WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR ME: TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS' ACCOUNTS OF COLLEGE LIFE

Gabrielle Merandi

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Committee:
Catherine Stein, Advisor
Dryw Dworsky
Craig Vickio
ABSTRACT

Catherine H. Stein, Advisor

The transgender community is widely discriminated against for not conforming to cultural expectations of how gender is experienced and portrayed. Living in continuously oppressive social conditions threatens transgender young adults’ emotional and mental well-being, as well as their academic success. Colleges and universities are increasing their efforts to create safe and inclusive environments for gender diverse individuals in higher education. Transgender students’ viewpoints are critically important in helping universities make informed, sensitive, and meaningful solutions to the systems level barriers that transgender students encounter on campus. The present qualitative study examined the lived experiences of 11 transgender and gender diverse university students regarding various aspects of university life. Transgender students also discussed their viewpoints on and experiences with advocating for social change related to gender diversity issues on campus. Through the qualitative analysis of in-person interviews, eight themes were identified for what aspects of campus life participants desired to be changed in order to improve the campus climate for the transgender community. Findings also provide insights into students’ personal beliefs about advocacy efforts related to transgender issues. Implications of the findings for future research and advocacy efforts are discussed.
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INTRODUCTION

Transgender is an umbrella term for a diverse range of identities that relate to any type of incongruency between a person’s assigned gender and their internal identity and external expression (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Transgender individuals typically contend with factors such as family rejection, discrimination in employment, marginalization in health care, and insufficient insurance coverage, which can severely negatively impact their overall health and well-being (Dean et al., 2000). Living with oppressive and marginalizing social factors puts young transgender-identifying individuals at risk for high levels of emotional distress, suicidality, dropping out of school, substance abuse, and homelessness (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006; Singh, Hays & Watson, 2011). Advocacy efforts have been made in attempt to improve these and other circumstances for transgender and gender non-conforming people for decades (Stryker, 2008).

Although advocates have made progress in creating support services for trans and gender diverse people and expanding cultural awareness and education, many barriers still exist (Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2012). For young adults attending college, the educational curricula, sports organizations, extracurricular activities, health care plans, housing and other facilities often do not acknowledge the needs of transgender students (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Marginalizing conditions such as these can impact the academic success of transgender students and leave them vulnerable to physical and mental health difficulties (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). Insights into transgender students’ viewpoints are of critical importance to making positive changes within colleges and universities because the perspectives of transgender students aid the creation of informed, sensitive, and
meaningful solutions to the problems and barriers they face first hand. It is with their expertise that transgender and cisgender activists alike can use their combined power to create change.

The present qualitative study examined the lived experiences of 11 transgender university students within various aspects of university life in order to replicate and expand upon the literature accessing the current needs of transgender and gender diverse students. This study also examined the participants’ views on and experiences with advocating for these issues on their campus. The present study purposefully uses a qualitative research design to amplify the voices of transgender and gender non-conforming college students as experts on these topics.

**Transgender Identity**

The term “transgender” refers to individuals who do not fully or at all identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and/or the societal expectations for their gender expression (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). “Traditionally gendered” or “cisgender” people are those whose assigned biological sex corresponds with their gender identity and gender expression (i.e., those who do not depart from the behavioral, cultural, or psychological gender norms associated with their sex; Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Seelman, 2014). The prefixes trans and cis mean “across” or “on the other side of” and “on this side of,” respectively, in Latin. Both prefixes are often used as abbreviations for these gender identities. The abbreviation “trans” is also often written with an asterisk (i.e., trans*) as another way to indicate its use as an umbrella term for various gender identities that differ from cisgender identities. Additionally, “agender” refers to individuals who do not identify with the concept of gender or feel that they have no gender (Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014; Heartland Trans Wellness Group, 2013). The prefix ”a-” means “without” or “not” in Latin.
Formal prevalence studies on transgender identity are currently lacking. Prevalence estimates traditionally report the number of cases of a disease or disorder within a population (VandenBos, 2007), which partly explains why the only numbers available for transgender-identifying people are based on individuals who have sought out services at gender clinics and have received a formal psychiatric diagnosis (either for gender identity disorder pre-DSM-5 or gender dysphoria post-DSM-5). In the DSM-5, the prevalence estimates for the diagnosis of gender dysphoria (i.e., clinically significant affective/cognitive distress and functional impairment resulting from one’s incongruence between experienced and assigned gender) range from 0.005 to 0.014% for natal males and 0.002 to 0.003% for natal females (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These estimates for gender dysphoria are modest given that they only represent those with formal diagnoses who sought hormone and/or surgical treatment at unspecified specialty clinics. Further, gender dysphoria does not begin to equate with the many forms of transgender identity and therefore it is not sufficient for representing the prevalence of transgender-identifying people within a population. Other forms of formal prevalence data for transgender identity are currently lacking in the literature. This may partly be due to a lack of consistent consensus in the culture for what is meant by the term ‘transgender.’

Presently, transgender is an umbrella term for a diverse range of identities that relate to any type of incongruency between a person’s assigned gender and their internal identity and external expression. Common terms related to this topic are indicated and defined below. It is important to note that this is not a complete list, the language for gender identities is continually evolving, and individuals may identify with more than one of these terms at a given time (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011).
Transsexual identities fall within the binary conceptualization of gender, because only male and female identities are at play. For example, Male-to-female (MTF) transsexual persons are individuals that were assigned male at birth but identify as and seek to transition to being female. Transitions are often accomplished through hormone treatments and/or gender-affirming surgeries. Similarly, female-to-male (FTM) transsexual persons are individuals that were assigned female at birth but identify as and seek to transition to being male (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011).

Cross-dressers are individuals who present at least part time as a gender that is different from the one assigned to them at birth. Drag kings and drag queens are those who cross-dress in traditionally masculine and feminine ways, respectively, mainly for theatrical performance. Similarly, the term “transvestite” was coined in 1910 to refer to individuals who are more comfortable in clothing belonging to a gender other than their assigned birth gender. However, this term is considered outdated because it picked up stigma when this identity was pathologized in the 70’s and 80’s by researchers who studied exclusively clinical populations of transvestite individuals (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011).

Non-binary identities include those who identify somewhere between male and female or as gender neutral. For example, androgynous people or androgynes are individuals who appear and/or identify as neither male or female, presenting as either mixed or neutrally gendered (Dean et al., 2000; Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014). The term “two-spirit” came from an American Indian tribe and refers to someone who simultaneously possesses attributes of males and females. Two-spirited persons are considered to possess a distinct gender with unique and special social roles in the community (Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014). The word “queer” means to not fit precisely into a category (Turner, 2000). Thus, the term “genderqueer” refers to
individuals who identify as a different gender than male or female, or as a combination of or somewhere in between male and female. Individuals who identify as genderqueer typically oppose the social construction of gender and the binary system and refuse to limit themselves to any single gender (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014). A recent online study by Kuper, Nussbaum, and Mustanski (2012) found that genderqueer was the most commonly endorsed gender identity among 292 participants, especially for young, biological females.

People who identify as bigender identify themselves as each gender in a combined and/or alternating fashion (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014). This is sometimes known as “alternating gender incongruity” and can involve dramatic involuntary shifts in biochemistry and hormone balances (Case & Ramachandran, 2012; Miller & Spiegel, 2015). The term “gender fluid” refers to individuals who experience fluctuations in their gender identity over time or throughout the lifetime (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014). While gender fluidity and bigender identity have related meanings, fluidity conveys a higher flexibility in gender experience and expression and is not characterized by the distinct contrasts in gender that is sometimes associated with bigender identity (Gender Diversity, 2015).

Non-binary identifying individuals may opt to use gender neutral pronouns in reference to themselves and may desire others to follow suit. This could mean using the term “ze” (pronounced “zee”) instead of saying “she” or “he” and using “hir” (pronounced “here”) instead of saying “her” or “his.” Others may choose to simply use “they” and “theirs,” respectively. These pronouns can also be referred to as “all-gender” pronouns or “third gender” pronouns; the latter being appropriate when the individual does not feel as though they possess a neutral gender
Additional information about these and other related terms are found in Table 1. However, many other alternative forms of pronouns exist that are not covered in this paper.

It is important to note that gender identity terms possess varied meanings colloquially that don’t adhere perfectly to the literature. Additionally, individuals who challenge gender binaries do not always consider themselves transgender or feel welcome within the transgender community (Seelman, 2014). Taking these facts into account, it is ideal to respect the individuals’ understandings of themselves regardless of their choice of gender identity labels. The terms “gender non-conforming,” “gender diverse,” and “gender variant” are broad descriptive terms that refer to individuals whose gender expression and/or identity do not conform to cultural expectations based on their assigned sex (Gender Equity Resource Center, 2014; Silverberg, 2013). These are more general terms compared to the identities outlined above and can be used to describe a variety of non-normative gender behaviors without designating a specific category. Following the recommendation made by Seelman (2014), the terms transgender and gender non-conforming or gender diverse may appear together in this document in order to acknowledge individuals who transgress or transcend gender norms but do not use the word transgender.

**Rights for Transgender People: Social Oppression and History of Advocacy**

Activism for transgender rights in the United States has had a turbulent history (Stryker, 2008). Because of the overlapping nature of sex, gender, and sexuality constructs, transgender oppression has an overlapping history with sexism and heterosexism (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). During the 1960s, the combined effect of the feminist movement, antiwar protests, and youth counterculture challenged and transformed gender and sexual norms in a way that was
particularly visible in fashion (e.g., women wearing pants, men growing their hair long; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, Stryker, 2008). Converse to previous decades, gender deviant expression was accepted by youth-based popular culture, which allowed more flexibility in gender expression for both cisgender and gender diverse individuals alike. With such allowances came courage. The first documented act of civil disobedience for transgender-related discrimination in the United States was in 1965 when three teenagers in “non-conformist clothing” refused to leave a restaurant after being denied service by the management who believed that the “gay kids” were harming business (Stryker, 2008). Although this sit-in was not done exclusively for the transgender community, this was the first of many disruptive acts related to transgender rights.

The transgender community is a relatively small group, which means that allies can be crucial for effective activism. Transgender people supported the gay and feminist movements, but were seen by their “allies” as an undesirable association that made it more arduous to gain the public’s acceptance (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). A critical setback in the transgender rights movement occurred in the early 1980s when the transgender movement lost these alliances (Stryker, 2008). In the feminist lesbian community, MTF women were generally ostracized for not “really” being women (Stryker, 2008). In 1980, homosexuality was successfully removed as a psychiatric disorder from the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III), in part due to pressure imposed by gay rights groups. However, two diagnostic categories remained in which transgender people could be classified as either suffering from “gender identity disorder of childhood (GIDC)” or “transsexualism” for adolescents and adults (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). In the 1987 revision of the DSM (DSM-III-R) a third diagnostic category was added called “gender identity disorder of adolescence and adulthood, non-transsexual type” (American Psychiatric Association, 1987).
Clearly, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals in the 1980s saw the issues facing transgender people as pathological in nature. The schism between the transgender and gay and feminist communities helped to temporarily silence activism efforts for the transgender community.

In the early 1990s, the transgender rights movement emerged as a separate entity from its previous allies (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). The word “transgender” started to be used as a catchall term for non-normative gender identities (Stryker, 2008). In 1990, Judith Butler published her first book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, which was followed by her second book in 1993, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex.”* Butler’s work is largely credited with facilitating scholarship that explores gender identity as flexible, non-dualistic, and socially inherited (McNay, 1999). “Queer theory” or “queer studies” emerged as areas of scholarly inquiry (Turner, 2000). Simply put, queer studies seeks to destabilize sex and gender norms that marginalize certain categories of people (Turner, 2000). Currently, many colleges and universities offer opportunities for the focused study of queer theory within degree programs for LGBT or LGBTQ studies, women’s and gender studies, and cultural studies (Younger, 2015).

Numerous gender identity-related hate crimes occurred in the 1990’s and 2000’s that attracted national attention and contributed to the momentum of the transgender movement. These include but are by no means limited to the murders of Brandon Teena in 1993, Rita Hester in 1998, Barry Winchel in 1999, Gwen Araujo in 2002, and Angie Zapata in 2008. The attention these types of events contributed to the actions taken by legislation and the judiciary courts to improve the state of transgender rights. During the 1990’s, twenty-four cities explicitly included transgender people in the writing of their human rights laws (Stryker, 2008). In 2009, President
Barack Obama signed the *Matthew Shephard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act*, which allows federal investigations of gender identity-motivated hate crimes when local authorities refrain from following through with their duty. In 2013, the Senate passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which specifically addresses discrimination on the basis of gender identity in the workplace (Bailey, 2013). However, discrimination against individuals who transgress or transcend gender norms is still widely legal (Stryker, 2009). Further, the passing of laws by no means automatically eliminates discrimination. Current discrimination can be witnessed in the cases filed against certain Florida schools for creating oppressive policies for transgender students that require the use of bathrooms based on birth assigned sex; thus, violating Title IX (De Vogue, 2016).

The expansion of the general public’s awareness of transgender issues can be in part accounted for by cinematography (Minter, 2012). This is made evident in a study by Walters and Rehma (2013) that sampled 120 university students and found that exposure to even brief documentaries about the transgender concept can cause an increase in the accuracy of the audience’s knowledge about transgender people. Some of the public’s increased awareness may be attributed to works like the 1999 film *Boys Don’t Cry*, which told the true story of Brandon Teena as a teenager who was murdered because of his gender identity and the 2010 film *I’m Just Anneke*, which is the first film in a series designed to educate parents and communities about gender non-conforming youth. Most currently, cinematic trans activism can be seen in the 2015 film *The Danish Girl*, which tells the story of the first transsexual woman who underwent gender confirmation surgery. The stories of transgender lives have also aired on television. For example, in 2014 a documentary called *The T Word* aired to share the stories of seven transgender teenagers’ real-life journeys to live authentic lives. Additionally, a comedy-drama
series called *Transparent* started airing in 2014 that depicts the story of a family’s journey after discovering that their father is transgender. These and many other critically acclaimed and award-winning productions have provided new opportunities for the general public to increase their understanding, acceptance, and potential embracement of transgender-identifying people.

Although advocates have made progress in creating resources and support services for transgender people and expanding cultural awareness and education, many barriers still exist (Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2012). Beemyn and Rankin (2011) conducted an extensive national survey featuring the identity development and personal experiences of 3,474 transgender respondents. Their data revealed that although transgender individuals experience less denial and concealment of their identity as they develop a transgender identity compared to previous decades, they still experience high levels of discrimination, verbal harassment, and physical assault from others.

A community-based health needs assessment called the Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Study found that out of 350 transgender people, 41% reported that they had experienced discrimination in health care systems and of those individuals with a primary care provider, 15% of participants reported being uncomfortable discussing transgender-specific health care needs and 20% of participants reported that they had to educate their provider about their transgender-specific needs (Bradford, Reisner, Honnold, & Xavier, 2013). Within this overall sample, 31% of participants reported a lack of support from families for their gender identity and 37% of the sample reported hostility from peers, teachers, or school administrators during high school. In 2014, Cruz (2014) conducted a study about the postponement of curative care by drawing from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey and found that of the 4,049 transgender adult participants, over 25% reported that they had postponed contacting a
health care provider when they were ill because of discrimination by health care professionals. A qualitative study of nine FTM transgender individuals conducted by Dispenza, Watson, Chung, and Brack (2012) found that discrimination in the form of microaggressions, horizontal oppressions, health care discrimination, and/or government policy discrimination negatively influenced participants’ work experiences or career trajectory.

Continual confrontation with adversity has a direct affect on quality of life, which puts transgender people at risk for high levels of emotional distress, dropping out of school, substance abuse, running away from home, becoming homeless, and suicidality (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006; Singh, Hays & Watson, 2011). The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention found that the prevalence of suicide attempts for transgender adults in the United States is 41% (Haas, Rodgers, & Herman, 2014). This far exceeds the overall adult population’s prevalence of 4.6% and also LGB adult’s prevalence of 10-20%. Suicide prevalence was elevated for those who had experienced rejection from loved ones, discrimination, victimization, or violence.

In the United States, individuals that identify as transgender have one of the highest rates of experienced violence and murder compared to other groups (Stryker, 2008). Stotzer (2009) provided a review of the research of transgender violence in the United States collected via self-report surveys, hotline calls, social service reports, and police reports. This review found that starting from an early age and continuing throughout the lifetime, transgender people are at an increased risk for violent crimes, especially sexual violence, by strangers and known others, including family members. The National Coalition of Antiviolence Programs’ (NCAVP) National Report on Hate Crimes Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities that was released in 2014 stated that in 2013, a disproportionate amount
of homicide victims were transgender women (72% of 18 LGBTQ reported homicides) and 12 of those 13 cases were transgender women of color. The NCAVP also reported that transgender survivors of hate crimes were seven times more likely to report experiencing violence at the hands of the police compared to non-transgender (LGBQ) survivors (National Coalition of Antiviolence Programs, 2014). Tannehill (2014) stated that hate crimes against transgender women are particularly high in Ohio, with four brutal murders between January 2013 and June 2014, three of which were transgender women of color. These homicides featured multiple stabbings, bludgeoning, and gunshots, but none were treated as hate crimes by authorities (Tannehill, 2014). On a global level, Transgender Europe’s Trans Murder Monitoring project showed 100 reported murders of transgender people in 2016 as of May 12th (Transgender Europe, 2016).

**Transgender Experiences on College Campuses**

Individuals who present as having a non-conforming gender identity typically face social stigma and often experience discrimination in school, employment, housing, and health care settings (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Grossman & Augelli, 2006). Grossman and Augelli (2006) conducted a series of focus groups designed to assess social and emotional experiences related to gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, and health-related vulnerability (i.e., risks, discrimination, marginalization, and access to resources) with individuals between 15 to 21 years of age who identified as transgender or gender “atypical.” The participants reported that other people’s negative reactions to their non-normative gender behavior ranged from invasive questioning by peers and dismissiveness from teachers to physical assault by family members and neighbors. Attending school was reportedly traumatic because of the wide variety of harassment (e.g., being a target for thrown objects, spit on, name called,
propositioned for sex). Pertaining to mental health services, participants noted that mental health providers’ negative reactions to transgender identity disclosure had a severe impact on their self-esteem. A review by Dean and colleagues (2000) provides a detailed account of how chronically stigmatizing and prejudiced social conditions impact the health of transgender people. Factors such as family rejection and abandonment, biased and discriminatory health care professionals and employers, and insufficient insurance coverage severely limit transgender peoples’ available resources for maintaining their health and well-being. Dean and colleagues (2000) also report that transgender individuals have increased experiences of psychosocial and physical health problems (e.g., adjustment disorders, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, substance use, suicide attempts, and other forms of self-harm) in large part due to these oppressive and marginalizing social factors.

Most colleges and universities have curricula, extracurricular activities, health care plans, and facilities (e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms, housing units) that do not take gender experiences beyond the binary, cisgender constructions of “male” and “female” into account (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). These circumstances often contribute to transgender young adults feeling marginalized, isolated, and ignored (Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014). Transgender students support services are usually combined with the campus lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students support services; however, combined (i.e., LGBT) organizations often overlook transgender-specific issues and lack sufficient support for students (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). This is especially true for transgender students who identify as heterosexual (e.g., a biological female who identifies as male and is heterosexual, meaning that he is attracted to women and may be mislabeled as a homosexual woman; Beemyn, 2003).
Mental health counselors on college campuses often struggle to create safe, nonjudgmental, and informed environments for transgender students to make progress in therapy, whether it is focused on gender identity issues or the average challenges of college life (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). Existing research suggests that transgender college students often do not have positive experiences in their interactions with college mental health professionals. For example, as part of a larger study focused on gender identity and relationships, Benson (2013) conducted seven feminist-informed qualitative interviews in order to gain an understanding of transgender people’s experiences in therapy. Four themes arose: purposes of treatment (i.e., quality of life and gender identity), problems in therapeutic practice, therapist reputation, and trans-affirmative therapy. Problems in therapy focused on therapists’ lack of knowledge about transgender issues (e.g., “I just had therapists who have crazy, off-the-wall ideas and just not really understood who I was or really taken the time to understand.”, “I think most of them listen to the transgendered clients so that they can learn something about the issue. I think for the most part they don’t know beans about what makes transgendered people tick.”; p. 29-30). Fortunately, a trans-affirmative theme revealed positive experiences as well (e.g., “But she said that she didn’t want to waste a lot of time having me describe to her what being transgender was all about. She said that she was willing to like go and research it herself.”, “He’s like, ‘That is so wonderful that you can be who you are.’…All this validation and affirming was so powerful.”; p. 32). McKinney (2005) conducted a qualitative study of 75 transgender college students (50 undergraduate, 25 graduate) from 61 colleges and universities about their experiences with mental health counselors on their campuses via a written survey. The survey included questions prompting for information about their personal experiences, knowledge about campus support resources, and the experiences of their friends or colleagues.
Results suggested only 4 of the 75 participants (5%) reported positive experiences. Undergraduate and graduate students in the study both reported that the counseling services on campus were inadequate (e.g., “I was referred to a mental institution for expressing such feelings.”, “…she said that I should educate her on trans issues since it was not something she knew anything about.”, “[I] was told that I need to find a counselor familiar with gender issues. I now pay for private counseling away from campus.”, “They had no counselors with experience dealing with trans folk. Nor were they able to refer me to any experienced counselors anywhere in my state.” p. 69-71).

Similarly, health care practitioners in medical settings on college campuses often have a limited understanding of transgender health issues, which can inhibit their ability to provide competent, high quality health care to transgender students (Dean et al., 2000). For example, providers may not realize that a person’s external appearance may significantly differ from their internal anatomy, which can lead to inappropriate care (e.g., it may be overlooked that a transgender man needs a pap smear if he has not had a hysterectomy). Research has rarely assessed the experiences of transgender people within the health care settings available on college campuses. However, one study that surveyed students found that graduate students were especially concerned about providers’ lack of knowledge and had needed to actively educate their providers about transgender-specific health issues (McKinney, 2005). They also noted that the limits of student health insurance act as a barrier to seeking alternative services off-campus. Students deserve expert heath care in order to maintain their health and productivity during college regardless of their gender identity, but there is a severe deficit in practitioners’ ability to meet transgender needs. Such deficits leave transgender students vulnerable to impaired
physical and mental health, as well as a subsequent decline in academic success and retention (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005).

A survey conducted by the FTM Alliance of Los Angeles that sought to identify the needs and barriers to health care for FTM individuals in Southern California, reported that over half of the 47 participants had experienced being denied health care services because they were transgender (FTM Alliance of Los Angeles, 2004). Sixty-eight percent of the participants reported negative experiences with the medical community that made them want to avoid seeking health care again in the future (FTM Alliance of Los Angeles, 2004). Relatedly, a transgender needs assessment questionnaire distributed in Washington, D.C. examined what services were being accessed, the quality of those services, the sensitivity of the staff to transgender clients, the barriers that exist, and what more was needed to improve conditions. This assessment found that one-third of the 263 participants felt that transphobic providers and the fear that providers would disclose their transgender status to others were significant deterrents to seeking health care services (Xavier, 2000).

Faculty, staff, and student leaders in many colleges and universities in the United States often lack any form of gender diversity training, which can leave them ill equipped to understand and handle transgender related issues (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). A majority of campuses also lack sufficient opportunities to educate cisgender students about transgender issues and experiences (Beemyn, 2003; Sausa, 2002). Transgender students’ vulnerability is most pronounced within gender-specific facilities. Bathrooms and locker rooms are among the most likely places for transgender students to experience verbal harassment and physical violence (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). Campus nondiscrimination policies usually only carry “sex and sexual orientation” as a category, which misses discrimination on the basis of gender
identification and expression (Beemyn, 2003). Also, college documents that require
demographic information typically only include “male” and “female” as options. When college
forms, websites, or brochures use binary language (e.g., “he/she”) it may suggest to transgender
students that they do not belong at the school (Beemyn, 2003).

Campus housing services often fail to recognize gender diversity when addressing
housing assignments. Transgender students who have transitioned, are in mid transition, or do
not hold a gender-conforming presentation are put into potentially unsafe and uncomfortable
living situations when they are assigned to rooms based on their birth gender. Still further, they
may encounter uncooperative or hostile roommates even if they are placed based on their gender
identity (Beemyn, 2005). Many colleges and universities require that freshman live on campus,
which means that transgender freshmen may be vulnerable to stressful living environments
without alternative options.

It can be typical for transsexual college students to desire the alteration of their
designated gender and name on official school records if they seek to transition from one gender
to another. Genderqueer students may also desire to change their name to reflect their
unconfined gender identity. The required steps for making these changes can be very difficult to
accomplish and are sometimes not available at all. When students are able to change their name
to reflect their identity, they may be able to avoid the discomfort and potential danger associated
with contradicting their birth given gender and name. For example, students would not have to
explain to professors why they use a name other than the one on the class roster. Similarly, this
would decrease the probability that students would have to explain why their appearance doesn’t
match the gender designated on their identification card or school record to other people. Name
changes can facilitate the privacy of transgender students because disclosure of their identity becomes a choice rather than something unavoidable (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005).

Seelman (2014) conducted a qualitative research study that examined what can be done to address the various forms of marginalization and victimization of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals on college and university campuses. In order to gain meaningful, first hand viewpoints, Seelman interviewed 30 transgender or gender non-conforming people (19 students, 3 faculty, 3 staff, and 5 who held multiple roles) from 10 colleges and universities in Colorado. Upon analyzing the content of the 30 interviews for what participants felt were the most important areas needing attention and improvement, five main themes arose. These themes expressed that the institutions needed to 1) offer education, campus programming, and support for trans individuals, 2) improve university systems and procedures for recording one’s name and gender, 3) encourage greater inclusivity and recruitment of diverse groups, 4) make physical changes to facilities, and 5) hold people accountable for acts of discrimination and/or negligence. These and the previously listed issues are all examples of possible points of intervention within colleges, depending on the individual campus’s unique needs.

Transgender Rights: The Theory of “Small Wins”

Social change through advocacy is not typically accomplished in one sweeping victory, but rather with an accumulation of small wins. Weick (1984) describes small wins as “concrete, complete, implemented outcome[s] of moderate importance” (p. 43). Although small wins may seem individually unimportant, they allow activists to focus on just one piece of an enormous social problem at any given time, which allows advocacy goals to become more manageable rather than overwhelming. According to Weick (1984) one small win provides the opportunity for those involved to learn from their experiences and gain confidence from their successes,
which feeds the momentum and optimism for planning and accomplishing the next set of goals. As small wins accumulate, new allies with new resources are drawn to the social movement (Weick, 1984). According to this theory, small wins by no means occur in a logical, linear fashion. Rather, small wins towards social change are often scattered and intermittent, only recognizably related because of their movement in the generally same direction toward a larger set of goals.

Activism for the rights of transgender people, also known as “trans activism,” appears to function in a “small wins” fashion, with scattered small victories that make a difference for select groups of people and contribute to the bigger picture in concrete ways. For example, during 2003 and 2004, transgender activists at the City College of San Francisco experienced a series of small wins, including successfully creating two transgender student organizations, adding books to the school library on transgender subjects, and creating Transgender Awareness Days (Davis, 2006). Researchers and professionals have developed guidelines and models of practice for how to create sensitive and inclusive atmospheres in previously oppressive settings. For example, the American Psychological Association created an information page for psychologists titled, “Answers to your Questions About Transgender People, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression” in order to facilitate mindful clinical practice (American Psychological Association, 2015). Several transgender-specific therapeutic models have been proposed for psychologists. One such model by Raj (2007) incorporates elements of advocacy (e.g., self-empowerment) in order to promote client agency, efficacy, resilience, and overall quality of life. Donatone and Rachlin (2013) created an intake template for clinicians to use with transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming college students that uses gender-affirming language and asks conscientious questions (e.g., “Do you have a preferred pronoun?”, “How do you describe your
gender or gender identity?”, “Have you had gender-affirming medical procedures?”). In 2008, Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper published a non-pathologizing book for parents with transgender and gender non-conforming children titled *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*. In popular culture, the lead singer of the rock band *Against Me!*, Laura Jane Grace, publicly started to transition from male to female in 2012. The band released their album “Transgender Dysphoria Blues” (NPR Music, 2014) and Laura subsequently became a public figure in the transgender community. More recently, Caitlyn Jenner has made an impact in social media, albeit, with mixed reactions from transgender people and allies (Anderson, 2016, Pilkington, 2015). The Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles exemplified the concept of small wins when they simplified their process for updating gender information on official documents and identification (Oregon DMV Changing Your Gender Designation, 2015). Target has also made explicit efforts to make their stores more gender inclusive for both guests and employees (e.g., encouraging individuals to use the restrooms and fitting rooms congruent with their gender identity; Corporate Target, 2016). These are all examples of “small wins” that have been accomplished in the pursuit of transgender justice during the 21st century.

**Advocacy and Transgender College Students**

Advocacy efforts for trans issues, also known as “trans advocacy,” have become increasingly more frequent on college campuses through grass roots student organizations, as well as institutional, regional, and national initiatives, in order to improve the state of transgender students’ rights (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Such efforts often focus on projects like creating a fully funded, functioning, and supported LGBT Center, adding “gender identity and expression” to the nondiscrimination policy, providing training to faculty, staff, and students on transgender issues, ensuring that documents and websites use trans-inclusive language, making
and advertising gender neutral bathrooms across campus, developing implementable policies for responding to transphobic physical and verbal harassment, creating trans-specific events (e.g., speakers, performers, films) and affirming student groups, and establishing a manageable method for changing a student’s name and gender on records and identification (e.g., college ID; Beemyn, 2003). Universities like the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Vermont, New York University, the University of Oregon, the University of California-Los Angeles, and Princeton University are among the leaders in creating increasingly trans-friendly campuses (Beemyn & Windmeyer, 2012). There are an increasing number of resources designed to promote trans and gender diversity awareness and support for students and advocates. For example, the National Center for Transgender Equality provides information about which schools carry trans-inclusive nondiscrimination laws, a model for creating safe and supportive school environments for trans youth, and a platform for keeping the public up to date on transgender-related school discrimination cases (NCTE, 2015). The organization Campus Pride also provides a wealth of information about how to be a transgender advocate and ally, how to create Safe Zone training programs, how to address trans issues within college athletics and Greek life, and much more (Campus Pride, 2015).

Although these resources are available, carrying out social justice endeavors is by no means simple. Advocates must be knowledgeable, strategic, and committed to the cause in order to succeed in the face of barriers and backlash. Individuals typically develop these advocacy skills over time through experience and training. Kieffer (1984) offers a developmental modal that sheds light on the process through which people transform from powerlessness to participatory competence. Kieffer posits that there are four “eras” that people experience. The first is the “Era of Entry” where one is mobilized into action by some emergency event involving
injustice. During this time, the previously intimidating power of authority is dismantled. A person may realize that authority figures “are just people too” and subsequently may reassess how they relate to authority. This may result in the person recognizing that they have more power than they previously realized. The next era “of Advancement” is a time of education and support. It typically involves learning information and new skills from a mentor, establishing a supportive network, and increasing one’s overall understanding of the nature of the social and political structures of interest. Then comes the “Era of Incorporation” where the person’s self-concept as an advocate and methodology mature. This is when they become more strategic and masterful of how they confront and contend with barriers. Overcoming obstacles becomes a means for increased confidence and strengthened resolve for the cause. Finally, development concludes with the “Era of Commitment.” This is when the person has a developed awareness of how they relate to the political world and has integrated their new knowledge and skill into other realms of their life. Kieffer’s developmental modal shows how the journey to becoming a knowledgeable and effective advocate requires openness and dedication. Moreover, it has been suggested that empowered people have a radiating influence on others in the community by which activism has the potential to become contagious (Maton, 2008). In this way, empowered individuals have the potential to serve as catalysts for social change.

The Present Study

The present qualitative study focused on the lived experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming students attending Bowling Green State University. This study described transgender and gender non-conforming students’ experiences within important aspects of campus life and with personal advocacy efforts. Participants were asked about organizations (e.g., clubs) on campus that address transgender-specific issues, their views about disclosing
their gender identity to faculty, staff, and other students, and whether transgender individuals are acknowledged in housing, health care, and classroom settings on campus. Participants were asked about their experiences with interpersonal oppression on campus based on their gender identity or expression. Study participants were asked about their views and experiences advocating for transgender rights and directions for campus change.

The author’s privileged life experiences and understandings of gender systems as a cisgender identifying person required special care and thoughtfulness to be taken when discussions of gender diversity were approached. Expert advocates were consulted throughout the process to ensure that the following methods were responsibly designed. This research is written with the belief that advancing equality for transgender people requires the united commitment of people of all gender identities.
METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 11 students attending Bowling Green State University (nine undergraduates, two graduate students). Five out of the 11 participants identified as having a non-binary gender identity (45.5%), with three individuals identified as genderqueer (27.3%) and two participants identified as genderfluid (18.2%). Four participants indicated binary gender identities (36.4%), with three people (27.3%) identified as FTM and one as MTF (9.1%). Two participants identified outside of or beyond gender (18.2%), and both of these participants identified as agender. In terms of pronouns, four participants used “he/him,” two used “she/her,” three used “they/them,” one used “ze/hir,” and one used “ze/zir.” Participants’ preferred pronouns are used in the reporting of the results. Complete demographic information can be found in Table 2.

A majority of the sample was raised as female from birth (81.8%) and identified as White (90.9%), with one identifying as Biracial (9.1%). The average age was 20.7 ($SD = 2.7$). Six participants reported that they lived on-campus (54.5%), and five individuals lived off-campus (45.5%). Eight of the participants were single (72.7%), and three people indicated that they were dating or in a relationship (27.3%). In terms of sexual orientation, three participants identified as pansexual (27.3%), three as homosexual (27.3%), two as asexual (18.2%), two as heterosexual (18.2%), and one as fluid (9.1%).

Five participants reported their religious preference as Agnostic (45.5%), while three identified as Atheist (27.3%), one identified as Christian (9.1%), and two participants indicated that they are spiritually exploring (18.2%). Four people indicated maintaining part-time jobs (36.4%). When asked about their current distance from their family’s home by car, two people
lived 30 minutes or less from home (18.2%), three lived 1-2 hours from home (27.3%), three lived 2-4 hours from home (27.3%), and four lived more than 4 hours from home (36.4%). Eight participants stated that they had mental and/or physical disabilities or persistent health conditions that impacted their functioning (72.7%).

**Measures**

The semi-structured interview protocol for the present study was adapted from an interview protocol developed by Seelman (2014). An expanded version of the interview protocol was developed for the present study (see Appendix C) which consisted of the following five sections: 1) overall perception of the campus environment as related to transgender and gender diversity issues, 2) their gender identity in their own words and their comfort with disclosure to faculty, staff, and other students, 3) personal experiences within a variety of settings (e.g., on-campus housing, mental and physical health services, classrooms), 4) experiences of finding support for their gender identity in campus settings, and 5) general knowledge about and personal experiences with transgender advocacy on campus. The interview ended with a demographics form (see Appendix D) that included information about: age, ethnicity, race, degree/major, full-time/part-time status, year in school, grade point average, employment status, living situation, religious affiliation, relationship status, family and personal income. General information was collected about participants’ family of origin and participants’ frequency of contact with parents and siblings.

**Procedure**

Information about the research was distributed after receiving approval from the university’s Human Subjects Research Board. Participants were recruited through campus wide email updates, flyers posted across campus (see Appendix A), and word of mouth. To be
eligible to participate in the study, individuals had to 1) identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, or any related subcategories (e.g., FTM, MTF, genderqueer, gender fluid, angrogyne, agender), 2) be currently enrolled at BGSU as either an undergraduate or graduate student, 3) have attended BGSU for at least one semester, and 4) be 18-years-old or older. Individuals interested in the study were contacted via phone or email to complete the brief telephone interview (see Appendix B) to determine if they were eligible to participate. Of the 23 individuals who expressed interest in learning more about the study, 12 individuals met criteria for the research and completed an interview. One participant who was in the early stages of their gender identity development was removed from the sample because they were unable to answer a majority of the interview questions.

The principal investigator conducted individual in-person interviews in locations that were convenient for participants. Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes and was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Individuals who completed the interview received a $25 Amazon gift card in appreciation for their participation. Participants were also given a list of campus and community resources should they want to speak to anyone in a professional setting about personal experiences and issues.

Qualitative Analysis

The present study used a qualitative content analysis approach as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) to examine participant interviews. A content analysis approach was selected for the present research as data analysis is guided by the existing literature and theoretical domains reflected in the construction of the interview protocol. A content analysis approach to data analysis was used to examine common patterns and themes in the narrative accounts of participants. Participant interviews were transcribed verbatim and summarized.
Summaries included exemplar quotes that reflect relevant experiences described by participants. The emergence of common themes and patterns of experience occurred through the process of transcribing and summarizing the content of the participants’ interviews.

Accounts of participants were organized according to content domains contained in the interview as a starting point for analysis. Throughout the analytic process, themes from participant interviews were compared across participants so that both similarities and differences in narrative accounts could be identified. A coding manual that operationally defined participant themes was constructed with 35 coding categories and each transcript was coded by the researcher and checked for accuracy by an independent coder. An iterative process of coding interview content and returning to the original transcripts was used to examine similarities and differences in participant accounts to arrive at final descriptions of participants’ accounts of their experiences. The principal investigator completed the coding process with a total of 898 codes. The independent coder checked the entirety of the principal investigator’s codes for accuracy within each transcript in accordance with the coding manual. The independent coder found reason to add additional codes to 24 of the utterances in the transcripts. Through this collaborative process, 12 additional codes were ultimately added, resulting in a final sum of 908 codes. Coders agreed on 97.39% of codes across the transcripts. This percentage was calculated by taking the number of codes agreed on by both coders and dividing by the total number of codes for the utterances. To protect confidentiality, participants’ names have been replaced with gender neutral pseudonyms.
RESULTS

Desired Changes On Campus

Participants shared important insights into their personal experiences as transgender and gender diverse students on their college campus. Despite participants voicing a desire to improve many aspects of the campus, participants also expressed general contentment with their overall experience of the campus environment, especially when comparing BGSU to previous academic settings. For example, Hayden, a genderqueer graduate student, pointed out that his previous institution was, "still very conservative…So we didn’t have any sort of LGBT groups on campus. No one was out…So I didn’t know of anyone personally that identified as LGBT.” Landry, a 19-year-old genderfluid student noted, “My perception was that [BGSU] was a lot more accepting and open to all this than I thought it would be…I’m very happy with my choice. I’m very happy with the community.” Blake, a 19-year-old FTM student, said, “BG felt safe. With that wildly accepting feel that it had, it made me feel like I could come out. I could feel safer coming out. And I wouldn’t be in danger or anything.” Payton, an FTM graduate student described very positive experiences while transitioning. He stated, “BG was awesome…in my program it was very much like, ‘Awesome. Cool. What pronouns do you want?...What gender would you prefer to be under?’ So like really inclusive and all that.” While BGSU has clear strengths when it comes to acceptance of diversity, areas in need of improvement were also identified.

Content analysis produced eight main themes for participants’ desired changes to the campus environment to improve conditions for gender diverse students on BGSU’s campus. These suggestions included 1) increase student body awareness and understanding of trans-specific information, 2) increase attention to gender issues and explicitly widen the net for what
is captured in the “T” in LGBT organizations, 3 increase responsiveness to issues within the residence halls and increase gender neutral housing location options on campus, particularly within the Learning Communities, 4 require trans-specific sensitivity training for faculty and staff, including RA’s, 5 improvement of resources within physical and mental health facilities, 6 increase the number of gender neutral bathrooms on campus, 7 improve transparency and ease of bureaucratic procedures and create inclusive gender options on official documentation, and 8 change or act to reduce current oppressive practices from non-BGSU groups visiting the campus and national student organizations. For more information on these themes, see Table 3.

Theme 1. Increase student body awareness and understanding of trans-specific information.

Based on their lived experience, the participants articulated that BGSU’s campus community as a whole needs an increase in overall awareness about gender diversity and increased participation in educational opportunities from non-LGBT identifying students. For example, when asked what they would most like to see change at BGSU, Skyler, a 21-year-old genderqueer student said, “I think general awareness…The biggest hurdle is that people just don’t even know. Or even realize it’s an issue, because they don’t even think that someone in their classroom could be trans or gender weird.” When elaborating on moments of feeling uncomfortable in interpersonal interactions, they stated, “Most of the things that I’ve experienced have come from a lack of knowledge on the subject. Because even when people make transphobic jokes, it’s not that they are being hateful. They just don’t understand really what it is.” Similarly, Sage, a 19-year-old genderqueer student expressed that ze is, “trying to figure out how to get students who are not in the [LGBT] community to come to things…I think [that] is the biggest challenge at BGSU that we face…Because the thing is, the resources are here.” One participant, Tatum, a 19-year-old FTM student, gave a novel suggestion to partly aid this
problem when he said, “I’ve met so many people that don’t even understand ‘trans.’ Education is needed definitely. I know we have the Cultural Diversity Gen. Ed. requirement. I think LGBT classes should be included [as an option] there.” Blake, another FTM student, also said, “I would like to see the gender and sexuality courses pushed more for different majors.”

Theme 2. Increase attention to gender issues and explicitly widen the net for what is captured in the “T” in LGBT organizations.

Participants noted that the organizations run through the LGBT Resource Center seem to have a primary focus on sexuality issues, which at times may leave gender issues out of the picture. For example, Jessie, a 20-year-old MTF student stated, “We have all these different sexual diverse programs, but there’s nothing really on gender. They kind of assume that sexuality is gender and they don’t really push the gender part of the programs at all really.” Similarly, Charlie, a 20-year-old genderfluid student, said, “…[the LGBT Resource Center] really does seem to prioritize gay and lesbian and sexuality stuff and less about gender stuff.” Some participants were unaware that a trans-specific group existed on campus. For example, Blake indicated, “I don’t even know of a transgender-specific group. And I feel like there needs to be one that people know about more, because I don’t even know about it.”

Non-binary identifying and agender participants made a plea for LGBT organizations on campus to increase overt inclusiveness for individuals who do not identify on the binary gender spectrum. For example, Charlie pointed out, “I think I’ve seen maybe one thing for gender non-conforming students ever in the campus updates or anywhere else. I mean I know it’s there. I just feel like it should be more open.” Riley, a 19-year-old agender student mentioned, “I would like to see people focusing on non-conforming and non-binary stuff. People are so intense on male-to-female, female-to-male. It’s kind of like, ‘What about us over here? You are not fitting us into
the spectrum.’…‘Do we really belong in the LGBT group?’” On a similar theme, Skyler expressed hesitation to attend such meetings. Skyler said, “But also since I haven’t been there, I don’t know how open they would be to me, because I’m genderqueer, I’m not a super huge part of the community, because the community doesn’t always acknowledge those parts of it. So I could go and they be like, ‘Well, you’re not trans enough.’ And that’s always kind of something that I’m afraid of a little bit.”

Theme 3. Increase responsiveness to issues within the residence halls and increase gender neutral housing location options on campus, particularly within the Learning Communities.

When relaying their personal experiences within the residence halls, participants indicated a high appreciation for the existence of gender neutral housing on campus. However, they also noted some limitations in Residence Life’s current ability to provide appropriate accommodations for transgender and gender diverse students consistently. For example, Kendall mentioned, “I got told there was [a gender neutral bathroom] on every floor in [my residence hall], but I live there and there’s definitely not one on my floor.” Blake spoke about needing a room change after deciding to come out about his identity in the middle of a semester. He explained, “I wasn’t planning on coming out…and people at Residence Life were not friendly…I [asked], ‘How can I move into the gender neutral housing?’ And [they said], “Oh, well you had to fill out the paperwork at the beginning of the year.’ So that was it and they hung up on me. It was kind of hurtful, because then I called back and was like, ‘[Are] there any single rooms available?’ [They said], ‘No, sorry.’ And they hung up again.” Based on participants’ reports, problems seemed to arise with students who desired to live within BGSU’s Learning Communities while still maintaining gender neutral accommodations. For example, Jessie described that, “Res Life [was] suggesting to me to move to the special floor. Like they have
special floors on campus that are gender neutral...And I’m like, ‘Well, why can’t I be in the building with my [learning] community?’ I had to really argue my point. And that’s when they said, ‘Well, you have to live with a guy then.’” This meant that Residence Life assigned a roommate based on Jessie’s biological sex instead of by her gender identity. Tatum also hit barriers when requesting permission to live off-campus while transitioning, because his learning community did not have gender neutral accommodations. He explained that, “They denied my appeal even though I had a letter from a psychologist...And their response would be, ‘Just move to the gender neutral housing we have on campus.’ [But] that’s super far from my degree.”

Tatum also mentioned that, “They did give me [sole access to] a gender neutral bathroom...[But] people were so mad when I got that bathroom to myself...” The current lack of options for gender neutral housing on campus puts transgender students, most notably transsexual students, in uncomfortable and “awkward” living situations.

Theme 4. Require trans-specific sensitivity training for faculty and staff, including RA’s.

Participants also spoke about the impact authority figures on campus have the potential to make with their inclusive knowledge or lack there of. Hayden expressed, “I do wish that teachers, all teachers, should be mandated to have inclusive training. Because we don’t have that and a lot of people are very inadvertently unkind and not supportive. Teachers are in a position of power and so they can do more damage with careless comments...it doesn’t have to be taken to [the] extreme or anything, but just like basic training. Like yes, you should use people’s preferred name and pronouns...That’s very important. Just do it. It’s not a big deal. You don’t have to be super supportive or anything like that. Just be respectful. And this is what respect looks like...They are teachers.” He described a specific personal experience with his advisor. He stated, “So my advisor still misgenders me...So that’s kind of disheartening...She’s my
advisor, she can do whatever she wants. So that’s a little sad.” Hayden went on to explain, “I think that’s a really big deal, because a lot of what the students face is just these interactions with their teachers and people on campus…And if they have all these little tiny situations [then] they build up. So it’s not actually big things, but I know from experience if all these interactions with all these people go smoothly, those few bad interactions won’t matter as much. It’s just when they pile up that it becomes a major, huge problem. And especially from people in power.” An example of an instructor’s lack of training becoming problematic came out in Sage’s interview. She noted, “Yep, my [course teacher] didn’t know how to refer to trans people so she called them ‘its’…It was one of those things that it wasn’t out of malice…it was just a place of ignorance….those mistakes are kind of damaging in front of a lecture hall of [hundreds of] kids.”

Sage discussed the importance of providing proper diversity training to RA’s in the residence halls. She described her personal experience in the training and explained, “…they talk a lot about gender inclusive housing, but never once was my gender identity asked about as an RA. It was just always assumed to be female…they were talking about students who lived in impoverished areas and low socioeconomic statuses and they were acting like we weren’t part of that group. And I was like, ‘You can’t keep making it an ‘us’ and ‘them’ sort of thing.’”

Conversely, a majority of participants also shared positive experiences with informed superiors. For example, Blake stated, “[Instructors] I expected to be more understanding, because they teach such a wide variety of people every year that they should be used to the differences people have. They’ve been accepting and they haven’t treated me any different than any other student.” Skyler spoke about what it was like for their professor to come out to them. They shared, “I will say it was a surprise when my teacher told me that she was also genderqueer. And I was like, ‘You too? I wouldn’t have known.’ And I think she probably only
told me because I had put it in my paper in the end. And she was like, ‘Oh yeah, you are totally fine. I feel the same way.’ And I was like – that was unexpected, but lovely.” In the same theme, Tatum gave an example of the critical impact professors can have on their students in moments of crisis. He explained, “I just went into his office and I was like, ‘Hey, I need to talk to you about something…I don’t know how to say this, so I’m just going to say it. I’m transgender…’ And he just looked so happy. He was like, ‘Really?! Okay then!’…I look up to a lot of professors…I’ve learned strength through some of them. They had a rough life growing up gay. Like they had to hide who they were for [decades]. And I remember when I was going through a really tough time and I was talking about suicide, [he] said, ‘Suicide when you don’t know the person is murder. You need to know yourself before you even think about that.’ So that just stuck with me. You need to know yourself, or at least give yourself the chance to figure out who you are before trying to give up.”

Theme 5. Improvement of resources within physical and mental health facilities.

Eight of the 11 participants had been to the Falcon Health Center, four to the medical unit and four to the psychiatry department. Participants expressed happiness when the nurses and psychiatrists respected their preferred names and gender identities. For example, Payton described, “…the first time I went, you have to fill out a form…and the sheet doesn’t have an option for sex and gender [separately] and so…I just circle female, but I put female-to-male trans right below it. And the nurse came out…and she was like, ‘What pronouns would you prefer? Is this your legal name on here or is this what you want to be called?…I just want to make sure, because we can’t put it in the computer…but it’s put in your chart to know you need to be called by this…” And I was like, ‘Damn. Cool…I’m glad you do that, because some people really need
that...thank you. I appreciate that.” This instance illuminates the level of appreciation that can be felt by transgender students when a genuine effort is made to respect their identity.

In the same theme, when talking about his experience specifically within the psychiatry department at Falcon Health Center, Blake stated that, “The staff there are very knowledgeable and they also know how to treat the trans community. They know how to either avoid gender questions completely or adapt it to how you identify yourself.” Jessie recounted a similar experience. He described, “I have really no issues there...the psychiatry part of the building, even the person who checks me in, before my name was changed over she called me by my preferred name. The psychiatrists there are very kind about doing that, they use the right pronouns. They flip a few times, but I’m understanding of that. I even flip my own pronouns, too.”

A majority of the participants had not gone to the health center for gender or sex-related procedures or ailments, and thus were unsure of the doctors’ knowledge about gender diversity. However, participants articulated a desire for doctors who were knowledgeable about gender diversity and trans issues, particularly pertaining to transition procedures. For example, Payton expressed, “I wish there was a thing at BG where a trans person could go to a website or call the Resource Center and be able to be like, ‘I need specific help with this. Like a specific doctor in the area or in the state of Ohio.’ Because that’s not something I individually can find or know...” Similarly, Tatum expressed frustration that neither his psychiatrist nor counselor was able to provide insight into additional trans medical resources. He recounted, “[The Counseling Center is] a bit behind on trans resources. Same as my psychiatrist, they are like, ‘If you find anything let me know so I can tell future people.’” This puts students in the sole position of responsibility for finding doctors that are thoroughly trained in transgender issues in a region that is often not
their native home. In a time where few doctors are open to and knowledgeable about this subject, this process of trial and error can be intimidating, expensive, and potentially physically and emotionally damaging.

Additionally, Hayden pointed out the importance of responsible website design for the facilities on campus. Specifically, he described an incident in a previous year. Hayden said, “.on their website they say that they are supportive of transgender people, but they call us ‘transgendered’...I was like, ‘What the heck?! Haven’t you had anyone review this?’…it made me not want to go there…on the website they’re like, ‘Transgender people [are] at risk to STI’s just like other people are.’…why would you even put that? Like we don’t see you as really humans, or as people, because we have to remind you [of] something like this. That’s what it seemed like to me.”

Six of the 11 participants had been to the Counseling Center. The majority of those who had gone described positive experiences with treatment, noting that practitioners were knowledgeable about how to work with transgender and gender diverse students. Statements from Hayden and Blake, respectively, included, “I’ve had only positive experiences there,” and “They are super wonderful.” There were specific qualities about the Counseling Center that participants seemed to especially appreciate. For example, Sage mentioned the impact that having a counselor from within the LGBT community can have when she said, “She’s really insightful…it’s really good to have somebody who has been there and understands.” Blake also noted the important role of advocate that counselors can sometimes play. He articulated, “I’m not out-spoken. I’m very quiet. I’m not one to fight for myself. And so going to the Counseling Center, my counselor fights for me even though I won’t do it myself.”
Theme 6. Increase the number of gender neutral bathrooms on campus.

Every participant was able to share their viewpoint on the current state of available bathrooms on BGSU’s campus. The consensus was that the lack of bathroom options was an issue and more gender neutral bathrooms need to be made available. Kendall stated, “I know recently our campus got gender neutral bathrooms. But that doesn’t really affect me because I’d have to go out of my way to use one…I never really get the opportunity to use them. I’m sure I would if they were around and easily accessible to me. Or if I knew where they were.” Sage, a genderqueer student who fluctuates in the gender orientation of hir presentation, pointed out that, “I’ve had a really big problem trying to find bathrooms, depending on the way that I’m dressed during a certain day and the way that I’m presenting...There’s not even a male or female [combined] restroom, which technically isn’t even gender inclusive, because that’s still binary. But those don’t even exist in some buildings.” Hayden, one of BGSU’s graduate students, also talked about the limitations he faces. He said, “So the closest one to [my building] is the one in [another building], which is like, that would be like half an hour trip. Walking all the way there, using the bathroom, coming all the way back. It’s like really awkward…I can’t take all that time out of my work just to go to the bathroom. So that’s a pain…A lot of people are more scared than me and just won’t use the bathroom at all if they don’t have a gender neutral one.” Jessie furthered this point when he said, “…If I’m dressed more feminine compared to masculine, I don’t go into the women’s restroom. I try to avoid using the restroom at all.”

Participants expressed apprehension when using the bathrooms that are separated by traditional binary gender categories. For example, after noting the difficulties related to “not passing” as male, Charlie said, “…[this] is why I can’t go into men’s restrooms. I would just get punched or something.” Similarly, Blake stated that, “I don’t even try to use the bathrooms for
the gender I identify with…I feel like if I went into the men’s bathrooms, that would not be accepted…I’m worried that biological men would call me out on it, because I’m not seen as equals in their eyes. They view me as not as much of a man as they are.” Additionally, Jessie emphasized the importance of having gender neutral options when she described the high discomfort she experiences when frequently “gawked at” in the men’s bathrooms.

Thirdly, participants expressed a general frustration with the bathroom system structure in general. Sage described, “…I’ve never had anything other than a couple RA’s, or even peers have been like, ‘You can’t go into the men’s bathrooms….You know you can’t do that. And I’m like, ‘Why? I mean it’s still a toilet and a sink, you know?’” Blake also stated, “I don’t even get the point of having different bathrooms for boys and girls, because – come on, we are all people.” Likewise, Hayden expressed, “Personally, I don’t see why we have different gendered bathrooms anyway. If we had all stalls, who cares?…people who are going to be uncomfortable in bathrooms with people of other genders in there are uncomfortable in bathrooms ever, you know, like all the time?…Well these people should use the single stalled bathrooms…” This consensus illustrated a unique perspective that is easily overlooked by those who identify as cisgender, and thus have likely never had to second-guess the traditional bathroom system’s structure present in our culture.

Conversely, Payton described an example of what it can be like when gender neutral bathrooms are consistently available. He explained, “…my experience has been so simple. All the buildings I’m in…they all have gender neutral bathrooms, which I know that’s a big problem for a lot of people. And it was always a concern for me. So I didn’t ever have that barrier to cross over…This is like a lot easier than I was ever anticipating.’ (laughs)…I do think maybe some more bathrooms would be helpful.”
Theme 7. Improve transparency and ease of bureaucratic procedures and create inclusive
gender options on official documentation.

Participants shared a variety of experiences when asked about the university’s procedures for official name or gender marker changes. There was an expression of appreciation for the options now available to create a preferred name for online profiles. For example, Haydon expressed, “One thing I really like about BG is that on your email profile…you can change your preferred name to whatever you want and it will display it on everything…It’s like the best thing ever.” However, this option is limited in that it only affects online name displays, not student ID cards or class rosters. When asked about official name changes, some participants expressed confusion or intimidation with the process. For example, Charlie mentioned, “I don’t know if I’m going to have to get a new ID or if I’m going to have to fill out any paperwork, because I honestly don’t know the process here. It’s not exactly advertised. Although, to be fair, I don’t know how they’d advertise that. I don’t really know where to look for it, like on the site or something.” Blake brought up the complication that it would require coming out to his family about his identity. He said, “I haven’t even attempted that at all, because it kind of scares me. It’s a huge step. It’s something my mom would definitely catch on about, because she has to go on and pay my bills.” This example illustrates how students may desire an official campus name change option affecting all aspects of the student experience (e.g., ID cards, class rosters) that does not require a legal name change prior. Such a procedure would allow students to live authentically on-campus regardless of complications related to their families or home state name change procedures. It should be noted that participants who had already undergone legal name changes in their home states indicated that the name change process at BGSU was completed with ease. Payton explained, “Like I just filled out a sheet and handed it to a woman and she was
like okay. And literally 3 minutes later the internet was changed. I was like, ‘Why was that so easy?’ I just thought there’d be more hoops for some things.”

According to the participants’ reports, options for official gender changes in the university’s system are more limited. Landry, a genderfluid undergraduate, described an encounter with an administrator about this topic. He said, “I just recently informed the university that I’d like to change the gender that is on my student registration…And they told me, ‘Well, we’d like to, but the program they use is pretty old so they are not sure how many options there are in there…He said that those programs…can be expensive and very difficult to update…but he said that it is the university’s wishes to make people as comfortable as possible with their gender identities and expressing who they are…He said he’d get back to me…”

Similarly, Kendall, an agender undergraduate, stated, “I don’t think you are allowed to change your gender to “none” on official documents.” None of the participants who were undergoing FTM or MTF transition had attempted to change their gender in the system yet. Therefore, based on their reports it is currently unknown whether this process can be completed at BGSU with the same ease and procedure as a name change.

Official university forms were also brought up among participants’ reports. Several people mentioned appreciating the presence of non-binary options when made to fill out demographic information. Riley noted, “I remember specifically that when I was filling out the thing that you do at orientation, they put transgender as one of their gender identity things. So I specifically noticed that…” Skyler spoke of how a similar experience made them feel. They recounted, “And I was like, *they acknowledged* [that other categories exist]…I’m like, ‘Thank you so much for putting that. That was so nice.’” Additionally, Sage indicated the importance of providing representative demographics options within research studies. Ze stated, “On the
surveys we were disseminating to students, my professor was like, ‘We’re not going to have
anybody who has a [diverse] gender identity…I was like, ‘Well, we can put: Male, Female,
Other? And I finally got “Other” to be put on the survey, which is a little bit of a victory, but at
the same time, nobody wants to be an “Other.” I just wanted to put, “Please Identify” and have a
line. But she said your average undergraduate student is not going to know what that is. She said
that she didn’t want it to take away from the survey and what they were trying to collect…It’s
hard in academia.” In addition to improving inclusivity, separating sex and gender as different
categories and providing additional gender options may prove to serve as a subtle means of
spreading awareness to individuals who previously had no exposure to these concepts. This is
just one of many possible potential small wins that may contribute to breaking down systems
unknowingly entrenched in genderism and heteronormativity.

Theme 8. Change or act to reduce current oppressive practices from non-BGSU groups visiting
the campus and national student organizations.

When participants were asked if there were any instances as a student where they felt
oppressed in settings we hadn’t specifically inquired about, several participants brought up
feelings of discomfort when encountering certain religious groups that visit the campus’s public
areas. Specifically, a group colloquially known as “the Bible Bob’s” or “the bible people.”
Landry mentioned, “…the bible people that come every once in a while. I mean, they are against
everything, so I’m sure they make everybody uncomfortable.” Sage, a student who presents
differently on different days, fully elaborated on this by saying, “…the thing about me is my
voice is still very feminine. Because I don’t cut my hair…it’s easier to see that I am female. So
[they don’t say anything] when I’m presenting as female…[They] shout things…‘Do you even
want a Bible? You’re going to hell young lady!’ Like very intentionally. ‘Jesus doesn’t love
you.’ Just ridiculous things…I will say that the old men who pass out the little green bibles have always been very polite. It’s just the ones who get up there with their signs…the burn-in-hell ones.” Addressing such sensitive issues requires special efforts. Despite the possible barriers, it is important to acknowledge and address injustice when it is affecting BGSU students’ ability to be treated equally and thrive on campus.

Additionally, students noted discriminatory experiences within nationally-run student organizations. For example, Tatum described, “I wanted to join [a Greek organization]. Very LGBT [friendly] chapter on this campus. They wanted to give me a bid, they wanted me in it, but they couldn’t. Because nationals says you have to be legally male. So I couldn’t join.” Similarly, Sage expressed that ze had to leave an organization based on hir gender expression, because they required gender-specific presentation for the members. She said, “…it’s really not [the group leader’s] fault. It’s the fault of the organization and system. The nation-wide, international [system].”

**Transgender Advocacy on Campus**

Interview questions about participants’ view about trans advocacy reflected four stages of advocacy proposed in Kieffer’s (1984) developmental model to becoming an advocate: the Era of Entry, the Era of Advancement, the Era of Incorporation, and the Era of Commitment. Participants in the present study varied in their advocacy practices, ranging from individuals who practiced making positive change solely within close friendships and interpersonal conversation to individuals who held leadership positions in groups designed to spread awareness about social issues. Advocacy themes are summarized in Table 4.

**Advocacy Efforts.** Ten of the participants (90.1%) described advocating at an interpersonal level, most often in conversations within their friend groups or acquaintances. For
example, Skyler described how opportunities come up naturally. They said, “…most of the time it’s come up in conversation already. And people are like, ‘I don’t understand this. What is this?’ And I’ll be like, ‘So you want someone to explain it to you?’ And I’m suddenly a walking LGBT dictionary.” Blake also shared his perspective on what it’s like to have to explain concepts related to gender identity to his peers. He stated, “That’s just one more person that knows. Just one person at a time makes a difference…I mean, I’ve gently corrected people before and kind of explained, but that’s the extent of it…I don’t speak up often… I just kind of want to be there and be accepted. I just want to be normal…” His account highlighted how intimidating exposing one’s stance and positionality can be as a transgender college student.

In further explanation of their largely informal advocacy efforts, participants also indicated that they were simply busy being college students. Landry articulated, “…I’ve always been on the side that if I find an opportunity I’ll take it. But I’ve got a lot on my plate already, so I won’t go out of my way…I do my best to spread awareness on campus when I can. But…I have not become aware of an opportunity where I can help with that on a larger scale.” Kendall also expressed, “I’m sure I could do something if I put my mind to it. But I have stuff to do.”

However, three participants (27.3%) described experiences actively advocating for transgender rights on campus on a systems level. For example, Jessie shared how she responded to the gender neutral bathroom in her residence hall being permanently locked. She said, “I actually created a petition and I got about a thousand signatures from people around campus just to open up the restroom, because there were some non-gendered, non-conforming, [and/or] trans individuals who may need it.”

Participants also talked about how it was important to find a balance between being an active advocate and simply being a person. For example, Hayden shared, “I’m all for activism
and things like that, but when it comes to your daily life, sometimes you just want to live it and
you don’t want to have to do all that.” Sage, an active advocate identifying as genderqueer and
as attracted to women, furthered this point when ze explained, “When am I allowed to just be
like a person and like accept compliments or accept things and not have to turn every
conversation into a social justice [opportunity]?...So if somebody’s like, ‘Where’s your
boyfriend?’ or something. When do I just say, ‘Oh, I don’t have one.’ versus ‘Well, here’s
what’s really going on and here’s why your statement is problematic.’ That’s not always the time
or place. So I think I’m learning how to balance that…”

**Recognizing Potential.** Participants who had begun to identify as potential agents of
change for themselves and/or others shared their experiences with this development. Blake,
stated, “I’ve learned that if you just speak up, people are going to listen. And that even though
you are just one person, you can make a difference and you have the power to make a change.
One drop at a time. Since I’ve come here I’ve been more able to voice myself and fight for
myself than I’ve ever been able to do in my whole life. And that’s just from watching those few
people and seeing that they think I’m worth fighting and advocating for, so I can do it myself.”
Payton explained, “I think [it was] maybe when I realized that my voice matters. Like people do
care about what you have to say sometimes.” Sage shared hir journey into recognizing hir own
power as an agent of change. Ze stated, “I can now arm myself with knowledge and help be a
better ally and help use my privileges that I’ve learned that I have to uplift others and I can find
my own identity even more…So I really think it challenged me and gave me more responsibility
as a citizen…Learning about campus resources, learning that anyone can make a flyer as long as
it gets approved, and knowing the avenues of approval, all of that I think helps make change. The
resources are out there. I think we need to teach students how to use them…I really try to use my
voice and my privileges and I’m constantly trying to learn... [I] just keep trying, because I’m not
perfect and I never will be.”

**Role Model Impact.** Participants’ accounts revealed the important impact authority
figures on campus can have on their understanding of how to advocate effectively. A majority of
the experiences that participants shared were with group leaders, professors, or advisors that
personally identified as queer in their sexuality and/or gender identity. Thus, they were
especially able to understand and aid their students in times of struggle. Kendall made a special
point to emphasize the importance of having queer role models when she said, “I always feel
comforted in some way when I see older trans or queer people in spaces being supportive. I feel
sometimes you don’t have a lot of people to look up to. I mean specifically people like me, not
just role models in general. I feel like there aren’t a lot of older LGBT people around for us to
look up to. And we have to kind of inspire ourselves, I guess. They definitely make me feel like I
could be successful in trying to do stuff if I wanted to do stuff.”

Out of the seven participants who identified a specific activist on campus that they looked
up to in terms of their ability to advocate, three indicated learning by their example. For
example, Payton stated, “I’ve been able to learn about ways to go about making change. So I’m
still learning from her what it means and looks like to be an advocate.” Sage also shared what ze
was learning from her mentor. Sage said, “…especially because she identifies as a cisgender
straight woman. And her advocating for people who identify within the LGBT community
without being a member of that community has been very helpful to me in terms of – How can I
be an effective ally for other groups? Or for trans people who transition. Like how can I be an
ally to these people without actually knowing their experiences and speaking for them? So she’s
really been able to model how to be an ally to those communities that I don’t belong in…” The
way I like to say it is she gives us the spaces to have our own voices. So she uses her influence and power to give us the opportunity to then tell our stories.” These accounts reveal important insights into students’ perspectives on navigating the potential barriers to becoming an adept advocate.

Advice. The final questions of the interview solicited participants’ advice for advocates, as well as for future gender diverse students at BGSU. Participants’ advice for advocates varied widely, to the point where it was difficult to discern major themes. Some participants encouraged advocates to advocate responsibly. For example, Skyler stated, “If they are not trans themselves, definitely make sure they understand everything that goes on. Because you don’t want to be advocating [for] the wrong thing.” Kendall more specifically shared, “Definitely try to unlearn cis-sexist language. Don’t assume someone’s gender when you see them, or their pronouns.” Hayden added encouragement specifically to cisgender advocates by pointing out, “I feel like people who aren’t trans have more power to make more change than people who are trans do, because they are not talking about themselves.” He also expressed, “…if people listen to [an advocate] whose within their own ‘class’ they might be more willing to listen…So I would encourage people to contradict people. Explain things. Try to get people to understand. Not just like let stuff slide, because that’s so easy to do.” Riley specifically asked advocates to, “include the non-binary people openly. I know that they are including them, but openly do it. Don’t have them feel like they need to ask. Be like, ‘Yes, we are open to you, too. We are going to advocate for you, too. Don’t hide in the corner. We are here for you.’” Payton specifically asked advocates who identify as transgender to be patient when allies make conversational faux pas. He described an interpersonal interaction when a friend was concerned about calling him the wrong name. Payton explained, “And they’re like, ‘Oh my God, I thought you were going to get
so mad at me and yell at me.’…So I think there are some people that are really trying and they’ve been harshly critiqued for things. And I’m like, “It’s okay. And if you mess up my pronouns – All good.” Participants also shared general words of encouragement for advocates. For example, Blake said, “I would tell them to not give up, because even though it may seem like a hopeless, uphill battle, it’s all going to pay off in the end.”

In terms of advice for future gender diverse students, a majority of the participants advised students to reach out, find support, be authentic, and know they are not alone. For example, Riley expressed, “Be true to who you are. That’s really cheesy, but that’s really important. It might take some time. You might need to get some courage, but be true to yourself.” Blake stated, “…don’t be afraid to speak [up] for yourself and fight for what you want and what you feel you deserve.” Sage shared, “…try to find at least one mentor who is knowledgeable about your issues…I think finding other people to help connect them for that first year is important.” Tatum advised, “Talk about it. Don’t hide it. Find someone you trust.” Eight of the 11 participants also specifically encouraged future students to get involved with LGBT organizations on campus and/or reach out to the Counseling Center for any reason. Skyler encouraged, “…even if you feel like you don’t have a good support system now, you are going to find people who are like you. It’s going to be better.” Similarly, Kendall asserted, “There’s people here who are like you. And even if you don’t necessarily know them, we’re here. And you are definitely not alone.”
DISCUSSION

Research shows that chronically stigmatizing and prejudiced social conditions impact the well-being of transgender and gender diverse individuals (Dean et al., 2000). College campuses often have curricula, extracurricular activities, health care, housing, and bathroom facilities that fail to account for gender diversity, which can make transgender students feel marginalized, isolated, and ignored (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Sausa, 2002; Seelman, 2014). Overtime, advocacy efforts for trans issues have increased on college campuses to create equal opportunities for transgender students (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Making progressive systemic change can require committed advocates, because navigating barriers and resistance to change is often par for the course. It is important for activists to be informed and knowledgeable about the issues for which they are advocating in order to ensure effective meaningful change. Thus, gaining the first hand perspectives and efforts of transgender and gender diverse individuals can be critical to effective trans advocacy movements.

**Desired Change**

Participants in the present study indicated a need for increasing the student body’s overall awareness of gender diversity and transgender-relevant information. This finding is consistent with Beemyn (2003) and Sausa (2002) who indicated that colleges frequently have insufficient opportunities to educate cisgender students about gender diversity. As campus climate has been shown to influence gender minority students’ likelihood to feel safe coming out to others on campus (Bartolo, 2013), efforts to improve student body awareness and acceptance of gender diversity may improve transgender students’ ability to live authentically while attending college. Recommended strategies for increasing campus awareness include wearing pronoun buttons or badges, creating gender inclusive bathroom signs for existing bathrooms, administering Trans
Allies Safe Zone Seminars, holding brown bag discussion series, providing trans-specific resources within the campus libraries, encouraging professors to cover the existence gender diversity when it’s relevant to course content, and providing separate categories for gender and sex on university documents with inclusive categories.

Participants also asked that the LGBT Resource Center provide a more balanced focus between sexuality and gender issues, which is consistent with previous findings that LGBT organizations often overlook the “T” by focusing primarily on diverse sexual identities (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005). Further, the current study uniquely found that students who identified as between or beyond genders (e.g., genderqueer, agender) felt that LGBT groups should make it explicitly clear that all gender identities (not only FTM and MTF) are welcome and accepted, in order to dispel any feelings of isolation, fear, or discomfort with joining meetings and events. Historically, the trans advocacy movement is less developed than the LGB rights movement and thus, creating equal representation in resource center events may require additional effort on the part of administrators and students. Useful tools for such efforts may include Trans Student Educational Resources’ ‘The Gender Unicorn’ diagram, gender pronoun posters, inclusive language (e.g., “queer justice” rather than “gay rights”), and special efforts to advertise inclusivity to underrepresented groups (TSER, 2016). Seelman (2014) suggests developing a “support team” specifically well versed in transgender individuals’ needs to answer specific questions that arise about the campus community (e.g. medical resources and insurance information, trans-specific events, notable allies). Such a group could be based within an LGBT resource center, just a phone call away from individuals in need of information. Resource centers could also host screenings of movies designed to promote understanding, equality, and empowerment, like the 2015 film We Exist: A Documentary Beyond The Gender Binary, the
2004 film *Toilet Training*, the 2015 film *Identity: In & Beyond The Binary*, and the previously mentioned documentaries *The T Word* and *I’m Just Anneke*. These types of changes may contribute to an increase in the overall student body understanding of transgender-specific information as well.

When asked about BGSU’s housing services, participants articulated a desire for Residence Life to become more responsive to gender-relevant room and bathroom issues that arise. This adds to the literature that states that campus housing often fails to recognize gender diversity when addressing housing assignments (Beemyn, 2005). Fortunately, BGSU has a gender neutral housing option located on one floor of one residence hall, a feature many campuses across the country lack. While the existence of this option indicates progress, the participants in the present study made it clear that multiple locations for gender neutral housing on campus are needed. They specifically asked that these be placed in convenient locations within different areas of campus depending on their degree or preferred Learning Community, as to not force students to live far from their main halls of study or isolate students from the academic community for their major. Integrating gender neutral housing and bathroom options into a multitude of residence halls would demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities for all students and prevent transgender students from feeling segregated from the rest of the study body.

Participants also requested that all faculty and staff, including RA’s, be required to undergo diversity training that explains relevant concepts (e.g., gender and sexuality as different constructs) and language (e.g., gender identities, gender neutral pronouns) for working with transgender students. This finding is consistent with research that shows that faculty, staff, and student leaders at universities have insufficient diversity training to work with transgender
students (Beemyn, 2003). However, it should be noted that reports on campus authority figures were not universally negative. On the contrary, participants shared many unique experiences with knowledgeable and understanding faculty and staff. Possible resources for developing and administering training programs for university employees include Johnson and colleagues’ (2011) guide for inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in higher education, Safe Zone training programs, and the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (2015) “Transgender 101: Identity, Inclusion, and Resources” guide.

Additionally, young adult students in the present study stressed the importance of making more gender neutral bathrooms readily available on campus; for example, in their Student Union, where there are currently none. This is consistent with the literature that found bathroom facilities as an important area of the campus to address for transgender students (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs; Seelman, 2014). This is frequently seen as a difficult issue to address, as it’s often assumed that additional bathrooms must be built separately from pre-existing gender segregated bathrooms. Such a project may be challenging, because of the limitations of a given building’s architectural structure, as well as institutional budgets. However, there are alternative ways to facilitate gender neutral restrooms around campus. First, pre-existing single occupancy or family restrooms can be relabeled as “gender neutral” or “all gender” (Unitarian Universalist Association, 2015). If multiple multi-stall restrooms are present within a given structure, 1+ may be relabeled as “gender neutral” or “all gender.” Bathrooms can also be labeled in a way that clearly empowers people to choose the restroom that they are most comfortable using and reassures that they will not be harassed for doing so. Such a pronouncement would also demonstrate clear expectations for cisgender individuals utilizing those bathrooms. For examples of creative bathroom signage featured by CampusPride.org, see Figures 1 and 2. An
additional example from uua.org can be seen in Figure 3 and is available for download from their “Gender Neutral Bathrooms” social justice page. Official all gender restroom signs are being made available by the company My Door Sign. These signs often feature the image of a toilet rather than people, which illuminates falsely dichotomous and possibly offensive gender images. It should also be noted that making gender neutral bathrooms available to students, faculty, and staff is additionally helpful for parents or caregivers whose children are a different gender from theirs or for individuals with caregivers or personal attendants whose gender is different from theirs (Unitarian Universalist Association, 2015). Access to bathrooms has historically been significant in civil rights movements related to racial and disability discrimination (Schmidt, 2013). In the case of transgender identifying people, controlling bathroom access constitutes unequal treatment, perpetuates prejudiced attitudes, and signifies a rejection of trans identity (Schmidt, 2013). Improving gender neutral bathroom options on campus would demonstrate the university’s commitment to gender equality.

These results provide insight into university students’ desires in terms of what aspects of campus life need to be improved for future transgender and gender diverse students to be treated equally. These results replicate and add to the pre-existing literature examining necessary college and university efforts to address issues of discrimination and marginalization based on gender identity and expression. The present study’s results were in some ways similar to Seelman’s (2014) qualitative study. It should be noted that Seelman (2014) collected data from 30 individuals (students, faculty, and staff) ranging from 18-45 years of age from 10 collegiate institutions in Colorado, while the current data was drawn from 11 students ranging from 19-27 years of age from one university in Ohio. Such differences in age, role on campus, and geographic location provide context for the comparisons made below.
Seelman (2014) and the present study reported a need to increase opportunities for education about gender diversity issues on campus. Both studies also articulated the risk inherent in lumping sexual and gender minority issues together (i.e., making gender diverse students feel invisible and isolated). Similar to the present study, Seelman also found that transgender and gender non-conforming individuals desired improvement to bathroom and housing facilities, as well as locker rooms. Additionally, participants in both studies noted the need for better name change procedures and inclusive gender options on university forms. Finally, participants in both studies talked about the need to find ways to address discriminatory practices occurring on campus. Converse to the present research, Seelman’s (2014) participants expressed a desire to have more organizations relevant to transgender people available. This difference may be due to BGSU having a relatively high amount of LGBT or “LGBT-friendly” student organizations already available to students.

Campus Advocacy

The present study is unique within the literature in seeking information about transgender and gender diverse students’ personal experiences and perspectives on trans advocacy efforts on their campus. This information was collected to explore how students felt about personal involvement in the cause and their level of current involvement outside of this research study. When asked about personal trans advocacy efforts on campus, a majority of participants shared that they personally advocate for themselves and others within conversations with their peers. This finding indicates that the current campus climate allows students to have the opportunity to safely speak up about gender diversity issues. This may be partly due to the diversity initiatives already in place on campus (e.g., Not In Our Town, LGBT Resource Center organizations, programming and events, FORCE).
Participants shared some perceived barriers to advocating further. First, that being a college student involved a busy schedule that hindered their ability to become more involved (e.g., class times conflicting with LGBT meetings and events). In order to increase attendance and provide more opportunities for students to become involved, LGBT organizations may benefit from increasing the number of meetings held (e.g., from once a month to twice a month) and/or holding meetings outside of when most courses are scheduled. Providing opportunities to become involved for smaller amounts of time or from home (e.g., online) may also appeal to busy students.

Secondarily, students expressed a hesitation to stand out based on their gender identities, as advocacy involvement can involve identity disclosure whether intended or not. This hesitation may indicate a need to create a more empowering and explicitly safe campus environment, which may be partly actualized by addressing the desired changes listed in the previous section. Additionally, this finding suggests that “undercover” advocacy opportunities may be more readily utilized by students who are interested in anonymously contributing their time and first hand knowledge (e.g., anonymous online polls, surveys, support groups, or advice blogs). Despite these barriers, a majority of participants had recognized their potential as positive agents of change for themselves and others. As noted by Keifer, discovering and developing one’s own capacity to advocate confidently and effectively is a process. University based efforts to encourage and empower students to further recognize their capacity to create positive change may improve students’ overall individual well-being and the general campus climate.

Additionally, some participants stated that they had experience actively advocating for gender diversity issues on a systems level (e.g., within the residence halls, as advocacy group
leaders). The knowledge and experiences they shared indicated that opportunities to contribute to positive change are available on campus to interested students, whether self-motivated (e.g., creating petitions, personally starting a new club) or by joining a pre-existing organization (e.g., holding a leadership position in T*AG, HUE, WWLW, VISION, DREAM, GradPride, Not In Our Town, etc.). Empowering interested students to recognize their own ability to take leadership initiatives may fuel the effort to improve the campus climate for future students.

Congruent with Keifer’s model of advocate development, role models were talked about as playing an important role in inspiring and teaching students to advocate affectively. Notably, queer role models (in terms of sexual and/or gender identity) were mentioned as especially inspiring and insightful to participants, partly because they are sometimes seen as uncommon. This finding may indicate the importance of additionally making explicit efforts to encourage LGBT faculty and staff feel empowered and safe to stand out and act constructively toward a more inclusive and open campus environment, as the increase in positive examples may provide inspiration to students.

Understanding transgender and gender diverse students’ perspectives on advocacy is of special interest because first-hand experiences are invaluable to informed and effective advocacy efforts. This explorative research on students’ viewpoints and experiences with advocacy efforts is uncommon in the literature. The results reveal the potential that exists within individual students to become strong, capable advocates when they are interested and nurtured to be so. The results may also help inform campus activism leaders, transgender and cisgender alike, about the varied level of interest and the clear ability present within students, as well as provide insights into their hesitations to become involved further.
Study Limitations and Implications

Although the findings are informative, the present qualitative study is limited in a number of important respects. The study used a small, non-random sample of transgender undergraduate and graduate students at Bowling Green State University. No claims can be made about the generalizability of participants’ experiences to the larger population of transgender college students in other locations or with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. It is also not clear how the interview context (e.g., flow of the interview exchange), sample selection, or memory issues may have impacted the narratives of participants and study findings.

For the past several decades, small wins for transgender rights have been made across the country (Stryker, 2008). Guidelines for how to improvement the state of college campuses for gender diverse people have been developed, partly due to research that illuminated the critical needs of disenfranchised transgender people (Beemyn, 2003; Conway, 2013; Patton, 2012). Students are increasingly more involved in fueling activism for these issues on college campuses (Schneider, 2010). The present study sought to provide current information on transgender college students’ needs, as well as their views on and experience with advocating for gender diversity rights. Participants shared what they felt was most important to improve on BGSU’s campus and gave insights into how they felt about personally acting to create positive change. Some students’ campus experiences were consistent with Seelman’s (2014) findings on Colorado campuses. However, additional issues were identified. Although participants’ reports indicated that BGSU currently has a number of strengths when it comes to transgender awareness and acceptance, many weaknesses were identified.

Despite its limitations, the present study reveals important insights into the lived experiences of transgender and gender diverse college students by serving as an indicator to
individuals in power at BGSU of what most notably needs to be addressed in order to make the campus environment more inclusive. This research also adds novel adds to the literature by providing valuable insights into transgender students’ views on personal advocacy initiatives, including their hesitations and potential to create positive change.
REFERENCES


Table 1

*Gender Neutral Pronouns*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Plural or Gender Neutral</th>
<th>Gender Neutral</th>
<th>Gender Neutral Pronunciation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>She</td>
<td>He</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Ze/Zie</td>
<td>“zee”/“zee”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object</strong></td>
<td>Her</td>
<td>Him</td>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Hir/Zir</td>
<td>“here”/“zere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possessive Adjective</strong></td>
<td>Her</td>
<td>His</td>
<td>Their</td>
<td>Hir/Zir</td>
<td>“here”/“zere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possessive Pronoun</strong></td>
<td>Hers</td>
<td>His</td>
<td>Theirs</td>
<td>Hirs/Zirs</td>
<td>“heres”/“zeres”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>Herself</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Themself</td>
<td>Hirself/Zirself</td>
<td>“herself”/“zereself”</td>
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Table 2

**Demographic Information (N=11)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age in years M (SD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-queer</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-fluid</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agender</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTM</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTF</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>9 (81.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Raised</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9 (81.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>10 (90.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious or Spiritual Viewpoint</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>5 (45.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritually exploring</td>
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Table 2 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information (N=11)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation n (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homo-sexual</td>
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<td>Asexual</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
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<td>Hetero-sexual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluid</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status n (%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>8 (72.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating or in relationship</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>5 (45.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.0</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-2.5</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability or Persistent Health Condition Impacting Functioning n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 (72.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment n (%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>4 (39.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7 (63.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$10,000</td>
<td>8 (72.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
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Table 2 Continued

Demographic Information (N=11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Annual Income</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$30,000</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000--$69,999</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000--$119,999</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120,000--$159,999</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$160,000--$200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>+$200,000</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4 (36.4)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Siblings</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (36.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (36.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Family by Car</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Live in the same house</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 minutes or less</td>
<td>2 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes – 1 hour</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 hours</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;4 hours</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
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Table 3

* Desired Change Themes and Quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and education needed</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I think just kind of like generally awareness. Because the way I see it, the biggest hurdle is that people just don’t even know. Or even realize it’s an issue, because they don’t even think that someone in their classroom could be trans or gender weird.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase attention to gender</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase overt inclusiveness for</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all gender diverse identities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited housing accommodations</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for gender-specific diversity training</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 4 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
<td>“I do wish that teachers, all teachers, anyone teaching, should be mandated to have inclusive training. Because we don’t have that and a lot of people are very inadvertently unkind and not supportive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with knowledgeable faculty and staff</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 7 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>“Staff I expected to be more understanding, because they teach such a wide variety of people every year that they should be used to the differences people have. But the staff, they’ve done just that. They’ve been accepting and they haven’t treated me any different than any other student.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5: Improvement of resources within physical and mental health facilities</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experiences with nurses at the Falcon Health Center</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experiences within the psychiatry department of the Falcon Health Center</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative experiences with the Falcon Health Center</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experiences at the Counseling Center</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire for an advertised list of known trans-knowledgeable medical doctors</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>Exemplar Quote</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of gender neutral bathrooms</td>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender neutral bathrooms consistently available</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension with binary bathrooms</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration with binary bathrooms</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 7: Improve transparency and ease of bureaucratic procedures and create inclusive gender options on official documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreication for Canvas option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion or intimidation with name change process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease with official name change process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited official gender change options</td>
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Table 3 Continued

Theme 7: Improve transparency and ease of bureaucratic procedures and create inclusive
gender options on official documentation Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic options on official university documents</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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Table 3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discomfort with outspoken religious groups</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination by national student organizations</td>
<td>2/11</td>
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<td>1</td>
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### Table 4

**Advocating on Campus Themes and Quotes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conversational level efforts</strong></td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 8 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…most of the time it’s come up in conversation already. And people are like, ‘I don’t understand this. What is this?’ And I’ll be like, ‘So you want someone to explain it to you?’ And I’ll come in like I’m suddenly a walking LGBT dictionary.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disclosure discomfort</strong></td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t speak up often…I don’t want to be someone who is seen. I just kind of want to be there and be accepted. I just want to be normal…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Busy college life</strong></td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 2 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m sure I could do something if I put my mind to it. But I have stuff to do. I’m at college, you know?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems level efforts</strong></td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I actually created a petition and I got about a thousand signatures from people around campus just to open up the restroom, because there were some non-gendered, non-conforming, [and/or] trans individuals who may need it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance between an advocate and a person</strong></td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>Exemplar Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified as agent of change</td>
<td>8/11</td>
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Table 4 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of queer role models</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always feel comforted in some way when I see older trans or queer people in spaces being supportive. I feel sometimes you don’t have a lot of people to look up to. I mean specifically people like me, not just role models in general. I feel like there aren’t a lot of older LGBT people around for us to look up to. And we have to kind of inspire ourselves, I guess. They definitely make me feel like I could be successful in trying to do stuff if I wanted to do stuff.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to advocate effectively by example</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ve been able to learn about ways to go about making change, if that makes sense…So I’m still learning from her what it means and looks like to be an advocate.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Exemplar Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>Beyond Undergraduate Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find Support</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to LGBT groups</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the Counseling Center</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be authentic</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know you are not alone</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand up for yourself</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Unisex Bathroom Signage
Figure 2. All Gender Bathroom Signage
Figure 3. Gender Neutral Bathroom Signage

GENDER NEUTRAL
RESTROOM

THIS BATHROOM
IS FOR
EVERYONE
APPENDIX A  ADVERTISEMENT FLYER

Let Your Voice Be Heard
Efforts are being made to improve the campus environment for transgender and gender non-conforming students!

If you are a gender diverse undergraduate or graduate student (if you do not fully or at all identify with the gender assigned to you at birth and/or you do not conform to those gender norms in terms of your gender identity and/or expression) and would like to share what your experience has been like as a BGSU student

Please contact us at 419-372-XXXX or email at GenderDiversityBGSU@gmail.com with your first name and a phone number.

You will be contacted by Gabrielle Merandi to find out if you qualify to be part of an interview study.

All of your responses will be kept confidential.

As a token of appreciation, you will receive $25 Amazon gift card for completing an interview.
Hello, my name is ______ and I am a clinical doctoral student at BGSU. I am calling because you recently indicated that you were interested in learning more about the study focusing on the experiences of transgender and gender diverse students at BGSU. If you are still interested in learning more, do you have about 5-10 minutes to talk about the study and answer some questions for me? (If no) Is there a better time I could call back?

(If yes) Okay, let me start by telling you a little more about the study. We are focusing on learning about the first hand experiences of transgender students. We are interested in learning about students’ experiences related to specific aspects of the campus such as housing, health care and classes, in order to get a better idea of what’s working at BG and what still needs to change. We are also interested in learning about what students think about advocating for transgender issues in small or big ways.

Participants’ identities are kept confidential. No names will be directly associated with participants’ views. We are hoping that the information collected through these will ultimately help make BGSU a better place for all students.

………..

After hearing more about the study, do you have any questions about it or what would be involved?

Does this sound like something you would be interested in participating in? YES NO

(If yes) Okay, great! I just have a few questions for you to determine whether or not you are eligible to participate.

………..

Are you currently a student BGSU? ______

Are you currently a student at the main campus? ______ Firelands? ______

Are you an undergraduate or graduate student? ______

How long have you been attending school here?/Year in school ______________________________

What is your age? ______
How would you describe your gender identity? 
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

How did you hear about our study?
   a. ___ Email invitation
   b. ___ Electronic Campus Updates
   c. ___ SONA
   d. ___ Facebook
   e. ___ Flyer
   f. ___ LGBT Resources Center
   g. ___ Group announcement
   h. ___ Class announcement
   i. ___ Word of mouth
   j. ___ Other__________________________________

(If qualified) It looks like you meet the criteria to participate! Would you like to find a time to meet for the actual interview?
I will send you an email reminder about the interview a day in advance. Thank you so much and I will be in touch again soon.

(If unsure) Thanks for talking with me today. We are still contacting students about participating. Is it ok if I get back with you about participating in this study?
APPENDIX C  TRANSGENDER STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES ON A MIDWEST UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:
Again, I would like to thank you for participating in this research study. Our hope is that the information that you and other participants provide will help us document the experiences that transgender and gender non-conforming students have as a way to begin to create more inclusive and just communities.

Before we get started, I need to go over this consent form with you and would like to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Do you have any questions?

Part I: Context Information

1. Just to start, can you tell me about your overall experience of being a student in BGSU’s campus community so far? (do you feel welcome here, included, isolated)
   a. What about when it comes to being able to express yourself in a way that is true to your gender identity (on campus)?

2. How visible are gender diversity issues at BGSU (in general) from your perspective?
   a. In what ways are they visible? (campus events, diversity training, etc.)

Part of learning about the campus is hearing about what kind of resources are available, so I’m going to ask you a little bit about that.

3. Do you know of any organizations on campus that are specifically focused on trans issues?
   a. Are you involved in ________?
   b. (If so) How so? (leader, member, attendee)
   c. (If applicable) What was your experience like?

4. Do you know of any organizations on campus that do not specifically focus on trans issues, but try to address them as part of their overall goals for the group? (LGBT Resources Center, multicultural affairs, etc.)
   a. Are you involved in those organizations?
   b. (If so) How so? (leader, member, attendee)
   c. (If applicable) What was your experience like?
5. Did you know that BGSU explicitly includes gender identity and gender expression in their non-discrimination policy?
   
   a. How does it make you feel to know that it’s included in their official statement for what discrimination is not tolerated within campus settings?

**Part II: Gender identity and disclosure**

I know that we already talked about this a little bit on the phone (during the pre-screen), but I would like to talk to you about your identity and how that intersects with your experience on campus here.

1. What words do you use to describe your gender identity?
   
   a. (If term(s) specified) What does ________ mean to you?
   b. How does your gender identity intersect with your sexual orientation, if at all?

2. How does this compare with how you identified when you first came to BGSU?

3. How have your experiences as a student here influenced the words you use, your gender identity, or the way you express yourself, if at all?

4. When you first became a student, what expectations did you have for how supportive the faculty, staff, and other students on campus would be of your identity?

5. What do you think shaped how you created those original expectations?

6. How have your experiences matched or been different from what you expected?

7. What have been your experiences with disclosing your identity to other students, faculty, and staff, so far?
   
   a. What influences how you decide whether or not to open up and disclose to people?

8. Can you tell me a little bit about how supportive your family is of you and whether or not you are able to be open with them about everything?

9. (To get a better idea of the dynamic) Could you briefly describe the people in your immediately family? (# of siblings, parents; closeness; frequency of contact).

**Part III: Experiences on campus**

Next, I’d like to ask a few more questions about your experiences on campus in some specific settings and in relation to other people. We want to learn about whether the university is creating a safe and inclusive environment for gender diverse students. As we go through just let me know if you haven’t had experience in any of these situations (in which case, we can skip those questions). You can share as much as you feel comfortable with.
1. What have your experiences been like in the residence halls?

2. What about the medical and counseling services on campus? (Falcon Health Center, Counseling Center, Psychological Services Center)
   a. Insurance? (covers transition-related health care? Hormones, surgery, mental health services, etc.)

3. Have you had any classes where gender identity and expression have been relevant topics to discuss?
   a. (If so) How did those discussions go? (in-depth, skimmed, accurate, diverse, etc.)

4. Have you come across any bureaucratic issues? Like having difficulty getting your name or gender changed on official university documents? (Email, ID card, etc.)

5. Have you ever been employed by the university?
   a. (If so) Where?
   b. (If yes) Are there any notable experiences that you’d like to share about your experiences as an employee here?

6. Have there ever been times where you felt oppressed by people on campus based on your gender identity or the way you express yourself?
   a. Things that made you feel uncomfortable?

7. Have you ever had trouble when trying to use a restroom or locker/changing room on campus?

**Part IV: Things that worked**
Okay so now I’d like to talk a little bit about what is working well at BGSU and where you have found support.

1. What kinds of things on campus have you found to be helpful to your experience as a student here? (related to gender identity development or issues)

2. Are there places that stand out to you that have been a source of support on campus?
   a. Who do you consider part of your support network? (no names necessary, just roles - friends, teachers, family, roommates, counselors; on- or off-campus)
   b. Were there instances while you’ve been a student where you found support that surprised you? (Examples?)
c. Similarly, were there instances or places of resistance that surprised you? (Examples?)

3. What would you like to see change at BGSU that would improve things for transgender and gender non-conforming students?

**Part V: Advocating on Campus**

1. Have any of the things you’ve experienced ever made you feel like something needs to be done to change how things are for gender diverse students here?
   a. If so, can you tell me about what that was like for you?

2. Sometimes people participate in advocacy efforts for trans issues. This can be difficult because it can be stigmatizing, but advocacy can be done in small and large ways. For example sometimes people may take the time to explain how someone may have a preference for what pronouns are used in reference to them, or dress in non-normative clothing to spread awareness, or actively advocate with a group to change an oppressive policy. There are many ways that people can try to create change.

   Have you ever tried to do things like this while you’ve been a student?
   a. (If yes) Can you tell me what it was like for you?
      i. Negative reaction?
      ii. Barriers?
      iii. Authority?
      iv. How empowered do you feel in your own ability to create change?
   b. (If no) Can you tell me how you feel about that idea? (why?)
      i. Interest level (or lack of)
      ii. Negative reactions?
      iii. Barriers?
      iv. Authority?
      v. How empowered do you feel in your own ability to create change?

3. Is there anyone on campus that you look up to in terms of their ability to advocate or create positive change on campus?
   a. who they are/what role are they in; undergrad/grad/staff

4. (If applicable) Have you been able to learn from them or other people with similar interests in terms of how to advocate affectively? (explain)

5. (If applicable) Was there ever a time where you realized you had more power to change things than you originally thought?
a. Reconceptualized self
b. Reconceptualized authority

6. (If advocacy efforts have developed over time) Was there ever a time where you recognized that your skills as an advocate were improving?
   a. Did your level of confidence change at all?
   b. How committed would you say you are to the cause? How has that changed over time?
   c. Where there any times when you felt you were relying on a mentor to help you know what to do? Has that changed over time?

7. (If skill level is highly developed) How much do you feel being an advocate has shaped who you are or how you act in other areas of your life, if at all?
   a. Do you feel that you influence others around you about these issues?
   b. Have you become a mentor to others in any way around these issues?
      (Examples?)

8. Do you feel like it is possible to create positive change for transgender and gender non-conforming students on this campus for the future?
   a. (If so) What do you think it will take to create positive change on this campus? In society more generally?
   b. (If not) Why do you feel this way?

Part VI: Other Thoughts
I just have a few more questions before we wrap up.

1. What advice would you give to new students coming here (that have to work through similar issues on campus)?

2. What advice would you have for people who want to advocate for trans rights?

3. Is there anything that we haven’t talked about today that you feel is important for me to know?

Part VII: Conclusion
Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me.

Do you have any questions for me before we finish?

Could you please fill out this demographics form?

It was a pleasure to get to know you, and I thank you for your participation in the study. Just in case you would like to talk with someone in a professional setting about anything personal, here
is a list of resources in the community. If you think of any questions that you want to ask me, my email address is on the informed consent sheet that I gave you. Thanks again for your help.
## APPENDIX D  DEMOGRAPHICS FORM

Participant ID#: __________
Date: __________

1. What is your age? ________

2. What is your ethnicity? __________________________________

3. What is your race? (Can select more than one if applicable)
   a. ____ American Indian/Native American
   b. ____ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
   c. ____ Latino/a/Hispanic/Chicano/a
   d. ____ African American/Black
   e. ____ European American/White
   f. ____ Not Listed __________________________________
   g. ____ Prefer not to answer

4. What degree and major are you currently working toward? _________________
   a. (Circle one): Undergraduate / Graduate
   b. (Circle one): Part-time / Full-time

5. What year in school are you in?
   a. (Circle one if Undergraduate): Freshman / Sophomore / Junior / Senior / 5th+
   b. (Circle one if Graduate): 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th+

6. Current cumulative GPA: ________

7. How many semesters have you been attending school here, including this one? 
   _______

8. Did you attend any colleges before coming here? If so, where and for how long?
   ____________________________________________________________

9. Are you currently working in addition to being a student?
   a. (Circle one): Yes / No
   b. (If Yes, Circle one): Part-time / Full-time

10. Where are you currently living?
    a. (Circle one): On-campus / Off-campus

11. What is your religion (e.g., Agnostic, Atheist, Catholic, Protestant, Fundamental Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.), spiritual practice (e.g., church, meditation, diet, etc.), or existential worldview (i.e., how you think life/the world works)?
    ____________________________________________________________
12. How important is religion in your life?
   a. (Circle one): Not at all / Somewhat / Important / Very Important

13. How important is spirituality in your life?
   a. (Circle one): Not at all / Somewhat / Important / Very Important

14. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
   a. ____ Heterosexual
   b. ____ Homosexual
   c. ____ Bisexual
   d. ____ Pansexual
   e. ____ Asexual
   f. ____ Fluid
   g. ____ Not Listed: ______________________________________
   h. ____ Prefer not to answer

15. How would you describe your current relationship style preference?
   a. ____ Polyamorous
   b. ____ Monogamous
   c. ____ Not Listed: ______________________________________
   d. ____ Prefer not to answer

16. What is your current relationship status? (Select more than one if applicable)
   a. ____ Never married
   b. ____ Single (not currently dating or in a relationship)
   c. ____ Dating or in relationship(s) (not living together)
   d. ____ Co-habitating (living together)
   e. ____ Married
   f. ____ Separated/divorced
   g. ____ Widowed
   h. ____ Remarried
   i. ____ Not Listed: ______________________________________
   j. ____ Prefer not to answer

17. What is your family’s approximate annual income? (Skip if unsure)
   a. ____ < $30,000
   b. ____ $30,000 - $49,999
   c. ____ $50,000 - $69,999
   d. ____ $70,000 - $89,999
   e. ____ $90,000 - $119,999
   f. ____ $120,000 - $139,999
   g. ____ $140,000 - $159,999
   h. ____ $160,000 - $179,999
   i. ____ $180,000 - $200,000
   j. ____ $200,000+
18. If applicable, what is your personal approximate annual income?
   a. ____ < $10,000
   b. ____ $10,000 - $19,999
   c. ____ $20,000 - $29,999
   d. ____ $30,000 - $49,999
   e. ____ $50,000 - $69,999
   f. ____ $70,000 - $89,999
   g. ____ $90,000 - $119,999
   h. ____ $120,000 - $139,999
   i. ____ $140,000 - $159,999
   j. ____ $160,000 - $179,999
   k. ____ $180,000 - $200,000
   l. ____ $200,000+

19. Do you have any disabilities or persistent health conditions? (Share only if comfortable)
____________________________________________________________________
   a. If so, do they impact your daily functioning? (Circle one): Yes / No

20. How would you describe your parents’ religious, spiritual, or existential worldview?
____________________________________________________________________

21. What’s your parents’ relationship/marital status?
   a. ____ Never married
   b. ____ Dating or in relationship(s) (not living together)
   c. ____ Co-habitating (living together)
   d. ____ Married
   e. ____ Separated/divorced
   f. ____ Widowed
   g. ____ Remarried
   h. ____ Not Listed: __________________________
   i. ____ Prefer not to answer

22. If you have siblings, please indicate how many (not including you): ________

23. How far away do you live from home/family?
   a. ____ live in the same house
   b. ____ about 30 minutes or less by car
   c. ____ between 30 minutes - 1 hour by car
   d. ____ between 1 - 2 hours by car
   e. ____ between 2 - 4 hours by car
   f. ____ more than 4 hours by car
APPENDIX E RESOURCES SHEET

If you wish to talk more about your personal experiences, you may wish to consider the following resources:

Trans Lifeline
National hotline staffed by transgender people dedicated to the well-being of transgender people
Phone: 877-565-8860
http://www.translifeline.org

University Counseling Center
Provides therapy and other mental health services to BGSU students
Address: 104 College Park Office Building, BGSU Campus
Phone: 419-372-2081
http://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html

Psychological Services Center
Provides therapy and other mental health services to the Bowling Green area
Address: 3rd Floor, Psychology Building, BGSU Campus
Phone: 419-372-2540
https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/psychology/services/psychological-services-center.html

The Link
Provides 24-hour crisis intervention services to the Bowling Green area
Address: 1022 N. Prospect St., Bowling Green, OH 43402
Phone: 419-352-5387
http://www.behavioralconnections.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=8306

SAAFE Center
Provides crisis intervention, emotional support, medical and legal advocacy, and other services for sexual assault and other forms of harassment and victimization
Address: Room 355, BGSU Psychology Building, BGSU Campus
Phone: 419-352-1545
http://www.victimsservices.org

Gender Neutral Housing at BGSU
The Office of Residence Life offers gender neutral housing for students on campus
Res Life Office: 470 Math Science Building
Phone: 419-372-2011
https://www.bgsu.edu/residence-life/housing-options/gender-neutral-housing.html
APPENDIX F  INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Purpose

You are invited to participate in a research study to better understand the lived experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming undergraduate and graduate students within various aspects of university life at Bowling Green State University. Your participation will involve completing an interview about your experiences. During the interview, you will be asked to share your views about the campus climate in terms of openness to gender diversity and your experiences in various aspects of campus (e.g., on-campus housing, classes, health services, employment). You will also be asked about your views on advocating for transgender rights and your opinions about how the campus environment can be improved.

The research study is being conducted by Dr. Catherine Stein, Professor of Psychology, and Gabrielle Merandi, a doctoral student in the Department of Psychology at Bowling Green State University.

Eligibility Requirements

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are at least 18 years old, have been registered at BGSU as an undergraduate or graduate student for at least one semester, and identify as transgender or gender non-conforming (i.e., if you do not fully or at all identify with the gender assigned to you at birth and/or you do not conform to those gender norms in terms of your gender identity and/or expression).

Activities

You will be asked to complete an interview about your experiences in a setting that is convenient for you. The interview will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half.

Risks

The anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. Some questions in the interview are of a personal nature and may cause emotions to arise. If any question in the interview makes you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer it and you can stop the interview at any time without penalty or explanation. Additionally, you will be given a list of resources at the end of the interview should you wish to further discuss personal experiences.

Benefits

By participating in this study, you have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences as a student that have been influenced by your gender identity and share your views on how things could be improved for future gender diverse students. The results of this study will help us to understand the experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming undergraduate and graduate students and inform efforts in improving the campus environment at Bowling Green State University. As a token of appreciation for completing the interview, you will receive a $25 gift card for Amazon.
Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of what you talk about in the interview. Your name will not be directly associated with any of your responses. Any information that you provide will be identified using an ID number. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can refrain from answering any or all questions without penalty or explanation. Interviews are audio recorded and your responses will be transcribed. The recording of the interview will be destroyed after your responses are transcribed and all material will be kept in a locked room where only the principal investigator will have access. Data will be stored in a secure, password protected, computer database. A copy of this form with your name will be stored separately from your responses in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. In any written documents related to the research, you will be given a pseudonym when using any quotations from interview material and measures will be taken to protect the identity of all research participants. Your decision of whether or not to participate in the research will in no way impact your association with Bowling Green State University or the Department of Psychology.

Your Rights as a Participant

You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time. If there is a question you would not like to answer, you can simple skip that question and go to the next one.

Should you choose not to participate or to withdraw from this research study, it will not impact your affiliation with Bowling Green State University or the Department of Psychology.

As a participant, you have the right to have all of your questions about the study answered by the researcher, and you may request a summary or copy of the results of the study after it is completed.

- If you have questions or comments about this study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Gabrielle Merandi, at (419) 372-4501, gmerand@bgsu.edu.

- If you have additional questions or comments about this study, you can contact the Principal Investigator’s Advisor, Dr. Catherine Stein, at (419) 372-2278, cstein@bgsu.edu.

- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant please contact the Chair of BGSU’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716, or at hsrb@bgsu.edu.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time.

I have been presented with and have read the statement of risks and benefits of participating in this study and I consent to participate in the study. I certify that I meet the eligibility requirements for this study.

______________________________________                _________________
Name of Participant  Date

______________________________________                _________________
Name of Witness  Date