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Out on Campus: Sexual Orientation and Academic Climate in a University Context¹

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Although lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students often “come out” in university settings, empirical studies have demonstrated that these environments are often hostile toward them. The current paper posits that such hostile contexts adversely affect their educational experiences. Results from a survey of a stratified random sample of 1,927 undergraduate and graduate students on a scale measuring perceptions of academic climate (General Campus Climate) supported this claim: LGB students had more negative perceptions of a variety of campus factors. In addition, a scale measuring perceptions of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Campus Climate found that LGB students were more likely than heterosexuals to perceive the campus as inhospitable to LGB people. Women and racial and ethnic minorities were also more likely to rate the LGB climate as hostile. Finally, data from two scales measuring attitudes believed to influence these perceptions yielded gender, racial/ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation differences in theoretically meaningful directions. Results indicate that LGB students often experience the university in more negative ways than heterosexual students, and that certain campus communities—particularly women and racial/ethnic minorities—are more aware of this negativity and contribute to it less because of their relatively more progay attitudes. Implications for how to improve LGB students’ experiences are discussed.

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Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) campus communities have been among the most active and influential communities in recent years, yet few com-

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munity psychologists have studied this population (Garnets & D'Augelli, 1994). Several empirical studies from other areas, however, have documented the experiences of LGB students. The majority of these studies reflect one of three types: (a) those that study sexual orientation identity development or "coming out" in university settings; (b) those that document prejudice and discrimination on campus; and (c) institutional research or self-studies of campus environments for sexual orientation diversity. None of these studies, however, has explored the relationship between sexual orientation and satisfaction with university academic life. The present study was undertaken on one campus to examine whether sexual orientation exerts an impact on general perceptions of campus life, referred to as General Campus Climate (GCC). In addition, various subcommunities on campus are compared to explore differences in their perceptions of the relative acceptance of LGB students on campus, referred to as Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Campus Climate (LGBCC), as well as their attitudes toward LGB people.

Coming Out into the Fire

Unlike heterosexual students, many (but not all) LGB students undergo an important developmental transformation in college: they come out, or acknowledge their sexual orientation to themselves and others (e.g., D'Augelli, 1991, 1992b, 1993; Rhoads, 1994). An example of a study of this process is Rhoads's (1994) detailed ethnographic study of gay and bisexual male undergraduate students (with some reference to women students) on a college campus. The study primarily focused on the struggles that these students go through to achieve their "queer" identities and form a "contraculture" (defined as a cultural group that has goals in opposition to the majority culture). Rhoads also defined these students as constituting a "community of difference," that is, one organized around a salient difference from the majority (in this case, sexual orientation). This study suggests that the experiences of LGB students are qualitatively different from those of heterosexual students because of the processes of identity development in a hostile environment and their affiliation with a campus subcommunity organized around sexual orientation.

Studies on identity development confirm that many LGB students are first exposed to LGB communities at their universities (e.g., D'Augelli, 1992b; Rhoads, 1994). Many colleges and universities have LGB student organizations that sponsor campus speakers and programs, and a handful has offered courses in LGB studies and hired staff members specifically designated to work with LGB campus communities (D'Augelli, 1992b;

D'Emilio, 1990, 1992). Thus, compared to high schools, university environments are relatively supportive of LGB students because many of these students are offered their first contact with their community of difference. It is therefore not surprising that many seize this opportunity to begin to construct their sexual orientation identities.

A host of empirical studies from the second type of research in this area, however, has demonstrated that university communities are also rife with incidents of heterosexism³ and homophobia (e.g., Berrill, 1992; D'Augelli, 1989; 1992a; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Waldo, Hesson-McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998). Research on the attitudes of heterosexuals (e.g., D'Augelli & Rose, 1990), for example, has found remarkably high levels of hostility toward LGB people. Other reports have surveyed LGB students concerning their experiences of harassment and violence; for example, on one large campus, D'Augelli (1992a) found that 77% of a sample of lesbian and gay undergraduates had been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation; 27% had been threatened with physical violence; and 3% had been punched, hit, kicked, or beaten. In another study by Herek (1993), it was reported that 27 of the 37 graduate students surveyed had concealed their sexual orientation from a faculty member because of fears of harassment or unequal treatment.

Relatedly, research from institutional self-studies, the third type of study in this area, also documents the prevalence of antigay attitudes and bias on university campuses (e.g., Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, 1992; Herek, 1993; Nelson & Baker, 1990; Nieberding, 1989; Norris, 1991; Shepard, 1990). At the Pennsylvania State University, for example, the Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns (1992) reported results of a survey of university students, faculty, and staff. Consistent with other independent research on the same campus (e.g., D'Augelli, 1989), the results documented high levels of antigay attitudes among heterosexual students, faculty, and staff. For example, approximately 50% agreed that "homosexuality is immoral" and about half of the student sample reported that they would tell derogatory jokes about LGB people and agreed that "male homosexuals are disgusting." Thus, the results of these institutional studies, in general, support the findings of other research that demonstrates a high level of antigay bias on college campuses.

Paradoxically, then, we can conclude from these studies that although many LGB students claim their identities in their college environments, these same contexts are often fraught with hostility and abuse in reaction

³Heterosexism is defined as "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship or community" (Herek, 1992, p. 89).

to these visible identities. It appears that although LGB students receive support from their own subcommunities, they are often negatively affected by the more global campus atmosphere. This mix of both positive and negative experiences leads to the question of how LGB students evaluate their campus experiences. Given both the positive experiences of coming out and community affiliation and the negative interactions with antigay attitudes and harassment, how do LGB students perceive their campus climate? This is the main question posed by the current study, and is addressed through assessments of both the general campus climate (GCC) and the LGB-specific climate (LGBCC).

The Concept of Campus Climate

Organizational psychologists have studied the concept of *organizational climate* when studying workplaces. As Schein (1990) explained it, organizational climate is a measurable manifestation of organizational culture. The latter construct comprises group norms, shared attitudes, and common beliefs, whereas the former comprises organization members' perceptions of particular behaviors and consequences within that culture. This conceptualization suggests that there are organizational norms and contingencies that shape members' perceptions that, in turn, influence their behavior. Following Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980), Hulin, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1996) conceptualized organizational climate as "shared perceptions, among members of a relevant group, department or organization, of contingencies between specific behaviors and their consequences, both private and public, positive and negative" (p. 133). Importantly, Naylor *et al.* (1980) found that employees' perceptions of climate were related to their actual behaviors in the workplaces.

There can, however, be multiple organizational cultures that influence perceptions of climate. As Martin and Siehl (1983) pointed out, organizations do not have one monolithic organizational culture that shapes climate perceptions. Rather, perceptions of climate can differ because of organizational members' affiliations with different subcultures. An LGB subculture within an organization is an example.

The Current Study

In the current study, these theoretical formulations are applied to a university as an organizational setting and *campus climate* is conceptualized as measurable perceptions of various aspects of campus life. These same important concepts that have been applied most often in workplaces, but

are also applicable to universities as organizations with members (e.g., students and faculty). In this study, two forms of campus climate are measured in students: (a) General Campus Climate (GCC), referring to perceptions of a variety of qualities of campus life such as interactions with instructors, self-confidence, classroom experiences, and campus safety; and (b) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Climate (LGBCC), referring to perceptions about the degree to which the general atmosphere on campus is accepting, supportive (or otherwise) of LGB people and their concerns. These concepts can be thought of as a "feeling" that students have about particular aspects of their university. An example of GCC might be that students may feel that they are or are not free to raise their hand in class to ask a question based on the perceived consequences of doing so. The theory would assert that these feelings then translate into actual behaviors (e.g., raising one's hand or not).

These perceptions are, however, likely to differ among various campus subcommunities because of their differential experiences and different affiliations with campus subcultures. That is, members of certain groups may, for example, feel more comfortable raising their hand in class than others. With respect to LGBCC, it is likely that LGB students will perceive the LGBCC more negatively than their heterosexual peers because of their personal identities and their affiliation with LGB campus communities. Given the findings that indicate that LGB students have many experiences of harassment and discrimination, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that these experiences would lead them to evaluate the campus as being less accepting of LGB people. Similarly, these negative experiences are expected to lead LGB students to evaluate the GCC less favorably than heterosexual students.

As Schein (1990) explained, a large factor that determines organizational climate is the shared attitudes that constitute the organizational culture. Thus, the present study also examines attitudes related to LGB students in an effort to explore one of the primary determinants of LGBCC. It is expected that these attitudes will also differ based on campus subcommunity affiliation. For example, it is possible that heterosexual students involved with the Greek System may have significantly different attitudes from those not involved with this campus community. Previous research supports the likelihood that measurement of these attitudes will yield significant group differences. Certain groups have more positive views of LGB people in general: being a woman, being less politically conservative, and being less religious are all consistently related to less antigay attitudes in a number of studies (for reviews, see Herek, 1994; Kite & Whitley, 1996). Less is known about the relationship of racial and ethnic minority status to these attitudes, but it is possible that minority students

may be more understanding of LGB students' experiences given their own negative experiences and affiliations with campus subcultures that promote more positive attitudes toward sexual diversity. Thus, certain heterosexual students—including women and racial and ethnic minorities—may report more pro-LGB attitudes, perhaps because of their own marginal status. Conversely, those who identify as politically “conservative” and those who are members of certain religious groups (particularly self-identified “Christians”) may have more negative attitudes toward these students.

In sum, the present study applies theoretical concepts related to campus climate to the experiences of LGB students in a large university setting. This approach is driven by previous research on LGB students' unique experiences of identity construction in the face of harassment, and seeks to understand how these experiences may affect their general perceptions of campus life (GCC) as well as their perceptions of how accepted they are on campus (LGBCC). Furthermore, attitudes toward LGB people on campus are explored to assess one of the primary determinants of LGBCC. To examine these issues, the current study surveys undergraduate and graduate students at a large public university on topics related to GCC, LGBCC, and attitudes toward LGB people.

METHOD

The design of the study employed stratified random sampling procedures, with certain groups of interest oversampled. As one purpose of the overall survey was to assess climate for groups with comparatively small numbers on campus, such as racial and ethnic minorities, women in the traditional sciences, and openly LGB students, a purely random sampling design was not appropriate. In an effort to represent the university population more accurately, however, all analyses reported in this study were weighted to reflect the available population parameters.⁴

The university sponsored the study to understand the needs of underrepresented groups more thoroughly. These issues were of interest largely because the campus itself is a large Midwestern research university with a predominantly White student population and strong science and en-

⁴The process of weighting the sample statistics involves assigning each case in the data set a case weight that is then multiplied by that case's score for each of the variables. Thus, certain cases are assigned relatively higher or lower values depending on how representative of the population they are. In the sample in this study, certain groups of interest were oversampled. So, for example, if an undergraduate participant in the sample is Asian American (who constitute 20% of the sample), she or he is given a case weight that transforms that case's relative contribution to the overall mean to be representative of the proportion of Asian American undergraduates at the university when the study was conducted (12%).

gineering programs where women are in a considerable minority. The survey was not, therefore, specifically focused on the issues of LGB students. The current report represents the primary analysis of the portions of the survey that concern LGB issues. The university is not located near a large city and the Greek System is the second largest in the United States among undergraduates, providing a considerable amount of the social life for the campus. The campus is typically considered neither "liberal" nor "conservative," but its demographics generally preclude the strong presence of any minority group in ways that seem to be more typical on campuses that are considered "liberal."

Problems with sampling LGB people have been outlined elsewhere (Harry, 1986; Herek & Berrill, 1992); in the current study, an attempt was made to adhere to suggestions from the research literature for sampling this population. Because it was likely that few respondents would self-identify as LGB in the random sample, a "snowball" sampling technique was used to supplement the random sample (for examples of snowball sampling, see D'Augelli, 1989; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Herek, 1993). This method involves sampling within communities through referral; thus, names and addresses of students who identified themselves as LGB through community and campus organizations and friendship networks were gathered to add to those who would self-identify in the random sample.⁵ The researcher and a female assistant gathered names of potential participants in these settings and mailed surveys to them following the procedure outlined below.

Participants and Procedure

The final overall sample included 1,927 students (377 graduate men, 384 graduate women, 518 undergraduate men, and 648 undergraduate women). The original sampling scheme consisted of 4,002 students (11% of all students), but 89 surveys were returned for incorrect mailing addresses; thus, 3,913 surveys presumably actually reached the students for an overall return rate of 49.3%. Return rates for the four main groups surveyed (undergraduate women = 48.3%, undergraduate men = 39.2%,

⁵Although snowball sampling generates a convenience sample, in many ways this group is representative of the population of interest. Because lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people are generally not readily identifiable, they must self-identify to be recognized as lesbian, gay, or bisexual by others. It is logical to assume that most heterosexual harassment, discrimination, and any resultant effects on academic experiences within this climate are experienced by self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; although "closeted" lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are certainly a population of interest, they are by definition virtually impossible to sample in any systematic way.

graduate women = 60.3%, graduate men = 57.2%) were acceptable with the rate for undergraduate males being significantly lower, $\chi^2 (1) = 29.68$, $p < .001$, than that for undergraduate women and both undergraduate groups being significantly lower, $\chi^2 (1) = 94.39$, $p < .001$, than the graduate groups. Overall, men were significantly less likely than women to respond, $\chi^2 [1] = 25.35$, $p = .001$, but graduate men and women were equally likely to respond, $\chi^2 [1] = 1.26$, $p = .26$. Of the 80 LGB students in the initial snowball sample, 42 (52.5%) returned their surveys. This return rate was not significantly different from the overall return rate of the randomly sampled students. Of the 121 LGB students in the final sample, 79 (64.8%) were therefore obtained through the overall random sampling procedures.

Seventy-seven gay and bisexual men (36 undergraduate and 41 graduate) and 44 lesbian and bisexual women (23 undergraduate and 21 graduate) responded to the survey, for a total of 121 LGB participants. Of these, a total of 78 identified as White/European American and 43 as racial/ethnic minority or international students. Due to the relatively small sample of LGB students, it was not possible to examine racial and ethnic group differences within the LGB sample. Descriptive characteristics of the final sample are listed in Table I.

Surveys were printed on computer-scannable forms to facilitate data entry; to maximize return rate, a follow-up postcard was sent to all participants. Two weeks later, a second survey was sent to those who had not responded (Dillman, 1978). For all analyses reported here, there were no significant differences between those who responded to the first or second surveys.

Measurement of Variables

Two slightly different versions of the survey were developed, one each for undergraduate and graduate students. Each form contained six main sections, each of which addressed different conceptual areas; only the first section (GCC), the fourth section (LGBCC), and the last section (demographics) were analyzed for the present study. Results from the institutional self-study and from studies focusing on gender and racial and ethnic minority issues are reported elsewhere (Cortina, Swan, Fitzgerald, & Waldo, in press; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1996; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 1998).

General Campus Climate

The first section of the questionnaire assessed general academic climate, with items varying slightly for graduate and undergraduate students:

Table I. Descriptive Characteristics of the Final Sample

Variable	Undergraduates		Graduates	
Mean number of semesters at university	4.65		6.00	
Mean Age	20.65		28.10	
% in a social fraternity or sorority	16		NA	
No. married/partnered	45		267	
No. in a long-term relationship	215		88	
No. divorced	2		22	
No. single	901		373	
No. with children	12		120	
No. of women	648		384	
No. of men	518		377	
Racial/ethnic group ^a	Undergraduates		Graduates	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
African American	113	9.7	69	9.1
Asian American	239	20.5	120	15.8
Bicultural	73	6.3	36	4.7
East Indian	24	2.1	21	2.8
Latina/o	142	12.2	70	9.2
International	114	9.8	156	20.5
Native American	0	0	3	0.4
White/European American	427	36.6	245	32.2
Other	19	1.6	18	2.4
No. in each sexual orientation group ^b	Undergraduates		Graduates	
Gay and Bisexual men	36		41	
Lesbian and Bisexual women	23		22	
Heterosexual men	474		317	
Heterosexual women	618		348	
No. in religious group ^c				
Agnostic/Atheist	30		26	
Baptist	48		21	
Catholic	335		136	
Christian	149		101	
Nondenomination Christian	13		7	
Hindu	25		21	
Jewish	29		16	
Lutheran	45		15	
Methodist	34		12	
Protestant	27		24	
Presbyterian	25		18	
None	116		79	
Other	61		42	

^a15 undergraduates and 23 graduates skipped this item.

^b15 undergraduates and 33 graduates skipped this item.

^c229 undergraduates and 243 graduates skipped this item.

for example, graduates were asked whether they were progressing as well as others in their department whereas undergraduates responded to "I am progressing as well as other students in my major." Some items were identical for both groups (e.g., "I have been treated fairly on this campus" and "If I had it to do over again, I would still attend this university"). Some items were based on Hall and Sandler's (1982) items, and all were scaled on a 7-point response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* and scored so that higher scores represented more positive evaluations of climate. Items were piloted on a sample of students and revised based on feedback and psychometric characteristics. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was selected to examine scales because no a priori latent variables were theorized; thus, factor analysis was used primarily for data reduction through the best linear combination of the items. Theoretically meaningful combinations did, however, emerge from these analyses.

For the undergraduate questionnaire, the analyses yielded five components, each of which tapped perceptions about a specific aspect of the GCC; these were labeled *Instructor*, *Acceptance*, *Confidence*, *Safety*, and *Respect*. Item factor loadings averaged .72 and each item loaded on only one factor; all items and factor loadings are available by request to the author. The Instructor ($\alpha = .76$) scale assesses students' perceptions of treatment they receive from their instructors (e.g., "I feel my instructors show little interest in my opinions"). The Acceptance ($\alpha = .71$) items gauged "fitting in" or feeling accepted at the university, for example "I feel somewhat out of place in the classroom." The Confidence ($\alpha = .70$) factor dealt with students' confidence in their own academic competence (e.g., "I feel less confident as a student now than I did in high school"). The Safety ($\alpha = .78$) scale comprised two items pertaining to campus safety ("I hesitate to attend evening school activities due to concerns for my safety" and "I feel safe walking at night on this campus"), and the two Respect ($\alpha = .65$) items involved quality of treatment by others on campus, an example being "I have been treated unfairly on this campus."

Principal component analyses on the graduate form identified five components, the first of which included a large number of items related to both students' advisors and faculty in general. To determine whether these items could be empirically separated into two scales, a cluster analysis with complete linkage was employed, yielding a clear separation; these items were subsequently treated as two separate scales. The final six linear combinations (with average item loadings of .74 and each item loading on only one scale) were labeled *Faculty*, *Advisor*, *Fairness*, *Confidence*, *Respect*, and *Safety*.

The Faculty ($\alpha = .86$) scale refers to perceptions of and experiences with professors in the academic setting, an example being "I have had fac-

ulty encourage me to work with them.” Similarly, the Advisor ($\alpha = .82$) items pertain to experiences with academic or research advisors (e.g., “My advisor sets aside sufficient time for me”). The Fairness ($\alpha = .80$) scale gauges experiences of fair or friendly treatment from others on campus, for example, “When I try to speak up in classes or meetings, I am sometimes ignored or interrupted.” The Confidence ($\alpha = .71$) items assess self-confidence and perceived academic competence, for instance, “I am progressing as well as other graduate students in my department.” Respect ($\alpha = .70$) concerns feeling respected by students and faculty, with a sample item being “Other graduate students have respect for my ideas.” Finally, the Safety ($\alpha = .77$) factor contains the two items identical to those on the undergraduate scale.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Climate

LGBCC was also assessed with scale items derived from a pilot study and was scored on a seven-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*; both forms of the survey were identical. The scale ($\alpha = .65$) contained only four items, all of which were related to a single factor measuring respondents’ perceptions of the campus environment for LGB students (principal component analysis, average loading = .67). “Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are likely to be harassed on this campus” and “Openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are accepted on this campus” are representative items from this scale. Higher scores on this component indicate participants’ perceptions that the campus is accepting of LGB students.

Attitudes Toward LGB Issues and People on Campus

Two sets of items addressing two different campus-specific sets of attitudes were employed to assess students’ attitudes toward LGB issues and people on campus. A principal component analysis on these items yielded the expected two scales with each having loadings averaging at least .70. The first scale, Policies ($\alpha = .89$), contained five items related to specific university issues and policies such as “It is important for a university to have gay, lesbian and bisexual student organizations” and “The university should include gay, lesbian and bisexual issues in its multicultural and diversity programs.” Higher scores on this scale indicate greater support for university policies and events related to LGB issues. Interpersonal ($\alpha = .89$), the second scale, concerned interpersonal interactions with LGB people. Examples from the seven items on this scale include “I would not want

an advisor who is lesbian, gay or bisexual" and "I would not want other students to see me socializing (e.g., having lunch) with someone who is openly lesbian, gay or bisexual." Higher scores on this component reflect participants' greater openness to interpersonal interactions with LGB people on campus.

Demographics

The final section of the questionnaire asked participants for demographics (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, number of semesters at the university), including political orientation (*liberal* to *conservative* on a 7-point scale). Sexual orientation was measured via one item that asked participants to self-identify and religious identity was assessed with an open-ended item. Those who identified as LGB were also asked to report their subjective level of "outness," or degree to which they are open with others about their sexual orientation on a 7-point scale from *not at all open* to *completely open*. The average score for LGB undergraduates on the outness variable was 4.47 (Min = 1, Max = 7, *SD* = 2.12), whereas the mean for graduate students was 4.77 (Min = 1, Max = 7, *SD* = 1.96).

RESULTS

Plan of Data Analysis

The data analysis proceeded in several stages. First, mean comparisons were conducted to determine any effect of sexual orientation on perceptions of academic climate (GCC). Next, the LGBCC and attitude scales were examined to test for effects of sexual orientation, gender, race/ethnicity, fraternity/sorority membership, and religious affiliation. Finally, correlational analyses examined which demographic variables were related to the LGBCC and attitude scales. Identical analyses were performed on the undergraduate and graduate samples.

Undergraduate Sample

General Campus Climate

Mean comparisons conducted on the GCC scales to compare lesbian, gay, and bisexual students to one another yielded no significant differences;

these groups were thus collapsed for comparison with heterosexual students. Results of a repeated measures MANOVA indicated that there was a significantly different pattern of responding for LGB students compared to heterosexual students (Wilks' $\lambda = .98$), $F(4, 1146) = 4.67$, $p < .001$. Univariate analyses on each of the five GCC undergraduate scales appear with effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) in Table II. As Table II indicates, heterosexual undergraduate students experienced greater respect and acceptance than LGB students.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Climate

Mean differences analyses were conducted for the LGBCC scale. With respect to sexual orientation, LGB undergraduates differed significantly from heterosexual students in that they viewed the campus environment as significantly less accepting ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.16$ vs. $M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(1149) = 4.64$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 0.57.

Results for gender and racial/ethnic group mean comparisons among heterosexual undergraduates are reported in Table III with effect sizes. As Table III indicates, the expected gender difference was found with women having a lower mean score on the LGBCC scale. Thus, heterosexual men perceived the campus as more accepting of LGB students than did heterosexual women. With respect to race/ethnicity, undergraduate students of color overall perceived the campus environment as more negative toward LGB students than did White/European American students (see Table III). Post-hoc analyses indicated that students of color from all racial/ethnic minority groups except for International students significantly differed from White/European American students on this scale ($p < .05$).

Table II. Undergraduate Mean Comparisons on General Campus Climate (GCC)

	Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students		Heterosexual students		$t(1150)$	p -value	Cohen's effect size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Acceptance	4.64	1.13	4.92	1.06	-1.94	.026	.26
Respect	4.72	1.31	5.16	1.28	-2.56	.005	.34
Confidence	5.04	1.11	4.88	1.02	1.08	ns	—
Safety	4.62	1.66	4.35	1.81	1.14	ns	—
Instructor	4.76	1.02	4.78	1.11	-0.22	ns	—

^aScores range from 1-7. Higher scores indicate a more positive campus climate.

Table III. LGBCC and Attitude Scale Mean Comparisons for Heterosexual Undergraduates Between Men and Women and White Students and Students of Color^a

Scale	Men	Women	<i>t</i> (1087)	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	Cohen's effect size	White/ European American	Students of Color	<i>t</i> (1087)	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	Cohen's effect size
LGBCC										
<i>M</i>	4.06	3.94	2.19	.029	0.13	4.19	3.88	5.35	<.001	0.34
<i>SD</i>	0.95	0.92				0.89	0.95			
Attitude scales										
Policies										
<i>M</i>	3.77	4.42	-7.03	<.001	0.43	4.55	4.75	-2.51	.012	0.16
<i>SD</i>	1.56	1.46				1.26	1.30			
Interpersonal										
<i>M</i>	4.34	4.95	-8.00	<.001	0.48	3.90	4.28	-3.90	<.001	0.25
<i>SD</i>	1.33	1.19				1.51	1.54			

^aScores range from 1-7. Higher scores on the LGBCC scale indicate a more favorable evaluation of the campus environment as supportive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Higher scores on Policies indicate more support for university policies and events affirming lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; higher scores on Interpersonal indicate more openness to interpersonal interactions with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people on campus.

The effects of fraternity/sorority membership were also examined for the LGBCC scale. Heterosexual students who identified as members of social fraternities or sororities ($n = 178$) were *less* likely to see the campus environment as accepting of LGB students ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.86$) than were other students ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.95$), $t(1083) = -2.04$, $p = .042$. This difference was small but somewhat meaningful (Cohen's effect size = 0.17).

As predicted, religion was also a discriminating demographic variable for heterosexual students. The LGBCC means for each of the 12 religious groups that participants identified in their open-ended responses are displayed in Table IV. The highest LGBCC means were found for students identifying themselves as Lutherans, Methodists, and Christians. Thus, members of these groups were more likely to view the campus environment as accepting of LGB students. To examine whether heterosexual undergraduates who self-labeled as "Christian" were more likely than other heterosexual undergraduates to perceive the campus as accepting of LGB students, mean comparisons were conducted. The results of this analysis, depicted in Table V, indicated that Christian heterosexual undergraduates were more likely to view the campus environment as positive toward sexual orientation diversity.

Attitudes Toward LGB Issues and People on Campus

LGB undergraduates were more likely than heterosexual undergraduates to support pro-LGB university policies and events ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 0.66$ vs. $M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.54$, $t(1149) = -24.52$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 2.18) and were more favorably disposed to interpersonal contact with other LGB people on campus ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 0.78$ vs. $M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.29$, $t(1149) = -15.12$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 1.59). These results, although not surprising, provide some evidence for the discriminant validity of these scales.

Results of mean difference analyses on the Policies and Interpersonal scales by gender and race/ethnicity are presented in Table III. With respect to gender differences, as expected, heterosexual women were more supportive of pro-LGB campus events and policies and more open to interpersonal contact with LGB people. Racial and ethnic group differences also emerged on both scales for heterosexual undergraduates. Students of color overall reported that they were significantly more inclined to support events and policies affirming LGB students on campus. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that students in all racial/ethnic minority groups except International students scored significantly higher than White students on the

Table IV. Heterosexual Students' LGBCC and Attitude Scale Means and Standard Deviations by Religious Identity^a

Religious identity	LGBCC						Attitude scales					
	Undergraduate			Graduate			Policies			Interpersonal		
	M	SD		M	SD		Undergraduate	Graduate		Undergraduate	Graduate	
Agnostic/Atheist	3.83	0.96		4.05	1.07		5.04	1.87		5.29	1.61	
Baptist	3.94	0.83		4.08	1.11		3.81	1.67		5.63	1.49	
Buddhist	3.85	0.86		4.41	0.91		4.80	1.01		4.28	1.23	
Catholic	3.97	0.98		4.26	1.01		4.18	1.51		5.11	0.84	
Christian	4.13	0.96		4.20	0.95		3.48	1.51		4.32	1.50	
Nondenominational Christian	4.06	0.81		5.15	1.18		3.63	1.58		3.51	1.64	
Hindu	3.60	0.74		3.96	0.96		4.75	1.45		3.88	2.08	
Jewish	4.02	0.77		3.95	0.95		4.27	1.25		5.18	1.52	
Lutheran	4.26	0.76		4.15	0.92		3.97	1.59		4.74	1.19	
Methodist	4.21	0.89		4.50	1.44		4.30	1.45		3.32	1.93	
Protestant	3.82	0.93		3.92	1.26		3.44	1.35		3.92	1.79	
Presbyterian	3.72	0.75		4.09	0.47		3.43	1.64		4.28	1.77	
None	3.88	0.96		4.12	0.98		4.52	1.45		3.70	1.60	
										4.92	1.30	
										5.77	1.15	
										4.85	1.02	
										4.30	1.30	
										5.03	1.36	
										4.52	1.44	
										5.74	0.50	
										5.19	1.47	
										5.74	0.88	
										4.30	1.14	
										5.15	1.45	
										5.26	0.93	
										4.99	1.56	
										5.33	1.41	

^a229 undergraduates and 243 graduates skipped this item. "None" refers to participants who responded with this or a similar phrase (e.g., "N/A," "I don't have any"). LGBCC and attitude scale scores range from 1-7. Higher scores on LGBCC indicate a more favorable evaluation of the campus environment as supportive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Higher scores on Policies indicate more support for university policies and events affirming lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; higher scores on Interpersonal indicate more openness to interpersonal interactions with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people on campus.

Table V. LGBCC and Attitude Scale Mean Comparisons of Self-Labeled “Christian” and All Other Students

Scale	Undergraduates				Graduates			
	Self-labeled “Christians”	Others	<i>t</i> (947)	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen’s effect size	Self-labeled “Christians”	Others	<i>t</i> (751)
LGBCC	4.13	3.93	1.95	.025	0.17	4.20	4.05	1.13
	<i>M</i>					0.95	1.04	ns
Attitude scales								
Policies								
<i>M</i>	3.48	4.33	-5.67	<.001	0.52	3.51	4.38	-4.89
<i>SD</i>	1.51	1.56				1.64	1.58	<.001
Interpersonal	4.40	4.78	-2.97	<.002	0.30	4.52	5.16	-4.26
	<i>M</i>					1.44	1.39	<.001
<i>SD</i>	1.25	1.32						0.45

^aScores range from 1–7. Higher scores on the LGBCC scale indicate a more favorable evaluation of the campus environment as supportive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Higher scores on Policies indicate more support for university policies and events affirming lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; higher scores on Interpersonal indicate more openness to interpersonal interactions with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people on campus.

Policies scale ($p < .05$). Racial and ethnic minority students overall were also more open to interpersonal contact with LGB people on campus than were White/European American students. Comparisons of the different racial/ethnic group means on the Interpersonal factor, however, indicated that the only group that differed significantly from the White students was the bicultural students ($p < .05$).

Greek System affiliation was also examined on these scales, and univariate tests indicated that those in social fraternities and sororities had significantly lower scores on the Interpersonal factor ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.22$) than did non-Greek students ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.29$), $t(1083) = -3.17$, $p = .002$. Cohen's effect size for this difference (0.26) suggested that this was a relatively small but meaningful difference. No mean difference was found for the Policies scale.

Finally, those whose religious identity was Protestant, Presbyterian, Baptist, or Christian had the lowest means on the Policies and Interpersonal scales (see Table IV). To determine whether heterosexual undergraduates who self-labeled as "Christian" exhibited more antigay attitudes than other heterosexual undergraduates, univariate mean comparisons were conducted on both scales. The results of these analyses are presented in Table V with effect sizes. As shown, Christian heterosexual undergraduates were in fact less open to interpersonal contact and less supportive of pro-LGB policies and events on campus.

Correlations of Demographics with LGBCC and Attitude Scales

Heterosexual Students. Numbers of semesters at the university was significantly but weakly correlated with the LGBCC scale ($r = -.14$, $p < .001$), indicating that for heterosexuals, length of time at the university may be related to an increasingly negative view of the campus environment for LGB students. A strong relationship to the attitude scales was found for the political orientation variable: students who identified as more politically conservative were less supportive of pro-LGB campus policies and events ($r = -.51$, $p < .001$) and less open to interpersonal contact with LGB students ($r = -.41$, $p < .001$). A weaker correlation was found between political orientation and the LGBCC scale ($r = .14$, $p < .001$), with this finding suggesting that more "conservative" students are somewhat more likely to view the campus environment as more accepting of LGB students.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students. For undergraduate LGB students, self-reported level of outness was significantly correlated with the two attitude scales (Interpersonal: $r = .50$, $p < .001$; Policies: $r = .54$, $p < .001$). Therefore, degree of openness about LGB identity was related to being

more willing to interact with other LGB people on campus and being more supportive of affirming policies and events on campus. Outness was not, however, related to the LGBCC scale ($r = -.14$, ns), suggesting that students at all levels of openness perceived the campus as equally accepting or hostile. Length of time at the university was positively correlated with the Policies scale ($r = .36$, $p = .006$) and negatively correlated with the LGBCC scale ($r = -.28$, $p = .032$). Finally, length of time at the university was also positively correlated with "outness" ($r = .39$, $p = .002$), suggesting that degree of openness about one's LGB identity increases with time spent at the university.

Graduate Sample

General Campus Climate Scale

LGB respondents were again collapsed into one group because mean comparisons between these sexual orientation groups produced no significant differences. As indicated by a repeated measures MANOVA, significant differences did emerge, however, when comparing the mean profile of these graduate students to heterosexual graduates on the six graduate GCC factors (Wilks' $\lambda = .97$), $F(5, 724) = 4.61$, $p < .001$. Univariate tests, displayed in Table VI with effect sizes, revealed that differences, all suggesting a better campus climate from the perspective of heterosexual students, were present on the Advisor, Fairness, and Confidence factors, with a marginal effect found for the Faculty factor.

Table VI. Graduate Mean Comparisons on General Campus Climate (GCC)^a

	Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students		Heterosexual students		<i>t</i> (728)	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's effect size
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Fairness	4.68	1.15	4.95	1.07	-1.88	.030	.24
Respect	5.49	0.93	5.41	1.03	0.63	ns	—
Confidence	4.29	1.28	4.76	1.23	-2.87	.002	.38
Safety	4.96	1.73	4.61	1.76	1.50	ns	—
Faculty	4.69	1.37	4.94	1.18	-1.56	.060	.20
Advisor	4.29	1.63	4.75	1.44	-2.40	.009	.30

^aScores range from 1-7. Higher scores indicate a more positive campus climate.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Campus Climate

LGBCC means were first compared by sexual orientation. Like their undergraduate counterparts, LGB graduate students were more likely than their heterosexual peers to view the campus environment more negatively ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.11$ vs. $M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.99$), $t(725) = 7.26$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 0.91.

Results of gender and race/ethnicity mean comparisons on the LGBCC scale are presented in Table VII with effect sizes. As the table indicates, no significant differences were found, suggesting that gender and racial/ethnic minority status exerted no impact on heterosexual graduate students' perceptions of the campus environment for LGB students. In addition, no effect was found on the LGBCC scale for graduate students' self-identification as "Christian" (see Table V).

Attitudes Toward LGB Issues and People on Campus

The Policies and Interpersonal scales were first analyzed by sexual orientation. LGB graduate students were more likely than heterosexual graduates to support affirming policies and events ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 0.68$ vs. $M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(725) = -21.06$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 1.93, and to be more favorable about interpersonal contact with LGB people on campus ($M = 6.51$, $SD = 0.62$ vs. $M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(1149) = -16.30$, $p < .001$, Cohen's effect size = 1.54. This set of results provides further support for the discriminant validity of the attitude scales.

The effects of gender and racial/ethnic status on the attitude scales are reported in Table VII with effect sizes. With respect to gender, the comparisons reported in the table reveal that heterosexual women were more supportive than heterosexual men of university policies and events affirming LGB people and more open to interpersonal contact with LGB people on campus. Racial/ethnic minority status yielded a different pattern of results than the undergraduate sample: Graduate students of color were less open than White/European American students to interpersonal contact with LGB students, faculty and staff and no differences were found on the Policies scale. Post-hoc contrasts indicated that the source of these racial and ethnic group difference on the Interpersonal factor was between the Asian American and White/European American students, $t(724) = 4.28$, $p < .001$, and the International and White/European American students, $t(724) = 8.62$, $p < .001$.

Religious group identification also affected heterosexual graduates' pattern of responses on the two attitude scales. Means for each of the re-

Table VII. LGBCC and Attitude Scale Mean Comparisons for Heterosexual Graduates Between Men and Women and White Students and Students of Color^a

Scale	Men	Women	<i>t</i> (1087)	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	Cohen's effect size	White/ European American	Students of Color	<i>t</i> (1087)	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	Cohen's effect size
LGBCC										
<i>M</i>	4.20	4.10	1.32	ns	—	4.13	4.15	-0.18	ns	—
<i>SD</i>	0.97	0.99				0.93	1.02			
Attitude scales										
Policies										
<i>M</i>	3.85	4.62	-6.32	<.001	0.49	4.20	4.29	-0.73	ns	—
<i>SD</i>	1.65	1.49				1.65	1.60			
Interpersonal										
<i>M</i>	4.55	5.35	-7.76	<.001	0.60	5.32	4.84	4.38	<.001	0.36
<i>SD</i>	1.42	1.23				1.24	1.41			

^aScores range from 1-7. Higher scores on the LGBCC scale indicate a more favorable evaluation of the campus environment as supportive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Higher scores on Policies indicate more support for university policies and events affirming lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; higher scores on Interpersonal indicate more openness to interpersonal interactions with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people on campus.

ligious groups participants identified are presented in Table IV above. As can be seen, the pattern of means for the graduate students was not as consistent for the two scales as it was for the undergraduates. Self-identification as a Christian did, however, appear to affect attitude scale mean scores. Univariate mean comparisons conducted comparing this group to all other heterosexual graduate students on the two scales (depicted in Table V) produced group differences such that Christian students had significantly lower mean scores on the both scales.

Correlations of Demographics with LGBCC and Attitude Scales

Heterosexual students. As with the heterosexual undergraduates, a few continuous demographic variables were found to be associated with the LGBCC and attitude scales for heterosexual graduate students. Number of semesters at the university was weakly related to each of the LGBCC scale such that being at the university longer was related to viewing the campus environment as less accepting of LGB students ($r = -.16, p < .001$). More semesters at the university was also weakly positively related to being more open to interpersonal contact with LGB students ($r = .13, p < .001$) and being more in favor of LGB-affirming policies and events on campus ($r = .07, p = .05$). As with the undergraduates, the strongest relationship to the attitude scales was found for the political orientation variable, with correlations indicating that self-labeling as more politically conservative was related to having more negative views toward LGB students on campus (Policies: $r = -.54, p < .001$; Interpersonal: $r = -.47$). In addition, being more politically conservative was related to viewing the campus climate as more hospitable to LGB students ($r = .21, p < .001$).

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students. The more "out" LGB graduate students reported themselves to be, the more likely they were to have higher Policies scale scores ($r = .45, p < .001$) and lower LGBCC scores ($r = -.29, p = .010$). Number of semesters at the university was negatively correlated with the LGBCC scale ($r = -.32, p = .011$), indicating that being at the university longer might promote more negative views of the climate for sexual orientation diversity.

DISCUSSION

The primary purposes of conducting this study were to examine LGB undergraduate and graduate students' perceptions of academic life and to gauge campus climate and attitudes with respect to LGB issues in a large

diverse sample of students. Supporting the predictions of the study, LGB students rated academic life (GCC) more negatively than heterosexual students on several dimensions. In addition, findings from the study provide support for the claim that certain heterosexual students—including men, White/European American undergraduates, and self-identified “conservatives” and “Christians”—would demonstrate less favorable views toward LGB students in both their perceptions of the LGBCC and in their attitudes toward LGB people. Some of the major findings are discussed below.

Undergraduates

For undergraduates, LGB students indicated that they feel less accepted and respected on campus than their heterosexual counterparts. These results are understandable in light of the considerable levels of heterosexism and homophobia found in previous research on university campuses. Such findings support the claim that encountering hostility on campus may lead to decrements in academic satisfaction, particularly in the realm of feeling accepted and “fitting in.” With respect to the LGBCC, LGB undergraduates were much more likely to rate the climate as antigay than were their heterosexual peers, providing evidence that the context of harassment and discrimination was quite salient to the LGB students in this study.

Consistent with the predictions introduced earlier, undergraduate heterosexual men in particular were more likely than heterosexual women to view the LGBCC as accepting of LGB students. At the same time, these men were opposed to university efforts to implement LGB-supportive policies and affirming events and relatively more resistant to interpersonal contact with LGB students when compared to heterosexual women. Also consistent with the predictions, undergraduate students of color viewed the LGBCC as less accepting than did White/European American students. Their attitudes were also more supportive of policies affirming LGB students and more open to interpersonal contact with LGB students. Perhaps, like women, these students were more in tune with LGB students’ negative experiences because of their status as minorities in the university. Thus, perhaps the most interesting finding to emerge from these analyses is that those students with the most antigay attitudes are the same ones who view the campus as most accepting of LGB students.

Similarly, students who identified as politically conservative and as Christian demonstrated less empathy about LGB students’ experience of the LGBCC when compared to students identifying as more liberal and those not identifying as Christian. These groups also simultaneously exhib-

ited more antigay attitudes. Although members of fraternities or sororities had more negative attitudes than non-Greek students about interpersonal contact with LGB students, they viewed the LGBCC as *less* accepting of LGB students than did students not involved with the Greek System. Perhaps there is something about this campus subcommunity that breeds understanding of the LGBCC while also fostering attitudes that reject interpersonal contact with LGB students. Such findings speak to the potential importance of considering the perspectives of those in the Greek System separately when conducting evaluations or interventions in campus communities.

Even though LGB undergraduates reported that the university climate is not supportive of them, correlational analyses suggested that they were more likely to be out the longer they attended the university. Although these data are not longitudinal, this finding supports many previous researchers' observations that LGB students are likely to "come out" in college. It is also unclear if this increasing outness is related to campus experiences per se or if a variable such as age could be driving this developmental process. At the same time, however, the longer the LGB students in this sample were in the university, the more they viewed the LGBCC as negative and had attitudes that were more supportive of affirming policies and events. These findings suggest that the longer they are on campus, the more problems they encounter and the more need they see for institutional remedies. This observation in the data perhaps reflects previous research that documents the widespread prevalence of violence against and harassment of gay people on college campuses. These findings may also reflect a raising of consciousness—perhaps from campus LGB communities—in LGB students as they attend the university.

Graduates

Many similar results were found in the graduate student sample. Like the undergraduates, LGB graduate students were found to have more negative academic perceptions than their heterosexual counterparts. LGB graduates reported relatively more negativity in the GCC than did the LGB undergraduates: They perceived that they were treated less fairly, were less self-confident, and had more negative relationships with both faculty and advisors. These differences in academic climate span more areas than the differences found for undergraduates, perhaps due to graduate students' generally more intimate contact with academic life. For example, it is generally true that graduate students have more close contact with faculty members. Unfortunately, these findings suggest that such increased contact may

lead to more negative experiences for LGB students. Constraints in these relationships may in turn affect these graduate students' self-confidence and perceptions that they are treated fairly. In addition to these differences on the GCC perceptions, LGB graduate students were far more likely than their heterosexual peers to rate the LGBCC as inhospitable to LGB students.

Of course, LGB graduates' negative perceptions may also be related to their interpersonal relations with other students. Results of analyses on the attitude scales indicated that graduate students are not immune to negative views associated with LGB issues on campus. As expected, graduate men in particular were less supportive in their views when compared to women graduate students with respect to university policies and interpersonal contact. However, no gender difference was found for how men and women viewed the LGBCC, suggesting that graduate men and women view the environment similarly.

Unlike the undergraduates, racial and ethnic minority graduate students did not view the LGBCC more negatively than White/European American students. In addition, they were not more supportive of progay campus policies and they were actually *less* open to interpersonal contact due to International and Asian American students' responses. A possible explanation for one of these group differences is that students from other countries with different cultures may have had less exposure to LGB issues or people. Those heterosexual graduate students who were more politically conservative and who self-identified as Christians also exhibited more negative attitudes toward LGB students.

Unlike the undergraduates, correlational analyses suggested that LGB graduate students were not more likely to be out as they attended the university longer, indicating that graduate students may arrive at the university after having developed their sexual orientation identities more firmly than undergraduates. As with the undergraduates, however, the longer the LGB graduate students attended the university, the more negatively they viewed the LGBCC. Those graduate students who were more out, were also more likely to see the need for affirming campus policies and events and to view the campus environment more negatively. Again, these findings may be related to the widespread prevalence of violence against and of gay people on college campuses because those students who are at the university longer and those who are more out may be more vulnerable to such hostility.

Changing Campus Contexts

LGB students' reports of negative academic experiences (GCC) and their relatively unfavorable evaluations from the LGBCC scale suggest that

campus life for these students needs to be improved. As suggested by Moos and Lemke (1983), social settings can be improved through measurement and feedback. Thus, the discussion below is offered to suggest possible ways of making university contexts more receptive to LGB students.

There are several tangible changes that some universities have made to warm their LGBCC. Some campuses have set up faculty and staff support networks of "allies" who demonstrate their support and respect by wearing buttons and hanging posters in their offices. Other universities offer LGB studies courses or academic programs to demonstrate that these issues are taken seriously in the classroom and that this area of scholarship is supported. Still another step that has been taken is educational panels of LGB students who speak in residence halls, classrooms, and fraternities and sororities. Given that interpersonal contact with lesbians and gay men has repeatedly been found to be predictive of more gay-affirmative attitudes and beliefs in past studies (see Herek, 1994, for a review), it appears that promoting these interactions might result in a reduction of negative attitudes on campus, and a subsequent positive effect on the LGBCC. These interactions may be especially important for those groups that demonstrated the most negative attitudes in this study (i.e., men, White undergraduates, members of the Greek System, self-identified Christians, international graduate students). In addition, a few universities have sponsored peer mentor programs in which perpetrators of campus violence against and harassment of LGBs are paired with a lesbian, gay, or bisexual student for the purposes of promoting interpersonal interaction and reducing prejudice. Even if there is individual resistance to such campus environmental changes, altering the context should ultimately yield a more inclusive campus setting that celebrates diversity. Moreover, by changing the LGBCC in this manner, it is likely that LGB students' perceptions and experiences of the GCC will be improved.

A theoretical implication of some of the findings is that it appears that campus subcultures exert an impact on students' perceptions and attitudes regarding LGB concerns. For example, the fact that group differences were found between those who were and were not in the Greek System and Christians and others suggests that affiliation with these campus subcommunities may influence attitudes and perceptions surrounding LGB issues. One important implication of this finding is that interventions designed to change attitudes and perceptions may be able to focus on altering the aspects of these subcultures that contribute to negative attitudes and perceptions. In the case of other groups that have negative attitudes but do not have well-defined campus communities (e.g., White men), strategies focusing on subcultural change may be less appropriate.

It is also important to address directly those aspects of GCC that were rated most negatively by LGB students. Although the differences in perceptions of the GCC may be diminished by improving attitudes and the LGBCC, a more direct effort should also be made to improve the academic perceptions of LGB graduate students in particular. Relative to their undergraduate counterparts, the LGB graduate students perceived the GCC especially negatively. Remedies must be implemented if academic life is to be experienced equitably across sexual orientation groups. Possible interventions include engaging faculty in dialogues about the special advising and teaching issues relevant to LGB concerns and raising awareness about how antigay bias on campus may negatively affect LGB students' academic self-confidence.

Limitations and Conclusions

More objective measures of academic achievement (e.g., grade reports for undergraduates, publication records for graduates) were not available for this sample, but future research might extend the results of this study to determine if perceptions of academic climate are related to actual academic performance. In addition, although support was found for the implication of antigay experiences leading to decrements in perceptions of the GCC, this relationship was not tested directly but rather was inferred from previous research as well as the LGB participants' low ratings of the LGBCC. Future studies might consider comparing actual experiences of discrimination and harassment of gays *within* LGB student samples to explore their impact on perceptions of campus climate more directly. The current approach of comparing all LGB students to heterosexual students assumes that all LGB students are equally affected by antigay experiences on campus or that being LGB per se affects GCC perceptions. A further area for new research concerns the fact that the relatively small number of LGB students in this sample did not allow for meaningful racial/ethnic or gender comparisons to be made within this group. It is possible that additional burdens associated with being a "double" or "triple minority" may more adversely affect academic perceptions and experiences. Another limitation of the study was that the LGBCC scale was limited to four items, primarily because of space limitations for the survey and the university administration's relative discomfort with the inclusion of LGB issues in the survey. Future studies should, however, attempt to include more items to assess the LGBCC.

The results of this study indicate that not only do LGB students report a relatively more negative GCC than heterosexual students, but also that the LGBCC is rated quite negatively by LGB students themselves. Indeed,

their evaluations of the university's acceptance of LGB students appear to worsen as they spend more time there. Some support was found for the contention that members of other marginalized groups (particularly racial and ethnic minority undergraduates and women) are also more likely than majority-group students to evaluate the LGBCC negatively while at the same time having more progay attitudes. In addition, politically conservative students and self-identified Christians were less sympathetic to the difficulties facing LGB students while also having more antigay attitudes. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing the multiple ways that campus climates are experienced and perceived as well as the relationship between antigay attitudes and perceptions of the LGBCC. Moreover, effect size analyses indicate that these group differences are in many cases quite large.

When attempting to address concerns related to LGB equity on campus, it is important to recognize the differences in these perceptions and attitudes. The differences in perceptions, in particular, can serve as a starting point for consciousness raising among members of campus communities who are not aware of the subjective experiences of LGB students. By highlighting the discrepancies between LGBCC perceptions, changes in the perceptions of members of these groups may occur once the subjective realities of LGB students are exposed. Even though it may be difficult to make such changes because of the prevalence of antigay attitudes in these groups, changing these perceptions may ultimately lead to attitude change or at least a critical examination of these attitudes. Changes in perceptions of the LGBCC as well as attitudes may then, in turn, lead to improved perceptions of the GCC by LGB students. Very few places seem more appropriate for these changes to occur, because as D'Emilio (1990) noted, "Having been granted the extraordinary privilege of thinking critically as a way of life, we should be astute enough to recognize when a group of people is being systematically mistreated" (p. 18).

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