals we can, there are many changes and additions we can make to our existing policies, organizations and practices. The following are some realistic measures we can take to achieve a more supportive campus:

Listening Sessions

One concrete action we can take to improve our campus environment for LGBTQ+ individuals is to regularly hold listening sessions open to all. Students, staff, and faculty can openly voice their criticisms and concerns, as well as their ideas for improvement. This is the best way for

administration, campus organizations, and individuals to directly exchange ideas. As alluded to by the Campus Pride assessment, this is one viable way to truly understand the needs and concerns of the LGBTQ+ community on campus.

GSEC recommends the hosting of one widely publicized listening session per semester, with a senior administrator present at each. These should be open to faculty, staff and students and aimed at fostering conversation between usually isolated groups with the goal of improving campus life according to the actual needs of LGBTQ+ individuals on campus. To this end, GSEC has already held the first listening session this fall and invites others to collaborate on future listening sessions.

Opportunities for Engagement

As noted earlier, one of our lowest scores was in the Student Life category. One way to address our problems with LGBTQ+ representation and inclusion in extracurricular opportunities is to increase the number of clubs, events and activities on campus that are specifically focused on LGBTQ+ students or issues. This could involve the formation of a new club that deals with broad topics of sexuality and gender identity. It could also include events such as movie showings, fun activities, or discussions. Many clubs and organizations could unite and co-sponsor these events, or they could be carried out by existing departments that deal with LGBTQ+ issues, such as the Women's and Gender Studies Department, the Office of Institutional Diversity, or on-campus We Are Family representatives. GSEC and OID should take the lead in co-sponsoring and visibly celebrating on campus national events like LGBTQ History Month, National Coming Out Day, etc. GSEC is currently taking the lead to develop a Coming Out support group for students, faculty and staff. The possibilities for an increase in extracurricular opportunities are endless, so it is up to existing groups of students, staff, and faculty to convene and creatively formulate ideas. More LGBTQ+ friendly student life will increase LGBTQ+ visibility on campus overall and contribute to an affirming, equal environment for all. GSEC is willing to work collaboratively with any group/organization/department/office that seeks to explore possibilities of expanding opportunities outside of the classroom toward building a robust and engaging LGBTQ+ friendly student life.

Training and Education

Another area in which there is major room for improvement refers to the lack of widespread and consistent LGBTQ+ awareness or training in our various departments and organizations on campus. This is a relatively easy problem to fix. GSEC recommends that all student and professional employees, organizations sponsored by the College (including sports teams, fraternities, sororities, Student Government, etc.), and departmental leadership should have required training in LGBTQ+ issues. This training should occur annually for student organizations and department leadership, and upon hiring for new employees. Safe Zone and GSEC are engaged in some LGBTQ+ training. However, their capacity is limited towards fulfilling the widespread and consistent training required across campus. To this end, additional funding provided by the administration to offer reasonable stipends for LGBTQ+ training would

go a long in addressing this gap. Simple workshops with participatory activities, room for questions, and clear instruction presented to all these participants would enormously improve the environment for LGBTQ+ individuals on campus. Student or peer-led workshops would likely be most beneficial for engaging student organizations and for educating staff and administrators on contemporary practices. Many myths and stereotypes could be disproven through this type of education, and it would certainly increase the visibility of the community and our institution's commitment to it. People with little to no experience with the community or LGBTQ+ individuals would be introduced in a non-threatening, friendly way. This would foster an environment in which it is okay to talk about sexuality and gender identity, but not from a discriminatory standpoint.

Practical Resources

There are several practical or material resources our campus could provide to affirm the LGBTQ+ community even further. A list and a map of all gender inclusive restrooms, showers, and locker rooms should be created and distributed throughout campus. We can also increase the number of gender inclusive restrooms available on campus. Housing and Residence Life should reconsider the fact that showers in dorms are strictly gendered according to the binary. Perhaps they could provide a few specific rooms for transgender or non-binary students that do not feel comfortable showering according to their assigned sex or expressed gender. Housing applications should also be changed to allow LGBTQ+ students to find a roommate that accepts their identity/ orientation.

GSEC is working towards the creation of web links to be housed on its website, showcasing all resources and events for LGBTQ+ individuals associated with the College. This will include a calendar of various club meetings and LGBTQ+ community events, listings of LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare providers and employers in the area, and links to connect with active LGBTQ+ organizations in the Charleston area. Support services will be included for those questioning their sexuality, as well as information on what to do if a hate crime or act of sexual violence has been committed. The creation of such web links would be a practical method of demonstrating the College's commitment to the community, giving LGBTQ+ students information they need to be fully integrated into the campus and Charleston area, and increasing visibility of LGBTQ+ activities in the region.

4. Comparing the College of Charleston to Other Institutions: Comparative Institutions Overview

Summary of Underrepresented Minority Students
Fall Reporting Term: 2016
Updated: August 2017
Source: IPEDS



Notes: LGBTQ student population was not counted in the following report.

For more please visit: <http://institutional-research.cofc.edu/facts-and-publications/peer-comparisons.php>

Summary of Underrepresented Minority Students

Peer List

Control	Institution	Undergraduate students			Graduate students			All students		
		Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent	Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent	Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent
Public	Appalachian State	16,595	2,329	14.0%	1,700	198	11.6%	18,295	2,527	13.8%
	College of Charleston	10,375	2,007	19.3%	919	149	16.2%	11,294	2,156	19.1%
	James Madison University	19,548	3,817	19.5%	1,722	232	13.5%	21,270	4,049	19.0%
	University of Mary Washington	4,357	1,056	24.2%	369	76	20.6%	4,726	1,132	24.0%
	University of North Carolina Wilmington	13,914	2,510	18.0%	1,826	346	18.9%	15,740	2,856	18.1%
Private	Elon University	6,008	1,011	16.8%	731	134	18.3%	6,739	1,145	17.0%
	University of Tampa	7,379	1,661	22.5%	853	171	20.0%	8,232	1,832	22.3%

Summary of Underrepresented Minority Students

Fall Reporting Term: 2016

Updated: August 2017

Source: IPEDS

<http://institutional-research.cofc.edu/facts-and-publications/peer-comparisons.php>



Aspirational Peers

Control	Institution	Undergraduate students			Graduate students			All students		
		Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent	Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent	Grand total	Minority Total	Minority Percent
Public	College of Charleston	10,375	2,007	19.3%	919	149	16.2%	11,294	2,156	19.1%
	College of William and Mary	6,276	1,822	29.0%	2,341	422	18.0%	8,617	2,244	26.0%
	Miami University-Oxford	16,981	2,158	12.7%	2,716	371	13.7%	19,697	2,529	12.8%
	University of New Hampshire-Main Campus	12,857	1,172	9.1%	2,331	187	8.0%	15,188	1,359	8.9%
Private	Boston College	9,870	2,540	25.7%	4,596	843	18.3%	14,466	3,383	23.4%

Summary of Underrepresented Minority Students

Fall Reporting Term: 2016

Updated: August 2017

Source: IPEDS

<http://institutional-research.cofc.edu/facts-and-publications/peer-comparisons.php>



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Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Peer List

Control	Institution	Grand Total	American Indian or Alaska Native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		Two or More Races		White		Race/Ethnicity Unknown		Non-resident Alien	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Public	Appalachian State	16,595	50	0.3%	306	1.8%	630	3.8%	791	4.8%	16	0.1%	536	3.2%	13,879	83.6%	243	1.5%	144	0.9%
	College of Charleston	10,375	27	0.3%	218	2.1%	835	8.0%	532	5.1%	19	0.2%	376	3.6%	8,146	78.5%	112	1.1%	110	1.1%
	James Madison University	19,548	25	0.1%	898	4.6%	892	4.6%	1,203	6.2%	24	0.1%	775	4.0%	14,643	74.9%	562	2.9%	526	2.7%
	University of Mary Washington	4,357	11	0.3%	165	3.8%	314	7.2%	340	7.8%	4	0.1%	222	5.1%	3,060	70.2%	192	4.4%	49	1.1%
	University of North Carolina Wilmington	13,914	70	0.5%	311	2.2%	674	4.8%	956	6.9%	13	0.1%	486	3.5%	10,780	77.5%	467	3.4%	157	1.1%
Private	Elon University	6,008	8	0.1%	147	2.4%	321	5.3%	367	6.1%	2	0.0%	166	2.8%	4,842	80.6%	26	0.4%	129	2.1%
	University of Tampa	7,379	14	0.2%	139	1.9%	380	5.1%	917	12.4%	3	0.0%	208	2.8%	4,408	59.7%	515	7.0%	795	10.8%

Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Fall Reporting Term: 2016

Updated: August 2017

Source: IPEDS

<http://institutional-research.cofc.edu/facts-and-publications/peer-comparisons.php>



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Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Aspirational Peers

Control	Institution	Grand Total	American Indian or Alaska Native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		Two or More Races		White		Race/Ethnicity Unknown		Non-resident Alien	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Public	College of Charleston	10,375	27	0.3%	218	2.1%	835	8.0%	532	5.1%	19	0.2%	376	3.6%	8,146	78.5%	112	1.1%	110	1.1%
	College of William and Mary	6,276	10	0.2%	499	8.0%	445	7.1%	570	9.1%	1	0.0%	297	4.7%	3,705	59.0%	375	6.0%	374	6.0%
	Miami University-Oxford	16,981	35	0.2%	361	2.1%	521	3.1%	681	4.0%	5	0.0%	555	3.3%	12,470	73.4%	74	0.4%	2,279	13.4%
	University of New Hampshire-Main Campus	12,857	23	0.2%	313	2.4%	167	1.3%	440	3.4%	1	0.0%	228	1.8%	10,380	80.7%	902	7.0%	403	3.1%
Private	Boston College	9,870	5	0.1%	932	9.4%	373	3.8%	944	9.6%	3	0.0%	283	2.9%	5,995	60.7%	570	5.8%	765	7.8%

Undergraduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Fall Reporting Term: 2016

Updated: August 2017

Source: IPEDS

<http://institutional-research.cofc.edu/facts-and-publications/peer-comparisons.php>



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Supplementary Articles of Interest

1. “*Conceptualization and Validation of Factors for LGBTQ Alumni Philanthropy.*” *Journal of College Student Development* 57 (6): 748–54, Garvey, Jason C. 2016

Link: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/629817>

2. “*The role of the academic library in supporting LGBTQ students: A survey of librarians and library administrators at LGBTQ friendly colleges and universities,*” *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 26:1, 66-87, Lily Todorinova & Maria Ortiz-Myers, 2019.

Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10691316.2019.1596857>

Current LGBTQ resources at CofC

SC LGBTQ: Oral Histories, Archives, and Outreach

Link: <https://speccoll.cofc.edu/lgbtq/>

1. Safe Zone

Link: <http://safezone.cofc.edu/>

2. LGBTQ+ Resources at CofC page

Link: <http://msps.cofc.edu/lgbtq-resources/>

Thank you for taking the time to read this report,

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Harlan Greene

