

2021 Report on the Status of LGBTQIA+ Resources at the University of Pittsburgh

A Living Document Submitted on behalf of the LGBTQIA+ Task Force



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Timeline for Implementation	3
2. Introduction	4
2.1 Vision Statement	4
2.2 About the Taskforce	4
2.2 General Background on University	4
2.3 Campus Pride Index	6
2.4 Previous Internal Information on LGBTQIA+ Populations	7
3. LGBTQIA+ Center Proposal	14
3.1 Background	14
3.2 Requirements for Center	14
3.3 Secondary Considerations for Center Design	16
3.4 Spaces to model after	16
4. New Staff Hires Proposal	17
4.1 Background	17
4.2 Position Description: LGBTQIA+ Center Director (SA)	17
4.3 Position Description: LGBTQIA+ Center Director (ODI)	19
4.4 Recommendations	20
5. Digital Services Recommendations	21
5.1 Background	21
5.2 Resources	21
5.3 Benchmarking	23
5.4 Other Considerations	23
6. Counseling Services Recommendations	25
6.1 Proposal	25
6.2 Staffing Recommendations	26
6.3 Other Considerations	26
7. Student Services Recommendations	27
7.1 Executive Summary	27
7.2 Existing Organizations	27
7.3 History of Collaboration	28
7.4 Required Support Structure	29
7.5 General Student Services Recommendations	30
8. Faculty and Staff Services Recommendations	32
8.1 Background	32
8.2 Overview of Survey Results	32
8.3 Next Steps	34
9. Example Outcomes	35
10. References	42
11. Appendix	43

Executive Summary

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to fostering a campus environment where all community members feel respected and valued, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. At the time of this proposal, the University of Pittsburgh has the following LGBTQIA+ resources: 10 related student organizations, a Gender Sexuality, and Women's Studies program, including a minor in LGBTQ Studies, a Transgender Working Group Committee, Pitt Queer Professionals, a Center for LGBT Health Research, Pride Health, and a Preferred Name Working Group. At the end of the 2020/2021 academic year, Pride Health will be folding in with Pitt Queer Professionals due to the retirement of prominent leadership. Pitt Queer Professionals is also working with the Alumni Association to bring back the LGBTQIA+ Alumni Council, which began in 2012 and disbanded in 2019 due to a lack of an existing pipeline for undergrads into the org. There are also lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic, non-binary, etc. (LGBTQIA+) programs, research, and initiatives spread across academic and administrative units. Because of all the continued work of these LGBTQIA+ communities and our allies, the University of Pittsburgh received a 5/5 on the Campus Pride Index (CPI) in 2020. This achievement is something that is important for LGBTQIA+ communities at the university, but does not give the full picture of the experiences and needs of this population.

The following report outlines a relevant snapshot of the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as researched and detailed information about ways that the administration could create more positive experiences for the LGBTQIA+ Campus community, and be more proactive in attracting more LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff. The LGBTQIA+ Task Force recommends that the University of Pittsburgh implement a series of changes outlined by proposals in this report and recommendations throughout this document in order to adequately address the consistent and ongoing concerns and needs voiced on behalf of the LGBTQIA+ population in the Pitt community.

Goals of this report

- Propose the creation of an LGBTQIA+ center
- Fill in gaps for needs and experiences not within the scope of the Campus Pride Index
- Provide a broad snapshot of individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community from the past 5 years.
- Propose hiring of LGBTQIA+ staff positions
- Recommend new and updated support services for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff

1. Timeline for Implementation

Summer 2021

- By the end of the Summer 2021 Semester, the University of Pittsburgh will have created a formal institutional working group dedicated to the creation of a final proposal for a physical LGBTQIA+ center.
- By the end of the Summer 2021 semester, the University of Pittsburgh will have worked with the LGBTQIA+ Task Force to formally agree to the implementation of a series of recommendations based on ideas put forth in this proposal concerning counseling services, student services, and faculty and staff services.
- By the end of the Summer 2021 Semester, the University of Pittsburgh will have created a formal institutional search committee dedicated to the hiring of two new LGBTQIA+ Center Co-Directors, housed in Student Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, respectively.
- By the end of the Summer 2021 semester, the University of Pittsburgh will have established and implemented a new centralized web domain, lgbtqia.pitt.edu, which will serve as a virtual hub for all LGBTQIA+ affiliated resources and opportunities.

Fall 2021

- By the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, the University of Pittsburgh will have fully implemented the recommendations concerning counseling services, student services, and faculty and staff services agreed on at the end of the Summer 2021 Semester.
- By the end of the Fall 2021 semester, the University of Pittsburgh's search committee dedicated to the hiring of two new LGBTQIA+ Center will have completed the process of finding and hiring two new LGBTQIA+ Center Co-Directors, housed in Student Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, respectively.
- By the end of the Fall 2021 semester, the University of Pittsburgh's LGBTQIA+ Center working group, established by the end of the Summer 2021 semester, will have completed its plan for the creation of a physical LGBTQIA+ center and will begin its implementation

2. Introduction

2.1 Vision Statement

LGBTQIA+ Task Force Mission Statement: To advocate and provide resources for the advancement of LGBTQIA+ individuals (faculty, staff, and students) at Pitt, starting with the hiring of new staff members and physical center for LGBTQIA+ individuals on campus.

Center defined: A physical space that centralizes and aggregates the variety of resources that currently exist for LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty on campus in support of these individuals, with the capacity for additional targeted resources such as counseling, advising, academic programming, and office space. Core to the physical center is an open concept with space for meeting areas and offices. This space will serve as a safe space for all individuals, regardless of affiliation with the LGBTQIA+ community.

2.2 About the Taskforce

The University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board, under the leadership of the Task Force Chairperson Tyler Viljaste (Vice President and Chief of Cabinet of the 2020-2021 Board), established the LGBTQIA+ Task Force in an effort to create a central working group through which the tangential efforts of varying LGBTQIA+ affiliated individuals, organizations, and initiatives could come together to aggregate the expansive networks and resources at their disposal. Composed of a coalition of over 80 faculty, students, and staff, the LGBTQIA+ Task Force has made its mission the betterment of the experience of LGBTQIA+ persons at the University of Pittsburgh, regardless of whether they are faculty, students, or staff. The proposals and recommendations featured in this report are the culmination of many years of work by an incredible number of individuals across the Pitt community who have been pushing for institutional change for some time.

2.2 General Background on University

The University of Pittsburgh stands alone among its peer institutions¹ and among AAU R1 Research Universities more broadly for having neither a dedicated LGBTQIA+ center on campus nor a full-time staff member whose exclusive role it is to support the LGBTQIA+ community at the University. A benchmarking exercise undertaken by the LGBTQIA+ Task Force found that all of the University of Pittsburgh's "public peer" institutions have a staffed LGBTQIA+ Center on campus, as do all institutions

¹ The University of Pittsburgh identifies its "public peer" institutions as the [University of Texas](#), Austin; [University of Florida](#); [University of Washington](#), Seattle; [Ohio State University](#); [Rutgers University](#); [University of Maryland](#); and [Penn State University](#).

identified by the University of Pittsburgh as its “aspirational peers.”² It is apparent from these findings that the University of Pittsburgh is an outlier for not investing in an dedicated LGBTQIA+ center and adequate staffing to implement such a center.

In the absence of a dedicated space and staff on campus for the LGBTQIA+ community, faculty and staff currently provide the majority of on-campus support and mentorship to LGBTQIA+ undergraduate and graduate students on a volunteer basis. This arrangement is not sustainable and is not the model used for other historically minoritized populations. This takes both a personal and professional toll on faculty and staff at the University of Pittsburgh. Faculty and staff can and do volunteer to contribute meaningfully to the experience of LGBTQIA+ students, but as a general rule lack the specialized training, skillset, compensation, and time necessary to sustainably support LGBTQIA+ students in crisis. When informal mentoring relationships with LGBTQIA+ and allied faculty and staff mentors comprise the main support system for LGBTQIA+ students, it is to the detriment of all parties. Students are not getting the appropriate mental health support that they would from a counselor, nor the social enrichment and affirmation they would receive from programming created by center staff. The sheer volume of student requests for support and mentorship related to LGBTQIA+ experience and community is such that faculty and staff who have identified themselves through an “allies’ network” training placard or who are otherwise visible in the Pitt community as LGBTQIA+/allies are inundated and overwhelmed with requests for support from LGBTQIA+ students. This takes a significant professional toll on the LGBTQIA+ and allied Pitt faculty and staff who currently volunteer their time to support LGBTQIA+ students. LGBTQIA+ and allied staff and contingent faculty provide student support entirely off-contract; junior tenure-stream or tenured faculty may take hours out of their own research and committee work, increasing the likelihood of burn-out. . . . Despite these disincentives, LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff give generously of their time to support LGBTQIA+ students because they recognize the acute need for this support. In this vein, faculty and staff generally lack the time and expertise required to create and implement non-academic programming for student populations. This is more fittingly the work of qualified LGBTQIA+ Center staff members and their Counseling Center affiliates.

Moreover, the University of Pittsburgh has struggled to consistently offer an appropriate in-house training for LGBTQIA+ allies on its Pittsburgh campus. An anonymous survey respondent of the *2020 LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Survey* (featured later in this report) writes of the “allies’ network training”: “The diversity and inclusion trainings out of Pitt HR as related to LGBTQIA+ issues are kind of a joke. I participated so that I could get the certification/sign that signals that my office is a safe place for people who need one. The trainer was not queer and openly disagreed with the university's gender-neutral bathroom policy” (“LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Survey” 2020). This frank assessment was shared by members of the Faculty & Staff Working Group on the LGBTQIA+ Taskforce and by panelists and attendees at OEDI’s summer 2020 LGBTQIA+ Townhall. An LGBTQIA+ Center and qualified staff at Pitt could offer strong, appropriate, trans-inclusive trainings, reducing the need to contract external

² The University of Pittsburgh identifies its “public aspirational peer” institutions as the [University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign](#); [University of Michigan](#); [University of Minnesota](#); [University of Virginia](#); [University of Wisconsin](#) and those identified by the University of Pittsburgh as its “private peers” ([Cornell University](#); [George Washington University](#); [New York University](#); [Columbia University](#); [Syracuse University](#); [University of Miami](#); [University of Pennsylvania](#); [University of Southern California](#)).

trainers or rely on the volunteer work of contingent Pitt faculty and staff, as has been OEDI's model for hosting trainings on supporting trans and nonbinary community members in recent years.

However, these issues do not begin and end with faculty and staff. The University of Pittsburgh has successfully implemented services and features geared at fostering inclusivity for the LGBTQIA+ student community - having LGBTQIA+ student organizations, establishing a gender and sexuality LLC, the recent creation of an LGBTQ+ Minor, providing LGBTQIA+ care and therapy at the SHC, and utilizing a preferred name option in Canvas have been important and necessary additions that the University of Pittsburgh has added over the past few years. However, compared to other institutions of this caliber, Pitt falls behind in the provision of adequate services to support its LGBTQIA+ student community. Quite often it is the case that these supports designed to support LGBTQIA+ students are only realized after students pushed vigorously for them or violence and harm occurred against LGBTQIA+ students. Our LGBTQIA+ student leaders experience high levels of burnout and turnover rates because of the pressure to act as support staff and pseudo-counselors in ways they are not professionally prepared or compensated for.

Students, faculty and staff would therefore benefit greatly from having an LGBTQIA+ center on campus which, in addition to supporting both undergraduate and graduate students as detailed elsewhere in this proposal, could offer programming tailored to the needs of students, faculty, and staff. LGBTQIA+ Centers at Pitt's peer institutions offer a range of valuable services for students, faculty, and staff, including training, workshops, legal services, conversation groups, clinical services, mentorship programs, lecture series, resource libraries, archives, and dedicated faculty & staff drop-in hours.

In addition to the careful review of existing systems and shaping this vision, this proposal has been discussed and endorsed by the following:

2.3 Campus Pride Index

The CPI was launched in 2007 by Campus Pride, a nonprofit organization seeking to build safer environments for LGBTQIA+ students (Campus Pride, 2006). The assessment metrics used by this tool were last updated for relevance in 2015. The report is a self-assessment that conveys the existence of specific resources, but does not evaluate the success or effectiveness of each resource. In each section of the assessment, questions are weighted to emphasize importance of certain resources, but in the whole assessment, all 8 sections receive equal weight. These sections are: policy inclusion, support and institutional commitment, academic life, student life, housing and residence life, campus safety, counseling and health, and recruitment and retention. Pitt received a 4/5 in institutional support and recruitment and retention efforts, a 4.5/5 in policy inclusion, and 5/5 in the remaining five sections. According to the CPI LGBTQ-Friendly Report Card, the University is notably missing gender-inclusive/single occupancy restrooms and shower facilities in campus housing, paid staff

responsible for LGBTQ services, the ability to self-identify sexual orientation on admissions or post-enrollment forms, a social LGBTQIA+ Greek organization, and a mentoring program.

The CPI is currently the only measurement of campus climate, resources, and programming for all of the LGBTQIA+ community at the University of Pittsburgh that is currently available. Because of this, it carries a lot of weight as the tool used to measure LGBTQIA+ initiatives at the University. The importance placed on this metric can be seen in the article from the *Pittwire* titled “Pitt Pride: University Again Ranked a Best College for LGBTQ+ Students.” Part of the reason for the weight carried by the CPI is that it is the only available public-facing national metric to determine if a campus could be LGBTQIA+ friendly to incoming first-year students. In the limitations section of the CPI, the organization lays out that “the Campus Pride Index is not a replacement or substitute for campus climate research which examines more holistically campus attitudes/perceptions of LGBTQ and ally campus life (Campus Pride, 2006).” The CPI only determines quantitative data about the existence of programming and services, but does not assess them for effectiveness, relevance, or quantity of that service (for example, the amount of gender-neutral bathrooms).

There are other shortcomings to the CPI metric as well. Notably, experts in transgender experience on college campuses advocate for direct engagement with transgender students and LGBTQIA+ students of color when assessing resources. Professor Z Nicolazzo of the University of Arizona warns that placing too much emphasis on CPI outcomes can be detrimental, describing the creation and dissemination of this index as a prime “example of the way best practices overlook systemic trans oppression in the name of progress,” and further cautions that “the CPI does not require student input in its collection of data, and, because of this, is based solely on administrators’ impressions of support, inclusion, and comfort [...] if a student attends a school that is found to be LGBT-friendly by these indices but then feels that the campus is unsafe and uncomfortable, the student becomes the problem rather than the campus” (Nicolazzo, 2017). It is the fervent belief of this Task Force that no LGBTQIA+ student, faculty, or staff member should be made to feel like “the problem” when experiencing oppression and discomfort on Pitt’s campus. It is thus imperative that the University listen to and take seriously the needs and desires of its own LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff before declaring itself “LGBT-friendly” based on any standardized metric. This LGBTQIA+ student-led Task Force is dedicated to the creation of a staffed LGBTQIA+ Resource Center on campus, a goal that will require a great deal of work and investment from community members and campus leaders.

2.4 Previous Internal Information on LGBTQIA+ Populations

The following research conducted by students, faculty, and staff at the University of Pittsburgh presents the backdrop for the majority of this task force’s specific recommendations. This section acknowledges that the work of this task force does not exist in a vacuum - indeed, this report presents a comprehensive mosaic of the research that many have already conducted, further underlining that the push for improving LGBTQIA+ services at the University of Pittsburgh has occurred for a number of

years in multiple areas and the effort has not yet been made by University administration to centralize and strengthen these efforts.

2016 Dissertation on Queer International Students

- In this study, the majority of students interviewed indicated that the University of Pittsburgh had adequate resources for international students, but that they did not feel adequately supported as LGBTQ individuals. Services that the interviewees suggested were important to them as LGBTQ students and that the University could provide included: a university-wide LGBTQ graduate student organization, University sponsored events for LGBTQ students, and services specifically for LGBTQ international students to build support and allow them to connect with LGBTQ peers with similar identities and struggles to their own.
- Interviewees felt knowledgeable about safe sex practices in the United States, but less knowledgeable about how to safely meet potential partners and dating customs in the United States.
- When expressing experiences at other institutions and cities within the United States, several participants noted the feeling of a more conservative environment. One participant clarified that they did not believe that the people were more conservative as voters but that the social environment was more conservative.
- Although the majority of interviewees felt that the campus climate was mostly positive toward them as LGBTQ people, they felt the campus climate was less positive when it came to their international identities. Tarasi (2016) recommended that the **University implement programming specifically for LGBTQIA+ international students** including opportunities to network in their primary languages and educational programming on LGBTQIA+ culture in the United States; implementing more international perspectives into the Allies Network program; as well as finding ways to specifically involve international students in the campus community. Because it is important that an LGBTQIA+ center at the University put intersectionality at the forefront of its development, the recommendations of this study should be taken into consideration during center development.

Tarasi, P. (2016). An Exploration of the Experiences of LGBTQ International Students: The Case of the University of Pittsburgh (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).

2018 Rainbow Alliance Proposal for Hiring a Full-time LGBTQIA+ Staff Person

Rainbow Alliance leadership noted that each member of their leadership team spent between 15-25 hours a week on their officer duties with the president spending up to 35 hours a week. (since then, there has remained a high rate of burnout and turnover in leadership). During their benchmark efforts, they noted that on average, the universities they looked at had 2.75 staff people doing LGBTQIA+ work on campus. Their leadership noted that many of the programs they were planning are those planned and

executed at other institutions by full-time LGBTQIA+ staff. These programs included: Lavender Graduation, campus-wide events including drag shows, programming for incoming students, daily office hours, professional development and networking opportunities, and affinity groups (regular meetings for groups holding a specific or set of identities under LGBTQIA+). As of the writing of this proposal, Pitt Queer Professionals has taken the lead on Lavender Graduation, with help from OEDI and the Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OHSDEI). While this alleviates students from planning their own graduation event, it is still being done as an event led by volunteers at the university.

Rainbow Alliance's staff position recommendation was for an individual hired under Cross Cultural and Leadership Development who would serve as an advisor for Rainbow Alliance, and assist in facilitating training, provide mentorship and leadership development, create active and sustainable communications between different departments of the University and serve as a resource and advocate for LGBTQIA+ students. Their demands were for a staff person to be hired to fill this role in the Fall of 2019.

Rainbow Alliance also recommended that Allies Training should become a function of what is now the Offices for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in order to increase visibility, foster input from a broader population, and create a more regular schedule for the program.

2019 Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct

When extrapolating data from this survey, the University collapsed all individuals identified under the given categories of gay or lesbian, bisexual, asexual, queer, questioning, not listed, or multiple of the previous categories as "not-heterosexual." The University collapsed all individuals who identified under the given categories of Trans women, Trans men, genderqueer or nonbinary, questioning, or not listed into one category. Furthermore, there was not a large enough sample size for graduate and undergraduate categories so graduate/professional and undergraduate students were all collapsed into the "TGQN" category to maintain an adequate sample to generate data. When the survey refers to "men" or "women" they are referring to cisgender men and women, and individuals who might fall under TGQN but did not voluntarily identify under one of the TGQN categories.

Percent of surveyed students who have experienced sexual assault or violence by gender identity

	Experienced non consensual sexual touching by physical force or inability to consent	Experienced nonconsensual sexual contact without active, ongoing voluntary agreement	Experienced Sexual Harassment	Experienced Intimate Partner Violence
Undergraduate				
Men	4.8%	7.7%	10.5%	10.1%
Women	20.2%	31.7%	32.5%	15.7%
Graduate/professional				

Men	3.1%	5.5%	8.9%	4.6%
Women	7.7%	14.3%	20.5%	7.2%
Entire Student Population				
TGQN	20.1 %	37.3%	49.1%	20.2%

Prevalence rate of students who have experienced sexual assault or violence by sexual orientation

	Experienced non consensual sexual touching by physical force or inability to consent	Experienced nonconsensual sexual contact without active, ongoing voluntary agreement	Experienced Sexual Harassment	Experienced Intimate Partner Violence
Heterosexual	12.9%	5.9%	41.5%	9.8%
Non-heterosexual	24.5%	15.2%	59.8%	16.4%

Percent of surveyed students related to feelings of safety and belonging on campus by gender identity

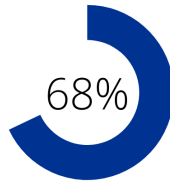
	Percent of students that felt it was very or extremely likely their report would be taken seriously	Percent of students that felt sexual misconduct is very or extremely problematic on campus	Percent of students that felt it was very or extremely likely that they would experience sexual assault	Percent of students that felt very or extremely connected to the campus community
Undergraduate				
Men	72.2%	9.0%	1.4%	31.7%
Women	55.2%	20.0%	10.1%	40.9%
Graduate/professional				
Men	61.9%	13.1%	1.0%	15.1%
Women	49.3%	12.0%	4.1%	13.1%
Entire Student Population				
TGQN	39.0 %	31.4%	15.5%	22.8%

2019 Student Government Board Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report

In 2019, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Student Government Board at the University of Pittsburgh gathered information in order to “better understand how students perceived both LGBT+ life on campus and resources provided by the University.” 70 self identified LGBTQIA+ students took this survey.

Quantitative data collected

Participants who were not satisfied with LGBTQIA+ resources on campus



Participants who were not a part of LGBTQIA+ organizations on campus



Qualitative data

Students who did not feel satisfied with the LGBTQ+ resources were invited to expand on why they are not satisfied. Four themes emerged from the 44 students who responded.

1. Both physical and digital visibility is lacking both in general and especially for Trans and Queer People of Color (QPOC) communities
2. Desire for an LGBTQIA+ center and specific staff support in various offices (including Title IX office, Counseling Center, Student Health, Student Affairs and a general LGBTQIA+ staff person) because there is a lack of support and resources especially for Trans and QPOC communities
3. Desire for more comprehensive programming and diversity in programming that is offered at Pitt
4. Students feel a lack of genuine administrative support; there is a sense that University Administrators do not extend any verbal or actionable gestures toward the LGBTQIA+ community

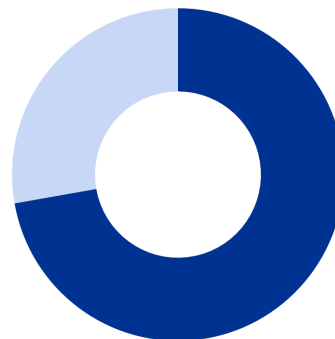
This report had a second data set on QPOC life at the University which was taken by 18 self identified QPOC students.

27.8% (5 respondents) felt they did not have a community on campus. They noted that either a lack of intersectionality in student organizations or difficulty finding people that share their identity(ies) as contributing factors..

72% (13 respondents) felt they had a community On campus., 9 respondents said their community was in student organizations, 11 respondents said their community was within a friend group, and 2 respondents said their community was in Pitt Resources.

QPOC students who felt a sense of community on campus

● Some source of community ● No community



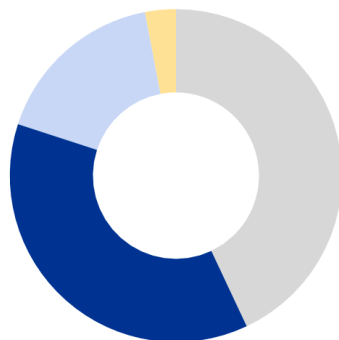
There were two questions asking about if QPOC students felt stigma about their intersectional identities when in a community specific to one of those identities and the majority of the students felt that both groups specifically for their racial and/or ethnic identity and groups specifically for their LGBTQIA+ identity stigmatized their other marginalized identity.

2020/2021 School of Education Student Faculty Research Preliminary Findings

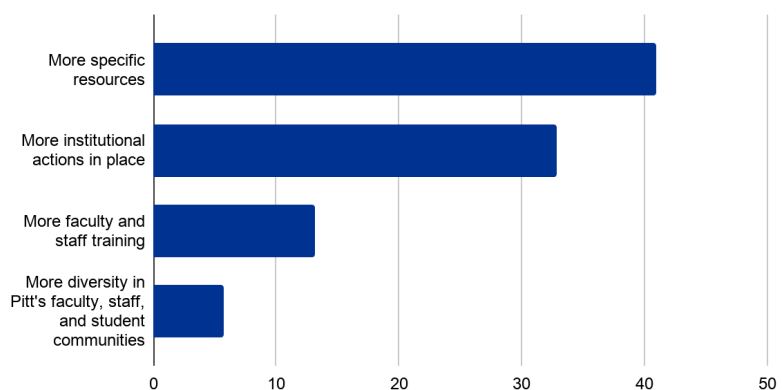
This project surveyed 82 students between 18-24 years of age who were not first year students and were LGBTQ identifying. Faculty from GSWS, GSPH, and SOE were sent this survey for distribution, as well as Rainbow Alliance and anyone within the personal networks of those who received the survey.

What do you think Pitt has done well in the last year to support the LGBTQIA community?

● Couldn't identify institutional support
 ● Identified campuswide pronoun efforts as point of support
● Had a negative response about support efforts
 ● No Response



What do you think Pitt could do to better support the LGBTQIA community now and in the future?



- 50% indicated need more specific resources such as spaces, more funding, and more organizational support in general.
- 40% indicated the University needs more actions in places including: more gender-neutral bathrooms, anti-hate policies, and more University administration speaking out on LGBTQIA+ issues.
- 16% indicated faculty and staff, and the University community in general needs more training and courses that are mandated.
- 7% indicated a need for a more diverse University community of students, faculty, and staff.

Some of these calls for increased training and creating a better campus climate are reflected in the measure of outness asked on this survey. While 86% of students were open about their sexual orientation to most or all of their friends at school, 11% were out to most or all of their instructors/professors and 28% were out to their most or all of their classmates.

3. LGBTQIA+ Center Proposal

3.1 Background

Central to the mission of the LGBTQIA+ Resources and Center Task Force is the creation of a physical space for LGBTQIA+ faculty, staff, and students. The Center Design Committee within the LGBTQIA+ task force prepared research and benchmarking on peer institutions' LGBTQIA+ centers, which, in tandem with recommendations provided by the committee members, have compiled a list of requirements and secondary considerations for an eventual LGBTQIA+ center housed on Pitt's main campus.

These requirements and secondary considerations are non-comprehensive, and are meant to demonstrate core ideas which will supplement the eventual work that future architects and building planners will use when designing the actual physical space, given location and financial constraints. The future architects and designers should design alongside LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff, consistently providing space for input as the design of the center develops. Additionally, the committee has created a list of reference spaces to model the aesthetic of the space after, drawing inspiration from recent innovative renovations to University buildings such as Posvar Hall and the School of Medicine.

The committee also recommends that the LGBTQIA+ center be housed in the William Pitt Union (potentially the 3rd floor of the William Pitt Union if space becomes available as a result of upcoming renovations). We want to emphasize that this center would not replace the office that Rainbow Alliance occupies on the 6th floor of the Union; this center would exist in tandem with the current office space that Rainbow Alliance has in the Union. Finally, the Task Force recommends that the University establish a formal working group tasked with creating a comprehensive plan for an eventual LGBTQIA+ center, composed of all relevant faculty, staff, students, and administrators, with a dedicated timeline for its final proposal no later than the end of the Fall 2021 semester.

3.2 Requirements for Center

The goal of this center is to foster an ideal environment for learning, engagement, and building community. This is achieved by ensuring that the physical space is welcoming and accessible to all, comfortable, adaptable, and creates opportunities for community building and for LGBTQIA+ folks to be visible and leave their mark in the space. We also recommend that the space fit into Pitt's broader vision for 'green' and sustainable spaces on campus.

Programmatic Requirements:

- Front reception desk
 - Desk should also be wheelchair accessible
- Main lounge area
- Staff office space for 2 staff
- Student office/work space

- Rooms with capacity of 4-5 students with a TV screen which can be reserved in a similar manner to the Hillman Library reservation system.
- Conference/Meeting room with capacity for 20-30 people for large meetings
- 2-3 computers and a printer
- Private Meeting Room
 - A space to have legal and personal conversations - this space should ideally contain a window to provide natural light and comfort for more difficult conversations
- Gender Inclusive Restrooms
- Resource Library
 - Easily accessible open shelving units
- Storage spaces
 - Lockers or lockable cubbies, filing cabinets

Spatial Requirements:

- **Open floor plan** - An open plan without walls or dividers ensures visibility all the way across the room. The ability to see other people occupying space is inviting and being surrounded by people can be comforting. It also allows people to more easily be in community with others because it creates the opportunity for individuals to hop in and out of conversations and spontaneously interact with new people. Open floor plans can encourage people to be unafraid of being seen and heard and take up space unapologetically, really encouraging the LGBTQIA+ community to take ownership of this space.
- **Natural light**- studies show that exposure to natural light improves mood, efficacy, and sleep. To allow for a welcoming and safe space, ensuring there is natural light is key.
- **Adaptable space created through the use of modular furniture** - To allow the space to be used to its full capability, all furniture should be modular and designed to move. This way, by rearranging furniture, the main lounge area could transform into an events space for presentations and screenings. Throughout the day people move through the center, people can rearrange the furniture into groups for discussions.
- **Accessibility** - A color/material change in the floor through the space to indicate a circulation path that should never be blocked (with furniture or other items) helps to keep the space accessible - that path should be wide enough for two people to occupy side by side (think of two people walking and signing in conversation) and for a wheelchair to comfortably turn around.
- **Easily visible and accessible resource library** - The shelving units for this library should be visible from the entrance of the space, letting people know that this space serves as a resource in addition to everything else it will achieve.

Campus Accessibility

- Centrally located to ensure accessibility for faculty, staff, and students - for example, 3rd floor of the Union

- Center should have a presence on the ground floor, whether through art or advertisements.

3.3 Secondary Considerations for Center Design

Secondary considerations that remain important for a welcoming environment as proposed by the committee include greenery, LGBTQIA+ commissioned artwork and adequate space to continuously display them, ensuring adequate accessibility for outlets, and maximizing opportunities for natural lighting.

3.4 Spaces to model after

- Student lounge specifically for engineer groups
- The 4th floor renovation of the Economics Department in Posvar Hall
- Global Hub in Posvar Hall
- Scaife Hall west wing expansion for school of medicine
- The Center for Gender and Sexual Identity - [Penn State](#)

4. New Staff Hires Proposal

4.1 Background

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to fostering a campus environment where all community members feel respected and valued, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. At the time of this proposal, the University of Pittsburgh has the following LGBTQIA+ Resources: 13 related student organizations, Gender Sexuality and Women's Studies program, LGBTQ Studies Minor, Transgender Working Group Committee, Pitt Queer Professionals, Center for LGBT Health Research, and Pride Health. There are also LGBTQIA+ programs, research, and initiatives spread across academic and administrative units. However, further support and development for these programs is needed to ensure they are able to maintain relevance. There is also a need to ensure there is a centralized, coordinated, and visible LGBTQIA+ staff that can take on responsibilities that are currently being done as volunteer work by individuals in the Pitt Community. This need will continue to grow as the University draws in more LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, the University needs to develop greater institutional support for LGBTQIA+ faculty, staff, alumni, and graduate students. Because of the scope of and differences in these populations, the LGBTQIA+ task force recommends that at least two staff members are hired to meet the current needs of our LGBTQIA+ Community.

We recommend that these positions be housed under different departments but work in tandem under the LGBTQIA+ Center. One position would focus on the LGBTQIA+ undergraduate student population and be housed in Student Affairs under Cross Cultural and Leadership Development and the other on LGBTQIA+ graduate, faculty, and staff (coordinating with PAE for Alumni) populations in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion under the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion. The duties of these positions include work currently done in their respective departments and incorporates it with the work that has been requested of OEDI, CCLD, GSWS, PQP and student organizations but has not been enacted because of the current scope of these departments and programs. The administrative level, required experiences, and some fine tuning of duties were acquired by gathering information about LGBTQIA+ staff from peer institutions.

4.2 Position Descriptions

LGBTQIA+ Resource Center

Executive Director

Position Funding & Secondary Report:

Office of Equity Diversity & Inclusion

Assistant Director

Student Affairs

Suggested Administrative Level and Pay:

Administrator IV | \$70,000

Administrator III | \$60,000

Duties

Develop organizational goals, objectives, reports, proposals, and grants	Develop programs to support the increased recruitment and retention of LGBTQIA+ students
Directs preparation of budget with near total responsibility for planning, forecasting, and approval. Authorizes and approves purchases, requisitions, and reimbursements.	Serve as a resource and consultant for the campus community on LGBTQIA+ issues and best practices
Develop programs to support the increased recruitment and retention of LGBTQIA+ staff, faculty, and	Assist and support all operational activities within the center.
Provide administrative/operational oversight to all aspects of the offices within the LGBTQIA+ Center	Expand the Allies Network training and create a focused peer program for LGBTQIA+ leadership
Develop and coordinate a lecture series and educational events that focus on the needs of LGBTQIA+ professionals	Advise LGBTQIA+ Senate if created
Advise LGBTQIA+ graduate student organization	Serve on and advise LGBTQIA+ related committees and task forces within Student Affairs
Coordinate legal, clinical, and wellness services for faculty, staff, and graduate/professional students	Develop and coordinate LGBTQIA+ wellness programming
Serve on and advise LGBTQIA+ related committees and task forces in ODI and other units across campus when requested	Develop <i>programs & services</i> to secure equity of experiences and resources for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff
Propose <i>strategies and advocacy</i> to secure equity of experiences and resources for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty,	Recruit and coordinate students for LGBTQIA+ mentor program
Collaborate with local, state and national LGBTQIA+ organizations and services	Work with leaders at other Pitt campuses to disseminate LGBTQIA+ resources
Recruit and coordinate faculty and staff for LGBTQIA+ mentor program	Interview, onboard, and supervise future staff & volunteers in center
Attend conferences and join relevant professional organizations to bring information on current trends back to Pitt	

Skills/Experience/Qualifications/Skills*

**Source: Pitt HR Administrative Job Family <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/AFAdmin.pdf>*

At least 5 years of experience in an intermediate or senior level professional and/or administrative position	2 years of experience in a professional and/or administrative position
Administers or manages a department, system, or program with multiple facets	Provides financial and administrative support to a dean, faculty member, or other management staff
Drafts and recommends policies and procedures	Determines procedures and has input into developing policy
Makes a variety of strategic decisions	Prepares complex reports, analyses, and proposals
Interviewing and selection, orientation, training, work assignment and review, performance appraisal, and recommendations for various personnel actions for exempt and non-exempt employees.	The job consists of broad responsibilities requiring the application of policies to dynamic and complex conditions. Problems generally require significant analysis and judgment. Solutions may include adapting existing policies
Handles difficult and complex situations with tact and diplomacy to maintain a service oriented environment. Interaction is across all levels of University and outside public	Interacts with various levels within or outside the University including Deans, Directors, and Department Heads. This interaction may include interpreting and explaining ideas and concepts, as well as solving problems and coordinating
Directs preparation of budget with near total responsibility for planning, forecasting, and approval. Authorizes and approves purchases, requisitions, and reimbursements.	Prepares and monitors budget, analyzes requisitions for conformance to budget, compliance with specific requirements (such as for grants, gifts, gov. regulations), and

4.3 Core Competencies for Both Positions

- Demonstrated knowledge of issues significant to LGBTQIA+ population
- Knowledge of laws and regulations impacting LGBTQIA+ population
- Knowledge of and commitment to diverse student, faculty, and staff populations
- Demonstrated interpersonal, communication, and management skills
- Assessment and organizing information and projects (project management skills)
- Demonstrated success in program development
- Experience with student resources and advising student organizations
- Experience working with students, faculty, and staff
- Knowledge of university policies and procedures

4.3 Recommendations

In sum, the New Staff Hire Committee under the LGBTQIA+ task force formally recommends that a minimum of two professional staff are required in order for an effective LGBTQIA+ Center to serve the entire LGBTQIA+ community of the University of Pittsburgh. Because of the volume of undergraduate students and the difference in their needs compared to graduate/professional students, faculty, and staff, the two positions should be divided into service along these populations.

This task force believes that the best course of action to ensure that the future center is involved in other diversity, equity, and inclusion work is to place the staff positions under existing departments within the University. To build on the continued work of Cross Cultural and Leadership Development under Student Affairs, the position focused on undergraduate students should be housed in this department. In order to build on the work of the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, including the continued work of Pitt Queer Professionals (which is housed under OEDI), the Position focused on faculty, staff, and graduate/professional falls under the purview of OEDI and should be housed here. The task force recognizes that the proposed leadership division of this center, in failing under multiple departments, may have implications for conversations about financial and capital planning of the center. These positions are merely recommendations and should serve as the starting point for further institutional structures that are formally tasked with the hiring of such positions moving forward.

5. Digital Services Recommendations

5.1 Background

Members of the Student Government Board worked during the Summer of 2020 to provide a series of recommendations to fix the Student Affairs website that specifically outlined LGBTQIA+ resources and information at the University of Pittsburgh ([view the recommendations here](#)). Many of these fixes were implemented, but the website is still outdated, has broken links, and is hard to both find and navigate. In addition, as a student-centric domain, the Student Affairs portion of the website which focuses on LGBTQIA+ resources does not serve as an adequate central location for resources that are accessible to all persons at the University of Pittsburgh (faculty and staff included).

This task force formally recommends that Pitt create an lgbtq.pitt.edu web domain as part of our proposal. Having a centralized web domain is critical, as it will serve as a digital extension of the physical center we imagine. As we will outline later, LGBTQIA+ resources exist in disparate amounts and in disparate locations across the University of Pittsburgh, both physically and virtually. Though these locations and web domains offer a large quantity of helpful information, the lack of virtual resource centralization has led to a problem of accessibility for Pitt students, staff, and faculty, such that these resources are not currently able to be utilized to their fullest potential. Peer institutions with LGBTQIA+ center structures similar to the center outlined in this proposal have their own unique web domain which serves as a central location to find all information and resources for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff at their respective institutions. Thus, it is only natural that the University of Pittsburgh creates its own central domain (lgbtq.pitt.edu) as well.

This website will be a central location for those seeking information about LGBTQIA+ communities, services, and events at the University of Pittsburgh. This web domain will centralize all of Pitt's resources that currently exist across myriad departments, offices, and student websites, as well as provide important information from national organizations. The website will also serve as a central location to promote, support, and uplift the work of LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff as they continue to create events and programming for the LGBTQIA+ community at the University of Pittsburgh. The following sections outline our vision for the website as well as compiled a list of resources that we believe should be included.

5.2 Resources

Our committee performed benchmarking across other schools' websites and a thorough read-through of our current site. The current Student Affairs website that Pitt has (<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/lgbtqia/>) contains information that is outdated with broken links and errors. The new site would have an updated look with links that reflect relevant information to the student population, as well as contain many of the resources which exist on the diversity.pitt.edu page. We have also found resources (local, state, and national) that exist outside of the scope of Pitt that we believe can be relevantly included under appropriate headings. We also suggest creating informational graphics with the information found from other websites. All have been compiled below; note that this list is non-exhaustive and serves simply as a starting point which helps to clarify our broader vision.

- Undergraduate Student Organizations Information³
 - See section 7.2 of this report for an up-to-date list of Undergraduate Student Organizations and descriptions of their work
- Graduate Student Organizations Information
 - See section 7.2 of this report for an up-to-date list of Graduate Student Organizations and descriptions of their work
- Faculty and Staff Organizations Information
 - See section 7.2 and section 8 of this report for an up-to-date list of Faculty and Staff Organizations and descriptions of their work
- Transgender Resources/Information
 - Preferred/Chosen Name Initiatives:
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources/preferredchosen-name-initiatives>
 - Guidelines for to Inclusion Related to Gender Transition:
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources/guidelines-inclusion-relating-gender-transition>
 - Restroom and Housing Guides:
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources/restrooms-and-gender-inclusive-housing>
- Office of Civil Rights and Title IX:
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources>
- Housing Information
 - Restroom and Housing Guides:
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/diverse-populations/lgbtqia-resources/restrooms-and-gender-inclusive-housing>
 - Housing Statement from the University
<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/lgbtqia/housing/>
 - Gender and Sexuality LLC <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/reslife/llc/upper/>
- Academic resources (scholarships/classes)
 - <http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/students/research-fund-0>
 - Scholarships
 - <https://theprismfoundation.org/scholarships>
 - <https://www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/lgbt-scholarships>
 - <https://pridefoundation.org/find-funding/scholarships/>

³ Despite the centralization of student organizations on SORC, not all student organizations are listed or accessible (for example: SMILE with Pride and Medical Student PRIDE Alliance (see section 7.2), both of which are not officially listed in the SORC database). This further underlines the need for an LGBTQIA+ specific web domain.

- <https://www.bestcolleges.com/financial-aid/lgbtq-scholarships/>
 - Research
 - LLC (paired with GSWS class)
- Ally guides
 - -"what do the letters mean?" (will create our own graphic)
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/style/lgbtq-gender-language.html>
- Campus policies
 - <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/resources/lgbtqia-resources/non-discrimination-policy>
- Healthcare and Counseling
 - Gender and Sexual Development Program, UPMC Children's Hospital Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine (through age 26)
 - <https://www.chp.edu/our-services/aya-medicine/gender-development>
- National Resources
 - <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/resources/national-resources>

5.3 Benchmarking

Through the analysis of various other websites we came up with comprehensive update recommendations to the website. We suggest working with a liaison from Pitt tech departments to implement the creation of a unique domain (lgbtq.pitt.edu). Recommendations include the following: the site should be stand alone. It should include links to the center as well as other resource pages. The site will be a repository for Pitts specific as well as national and international news regarding LGBTQIA+ events and issues. Other sections should include FAQs, contact information, link to a mailing list, and a reporting portal to report incidents related to LGBTQIA+ issues.

5.4 Other Considerations

- Two new hire positions would be responsible for keeping the website regularly updated
- Model after web domains from comparable institutions, preferably after those listed under the institutions we aspire to resemble (ie: Penn)
- Include a Frequently Asked Questions section for current and prospective students, ie: What does housing for trans undergraduate students look like?
- Community-building considerations such as a student Discord or mailing list (modeled after Rainbow Alliance and T is For discords).
- Virtual training videos and worksheets providing LGBTQIA+ 101, comparable to the Allies Network trainings (but perhaps don't provide a certificate to commemorate completing these modules specifically)
- Virtual tour for the physical LGBTQIA+ Center space

- Provide Pittsburgh area resources for LGBTQIA+ undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and community members
- This would require fairly regular updating to maintain functionality for students. Including a date/timestamp when the page has been updated will allow viewers to know how current the information is.

6. Counseling Services Recommendations

6.1 Proposal

The Counseling Services Committee under the LGBTQIA+ task force was charged with reviewing the variety of non-clinical services and therapeutic support services for LGBTQ students. This section takes into consideration the implications and hybridization of work between an eventual LGBTQIA+ Resource Center and the University Counseling Center (UCC) to enhance the clinical therapeutic services available to students through the UCC. At this time, it is not recommended to include counseling services for faculty and staff through the LGBTQ Resource Center and that the UCC not serve faculty and staff, but that they offer referrals to external counseling services.

The committee recommends working directly with LGBTQ students to determine the specific services offered at the LGBTQ Resource Center and the UCC. The following services are potential services which could be offered by the LGBTQ Resource Center and recommended services for the UCC.

LGBTQ Resource Center	University Counseling Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychoeducational Groups• Let's Talk Hours provided by UCC• Drop in support groups• Peer-led support and activity groups – with UCC mentor/liaison• Referrals for faculty/staff to community counseling services• Monthly special topic mental health groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual therapy and counseling• Process and formal group therapy• Referrals to hormone replacement therapy/medical transition services

In recognition of the historical concerns raised by students who have utilized the UCC, the committee recommended the following enhancements to the UCC to better support LGBTQ students:

- All therapists trained and certified by LGBTQ credentialing bodies (e.g., WPATH, ITCA, GLMA, NLGBTQ Task Force)
- Annual requirement for therapists to complete continuing education courses to maintain their certification to work with LGBTQ students.

- Conduct focus groups with current and previous UCC LGBTQ service users to determine successes, challenges, and opportunities.
- Redesign the UCC website to include self-identified ‘areas of expertise’ for staff to designate their expertise, scope of practice, and type of practice (see Psychology Today for sample of web design). In the redesign, allow for filtering of clinical staff.

6.2 Staffing Recommendations

In addition to having a staff member who is funded to oversee the LGBTQ Resource Center, the task force proposes that there be a full-time staff member who oversees the non-clinical/ therapeutic services offered through the LGBTQ Resource Center, potentially aligning with any of the two proposed staff hire additions or as an additional staff person for consideration to hire. The task force also proposes that a staff member at the UCC be designated as a liaison to the eventual LGBTQ Resource Center who will assist with connecting students to UCC services as needed and provide updates to the LGBTQ Resource Center about services at the UCC as needed.

In addition to staff members hired by the University of Pittsburgh, we recognize the importance of supporting the development of students and enhancing the skills of students. Therefore, we propose the use of training student leaders who may lead the peer-led support groups and activities in mental health first aid and other crisis intervention tactics so they are able to support their peers if or when a staff member is unavailable. We also suggest the use of interns at the LGBTQ Resource Center through the professional schools (e.g., School of Social Work, Department of Psychology) depending on the availability of supervision to these students.

6.3 Other Considerations

- There was a recommendation to move any educational programming out of OEDI to the LGBTQ Resource Center and potentially work with faculty experts at Pitt to conduct educational programs.
- We suggest OEDI does an inventory of the needs of students and determine any gaps in OEDI in terms of supporting LGBTQ students specifically with regard to counseling and student health services. One recommendation is to include surveying LGBT alum from the past 10 years for their perspective.

7. Student Services Recommendations

7.1 Executive Summary

The Student Group Committee was created as part of this task force to come up with a structure for student group engagement, including how student groups will fit within the center space as well as coalition building for LGBTQIA+ student organizations. This report has been prepared through research of existing structures present on the University of Pittsburgh campus that support students organizations, in which this recommendation stands to replicate. The following report will be split up into present student organizations, a brief history of collaboration, a required support structure, and a section on general student services recommendations. This proposal is meant to be considered specifically in tandem with new staff hire recommendations and center design recommendations.

7.2 Existing Organizations

These organizations are all affiliated with the Student Organization Resource Center, or SORC. SORC requires all student organizations to have a president, vice president, and business manager. These titles will be important later on regarding the creation of a unified support structure.

- Alliance for Queer and Underrepresented Asians in Recognition of Intersectionality to Uphold Solidarity (Founded 2017/2018)
 - AQUARIUS seeks to empower the university's queer Asian community and its allies through educational programming and providing a platform for individuals to share their experiences. The organization unites the mosaic of identities that exist in the queer Asian community and broadly in Asia—Asia being merely a geographic term that can not broadly describe race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socio-political climate, and countless more found throughout diverse Asian nations.
- Black Loud and Queer (Founded 2019/2020)
 - BLAQ seeks to function as a safe and empowering space for The University of Pittsburgh's Black queer community and its allies through providing educational and social programming.
- Latinx Students Association* (Founded 2017/2018)
 - LSA advocates for the concerns, needs and interests of Pitt's Latinx students and will communicate them to the administration and the Pitt community. LSA also celebrates the unique perspective of Latinx students and their culture through social events and festivals. *This is not a specifically LGBTQ+ organization, however, they do have a specific subgroup within the organization to support Latinx LGBTQ+ students.
- Maspeak (Founded 2018)
 - Maspeak is a network and outlet for Jewish student advocacy on issues such as justice, freedom, and activism. For the students on the Maspeak board, it provides an opportunity

to work with other student activists involved in Jewish life. Maspeak creates space for dialogue, meaningful engagement, and collaboration with respect to thoughts and ideas on timely issues.

- Medical Student Pride Alliance (Founded Date N/A)
 - MSPA is a nationally recognized queer and allied medical student association formed with the goals of increasing our understanding of health care challenges that affect the larger queer community. Here at Pitt, our goals include advocating for curriculum reform, building networks both within and outside of UPSOM and UPMC, and establishing a community of social support. To learn more about MSPA, visit
- Minoritized Orientations & Gender Identities Graduate Student Organization (Founded 2020/2021)
 - M.O.G.I serves all graduate and professional students at Pitt who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Through this collective, we engage students, faculty, staff and allies to propel the objectives in mobilizing the organization in the most inclusive and transformative practices by offering resources and collaborative partnerships to support the scholarship endeavors of LGBTQIA+ cultures and populations.
- Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (Founded 2016/2017)
 - Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics is a national LGBTQ affirming organization that aims to provide services and support for students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to create a dynamic network between students and professionals in industry and academia.
- OutLAW (Founded 2016/2017)
 - Pitt OutLaw is a student organization that represents the interests of and coordinates events for LGBTQIA+ law students and allied students.
- Rainbow Alliance (Founded 1972)
 - The Rainbow Alliance is an organization that provides for the concerns and interests of marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities including but not limited to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Allied community.
- Smile with Pride (Founded Date N/A)
 - Sub-organization of Pitt Dental Student Organization
- T is For (Founded 2016/2017)
 - This group is for trans, non-binary, non cis, and gender non-conforming Pitt community members to gather, socialize, share resources, and arrange meet ups, all to create a positive environment for our educational, professional, and personal development.

7.3 History of Collaboration

These organizations exist as individual student made groups. However, each group exists to support a specific LGBTQ+ student community. They have mostly operated in isolation, creating programs and events for their own communities. Though expected, this type of community building has created disaggregated LGBTQ+ resources throughout the University of Pittsburgh. There have been

various attempts to create a coalition of sorts to bring together this larger LGBTQ+ student community, however they have often fizzled out due to students graduating and the mission being unable to be transferred sustainably, as there is no current institutional support in place to support the continued coalition of LGBTQIA+ student organizations. This task force recommends that the creation of a support structure be made specifically to allow ease of collaboration and coalition building amongst student groups, building institutional memory and continuity while maintaining their individual organization goals.

7.4 Required Support Structure

1. Mission
 - a. Within the LGBTQ+ Center mission, there will be a specific mission for the support of LGBTQ+ Student groups. This mission should be created by the coalition once formed to meet their specific needs, but has general sentiments of supported collaboration and recognition of intersectional identities that exist along with students' LGBTQ+ identities.
2. Student Support Staff
 - a. LGBTQIA+ Center Director (SA)
 - i. This position is further explained in section 3 of this proposal. See for more details about pay, qualifications, and skills.
 - ii. Duties as it pertains to supporting the Student Group Coalition:
 1. Attending once a month coalition meetings
 2. Guiding coalition members towards the guidelines should they steer off course
 3. Collaborate with other center staff to aid student groups in requesting, finding, and using University resources
3. Creation of Student Group Coalition
 - a. This coalition will serve to be the formal organizational structure for all present student groups. The main goal and purpose of this coalition is to create a unified LGBTQ+ student body community while each group can maintain their individuality and community. Student groups previously listed may choose to affiliate with this coalition, but must adhere to coalition guidelines. These guidelines include:
 - i. Reflect the center's mission
 - ii. A representative must attend the once a month coalition meetings to discuss updates about their group and listen to others.
 - iii. Collaborate with other groups when possible to work towards a unified and inclusive LGBTQ+ student community.
 - iv. Respect the center's space
 - b. This Coalition will have access to the following resources:
 - i. Lockers and other secure storage space
 - ii. Reservable Office Space

- iii. Reservable Meeting Space
 - iv. Centralized Events Calendar
 - c. Coalition Membership
 - i. The group must be SORC recognized and registered. The group must focus on LGBTQ+ issues and be primarily composed of students. It is suggested that the present organizations mentioned previously are invited in this creation. Future membership will be ultimately voted on by the coalition and in case of a tie, the Center Director will be the tie breaker.

7.5 General Student Services Recommendations

As mentioned previously, hiring new staff that works specifically under Student Affairs (see Section 3 of this proposal) will benefit the provision of services and support for LGBTQIA students at Pitt. Further, this staff person will work jointly with appropriate offices on campus to provide the following additional benefits to LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Pittsburgh:

- Health and mental care through Pitt
 - Hormones – restarting and expanding the Hormone Replacement Therapy program at the Student Health Center
 - Mental Health – variety of individual and group therapy options
- Health and mental care & resources outside of Pitt’s care
- Library /study spaces
- Social programs, including a LGBTQIA+ events calendar
- Mentorship programs
- Specific funds for LGBTQIA+ student groups and events, and building capacity to pay students for their labor and advocacy
- Student advocates
- Transgender resources
 - Name change clinic/legal services through partnership with OUTLAW, Barco Law School, SGB legal services for students
- A bias incident reporting system that is separate or related to ODEI but actually run and supervised by queer and trans* folks to recognize the mistrust/improper care for reported claims
- Something to listen and act upon students' needs and concerns, such as an inbox or help desk.
 - When the center does open, hundreds of requests and concerns will be brought up from students and alumni about discrimination/lack of support they witnessed/were a victim to. It will be critical that, in this time, an eventual LGBTQIA+ center or the new staff hire would address these concerns.
- Advising and aggregating of student groups, roundtables, and programming to uplift and push the agenda of disparate LGBTQIA+ student groups on campus.

- Space for students to stay over breaks and holidays if they do not have a safe and welcoming place to go to when University closes

8. Faculty and Staff Services Recommendations

8.1 Background

Faculty and staff investment in the creation of an LGBTQIA+ center at Pitt is twofold.

1) In the absence of a dedicated space and staff on campus for the LGBTQIA+ community, faculty and staff currently provide the majority of on-campus support and mentorship to LGBTQIA+ undergraduate and graduate students on a volunteer basis. This arrangement is neither sustainable nor appropriate; the volume of student requests for support and mentorship related to LGBTQIA+ experience and community is such that faculty and staff who have identified themselves through “allies’ network” training placards or who are otherwise visible in the Pitt community as LGBTQIA+/allies are inundated with requests for support from LGBTQIA+ students. Faculty and staff can and do contribute meaningfully to the experience of LGBTQIA+ students but as a general rule lack the specialized training and skill-set necessary to support LGBTQIA+ students in crisis. Likewise, faculty and staff generally lack the time and expertise required to create and implement non-academic programming for student populations. This is more fittingly the work of LGBTQIA+ Center staff members and their Counseling Center affiliates.

2) Faculty and Staff would themselves benefit greatly from having an LGBTQIA+ center on campus which, in addition to supporting undergraduate and graduate students as detailed elsewhere in this proposal, could offer programming tailored to the needs of faculty and staff. LGBTQIA+ Centers at Pitt’s peer institutions offer a range of valuable services for faculty and staff, including trainings, workshops, legal services, conversation groups, clinical services, mentorship programs, lecture series, resource libraries, archives, and dedicated faculty & staff drop-in hours.

This background presents the need to adequately address the concerns of LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff, without which many of the various students and student groups on campus would not feel welcome at Pitt.

8.2 Overview of Survey Results

The “Faculty and Staff Working Group” of the LGBTQIA+ Resources and Center Task Force administered a survey in October and November 2020 open to all LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff members and their allies at the University of Pittsburgh (see attached “LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Survey”). At the time of writing, this survey was taken by 120 respondents from across the main and branch campuses. Survey respondents were asked to reflect on how Pitt’s current resources for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff meet their needs, to rank how likely they would be to take advantage of various potential programs administered by an LGBTQIA+ Center, and to share any other relevant experiences and recommendations with the taskforce.

When asked how they felt about the statement “the University of Pittsburgh is a supportive and inviting place for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff to work,” 43% of respondents said that they “somewhat agree”; 22% said that they “neither agree nor disagree”; 16% “strongly agree”; 15% “somewhat disagree”; and 2.5% “strongly disagree”.

When asked how they felt about the statement “the University of Pittsburgh is a safe place for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff,” 44% of respondents said that they “somewhat agree”; 24% said that they “neither agree nor disagree”; 20% “strongly agree”; 7.5% somewhat disagree; and 3% “strongly disagree”.

Respondents ranked their likelihood of using nine potential LGBTQIA+ Center resources and listed other resources they would like to see housed in a campus center. In this ranking exercise, respondents identified “Trainings & Workshops,” “Legal Services,” “Lecture Series,” and “Faculty & Staff Conversation Groups” as the resources specific to faculty and staff that they would most like to see provided by the center. Through a write-in option, respondents further identified trans-specific programming, new faculty and staff orientation, social/networking opportunities without a formal focus or agenda, liaison to other University services, and support for parents of LGBTQIA+ individuals among others as services they would like to see (“LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Survey” 2020).

When asked how Pitt’s LGBTQIA+ resources compare to those at other institutions where they’ve worked, 32.46% of respondents described Pitt’s resources as comparing “neither positively nor negatively”; 17.54% described Pitt’s resources as comparing “moderately positively”; 14.91% described as comparing “slightly positively”; 14.04% “extremely positively”; 12.28% “slightly negatively”; 8.7% “moderately negatively”; 0% “extremely negatively”.

When asked what Pitt is currently doing well to support members of the LGBTQIA+ community, respondents called attention to the work of the GSWS program, the work of the Pitt Queer Professionals (PQP) affinity group for faculty and staff, the work of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, trainings taking place on the Greensburg campus, the “preferred name” initiative, an uptick in pronouns being included in email signatures, employee benefits for domestic partners, parental leave policies, and recent initiatives from the University Counseling Center.

When asked for more general feedback about a potential center and the status of LGBTQIA+ resources at Pitt, respondents were generous in providing comments. Please see the attached report to view this feedback in its entirety. This working group would like to call attention to the following requests:

- More resources for transgender and non-binary community members and their allies
- Investment in an LGBTQIA+ Alumni Council
- Greater support for student leaders of LGBTQIA+ initiatives
- Prioritization of support for Black LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff
- Improved trainings for allies
- Hiring dedicated full-time LGBTQIA+ Resource Center staff

- Creation of more all-gender restrooms on main and branch campuses
- Greater LGBTQIA+ resources and support on Pitt's branch campuses, especially Johnstown
- Hiring new LGBT-studies faculty and providing better support and tenure-stream positions for existing LGBT-studies faculty
- More centralized support and advocacy through a center and website

8.3 Next Steps

This working group recommends that the University of Pittsburgh begin the work of creating an LGBTQIA+ Center by hiring two full-time Directors housed in Student Affairs and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion respectively (see Section 3 of this proposal).⁴ The two directors can begin their work by engaging with the community via a new "lgbtqia.pitt.edu" website to serve as a virtual hub for the activities of the LGBTQIA+ Center while an appropriate physical space is pending.

We recommend that the University of Pittsburgh launch a national search for the two directors. We strongly recommend that the University prioritize the recruitment of QBIPOC candidates for both director positions.

We recommend that LGBTQIA+ community stakeholders be a part of the search process for the two directors, including representatives from student groups, the Transgender Working Group, PQP, and the GSWS Program Steering Committee/LGBTQ Studies Minor.

We recommend that the LGBTQIA+ Center at the University of Pittsburgh explicitly include faculty, staff, graduate students and alumni in its mission statement alongside undergraduate students.

We recommend that this taskforce and any future committees for the creation of the LGBTQIA+ Center establish a direct connection to Pitt's regional campuses for the dissemination of resources and information.

We recommend that this taskforce and any future committees for the creation of the LGBTQIA+ Center reach out to the leaders of existing LGBTQIA+ inclusion and education initiatives across the university so that the center may support these initiatives when helpful and avoid duplicating efforts and competing for resources.

This working group would also like to express its sincere gratitude to the 120 anonymous faculty and staff members who took the time to provide detailed and thoughtful feedback in response to our survey. This level of early and enthusiastic engagement with the LGBTQIA+ Resource Center initiative on the part of Pitt faculty and staff is auspicious and speaks to the importance of soliciting feedback widely across the university in all phases of the proposal and planning process.

⁴ LGBTQIA+ Centers at Pitt's peer institutions tend to be housed either in Student Affairs, ODEI, or both. It is the recommendation of this task force that Pitt hire two directors, one responding to each of these two units of the University. The Co-Director of the LGBTQIA+ Center who reports to ODEI would direct the programming for faculty and staff.

9. Example Outcomes

Community Building:

Pitt has a large LGBT+ community; however, due to the disaggregated nature of student organizations and LGBTQIA+ resources on campus, it can be difficult to discover and connect with members of this community. This is especially true for students first arriving on campus, particularly because a safe, centralized space specifically dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ community does not exist. This proposal highlights the fact that many student organizations exist as individual student made groups; however, despite their individualized natures, each organization exists to support a specific LGBTQ+ student community, and through such uplifts the community as a whole. They have mostly operated in isolation, creating programs and events for their own communities. This type of community building has created disaggregated LGBTQ+ resources throughout the University of Pittsburgh, and has made true community building and feeling of belonging inaccessible to a wide range of students, faculty, and staff.

Student, staff, and faculty feedback solicited throughout the process further illuminates the need for community building at Pitt, and demonstrates the ability for this proposal to fully realize the incredible potential for community building among LGBTQIA+ Pitt members. The following personal experiences offer a snapshot into the current state of LGBTQIA+ resources at Pitt and a glimpse of what the implementation of this proposal would mean to members of the LGBTQIA+ community at Pitt:

“As a trans and queer alumni, I didn’t find these LGBT groups until I was a junior at Pitt. I only heard about T is For after I came out of the closet and one of my friends recommended the group. It was great to find community, but it would have been even better and safer had I found it sooner. Had I been able to go to an LGBT Center on campus/view their website and discover these groups, I could have found more support as I discovered who I was, chose to come out of the closet, and start my transition. The Creation of Student Group Coalition housed under the Center will be very impactful for students both in and out of the closet.” - Drew

“It feels like every resource is always ‘well, we have a rainbow alliance.’” - Anonymous, Student Government Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee 2019 report

“I moved here from Philadelphia, where I worked at Penn and then before that, the William Way LGBT Community Center. During my first months here, I had a conversation with one of my coworkers who told me they were getting married to their partner that weekend. I was so excited, but confused as to why he didn't tell anyone because we would have had a party for him. We had just celebrated several straight coworkers' weddings, including mine, and I wanted to celebrate him. He told me that "people didn't feel comfortable about him". That broke my heart and pissed me off. I found that there were a few other coworkers that were also not out at work for the same reason. Luckily, I was able to take the Ally training that Pitt offers and hang the card up at my desk so people know they are safe with me and can talk to me. But, LGBT people should not have

to feel like they can not be out at work, especially at a University.” - Anonymous, Faculty and Staff Survey

“I wish there was more for bi/pan folks and bi/pan visibility” - Anonymous, Student Government Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee 2019 report

These experiences highlight that there is indeed a stigma of being LGBTQIA+ on Pitt’s campus. Though many LGBTQIA+ organizations currently exist on our campus, it is clear that these organizations are limited in their capacity to build community: indeed, not every LGBTQIA person wants to be visible in a group setting by joining an openly-LGBTQIA+ organization. A physical center is the only way that the full and complete needs of the LGBTQIA+ community can be met. By offering online resources, individuals can find the support and resources they need at a level of visibility that is comfortable to them. The Center can also engage in important proactive outreach to identify and work with all areas of the University to improve inclusion and foster a welcoming attitude. especially areas where stigma is high.

Collaborations:

This report highlights opportunities for further expansion of collaboration between student organizations, clubs, faculty and staff organizations, athletic departments, offices, programs, centers, and schools. By implementing the requests outlined in this proposal, the LGBTQIA+ community at Pitt could have liaisons that report or have quarterly meetings with the eventual LGBTQIA+ center or the staff positions in Student Affairs or the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This would foster a well-connected entity of students, faculty, and staff and make the center even more accessible and approachable.

Specific student, staff, and faculty feedback solicited throughout the process further illuminates the need for further cross-school collaboration among the LGBTQIA+ community at Pitt, and demonstrates the ability for this proposal to fully realize the incredible potential for establishing new pathways for collaboration among LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff:

“GSWS has courses for undergraduates and grad students in LGBTQ studies; GSWS tenure stream and non-tenure stream faculty do a lot of mentoring for students working in LGBTQ studies; GSWS tenure stream and non-tenure stream faculty have been directly involved in new research opportunities for LGBTQ research, including grants and funding for undergraduate research internships; GSWS built and launched a new minor in LGBTQ studies; PQP and GSWS are working towards an endowed fund for LGBTQ research; Pitt has LGBTQ in it's diversity and inclusion commitment, which is excellent, but much of what is good or progressive, with respect to LGBTQ, has been built by students and contingent faculty, frequently with little institutional support.” -Anonymous, Faculty and Staff Survey

Mentorship:

The idea of developing a system for LGBTQIA+ mentorship is continually suggested by students. These mentorships often help the mentees discuss LGBT issues that can be difficult to discuss with

non-community members. They also help the mentees find resources or connect to networks (both professional and personal). Mentors also find a sense of community and support that brings them joy and improves their wellbeing. Because there is not currently a centralized and organized mentorship program (or something similar), students often go without mentorship or have to go out of their way to find a mentor, risking potentially damaging self-outing to individuals who may not be accepting of the LGBTQIA+ community. Providing a voluntary system of mentorship for the LGBT community at Pitt, facilitated and coordinated by the new hire positions in Student Affairs and ODEI, will result in many more mentor-mentee relationships that are safer and more accessible to students at Pitt.

Specific student, staff, and faculty feedback solicited throughout the process further illuminates the need for institutional support for LGBTQIA+ mentorship at Pitt, and demonstrates the ability for this proposal to fully realize the incredible potential for mentorship among LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff:

“Pitt's history tells us that we need more institutional support for our LGBTQ students. As faculty, in any given year, I hear endlessly about how student leaders feel like they do not have the resources that they need to support our student groups. As well, to reach our LGBTQ and ally students, as faculty, we have to reach out to the student groups, which isn't always useful or effective. All of this results in a far less coordinated network, with no internal infrastructure that maintains communication, support, etc. Leadership requires mentorship, so that our students can develop the skills that they need. Other commitments that we could and should have are barely off the ground (like an LGBTQ alumni council that one would assume Pitt would have some investment in); institutional support is central here, too. It would be excellent for Pitt to commit to LGBTQ diversity and well being at Pitt through institutional commitments, considering the tremendous amount of labor we faculty, staff, and students have put towards helping Pitt to earn a high reputation for LGBTQ people.” - Anonymous, Faculty and Staff Survey

“It is really vital to the livelihood of LGBTQ+ community at Pitt that the university prioritize hiring a full time LGBTQ+ student life coordinator. The students need mentorship, programming, and a space beyond what they can provide each other through the student clubs. LGBTQ+ faculty and staff are overextending themselves trying to provide unpaid support to the undergraduate students. We need to hire someone to do this important work so that LGBTQ+ culture can flourish on campus. And, we need to train and hire more trans competent clinicians to provide counseling on campus.” - Anonymous, Student Government Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee 2019 report

Increasing Advocacy:

As mentioned in the 2019 Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct, the rates of assault, harassment, and mistrust in the reporting system/University from queer and trans* students is alarming and are much higher than the rates of heterosexual/cisgender students. The LGBT center, through the provision of educational resources and advocacy around campus could help curb these stats. Title IX is housed within ODEI. Having a staff member of the Center directly report to and work with ODEI will be extremely beneficial in tackling the issues that influence these statistics.

Having LGBT people involved in remedying the issues that affect them is fundamental in properly responding. Improving the Title IX Office's connection with the LGBT Community via the Center will hopefully reduce the statistics of trans and queer students not reporting their assaults. It will also help to reverse the trend that LGBT people generally do not have trust in the Title IX Office (39.0 % of TGQN people felt it was very or extremely likely their report would be taken seriously). ODEI and the Center could have open discussions/meetings for LGBT people at Pitt to give their advice on how to tackle these issues. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator housed within ODEI would work with the Center to encompass all people in its education and prevention work. There is a dominant narrative that white cisgender women are disproportionately the victims of sexual assault, violence, and harassment. As the statistics show, white cisgender women are often victims of such acts; however, they are not the only victims, nor, as a community, do they have the highest rates of experiencing violations. Yet, most education and prevention surrounding sexual assault is targeted towards white cisgender women. The Center will ensure the Title IX Office has the support and materials necessary to include trans*, LGBQ, and people of color in its education and prevention efforts in order to properly curb the statistics of assault and violence across the board.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, LGBTQ individuals are more than twice as likely as non-LGBTQ individuals to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime. Findings from the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey show that 1 in 2 transgender individuals attempt suicide in their lifetime (Williams Institute, UCLA). More so, transgender individuals who identify as African American/black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Multiracial/Mixed Race are at increased risk of suicide attempts than white transgender individuals. Many LGBTQ people have reported experiencing stigma and discrimination when accessing health services. LGBTQ individuals may have less social support than individuals not in the community, particularly if they have experienced rejection by their family of origin (American Psychiatric Association). Certain groups within the LGBTQIA community, particularly the BTQIA, face more stigma and barriers when seeking mental healthcare.

It is pertinent for the safety and well-being of LGBTQIA individuals in the Pitt community that we act promptly and adequately in providing a Center that can curb these saddening statistics. The LGBT Center and the Student Counseling Center will work together to hire and train personnel as well as create programming that fosters mental healthcare best practices for LGBTQIA people. Working together, the two centers will also advertise these resources across campus. The LGBT Center will also create and make known a list of trusted resources, mental health professionals, and mental health programs in the Pittsburgh area that students, staff and faculty can utilize. The list will denote resources that are geared towards certain populations and issues. The LGBT Center is not a mental healthcare provider, but it will serve as a way to connect individuals to appropriate mental health resources. Additionally, the friendships, relationships, and mentorships in combination with a physical safe place filled with resources will do a lot for the improvement of mental health in the LGBTQIA community and save lives.

Creating a Safe Space on Campus:

There are many benefits of having a physical space that would serve as an LGBTQIA+ center: it would serve as a place to safely gather, offer a place for mentors and mentees to meet, be a place to hold

activities, a safe place to talk, or a safe place to simply escape an unsafe situation. Critically, an LGBTQIA+ center on campus would contribute to harm reduction, which is especially pertinent in the LGBTQIA+ community. Further work would be done to address systemic concerns across the board, including but not limited to issues concerning bathroom accessibility for all persons, regardless of LGBTQIA+ affiliation.

Specific student, staff, and faculty feedback solicited throughout the process further illuminates the need for safe and trusted spaces for LGBTQIA+ persons at Pitt, and demonstrates the ability for this proposal to fully realize the incredible potential for creating a safe and trusted space LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff:

“Specific faculty and graduate students are doing excellent work to create community. I am concerned about the fact that Posvar Hall, which is 'home' to many Social Sciences has ONE gender neutral bathroom. There is a great deal of unlearning that many professors need to do about binaries, with the specifics of gender and sexuality binaries. Pitt, speaking from the Oakland campus, also reflects a largely normative gendered culture. We can do better.” - Anonymous, Faculty and Staff Survey

“There isn't an LGBTQIA+ safe building yet and this makes me very angry.” - Anonymous, Student Government Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee 2019 report

“Trying to find a gender neutral bathroom is a struggle, let alone a gender neutral bathroom that doesn't smell terrible, is open consistently, and that I can get to in between classes... I have been mocked on campus. I have been misgendered by university officials, specifically at the student health center and the records office, at least twenty times over the past two months. I'm so tired of this.” - Anonymous, Student Government Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee 2019 report

Benefits for Individuals Beyond the LGBTQIA+ Community: Increasing Awareness and Inclusivity on Pitt's Campus:

All humans have a sexual orientation, a romantic orientation, a gender identity and gender expression. Providing a space on campus to discuss these topics and provide information related to them will help everyone, not just LGBT people. Examples of benefits to individuals beyond the LGBTQIA+ community include:

- Unpacking masculinity for everyone is extremely beneficial. Men can be hurt by their adoption of and commitment to unhealthy ideals of masculinity, and can also lead to resolving other issues that are discussed in this report (example: sexual assault).
- Addressing the issue of gender binaryism will benefit everyone. Gender binaryism hurts both LGBTQIA+ and cisgender persons by suppressing their expression. Creating spaces for discussion and dialogue on this subject would lead to a freer and more accepting Pitt community.

- The center could be a space for LGBTQIA+ equity education that, while centering the needs of LGBTQIA+ community members, would be helpful for the wider campus community. Bringing non-LGBTQIA+ community members into the conversation as meaningful participants through training can be empowering and is fundamental to a holistic and restorative approach to creating equitable campus culture for LGBTQIA+ people. The problems LGBTQIA+ community members face outlined in this proposal are not simply issues to be solved topically or through avoidance measures, but can be taken up as part of a larger restructuring effort that all community members should play a part in. Broadly, this center could educate community members on how they interact with their own identities and can rethink them if desired, ideally leading to more liberatory outcomes for campus culture and the individuals involved.

Educational materials that will be provided by the Center are not just for LGBTQIA individuals. These resources are for all and are encouraged to be utilized by all non-LGBTQIA individuals at Pitt. It is common for a non-LGBTQIA person to rely on the LGBTQIA person to educate them. While this sometimes can be seen as a way to connect, it is often inappropriate (i.e. a professor asking prying questions after a student discloses they are LGBT). We all have a responsibility to educate ourselves through the Center. When a student or colleague comes out to a staff member, the Center will not only serve as a support for coming out at the workplace for the LGBT person, but it will also provide educational resources for the staff member that needs knowledge on the matter. Additionally, the Center will encourage a proactive approach to LGBT education. Usually someone seeks educational materials after someone discloses their identity and/or sexuality to them when it should be the other way around--education in preparation for having LGBT colleagues and students. The Center will provide educational resources that span all backgrounds and intersections so that the Pitt community will be as well-educated as possible. This proactive approach will minimize the burdens of labor and anxiety on LGBT people at Pitt and it will contribute to a general feeling of safety and respect on campus. Non-LGBT people at Pitt will also feel more knowledgeable and therefore less uncomfortable and awkward around LGBT members at Pitt. Parents of LGBTQIA+ students can also utilize the resources of the center to self-educate on their child's identity and engage with them in a safer, more productive, and more meaningful way.

Intersectional Representation:

Specific student, staff, and faculty feedback solicited throughout the process further illuminates the need for highlighting the diverse intersectional identities of LGBTQIA+ persons at Pitt, and demonstrates the ability for this proposal to fully realize the incredible potential for such representation among LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff:

“Intersectionality is Critical!!! The conversation needs to honor the different experiences Black students navigate and having a culturally responsive environment is a must!” - Anonymous, Faculty and Staff report

"Please please please please please please make sure that LGBTQIA+ students of color are explicitly centralized in this effort. Pittsburgh is ALREADY the most unliveable city for black women, making sure that any space is not only welcoming but enthusiastically celebrating BIPOC is crucial in making a truly inclusive space at Pitt. Having a POC staff member in the center is CRUCIAL for POC students to feel like someone understands their unique intersections of being LGBTQ+ and their race. Please do not make the task force or any lgbt issue on campus solely a white gay welcome issue"

-Anonymous, Student report

10. References

Campus Pride. (2006). Campus Pride Index: About us. <https://www.campusprideindex.org/menu/aboutus>

Nicolazzo, Z. (2016). *Trans* in college: Transgender students' strategies for navigating campus life and the institutional politics of inclusion*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/suicidality-transgender-adults/>

<https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-LGBTQ.pdf>

11. Appendix

[Campus Pride Index Questionnaire](#)

Appendix A: Benchmarking

Appendix B: Fall 2020 LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff Survey Report

Q1 - On which campus do you work?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Pittsburgh	90.83%	109
2	Bradford	0.00%	0
3	Greensburg	1.67%	2
4	Johnstown	7.50%	9
5	Titusville	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	120

Q2 - Which best describes you?

#	Answer	%	Count
---	--------	---	-------

1	Faculty	40.50%	49
2	Staff	57.85%	70
3	Other	1.65%	2
	Total	100%	121

Other

graduate student

Postdoc

Q3 - How long have you worked for Pitt?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How long have you worked for Pitt?	1.00	4.00	2.82	0.91	0.83	120

#	Answer	%	Count
1	0-1 years	4.17%	5
2	1-5 years	40.00%	48
3	5-10 years	25.83%	31
4	More than 10 years	30.00%	36
	Total	100%	120

Q4 - Which resources at an LGBTQIA+ Campus Center at Pitt would you be most likely to use? Please rank in order of most important to you.

#	Question	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		Total
1	Legal services	19.17%	23	10.83%	13	14.17%	17	9.17%	11	15.00%	18	13.33%	16	10.00%	12	8.33%	10	0.00%	0	120
2	Conversation groups	15.00%	18	12.50%	15	25.00%	30	13.33%	16	10.83%	13	12.50%	15	5.83%	7	4.17%	5	0.83%	1	120

3	Clinical Services	6.67%	8	6.67%	8	9.17%	11	15.00%	18	20.00%	24	10.00%	12	19.17%	23	11.67%	14	1.67%	2	120
4	Mentorship programs	8.33%	10	15.00%	18	10.83%	13	17.50%	21	17.50%	21	20.83%	25	2.50%	3	5.83%	7	1.67%	2	120
5	Lecture Series	17.50%	21	17.50%	21	14.17%	17	10.00%	12	11.67%	14	14.17%	17	10.83%	13	3.33%	4	0.83%	1	120
6	Weekly or Biweekly hours where the space is reserved for faculty/staff (no students)	0.83%	1	5.83%	7	7.50%	9	10.83%	13	7.50%	9	16.67%	20	25.00%	30	24.17%	29	1.67%	2	120
7	Library	5.00%	6	5.00%	6	6.67%	8	9.17%	11	14.17%	17	5.83%	7	20.00%	24	31.67%	38	2.50%	3	120
8	Other	5.00%	6	4.17%	5	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.83%	1	0.00%	0	6.67%	8	83.33%	100	120

9	Trainings and Workshops	22.69%	27	22.69%	27	12.61%	15	15.13%	18	3.36%	4	5.88%	7	6.72%	8	4.20%	5	6.72%	8	119
---	-------------------------	--------	----	--------	----	--------	----	--------	----	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	-----

Write-in Responses for Other:

Access to recommendations for other LGBT-friendly service providers

information resources

Trans-specific content

Referral to welcome/orient new staff to Pitt

Social/networking opportunities without a formal focus or agenda

Liaison to other University services; e.g. benefits, payroll, IT, registrar, &c.

Helping to connect with the LGBTQIA+ community

support for parents of LGBTQIA+

archive

Mentorship Programs, Trainings and Workshops

research support

only 1 and 2

Free tea and coffee

If adoption/family planning options are in the legal services, but I'd be interested in that

Full-time Director

Q5 - Please select how you feel about the following statements. The University of Pittsburgh:

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	is a supportive and inviting place for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff to work.	1.00	5.00	3.57	1.01	1.03	120
2	is a safe place for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff.	1.00	5.00	3.72	0.98	0.97	120

#	Question	Strongl y disagree		Somewha t disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewha t agree		Strongl y agree		Total
1	is a supportive and inviting place for LGBTQIA + faculty and staff to work.	2.50%	3	15.00%	18	22.50%	27	43.33%	52	16.67%	20	120

2	is a safe place for LGBTQIA + faculty and staff.	3.33%	4	7.50%	9	24.17%	29	44.17%	53	20.83%	25	120
---	--	-------	---	-------	---	--------	----	--------	----	--------	----	-----

Q6 - How do Pitt's LGBTQIA+ resources compare to those at other institutions you've worked at?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How do Pitt's LGBTQIA+ resources compare to those at other institutions you've worked at?	1.00	6.00	3.38	1.48	2.20	114

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely positive	14.04%	16
2	Moderately positive	17.54%	20

3	Slightly positive	14.91%	17
4	Neither positive nor negative	32.46%	37
5	Slightly negative	12.28%	14
6	Moderately negative	8.77%	10
7	Extremely negative	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	114

Q7 - What (if anything) is Pitt doing well to support the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies?

What (if anything) is Pitt doing well to support the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies?

Allies training at UPG

Support feels much more personal on the part of faculty and staff than it does institutionally. Pitt could do a better job of being vocally, actively, and legally supportive.

A true leader of support of this group

improvement keeps happening- when problems are shared- they seem to be getting fixed

Specific faculty and graduate students are doing excellent work to create community. I am concerned about the fact that Posvar Hall, which is 'home' to many Social Sciences has ONE gender neutral bathroom. There is a great deal of unlearning that many professors need to do about binaries, with the specifics of gender and sexuality binaries. Pitt, speaking from the Oakland campus, also reflects a largely normative gendered culture. We can do better.

It has great resources for students at Pitt and they make sure to announce these resources to the students so they know they are well known. Any LGBTQIA+ events are very welcoming and provide comfortable environments for the attendees. The gender neutral dorms and bathrooms have been a big improvement. I'm surprised at how many faculty and staff include pronouns in their emails, it's truly impressive and very comforting to see how inclusive they've been.

Simply having affinity groups at Pitt is great since not all organizations have one.

Being open about it. Promoting benefits.

From the top-down, Pitt is doing little to support the LGBTQIA+ community. "Preferred name" is one exception; however, even that doesn't sync well across Pitt technologies.

GSWS has courses for undergraduates and grad students in LGBTQ studies; GSWS tenure stream and non-tenure stream faculty do a lot of mentoring for students working in LGBTQ studies; GSWS tenure stream and non-tenure stream faculty have been directly involved in new research opportunities for LGBTQ research, including grants and funding for undergraduate research internships; GSWS built and launched a new minor in LGBTQ studies; PQP and GSWS are working towards an endowed fund for LGBTQ research; Pitt has LGBTQ in it's diversity and inclusion commitment, which is excellent, but much of what is good or progressive, with respect to LGBTQ, has been built by students and contingent faculty, frequently with little institutional support.

At least there is the PQP affinity group and the GSWS program, but there really should be a center on campus

I do think Pitt is at least entertaining (not necessarily having) conversations regarding support to this group of individuals.

Compared to the main campus there are no resources to branch campus. Everything that main does needs to be given to branch. There is no center on our campus.

I have noticed more lectures and conversation this semester, but I think there is room for more training/workshops, especially in regard to mentoring and supporting LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty. As of now there is no mandatory training or education about this at all.

In some spaces, programming and interaction norms are not too bad.

Good leadership.

Responsiveness to Pitt Queer Professionals is good; the possibility of this resource center is fantastic

Having the PQP group! I really don't know what kind of support is available, but I do feel that there is a welcoming and supportive environment on campus.

I think Pitt as a whole does a great job of prioritizing inclusion.

Domestic Partner benefits

The community is well represented in leadership, at least for the Dietrich School.

Their policies on paper are good.

I like that Pitt has open discussions about diversity and is public in their support of diverse populations.

Allowing people to change their names on their IDs without requiring legal documentation.

Student initiatives are strong; GSWS seems to be the hub for a lot and seems supportive

Recent changes to permit change of preferred name.

Having groups for LGBTQIA+

I think we have a number of policies that are inclusive. For instance, I was able to take parental leave when my wife gave birth to our daughter without having to jump through any hoops. That's certainly not the case everywhere.

Resources for students, faculty

The office of diversity and inclusion incorporates work/support for the LGBTQIA+ staff as it does for other diverse populations.

ODI has been LGBTQIA-friendly in recent years. Carrie in ODI is awesome.

Still committed to improving all aspects of life for transgender & non-binary affiliates

The required job-training that every staff and faculty member must take to work at PITT is great. It is also great that PITT has diversity (which includes LGBTQIA+) as one of its core values to continually work toward and improve.

I'm not really answering the question, but Pitt will not be a supportive/inviting place for LGBTQ+ folks to work until GSWS is a department with full time, tenure stream faculty. Most of the scholars who teach/research in this area are contingent or non-tenure stream. It is unacceptable, and frankly insulting.

Resources

Offering some high quality and training / workshop opportunities for faculty and staff.

as a gay person i feel totally respected and appreciated here. i have no complaints.

Overall I do not feel that there is strong support.

The departments and programs I've worked for are supportive for the most part--my pronouns, name, and identity are respected. My sexuality has been a non-issue, which is nice.

affinity group

The GSWS program is solid.

Working towards building a dedicated center. Existence of PQP.

The preferred name selection is good. Other than that I am unsure if Pitt does anything to support the LGBTQIA+ community that is worth writing home about. I think more often than not, the University leadership makes choices that do not support the LGBT+community. For trans students, however, I believe the counseling and student health center offer some good resources.

Trying to make trainings, etc. to support LGBTQIA+ community and those aspiring to allyship. My office is generally accepting and open-minded, which I think is culturally prevalent in some places across campus.

I feel like our community is often ignored. I don't hear much about it, and I want to connect to it. At times, I feel isolated and I have found that I need to connect to queer colleagues outside of Pitt. Not sure that offers much...but I do feel safer here compared to other contexts. I know other queer folks thrive here and that presence and knowledge helps.

Q8 - Is there anything else you'd like to add?

The Johnstown area is not very diverse and diversity programs tend to falter from demographics. I appreciate the programs and lectures offered by Pitt main but they do not seem to have much influence in this area.

There was nothing about LGBTQIA+ resources, or resources or affinity groups relating to any other identities included in the faculty orientation or onboarding process. I don't know what's out there, or how to find out!

I would like to hear more from trans students, or transgender people across Pittsburgh, about their lifestyles at Pitt and in the city. It's definitely a growing community, but I don't think I've seen as many opportunities to get a chance to hear some personal stories from these students/faculty/staff members. I can understand if some of them prefer not to be as public about it, but I'm sure there are other ways to reach out to trans people attending universities and get some feedback from about their lives. It also might be nice to see some events for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff, since there hasn't been much introduced to me during my time as a staff member at Pitt.

I moved here from Philadelphia, where I worked at Penn and then before that, the William Way LGBT Community Center. During my first months here, I had a conversation with one of my coworkers who told me they were getting married to their partner that weekend. I was so excited, but confused as to why he didn't tell anyone because we would have had a party for him. We had just celebrated several straight coworkers' weddings, including mine, and I wanted to celebrate him. He told me that "people didn't feel comfortable about him". That broke my heart and pissed me off. I found that there were a few other coworkers that were also not out at work for the same reason. Luckily, I was able to take the Ally training that Pitt offers and hang the card up at my desk so people know they are safe with me and can talk to me. But, LGBT people should not have to feel like they can not be out at work, especially at a University.

Pitt's history tells us that we need more institutional support for our LGBTQ students. As faculty, in any given year, I hear endlessly about how student leaders feel like they do not have the resources that they need to support our student groups. As well, to reach our LGBTQ and ally students, as faculty, we have to reach out to the student groups, which isn't always useful or effective. All of this results in a far less coordinated network, with no internal infrastructure that maintains communication, support, etc. Leadership requires mentorship, so that our students can develop the skills that they need. Other commitments that we could and should have are barely off the ground (like an LGBTQ alumni council that one would assume Pitt would have some investment in); institutional support is central here, too. It would be excellent for Pitt to commit to LGBTQ diversity and well being at Pitt through institutional commitments, considering the tremendous amount of labor we faculty, staff, and students have put towards helping Pitt to earn a high reputation for LGBTQ people.

There are many benefits that I will never use as a result of my sexuality. I would love to see some way of acknowledging my, and others, lifestyle choices in what benefits we have. I have heard of other institutions considering a points based spending system to opt-in/out of benefits that would make sense for your lifestyle.

Just share the wealth. When we talk with staff at main we hear of all the great things that they are doing. We don't have the resources or bodies to do a 10th of what they do. We need councilors on our campus desperately

I know of several LGBTQIA+ members that still feel insecure about sharing their identities at Pitt - so I think there is still room to improve the climate at Pitt, especially in the workplace regarding tenured faculty that may be of older generations

As there tends to be zero accountability among leadership, and only the most corporate formal "diversity" rhetoric, LGBTQIA+ tend to be hit-or-miss in an individualizing way. :(

Intersectionality is Critical!!! The conversation needs to honor the different experiences Black students navigate and having a culturally responsive environment is a must!

Evict Chic Fila

Nope. Kudos

We are not totally ignored, but there's more talk and less action than there seems to be for other URM's. Voices are recognized, but changes are not realized.

A lot of staff are siloed throughout the university, so individual experiences can vary regardless of university policy.

The diversity and inclusion trainings out of Pitt HR as related to LGBTQIA+ issues are kind of a joke. I participated so that I could get the certification/sign that signals that my office is a safe place for people who need one. The trainer was not queer and openly disagreed with the university's gender neutral bathroom policy... It would be incredible if an actual queer entity could takeover responsibility for those trainings.

Having a dedicated center and staff is extremely important. I am shocked that a University of Pitt's caliber does not have this, at minimum.

I think a center is very necessary for students, but to me the biggest thing that could support faculty and staff is to have designated center staff. Much of the labor that is currently being done re LGBTQ issues on campus is carried out through informal networks and is being done as volunteer work on top of faculty and staff job descriptions. While it would be nice to have faculty and staff focused services in a center, the main benefit would be having support for students to take some of the pressure off of those of us doing this work informally.

Add the non-university LGBTQIA community from the city of Pittsburgh. I think the university by its own nature is a bubble that protects us (isolates us) from the rest of the community. We should actively seek to engage the community to spread understanding and a feeling of community beyond the university walls.

It's really too bad there isn't a group that supports all faculty and staff in the LGBTQ+ community - instead of only those who identify as queer. I totally support anyone who prefers to identify as queer, but it shouldn't mean that those who prefer gay, lesbian, bi, etc. labels should be denied their preferred identities. Pitt Queer Professionals runs counter to "inclusivity" with such a narrow focus.

I think that while we have a number of supportive policies and structures in place, there's more that can be done to foster an inclusive culture/workspace. I feel safe being out and open in my office, but I know that is not uniformly true across Pitt.

LGBTQIA is a minority group that is overlooked at the University in terms of faculty representation. Other minority groups have designated tenure stream spots or funding allocated to them. Better representation and support is needed.

Not so many resources for staff

I think there is a lot of LGBTQ research and LGBTQ staff support going on at the university, but no centralized information about what is going on. It would be great for the various schools at the university to communicate and maybe collaborate!

If the University really wants to commit, then resources for a true LGBTQIA+ center should be funded and established with hired leadership instead of relying on staff, faculty and students to volunteer their services/time to do all of the work. Perhaps that is the intent of this survey which I then applaud! Partner with HRC to help determine the best resources available and how they might help in this endeavor.

more gender neutral restrooms are needed

Hire faculty working in LGBT studies and support them.

Keep standing up against an increasingly-hostile government.

I'd like to see more support for faculty and staff who have LGBTQIA+ children.

If this initiative should happen, I'd like to know that it was happening in conjunction with programs that are already established within the University. For instance: an LGBTQ+ library AND ARCHIVE would be a fantastic resource, but I would like to see that established in conjunction with the University Library system and the Pitt archives (Pitt archives already has a good deal of this material because of the efforts of David Grinnell, but it would be great if they had additional resources/staff to do more collecting and organizing). Lectures are already happening through GSWS, and workshops through the ODI/deans office/provost's office. I would like this initiative to enhance programs that are already happening at the University, and not compete with them.

Put focus on resources available to faculty and staff (not just students) More discussion groups and support training

Student health services can be more open/supportive to providing gender affirming care for students.

I think older faculty members and administrators should be required to complete a pronoun/name workshop so that they're at least aware that pronouns/names aren't static or a given.

It's really time for a high-level administrator who identifies publicly as LGBTQ to be hired/included. Inclusion at that level never seems to include LGBTQ.

More concrete plans to hire LGBTQIA+ staff and faculty. Putting out calls for application for folx that research or work with queer communities would be an easy way to find these specialists!

We need a centralized support and advocacy space for the LGBTQIA+ Pitt community. There are still lacking protections for trans people on campus (protection from discrimination/employment harrassment, etc). We need explicit support of LGBTQIA+ community on campus, not just "inclusion" or add-ons (i.e. "you can use any bathroom you want" rather than making *explicitly* gender inclusive, and ideally multi-use, bathrooms.) Pitt should actively create such a place/position to support these ideas. We need to get beyond pronouns, which are the most basic, basic level of "diversity and inclusion" and begin forging ahead to intersectional equity and liberation models of advocacy and engagement.

Lots of possibilities with this center--I'm excited. Ask for a lot! Don't let us get undersold on resources, staff, and space that we deserve! I think this center should most certainly be staffed by a queer staff member at the director or assistant dean-level--don't settle for an entry-level coordinator, have two queer graduate student assistants (to support their own grad student development and engagement and training for future work), and give space for undergraduate work-study students; I think there could be an annual faculty-in-residence program where queer faculty engage intentionally with the center (these types of acknowledgements are helpful for faculty who still need to prove they provide service to the university and identity-based work often goes "unrecognized" because it is not formalized); other queer groups that interact and operate as a coalition (queer staff, queer undergrads, queer grads, gender and sexuality residence hall, etc.) and come together in different ways to form communities of healing, of gathering, and of justice. I think this is true for other identity groups as well (collaborating with Black or Latinx coalitions on campus as well for example). I think perhaps even having in the new center all the trappings and materials for a coffee shop (I don't mean a coffee pot either, I mean a real coffee bar like you would see in a Starbucks; they did it in WPU's Nordy's and 6th floor with slushy machines, a kitchen, etc., so we should get some nice stuff too) and theatre (I understand a full movie screen wouldn't be possible, but it should be a separate room with sizable screen and projector and sound). Being able to host queer coffee hours or queer cinema would be dope. In non-covid times, I would see myself heading to that queer coffee lounge with my laptop, grabbing a coffee there, and setting up shop to do work for the day...and feeling safe and at home while I'm there. For staff, why not have some reservable hotel-like offices, where staff can complete a form and spend a half day or whole day or even just a few hours in the center doing their daily work...we know now we can do our work from anywhere given the pandemic so let's get some room for staff to work comfortably as well away from their home departments. Gender neutral restrooms are a given I assume, but I would make that explicit to Pitt as well. To clarify---In addition to staff offices and at least one or two conference meeting rooms, we should have a coffee hangout lounge (with a good sound system for open mic spoken word poetry and music performances that our community can engage in), and theatre/lecture hall. We also need to use this space to partner with PERSAD, queer homeless youth in Pittsburgh organizations, trans* Pittsburgh organizations, etc., and begin to provide pathways for these youth to engage with the University and have a pathway toward college that may be unavailable to them. This has so much potential that I'd hate for the University to say here's a room for the queer kids and we're just stuck in a closet in a different space (pun not intended but accidental...). We need a legitimate center that is a vibrant space like the 6th floor of the WPU that has a familial vibe, like a queer coffee shop/cinema. Benchmarking is hard since so many places aren't leading the way with queer identity centers and you see pictures of students online stuffed away in basements sitting on used and worn couches or with clearly leftover mismatched furniture from an old campus lounge. I say this to caution putting too much weight on benchmarking and to imagine our space beyond the benchmark. The worst we can hear from them is no. It might sound superficial, but physical presence and our physical possession of University "real-estate" matters. We should be able to

take up space on campus, even if we do take up an entire floor of a building on campus (why not?). Also, while I do not need clinical services, I know our trans* kin (especially undergrads) do have a need for clinical and health services from practitioners who understand them. I want to amplify that need since it may be overshadowed in a survey completed by largely cisgender queer folx who do not share those same needs, but should certainly have opportunities within the center for clinical services. I cannot emphasize enough that we need to think BIG! PERSAD's center is pretty awesome and could be a good benchmark for us to measure against rather than other colleges/universities.

Pitt needs to prioritize hiring staff and student workers for this Center.

Sources