
LGBTQIAP+ INSIGHTS & POLICY



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This report represents the work of three WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its web site without editorial or peer review.

LGBTQIAP+ Insights & Policy

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Report Submitted to:

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ABSTRACT

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is home to a thriving LGBTQIAP+ community. However, there currently is no physical location on campus where this population can go to get access to relevant resources or connect with other like-minded individuals. Furthermore, those within that community who identify as non-binary and not on either side of the spectrum of gender, face a unique set of issues with regards to preferred pronoun usage by peers. A general survey was distributed across campus to gauge familiarity with the LGBTQIAP+ community. Interviews were conducted both to document experiences with using preferred pronouns in academic and social settings as well as gather suggestions for the details of an LGBTQIAP+ resource center. From the data collected in these interviews, a gender neutral pronoun training was written and a proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center was drafted. A focus group session was held to determine the expectations and effectiveness of the aforementioned pronoun training. Based on all of the information gathered, a recommendation was made to the Safe Zone Committee to add the pronoun training to their selection of modules. Another recommendation was made to the administration of WPI to review the written resource center proposal and use it as a guideline when constructing the space. The work done this project will serve not only to provide valuable data about the experience of the LGBTQIAP+ community on this campus but also improve the quality of life here for those within that community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is imperative that we take the time to thank all of the miraculous individuals who contributed their efforts to making this project a success. Without their help it wouldn't have been nearly as possible to impact our campus in such a meaningful way. We would like to express our gratitude to our sponsor, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and more specifically our closest OMA contact, Julia Sorcinelli. She attended nearly every single one of our progress update meetings and shared resources with us that were invaluable to the creation of the LGBTQIAP+ resource center and pronoun training. We would like to also acknowledge the support of the project by the members of the Safe Zone committee and their contributions. Thank you to WPI facilities meeting with us and discussing the issue of free space on campus as well as offering suggestions in drafting the LGBTQIAP+ resource center proposal. Special thanks to Fred DiMauro and James Bedard for your offering all of the knowledge of campus that you had.

We especially appreciate the exuberance of diversity chair Michelle Jones-Johnson in our project and for taking the time to attend one of our meetings to learn more about what we were doing. We thank her for continuing to be a champion of acceptance and understanding at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Finally, we would like to thank our project advisor professor Adrienne Hall-Phillips. Her guidance throughout the duration of this project has been incredible and given us tools to take with us in our future academic endeavors. She gave us the freedom to investigate the topics we were passionate about and her comments were always constructive and ultimately helped produce a project that we can all be proud of.

AUTHORSHIP

Leo Bunyea: Leo served as the lead for all research pertaining to the drafting of the resource center proposal. Leo was responsible for writing all sections of this paper pertaining to the center, conducting resource center related interviews, and being the main contact between the IQP team and the Safe Zone Committee.

Pat Linzo: Pat served as the lead for all research pertaining to the drafting of the pronoun training. They are responsible for writing all sections pertaining to the training, being the main contact between the IQP team and the Alliance Executive Board, and drafting questions for the surveys, interviews, and questionnaires.

Chris DeJesus: Chris handled a variety of tasks for the IQP, and mostly handled the analysis of data obtained from the Qualtrics Survey. Chris was responsible for writing the sections pertaining to the results of the Qualtrics Survey that was conducted across campus, as well as formatting the document.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students identifying as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual or aromantic) community are a significant portion of WPI's population. In order to create a more inclusive atmosphere for these students, WPI needs to update some of its practices. Currently, there is no physical space at WPI where LGBTQIAP+ students can go to feel safe or to get access to vital resources. Furthermore, students who identify as non-binary, falling in between the two stereotypical gender binaries, face particular adversity in the classroom and across campus. Some staff and faculty are ill-educated on the subject of gender neutrality and identity and accidentally misgender students by referring to them with some incorrect pronouns. In order to make WPI a more welcoming institution for the aforementioned community, this project tackles two major goals: 1) develop and implement a Pronoun Awareness Training for staff and faculty, and 2) develop a detailed proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center for the WPI campus. A pronoun awareness training will serve the purpose of normalizing gender neutral language and, therefore, ease the plight of these transgender students. Giving WPI as an institution a complete and thorough proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center would incentivize the creation of such a space and ensure that its contents and design are appropriate for those that would find solace there.

Pronoun Awareness Training

Methods

First, a series of interviews were conducted to gauge student experience with preferred pronoun usage on campus. After this, a first draft of the training was written in an interactive style and designed to be forty-five minutes to an hour long. It consisted of a power point presentation lead by a trained speaker, engaging activities among the participants and a helpful worksheet for the participants to refer to and utilize after the training is completed. This version of the training was then administered to a focus group that is active in the LGBTQIAP+ community. A survey was given to them before and after the training to determine its effectiveness and obtain feedback. Based on the combined results of those two surveys, the

training was revised and then deemed acceptable to be administered to the WPI community. The training was administered to willing participants of WPI's campus and then given to the Safe Zone Committee to maintain as a living document and selectable module.

Results and Recommendations

We found several interesting things during the process of our interviews and focus groups. The first of which was that students who used she/her or he/him pronouns had far less difficulty in asking other members of the community to use their preferred pronouns. Similarly those that were interviewed and used they/them pronouns felt unwelcome on campus. To address this issue and make these students feel more comfortable in this campus environment, we recommend administering training to as much of the WPI community as possible. This will provide these students visibility and grant their identity validity in the mind of those less educated in this area. Our focus groups mainly raised the concern of addressing "it" as an unacceptable pronoun when referring to a human being. To fix this, "the use of it as a pronoun" has been added to the final version of the training. Something else that they voiced was that sitting through an hour of this training may not affect the trainee's behavior. However, they did understand that this training was simply meant to be a stepping stone into the world of gender identity and respect for the participants.

LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center

Methods

For the purpose of creating the LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center, the campus was polled on their general knowledge of and affiliation with the LGBTQIAP+ community. Through getting this data from students, a statistic for those who may benefit from the resource center can be acquired. Garnering the opinions of the student body, staff and faculty is a very important factor for the creation of this Resource Center, so a series of interviews were conducted to find out what resources they thought this center should house, how it should be staffed what type of space it should inhabit, and what they already knew about resources available to the LGBTQIAP+ community. After taking those viewpoints into account and determining what is needed, a proposal for the center was drafted, detailing the cost of the contents and upkeep, the necessary furniture, and what kind of staff must be available.

Results and Recommendations

The Resource Center Interviews provided a number of perspectives on the campus climate around the LGBTQIAP+ community. One of the most important deductions from them was that every single person who was interviewed said that this was a place that they would feel comfortable visiting whether they identified within the community or not and also that the center should span at least across an entire floor. The majority of participants felt that this center was the best way for WPI to provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community. In addition to this, not one participant could name the full range of resources available to WPI's LGBTQIAP+ population. We recommend that WPI follow the proposal that was drafted with these data points in mind when seeking to construct or establish this center. It would be a central location that everyone has access to so everyone within this community would be able to advocate properly for themselves and find a relevant support network.

KEY TERMS

- LGBTQIAP+ - One of the many acronyms used to refer to the community of individuals who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. This one stands for “Lesbian, Gay/Genderqueer/Genderfluid, Bisexual/Biromantic/Bigender, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic/Agender, and Pansexual/Panromantic/Pangender”. The acronym grows every day.
 - Lesbian - An individual who identifies as a woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women
 - Gay - Generally refers to individuals who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals of the same gender. This term is often used specifically to mean male-identified individuals who are attracted to men, but is sometimes also used to refer to the entire LGBTQIAP+ community (e.g. Gay rights)
 - Bisexual - An individual who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals of two or more genders
 - Bigender - An individual who identifies with two or more gender identities
 - Transgender - An individual whose gender identity does not match the one assigned to them at birth
 - Queer - This is used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who identify as non-straight. It is also used to describe people who have nonconforming gender identity. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ+ community. The term queer can also be used interchangeably with LGBTQIAP+
 - Questioning - An individual who is unsure about or is exploring their orientation or gender identity
 - Intersex - A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. There are therefore many third biological sexes, outside the binary of male and female.

- Asexual - An individual who does not typically experience sexual attraction.
- Aromantic - an individual who does not typically experience romantic attraction
- Agender - an individual who does not identify with any gender
- Pansexual - An individual who is sexually attracted to individuals of more than two or all genders. Sometimes, this term is used interchangeably with bisexual, the correctness of which is still being disputed. Please defer to how the individual chooses to identify themselves.
- Gender - The label given to one's internal sense of self in relation to the social constructs of masculinity, femininity and androgyny
- Cisgender - Term that refers to an individual who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth
- Sexual Orientation - The sexual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the individual and the people they are attracted to
- Sex - The classification of people as male or female or intersex, typically assigned at birth based on the appearance of external anatomy
- Non-Binary - An individual whose gender identity does not fit within the binary of male and female. This can be an umbrella term for many non-binary genders, such as androgyne, agender, bigender, genderfluid, and genderqueer.
- Gender-Non-Conforming - An individual whose gender identity does not conform to any societal notions of gender. Sometimes used to mean non-binary.

INTRODUCTION

Gender is the label given to one's internal sense of self in relation to the social constructs of masculinity, femininity or the lack thereof. Contrary to popular belief, this is not limited nor defined by any of the sexes to which people are assigned at birth: male, female or any of the forms of intersex. Sex is assigned at birth based on the appearance of genitalia on the infant. Generally, an infant with a penis will be assigned male and one with a vagina will be assigned female. In the case of intersex, doctors will often recommend surgeries to alter combined configurations of genitalia so as to fit the prescribed male-female binary. Biologically, sex is defined by the chromosomes which carry the genes for various sex characteristics (breast tissue, genitals, hormones, etc), the sex chromosomes X and Y. Generally, females have two X chromosomes and males have one X and one Y. Intersex people may have extra sex chromosome(s) or missing a sex chromosome or some other condition that results in an uncommon configuration of sex characteristics.

In many Western cultures, there exists a binary gender system: male and female. Each gender is associated with a set of gender roles, a prescribed set of behaviors and societal roles a person of a certain gender is expected to fulfill. For example, in most Western cultures, women are expected to be docile and submissive to the men who are allowed to be aggressive and authoritative. These roles can be best observed in the Western idealization of a nuclear family. The mother stays home to take care of the children while the father works, and the father is not expected to contribute as much to child-rearing and earns money for the family. This phenomenon can be linked to the fact that XX people are biologically equipped to carry and bear children and nurse. The assumption followed that XX people are to be child rearers while the XY people provide for them. This system evolved into what is known today as the gender binary system of Western society. These roles associated with the two most common sexes grow into Western gender roles. Thus, each sex became strongly associated with a corresponding gender: XX people are women and XY people are men.

Individuals who do not identify with the gender to which they were assigned at birth are considered transgender or gender-non-conforming. Some of these individuals may then choose

to physically “transition” into this gender. They may undergo hormone replacement therapy, genital reassignment surgery and other procedures. Many transgender and gender-non-conforming people feel this is necessary to be accepted as their chosen gender, as sex characteristics and gender roles are tied so tightly to gender. Some transgender and gender-non-conforming people may choose not to undergo any sort of transition as they feel that their gender is not dependant upon their physical or hormonal characteristics. Gender, while strongly tied to sex, is not entirely dependant upon it.

However, the concept of gender and sex being independent is not widely accepted. This is the result of years of creating the social constructs of femininity and masculinity, the notion of being able to determine someone else’s gender based only on appearance and traits that coincide with these social constructs. As a result of this misgendering, many transgender or gender-non-conforming individuals are put into an uncomfortable environment where they are perceived one way, but identify differently. Due to the largely cisgender population, many people feel pressured to conform to the genders that other people assign to them rather than what they identify as out of fear of discrimination.

It is widely believed that 4-10% of the world’s population identifies as LGBTQIAP+. LGBTQIAP+ youth are 8.4 times more likely to have reported attempting suicide and 5.9 times more likely to report severe depression in comparison to their non-LGBTQIAP+ identifying peers. Approximately a fifth of students are physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation and over a tenth because of their gender expression. Two thirds of LGBTQIAP+ students reported being sexually harassed in school during the past year (Syracuse University, 2016). In their lifetime, 42.8% of transgender individuals are diagnosed with depression (The Alliance, 2016).

LGBTQIAP+ students at college are at risk of being a victim of prejudice and ignorance. Someone who is prejudiced against any part of the LGBTQIAP+ community will react negatively to their lifestyle which may manifest itself in violent acts, whether they be verbal or physical. Those who are uneducated about the LGBTQIAP+ community may unintentionally say something hurtful or offensive and make LGBTQIAP+ students uncomfortable. They also may want to learn more, but ask inappropriate questions that are also unwelcomed by the student

in question. Transgender individuals tend to be the subject of this aggression in most cases. But on top of ignorance and prejudice, there is the constant fear that they will not “pass” as the gender (or lack thereof) that they identify with. Many transgender people also suffer from gender dysphoria which is a crippling condition that amplifies the discrepancies between the gender you identify with the and stereotypical biological sex that is associated with that gender. Transgender students are constantly conscious of their gender presentation and actions in social situations for fear of being misgendered through pronoun usage (Miller & James, 2009; Amherst College, 2016).

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is no longer an all white, cisgender male engineering college. Since its founding in 1865 it has extended its acceptance to women, all types of racial minorities, people of varying sexual orientations and individuals anywhere in the gender spectrum. Students identifying as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual or aromantic) community are a sizeable portion of WPI’s population in comparison to other colleges in the United States. To position itself as a campus for all students, we believe, WPI needs to update some of its practices in order to create a more inclusive atmosphere for those students on campus. Currently, WPI’s main support system for LGBTQIAP+ students on campus is the Safe Zone Committee, which is connected to the WPI Office of Multicultural Affairs. However, there is no physical space at WPI where LGBTQIAP+ students can go to feel safe or to get access to helpful resources. Furthermore, students who identify as transgender and fall in between the two stereotypical gender binaries face particular adversity in the classroom and across campus. Some staff and faculty are ill-educated on the subject of gender neutrality and accidentally misgender students by using the incorrect pronouns when referring to that individual. In order to make WPI a more welcoming institution for LGBTQIAP+ people, this project will tackle two major goals: 1) develop and implement a Pronoun Awareness Training for staff and faculty, and 2) develop a detailed proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center for the WPI campus. A pronoun awareness training will serve the purpose of normalizing gender neutral language and, therefore, ease the plight of these transgender students. Giving WPI as an institution a complete and thorough proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center would incentivize the creation of such a space and ensure that

its contents and design are appropriate. After its completion there would be a designated space for students, staff and faculty to get access to the resources and services that they deserve. With these goals in mind, this project hopes to introduce more individuals to gender neutral pronouns and also give WPI the tools it needs to build or convert a safe space into an LGBTQIAP+ resource center.

This IQP report is organized in the following way. First we will review background on misgendering and gender expression, pronoun history and modern usage, pronoun awareness trainings and LGBTQIAP+ at WPI. Next we will layout the methodology for the pronoun awareness training and the LGBTQIAP+ resource center separately. After this will be the depiction of the results of the results of the surveys, interviews and focus groups that we conducted. Following this section is the discussion which includes our data analysis and recommendations going forward. The final section is the conclusion which will summarize the entirety of the project and speak more directly to our deliverables. The pronoun training, resource center proposal, focus group surveys, and interview transcriptions can all be found in the appendix.

BACKGROUND

It is important to establish a solid foundation of knowledge in the realm of gender identity and pronoun usage. With this clearer understanding of the topic, one can begin to see the benefits that would be offered by what this project is proposing. This section will provide an analysis of gender identity, preferred pronouns and their history and usage, current pronoun trainings and how they all relate at this institution.

Gender: Misgendering and Expression

In modern society, there are stereotypical expectations of gender expression and the pronouns associated with either feminine or masculine expression or biological body parts. Due to this preconceived notion of “feminine” or “masculine” body types, preferred pronouns are generally assumed. When an individual is referred to with pronouns that don’t match their

preferred pronouns, it is called 'misgendering'. Misgendering is harmful because it negates the ability of self-expression and disrespects the identity of the target, intentional or unintentional (Kapusta, 2016). Misgendering is far more frequent for people that identify in between the "traditional" gender binary. This is because neo pronouns are unfamiliar to many older generations. In a classroom setting, students who identify on the non-binary spectrum run the risk of being misgendered by a professor or a peer. This deeply hinders the capacity for learning of a transgender student who feels targeted and invalidated. The most effective academic environment is one which supports and embraces diversity in order to make students of any kind feel comfortable and safe (Wilson, 2016).

Pronouns: History and Modern Usage

Pronouns possess a great deal of emotional value for those identifying outside of the gender binary. However, speaking from technicality, a pronoun is a word which is used in place of a noun or noun phrase. Personal pronouns refer to a grammatical person: the first person (the speaker), the second person (the addressee) or the third person (others). Pronouns are used in place of a person's name. They are used to avoid superfluous language caused by using a proper noun multiple times in a sentence. They are also used when the name of a person is unknown.

Currently, there are four linguistically accepted English language third person singular pronouns: he/him/his/his/himself (masculine), she/her/her/hers/herself (feminine), it/it/its/its/itself (neuter) and they/them/their/theirs/themself (epicene, or without gender). When we refer to someone other than us or the person we are speaking to, we generally choose one of these pronouns. In the American education system, students are taught that, when the gender of the third person is unknown to the speaker, they should use "he or she" instead of the epicene, singular "they". Formal and legal writing use generic "he" in place of "he or she". The use of the generic "he" has been found to be harmful and to fuel sexist tendencies in the male dominated society of the Western world. For example, in the Canadian Supreme Court Case *Edwards v Canada*, the use of the generic "he" in Canadian legal documents was called into question. It was unclear whether or not women were allowed to serve on the Canadian Senate. The ruling stated that members of the male and female sex can serve on the

Canadian Senate, interpreting the “he” pronouns throughout the documents to be the generic use (Edwards v. Canada, 1929). More commonplace examples include phrases such as “A doctor should not harm his patient,” reinforces the idea of men being doctors and women not being skilled enough to become doctors (Miller & James, 2009). Despite these well-known adverse effects of generic “he”, the use of epicene, singular “they” is looked down upon by intellectual communities as uneducated.

Preferred pronouns are defined as a set of third person pronouns with which an individual prefers to be referred to. Pronouns do not inherently have a gender outside of their linguistic gender. They are not inherently connected to particular one particular gender identity. For example, an individual may identify as a woman but prefers to be referred to with they/them/their/theirs/themself pronouns. However, there are pronouns commonly associated with certain genders (e.g. he/him for men, they/them for agender people).

Due to the fact that epicene, singular “they” is not yet widely accepted, individuals whose genders fall outside of the binary of “man or woman” will sometimes choose a neo-pronoun as their preferred pronoun. Neo-pronouns are often doctored versions of existing English pronouns or borrowed from other languages. For example, the Elverson neo-pronouns from 1975, ey/em/eir/eirs/emself were formed by removing the “th-” from they/them plural pronouns. These are used in science fiction novels and preferred by a number of non-binary or gender-nonconforming individuals. Another set of neo-pronouns are borrowed from the German language and is conjugated ze/hir/hir/hirs/hirself. These pronouns were widely preferred by non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals in the 1980s and 1990s (Bornstein & Bergman, 2010).

Pronoun Awareness Trainings

The usage of correct preferred pronouns by others is an integral part of the comfort of a transgender individual in social settings. However, it is not yet normalized to ask someone about which pronouns they prefer and pronouns are often assumed based on gender expression. Therefore, to introduce the uninformed to the concept of pronoun preference and the LGBTQIAP+ community in general thousands of trainings have been created.

LGBTQIAP+ Awareness Trainings are administered by a number of companies and educational institutions. Typically, these trainings are delivered in a lecture format accompanied by a PowerPoint (Shlasko, 2016). In some instances a worksheet is provided to complete alongside the presentation. These workshops briefly include a section about transgender individuals who identify as non-binary and use unfamiliar pronouns. Syracuse University has a three hour training entitled “Safer People, Safer Spaces” that falls under this category (WPI, 2016b). There are also programs specifically geared towards preferred gender pronouns such as the “Think Again Training” that can be performed by a knowledgeable speaker hired from the organization (Shlasko, 2016). Currently, WPI has its own LGBTQIAP+ Awareness Training that is three hours long and educates attendees on most topics of the LGBTQIAP+ discussion. It is incentivized by the Safe Zone Committee placing a special “Safe Zone” indicator on the door of a participating professor to show students who identify under that spectrum that they can confide within that person. It does contain a section on preferred gender pronouns, however, the participants of the training are not actually required to use or further familiarize themselves with them. WPI needs a training specifically for preferred gender pronoun education so that students, staff and faculty are comfortable with using non-binary inclusive terminology in an academic setting (Wilson, 2016).

LGBTQIAP+ at WPI

Currently, WPI does have several resources and social groups available for LGBTQIAP+ students to utilize or participate in. There is the student-operated organization called The Alliance, who provides educational, social and advocacy outlets through various event surrounding the Day of Silence, World AIDS Day, National Coming Out Day and many others (The Alliance, 2016). WPI also has a faculty/staff-run organization called the Safe Zone Committee. The Safe Zone Committee, as discussed above, acts as resources for members of the campus community who have questions or concerns related to LGBTQIAP+ issues. (Worcester Polytechnic Institute [WPI], 2016b). Even WPI’s Career Development center has specific resources for LGBTQIAP+ on how to handle their identity in the workplace (WPI, 2016a).

To provide additional support to LGBTQIAP+ individuals, WPI could benefit from having a dedicated LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center. Other campuses, such as Amherst College and Cornell University have such facilities, and offer services such as a counseling center, free coffee, a library containing information on queer history, Queer/Trans 101 and Advanced Training, and a dedicated staff willing to create a safer space on campus (Amherst College, 2016; Cornell, 2016). Additionally, these centers also provide information and resources that assist with the procedures of Legal Name Change, and Gender Marker Changes on Identity Documents. Through these services, students who otherwise feel uncomfortable living on campus can be provided support from staff to give them a sense of belonging. WPI could benefit from the existence of such a center, to aid its increasing population of individuals on campus who identify as LGBTQIAP+ in order to give them a location where no matter what, they may feel comfortable. Given WPI's history of formerly being an all white male school, adding this facility may help WPI in its transformation into a more safe and inclusive place for students of all sexualities and genders. WPI already has groups such as The Alliance dedicated to helping out LGBTQIAP+ individuals who host campus events such as Trans Day of Remembrance and Coming Out Day, and having this Resource Center as a dedicated space for these events to be hosted would be highly beneficial. In addition, having resources for educating individuals on LGBTQIAP+ information would help spread awareness to those who may be uninformed of any issues facing LGBTQIAP+ peoples. Through the distribution of this information via the resource center, students and staff alike can avoid misunderstandings amongst each other regarding LGBTQIAP+ issues, such as misgendering people. With more informed people on campus, the likelihood of this information being spread and passed on to incoming students increases. This center, in conjunction with the Pronoun Training can help create a campus where everyone can live in harmony.

METHODS

This project's deliverables are based on the growing diversity of WPI's community. The first objective is to tailor a gender neutral pronoun training to the specific needs of the students, staff and faculty on this campus. The main goal of this training is not only to raise awareness of the existence of non-binary students on this campus but also to generate familiarity with the concept of using respectful gender neutral pronouns in everyday speech. The second mission of this project is to draft a physical proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center. This center would provide resources, specific services and a safe space for WPI's LGBTQIAP+ population.

Pronoun Awareness Training:

First a series of interviews were conducted to catalog the experiences of students attempting to use preferred pronouns on campus. Using this data, a first draft of the training was written in an interactive style and designed to be forty-five minutes to an hour long. It consisted of a power point presentation lead by a knowledgeable speaker, engaging activities among the participants and a helpful worksheet for the participants to refer to and utilize after the training is over. Then this version of the training was administered to a focus group that is familiar with and active in the LGBTQIAP+ community. A survey was given to them before and after the training to determine its effectiveness and obtain feedback. Based on the combined results of those two surveys, the training was revised and then considered to be acceptable to be administered to the WPI community. The training was administered to willing participants of WPI's campus and then given to the Safe Zone Committee to maintain as a living document and continue to utilize it.

LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center:

For the purpose of creating the LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center, a general survey was distributed to campus with various questions asking about familiarity with the LGBTQIAP+ community. Examples of such questions include: "Do you identify as LGBTQIAP+?" and "Do you know

someone on the campus who identifies as LGBTQIAP+?” Through getting this data from students, a statistic for those who may benefit from the resource center can be acquired. Additionally, a series of interviews was conducted to gather suggestions that students, staff and faculty had for the resource center. Ideas presented were compared with facilities made available at other such resource centers such as the center at Syracuse University. After gathering the opinions of the WPI community and determining what was needed, a proposal for the Center was drafted in two parts, one fiscally realistic and the other using less financial limitation.

RESULTS

Research efforts were split into three sections based on the nature of this project’s deliverables: general campus knowledge of the LGBTQIAP+ community, gender neutral pronoun awareness, and resource center visualization. To cover the first topic, a survey was sent out to the WPI community to capture information that would not only highlight the level of education of these issues but also help establish a need for a gender neutral pronoun training and resource center. The next section was investigated with a series of interviews asking the participants about their experience using their preferred pronouns on campus. This information was then used to tailor a gender neutral pronoun training to the specific needs of gender nonconforming students at WPI. That training was given to a focus group who filled out a questionnaire before taking it as well as after to give feedback on the effectiveness of the training and suggestions to make it better. To gauge the community’s ideas and desires for a potential LGBTQIAP+ resource center, interviews were conducted asking the participants pointed questions about how they would visualize the space.

General Campus Knowledge of the LGBTQIAP+ Community

The survey that captured campus’ general knowledge and awareness of the LGBTQIAP+ community was sent out to all faculty on campus as well as several student groups and organizations like The Alliance and the Game Developers Club via email. The survey was open for approximately two and half months. The majority of people who took the survey were

faculty or staff with a total of 252 responses, followed by seniors (52), sophomores (50), first-years (41), juniors (30), and lastly graduate students (12), the entire survey having a total of 437 responses (Figure 1).

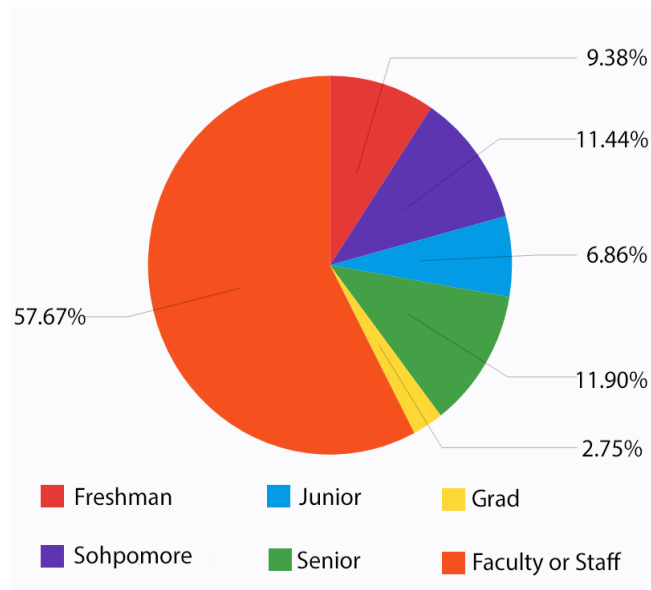


Figure 1: Demographic of Survey Participants

The first question that the participants were asked was, “Do you self-identify as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ Community?” This question’s purpose was to attempt to estimate just how much of WPI’s population would be represented by this project. Of the collected responses, the majority of them do not self-identify as LGBTQIAP+. Out of the 437 responses, 103, or 23.79%, self-identified as members of the LGBTQIAP+ community (Figure 2).

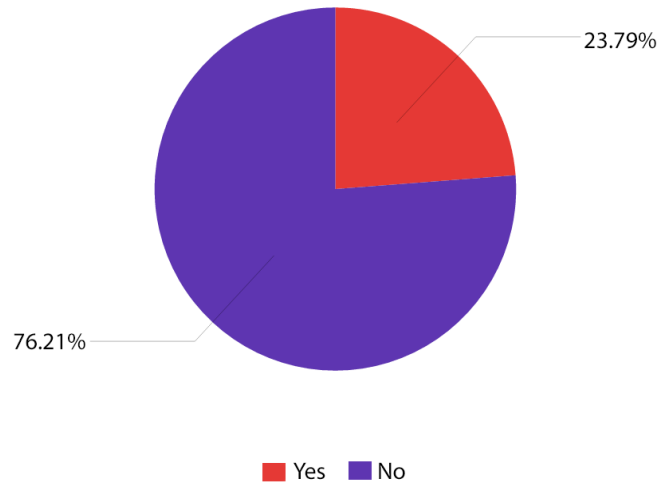


Figure 2: Whole Sample Self-Identification

The second question that the participants were asked was, “Do you know anyone who self-identifies as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ community?” The responses to this question helped to infer the familiarity of the WPI community with issues that affect people who self-identify. 93.67% of the people who responded to this survey claimed to know someone who identifies as a member of LGBTQIAP+ community (Figure 3).

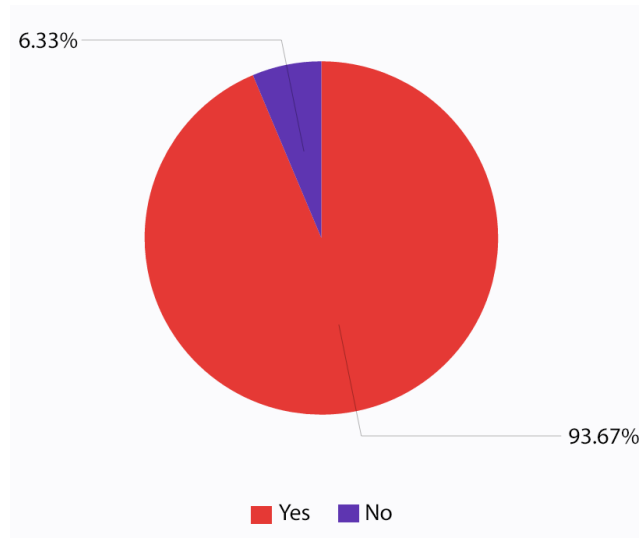


Figure 3: Figure 3: Whole Sample: Do you know someone who self identifies?

Furthermore, of those who claimed to know someone who self-identifies as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ community, 102 also self-identified while 293 did not. None of the individuals who self-identified did not also know someone else who also self-identified. On the other hand, 28 of those who did not self-identify also did not know someone who did (Figure 4).

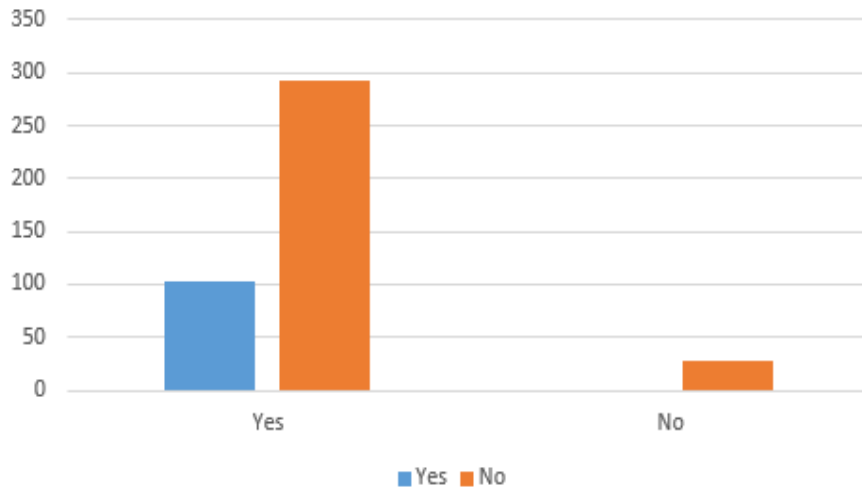


Figure 4: Sample Identification Within and Without the LGBTQIAP+ Community

The third question that the participants were asked was, “Do you know anyone who uses pronouns other than he/him or she/her? (For example *they/them* or *ey/em*).” This question was to test the familiarity of WPI’s population with gender neutral pronouns. Approximately 42 Percent of respondents knew someone who used pronouns other than he/him and she/her (Figure 5).

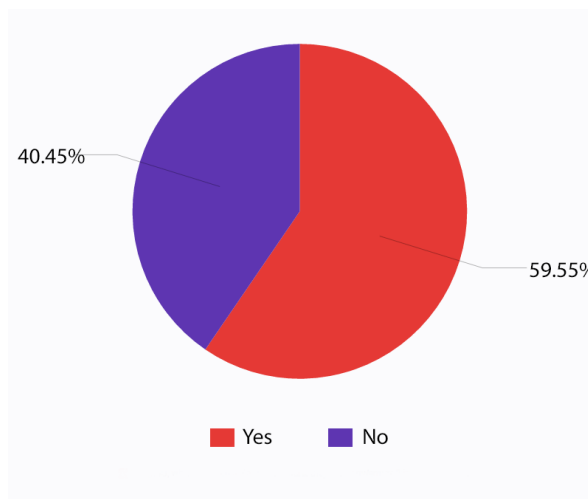


Figure 5: Whole Sample: Gender Neutral Pronoun Awareness

However, 70.18% or 155 of faculty or staff who responded to this question did not know anyone who used gender neutral pronouns (Figure 6). Only 38.99% or 62 members of the student body did not know anyone who used gender neutral pronouns. The most commonly known other pronoun was they/them, with a total of 146 responses.

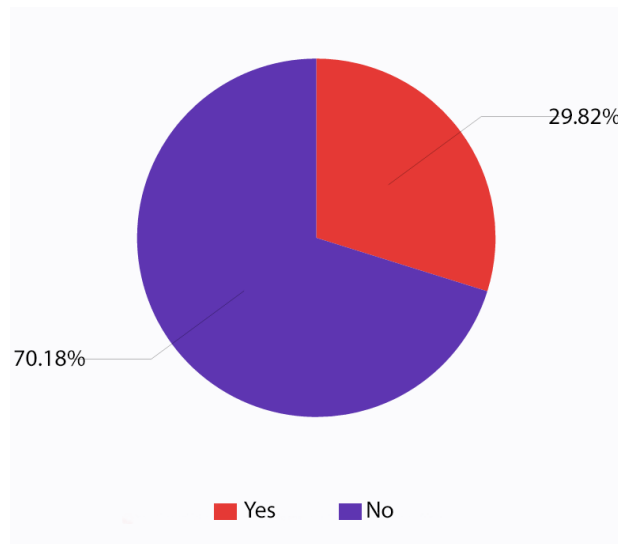


Figure 6: Faculty/Staff: Gender Neutral Pronoun Awareness

The final question presented to the participants was, “Please indicate with the following statement: WPI is accepting of students who self-identify as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ community. (on a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).” This question’s main purpose was to see how accepting each demographic who took the survey thought WPI’s atmosphere was towards people who identify themselves as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ community. 75.46% of all participants at least somewhat agree with the statement that WPI is accepting of students who self-identify as members of the LGBTQIAP+ community. However, of the individuals who indicated that they self-identified 9.09% marked that they feel that WPI’s campus climate is not accepting towards the LGBTQIAP+ community (Figure 7).

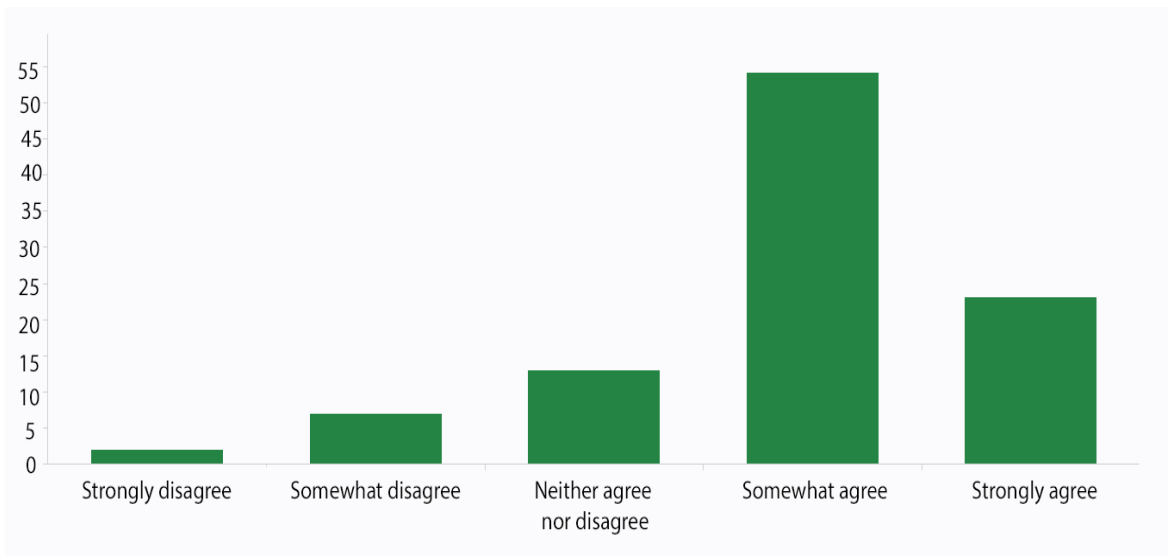


Figure 7: Campus Acceptance Towards LGBTQIAP+ Community According to Those Who Self-Identify

Of the individuals who indicated that they know others who self-identify, 6.69% marked that they feel that WPI’s campus climate is not accepting towards the LGBTQIAP+ community (Figure 8). Of the individuals who indicated that they neither self-identify nor know others who self-identify 3.70%, one person, marked that they feel that WPI’s campus climate is not accepting towards the LGBTQIAP+ community. No one in this category marked that they strongly disagreed (Figure 9).

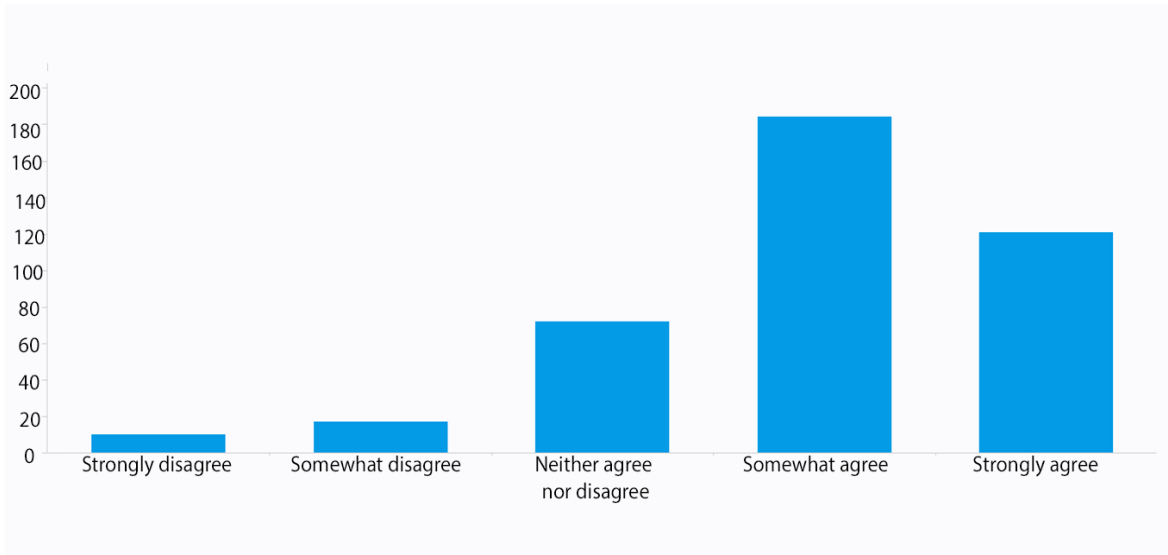


Figure 8: Campus Acceptance Towards LGBTQIAP+ Community According to Those Who Know Others Who Self-Identify

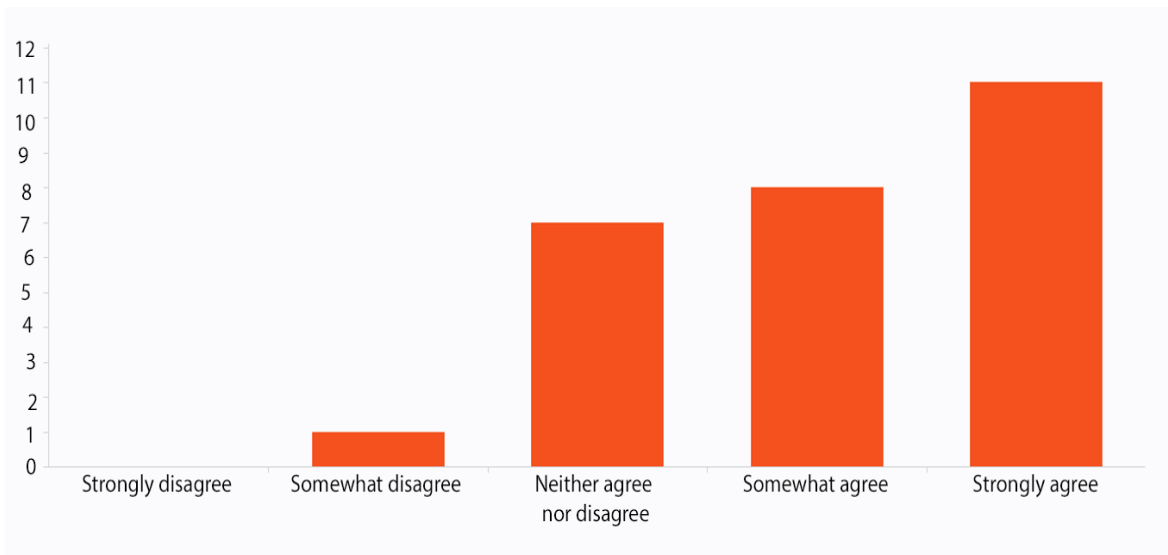


Figure 9: Campus Acceptance Towards LGBTQIAP+ Community According to Those Who Do Not Self-Identify and Do Not Know Others Who Self-Identify

Of the individuals who indicated that they were either a freshman or sophomore and self-identified as a member of the LGBTQIAP+ community, 8.57% marked that they feel that WPI's campus climate is not accepting towards the LGBTQIAP+ community (Figure 10).

There are several important and relevant conclusions that can be extracted from this data. The first is that almost all of the individuals that were surveyed at least know one person

who is a part of the LGBTQIAP+ community. It also appears that the student body seems to be far more comfortable with the concept of using gender neutral pronouns than staff or faculty. The last deduction is that for the most part, the people who were surveyed feel that WPI is at least somewhat accepting of the LGBTQIAP+ community. However the largest number of people who disagree are members of the LGBTQIAP+ community themselves.

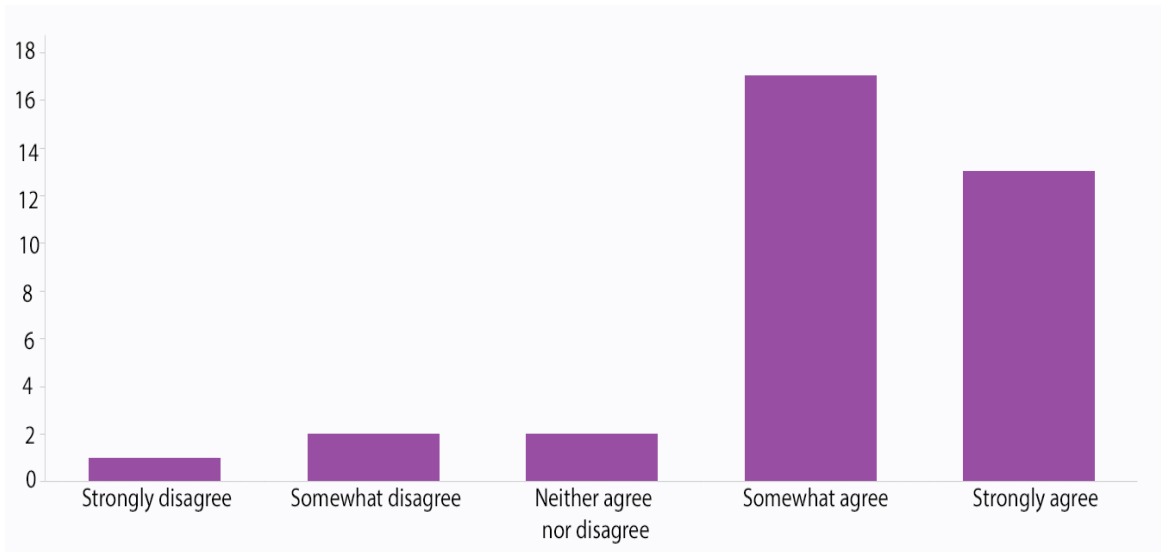


Figure 10: Campus Acceptance Towards LGBTQIAP+ Community According to Freshmen and Sophomores Who Self-Identify

Pronoun Training Development

Interviews

It was observed from the survey that a majority of those surveyed is someone or knows someone who identifies as members of the LGBTQIAP+ community. 70.18% of the students surveyed indicated that they knew someone who used gender neutral pronouns. While the survey also asks for an opinion on the acceptance of LGBTQIAP+ community members on the WPI campus, it does not ask about acceptance specifically regarding pronouns. To investigate this further, a series of interviews was conducted. Four community members belonging to The Alliance were asked questions about their pronouns and their experiences with them in an educational atmosphere and in a social atmosphere.

The first question that the participants were asked was what their preferred pronouns are. Two participants used she/her pronouns, one used they/them pronouns and the last participant used either they/them or he/him pronouns. They were then asked why they used these pronouns. Some of these responses had to do with gender identification as well as comfort. One participant remarked,

“I never felt connected to the pronouns that I was assigned at birth”.
-Undergraduate Student

Next the participants were asked if they had ever asked another student on this campus to use those pronouns. Three participants responded that they have asked people to use those pronouns. Those participants were asked how that experience went for them. For one individual, their pronouns were understood and respected. The other two participants expressed that it depended on the student that they were asking. Accepting and understanding students went on to use those pronouns while students who were uneducated or unfamiliar did not really respond to the request. The one participant who had never asked anyone to use these pronouns said that it was because their pronouns were always correctly assumed.

A similar question was then raised to the participants, it asked them if they had ever asked the same thing of a faculty or staff member. The same three participants from above had replied that they did. Two of those participants explained that it went very well or “better than I had expected”. One of those three participants explained that they had varying success. The last participant stated that they had never asked a staff or faculty member to use their preferred pronouns.

The participants were then asked if they felt safe and welcome in the WPI Community. Three participants responded that they did in all aspects, in both social spaces and in class. One participant just felt okay as an individual in the community but less so regarding personal or transgender topics. They stated,

“Generally, I feel okay about WPI. Not, generally, about trans and nonbinary issues that I’ve had to deal with personally.” - Undergraduate Student

The one participant who expressed negative feelings about being safe or welcome at WPI was then asked what made them feel unsafe. They responded that,

"I think a lot of what the negative responses I've gotten is simply due to lack of knowledge and lack of training. So, I feel like if more people understood things about trans and nonbinary issues it would be a lot better community and more open to people who identify because I know that's a large problem. Especially with incoming students. So, just more of an emphasis on it on campus as a whole would make things significantly improved."

- Undergraduate Student

Focus Group

Informed by the survey and interview responses, a first draft of a pronoun training was prepared by the IQP team, based on individual experiences with the subject matter and background research. A focus group of eight participants was recruited from the undergraduate general body of the WPI Alliance to whom the pronoun training draft was presented. The participants were asked to complete two questionnaires, one before and one after the focus group activity that evaluated their opinions of the training. The first questionnaire asked the participants for expectations of the pronoun training and familiarity with gender neutral pronouns. The second questionnaire asked for feedback after the participants were given the pronoun training in regards to efficacy and representation. The three questions asked during the first questionnaire were:

1. What do you expect out of a pronoun training?
2. Do you consider yourself to be knowledgeable about gender neutral pronouns?
3. How comfortable are you using gender neutral pronouns?

The questions asked in the second questionnaire were:

1. What did you think of the training?
2. How effective do you think it would be to individuals who know absolutely nothing about the subject matter?
3. Are we under- or over-representing any populations?
4. What could be done to improve the effectiveness of the training?

All of the questions were free response.

In the first questionnaire, it was found that most of the participants were concerned about conveying to trainees the importance of respecting another person's pronouns. Some participants expected the training to include "tools for avoiding misgendering people, respecting pronouns, and not assuming pronouns". One participant expected "more awareness about what different pronouns mean". All participants identified themselves as at least

somewhat knowledgeable about gender neutral pronouns and comfortable with using gender neutral pronouns.

In the second questionnaire, it was found that many of the participants thought the training to be “good”, “informative”, “fairly comprehensive”, and “concise”. Most participants thought the training to be effective for individuals who knew nothing about the subject matter but many clarified that this training should be the first of many steps toward understanding gender neutral pronouns. One participant expressed concern with the way gender were covered. They were “a little worried that people still won’t understand gender basics”. All participants felt that there was no over- or under-representation of any populations. One participant noted a “focus on non-binary people” but considered that to be “warranted”. Another participant suggested adding “gender queer as a more overarching trans identity”. Suggest improvements to the training included “to never use “it” pronouns”, “address specifically what happens when pronouns are not respected”, “looking into comments about a professor’s inclusiveness after the training”, and “more runs of the presentation”.

LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center

A series of interviews with open-ended questions was conducted to gauge WPI’s campus about both their awareness of LGBTQIAP+ issues on campus and what tools an appropriate resource center should have available. Six individuals, ranging from student to staff member and member of the LGBTQIAP+ community to not self-identifying, participated in these interviews.

The first question asked to the participants was regarding the participant’s knowledge of the campus climate around the LGBTQIAP+ community. Five out of the six participants expressed that they felt WPI’s acceptance and attitude towards these issues was relatively positive. One participant who shared this sentiment stated,

“I think it’s actually - I’m - I’ve been surprised by the - I think it’s pretty good. I think that a lot of it has to do with the last campus I was on was a year and a half ago and I think things have changed. So I’m not being personally affected by it on campus but I still think it seems to be pretty decent”.

-Faculty Member

However, the one participant who did not agree said,

"I think that I see less negative issues because I try to surround myself with people who aren't close minded. But, overall I think that people aren't educated and there's a lot of microaggressions that go on on-campus that I've noticed from people in and out of the community".

-Undergraduate Student

The second question presented to the participants asked them what resources WPI offers its LGBTQIAP+ community that they were familiar with. Only one participant could not name a single resource. The other participants mentioned student run organizations such as The Alliance and the Gender Equality Club, they also mentioned the preferred name initiative with Bannerweb and the Gender Neutral Bathrooms IQP as well as the Safe Zone Committee and the resources at the SDCC. However, no one participant was able to mention all of these.

The third question raised to the participants was if they would ever go to the resource center if it did exist. Four participants said that they would definitely go and two said that they were not sure. One of the unsure participants expressed after being asked to explain their feelings,

"...mostly because, personally, I don't feel like I need support. But, as an ally I definitely think that me going and showing my support would be a good thing. But, I don't know exactly what they would be planning to use the resource center for, so, it just kind of depends".

-Undergraduate Student

After this the participants were asked how they thought that WPI could better provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community member. Four out of the six participants said that a resource center would be the best way to do this. Other suggestions were pronoun trainings, amending the housing system, acknowledging the existence of the hardships of the community, and just generally making the protection of the LGBT community a larger priority. One participant mentioned,

"Well, these are hard questions for me because I'm not on campus very much. So I don't actually know everything that's here. But I think a center that combines social and practical stuff would be really cool".

-Faculty Member

Next the participants were asked what resources, service and amenities they would like to see be available in a resource center such as this. Some common themes in the varied responses were gender neutral or inclusive bathrooms, the availability of Alliance office hours or counseling, and a comfortable space to inhabit that included several couches and surfaces to do school work on.

The participants were then asked how they thought the center should be staffed. All of the interviewed participants expressed that a mixture of adult and student staff all belonging to or supportive of the community would be the most beneficial to the center.

The final question that the participants were asked was about what kind of space the resource center should inhabit. All six participants reported that WPI should grant at least an entire floor of a building to this space. Two participants said that it should inhabit an entire house similar to the OASIS House model. One participant responded,

“Probably a small house just off campus. That way you’re still in the campus community but far enough that it’s almost escaping the atmosphere of - like, if it’s during finals week you’re escaping the atmosphere of the ‘I have to do everything right now’ pressures and could just relax, be yourself, and study.”

- Undergraduate Student

In gathering this data, we were able to discover several things. The data from the survey helped find out that the majority of faculty or staff were not aware of gender neutral pronouns, and that most people somewhat agree with the statement that WPI is accepting of students who self-identify as members of the LGBTQIAP+ community. The pronoun training interviews and focus groups provided affirmation for the need of a gender neutral pronoun training on campus as well as providing good feedback on the pronoun training demonstration. The Resource Center Interviews provided a number of perspectives on the campus climate around the LGBTQIAP+ community, and also provided incentive to raise awareness of all of the resources that are available to the WPI LGBTQIAP+ community. All of these separate pieces can be connected in support of both the pronoun training that was written and the construction of an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus.

DISCUSSION

The general purpose of this IQP was to investigate the manifestation of gender neutrality at WPI and develop something that would promote and support the diversity of this campus. Our aim was to focus specifically on the local LGBTQIAP+ population and create tools and resources to not only grant them visibility but also safety and comfort. This was extremely important for us because we feel that this demographic is currently not given the full range of support and recognition that they are entitled to at an institution of this size and prestige.

In order to accomplish this goal, we devised a plan for a Gender Neutral Pronoun Training, as well as a proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center. In providing such a resource center in conjunction with the training, the WPI community would be taking steps forward in fostering a safer environment for a diverse population. To ascertain the need for such resources, we not only distributed a survey to members of the WPI community, but also conducted various interviews and focus groups.

Pronoun Training

Interviews

In the interviews conducted regarding pronouns, it was observed that participants who preferred she/her or he/him pronouns had less difficulty asking others in the campus community to use those pronouns. Participants who preferred they/them pronouns had varying difficulty, depending on the person they were asking. One participant said that “with people ... who aren’t cis-het, it tends to do over a lot better” and with “some people...can be a little more nonresponsive to the suggestion.” This same participant said the following:

“Generally I feel okay about WPI. Not, generally, about trans- and non-binary issues that I’ve had to deal with personally. ... I think a lot of what the negative responses I’ve gotten is simply due to lack of knowledge and lack of training.” - Undergraduate Student

A student not feeling safe to express themselves on the WPI campus is a point of concern for the entire campus community. A school needs to foster a safe learning environment for all of its students. As discussed in the background, this can hinder a student’s

capacity for learning. As a campus, we need to focus on validating the identities of transgender and gender-non-conforming students on our campus, making them feel safe and welcome at WPI. The same way we provide support system for the women and students of color, we need to provide for LGBTQIAP+ students.

We can provide this support system through an array of different ways. We can work to make the campus community more competent at dealing with LGBTQIAP+ issues. This can be accomplished through training. The existing Safe Zone Training offered by the Safe Zone Committee is an effective way to educate faculty, staff, and students in being able to better support their peers. In order to prevent misgendering and the adverse effects of it, we recommend developing and adding Pronoun Training to the Safe Zone curriculum. This training should be available to all students, faculty and staff. It should be required for community leaders such as Resident Advisors and staff members to receive this training.

Focus Group

In the questionnaire results from the focus group, we were able to gain some insight as to what we might have missed in writing up the Pronoun Training. One of the participants noticed and voiced that we had failed to discuss use of “it” as a pronoun in the training. The pronoun “it” will be added to the training and it will be stressed that it is offensive to refer to another person using “it” pronouns unless asked specifically by the other person. Other participants were concerned that the concept of gender was not fully covered in the training. We recognized that gender is a large and daunting topic to talk about and that many, many training modules could be written and never cover gender in entirety. In future, we will emphasize that the training is not meant to be a crash course in gender, but in preferred pronouns.

Most participants expressed that the training would only be the first step for community members to learn about gender neutral pronouns and supporting transgender and gender-non-conforming people. It was clear there was a desire for a resource for trainees to be able to continue learning. For this reason, a participant handbook will be provided along with the training. This will be available to all trainees in physical and digital forms with a number of

resources including: material covered in training, books and links for further reading, organizations to support, and a directory of on-campus support systems.

It was also recognized that it is unreasonable to expect trainees to memorize all gender neutral pronouns. Focus group participants asked that we emphasize that trainees should take away an openness to learn about new and different pronoun sets, and a willingness to improve in pronoun awareness.

The complete and revised training will be provided to the Alliance and the Safe Zone Committee. The Safe Zone Committee Student Chair will be responsible for coordinating and scheduling training schedules. We recommend that the training is updated once each year to ensure the campus community is being provided with the most current information.

Resource Center

In the survey that was distributed to campus, 93.67% of participants said they knew at least one individual who identified within the LGBTQIAP+ community. However, not one individual who was interviewed about an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center could name the full range of resources available to the members of this community. This could imply that either there is a lack of proactivity in the student body to discover the resources available to enrich their experience at this institution or WPI isn't properly advertising all of the materials they provide. In reality, it is probably a mixture of both. There is a factor of intimidation for students to ask for help at any type of school but this factor is increased at a place centered around the STEM field and a place of such prestige. It's a stigma to ask for help academically or socially, some students feel as though it's an admittance of weakness or lesser intelligence. This could prevent students from seeking out the resources that they have a right to access. It is also sometimes difficult to find these resources because of WPI's many layers of administration. Often when asking a pertinent personal question you are sent to the head of another department who sends you to someone below them who might know something about your problem. However, if an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center existed, there would be no question of

what resources were available to that community (see Appendix C). They would all be housed in one convenient location accessible by students and allies of all backgrounds.

A common answer to the question of what WPI could do to better provide for its LGBTQIAP+ population among the resource center interviews was simply to grant them more visibility and to prioritize the issues that affect their community. Although 75.46% of the participants of the general survey felt that WPI was at least somewhat accepting towards this community, there is still almost one fourth who did not feel this way. Additionally, 23.79% of the survey's participants self-identified as LGBTQIAP+. All of this data together suggests that WPI's LGBTQIAP+ population is growing and while the majority of people believe that WPI is not a hostile environment for this community to exist in, it is not felt that WPI as an institution does not properly acknowledge them. This is understandable considering WPI's history of being an all male, all cisgender, and mostly white engineering school for so many years. However in the last few decades the institution has been heading in a new and exponentially diverse direction. This includes the current position of president being filled by a wonderfully qualified woman. This issue of underrepresentation is not just a problem on a local level. An examination of pop culture and modern, national politics reveals the same trend. Media tends to be hetero and cisgender normative while legislation is continually drafted to suppress the rights of the LGBTQIAP+ population. There is no better statement for WPI to make than to dedicate the time and capital to an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center to support this growing demographic of its population (see Appendix C). This would be especially powerful in the political climate of 2017 with figures in office who are infamous for hate speech towards those within the LGBTQIAP+ community.

Another noteworthy theme that arose during the interview process was that no one thought the resource center would be suitable in a space smaller than an entire floor. This implies that the student and faculty of WPI believe that this is an issue worthy of WPI's space, which is a very valuable commodity, given the size of the campus. Several individuals brought up the fact that a shared space wouldn't work for this particular venture. This is because we, the IQP team and the interviewers, felt that the space should be private and secluded in order to respect its inhabitants and ensure that no one with ill intentions could have an excuse

to be in the space. This incentivises WPI to not just put this resource center in a small room in the corner of the library in an unused tech suite but instead to plan an appropriate and respectable home. Furthermore, a theme also prevalent in the interviews was that every single participant expressed they would visit the center, even if they didn't find the services necessary for themselves. This suggests that it would not become an exclusionary space that is uncomfortable for people outside of the LGBTQIAP+ community to inhabit. It also suggests that it would not be an underutilized space if WPI did choose to construct one (see Appendix C).

Project Limitations

There are a few important notes to keep in mind when thinking about the recommendations made in this section. The first is that of the six interviews that were conducted on this topic, five of them were with undergraduate students. There were no interviews conducted with graduate students and only one interview conducted with a faculty member. Four out of the six interviews were conducted with members of the Alliance. The focus group session was conducted immediately after an Alliance general body meeting, causing the focus group to be completely made up of Alliance members. Members of the Alliance have a greater general knowledge of the issues that affect the LGBTQIAP+ community than unaffiliated students.

With regards to the Gender Neutral Pronoun Training, these aspects of the interviews put some limitations on what feedback we could receive. Specifically, the 5 undergraduate students and one faculty member that were interviewed. Since there were no interviews conducted with them, we could not get any insight from the perspective of a graduate student. Furthermore, 4 out of the 5 undergraduate students interviewed were members of The Alliance, which limits the amount of responses we could get from unaffiliated students to one.

When drafting questions for the survey we distributed across campus, we had to consider several things, such as respect for the responders' privacy as well as following the rules of conducting such a survey as stated by the IRB. Additionally, we had little to no control over who took the survey resulting in a much larger amount of faculty and staff responses as

opposed to responses from the student body. This limited control also determined how many responses we got, as it was not possible for us to distribute the survey across the entire campus population. In spite of all of these limiting factors, the survey was still able to produce fruitful results, and valid findings.

IQP Team: Personal Growth

The team members working on this project benefitted in their own unique ways and gained their own unique set of tools to carry with them in their academic pursuits. This section is dedicated to giving room for their personal accounts and descriptions of the knowledge they've gained.

Leo Bunyea

I heard about this project through a staff member of the OMA and couldn't resist the opportunity to work on a topic that was so personal to me. This past summer I came out as a transgender man and was ready to champion the cause of gender inclusivity on campus. This project not only taught me about responsibility, time management, and how to work around the schedules of my group mates but it also connected me to various community members, student organizations and resources that I never had the chance to explore. If it weren't for the events of this IQP I would never have been so deeply involved in the Safe Zone Committee or have a position on the executive board of the Alliance or have met such wonderful people like Julia Sorcinelli, Professor Hall-Phillips, and Michelle Jones-Johnson. I am extremely grateful for having played a part in this whole endeavor because it has allowed me to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Pat Linzo

Prior to joining the project team, I had been serving as the President of the Alliance. I came to WPI's campus wanting to come out and live authentically as a gender-non-conforming individual. I was met immediately with resistance stemming from antiquated policies of the university. While I was able to find a community that supported me regardless of gender status,

expression or identity, the campus community at large still felt unwelcoming. Since then, I have taken every opportunity to prevent my experiences to repeat themselves among all students to enter WPI from now forward. Working on this project, I learned the different avenues through which I can push my activism. I also gained valuable knowledge in small group work and how that differs from whole club operations and larger group work. In communicating with the team, our advisor, and the people who attended our presentation, I have gained invaluable communication skills to carry with me into my career. I learned how to manage my time more effectively, with my activism taking up the space of one class as opposed to an extracurricular activity. What, to me, was most valuable was, becoming meeting with and becoming acutely aware of the advocates and supporters transgender and gender-non-conforming WPI community members have.

Chris DeJesus

In cooperating on this project I have learned much about what it takes to accomplish a project of this scale: time, coordination, and cooperation. Additionally I have learned that the proper management of time is extremely important, as managing this alongside my other courses proved to be amongst the most challenging things I've done. There were many times where I felt like I was unable to keep going, but through the support of my peers and our professor, I found myself able to proceed. Perseverance in the face of hardship proved to be a key component in this project, as well as not being afraid to ask for help when needed.

CONCLUSION

WPI's community is evolving and needs the proper programs and resources to support it. In order to foster the social growth of WPI's community we set out to not only write a gender neutral pronoun training, but also to draft a proposal for an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus. The gender neutral pronoun training would mainly provide students, staff and faculty with the opportunity to practice using unfamiliar pronouns and to provide the nonbinary community at WPI visibility. The existence of an LGBTQIAP+ resource center center on campus would grant a physical space to that particular community to meet and connect with like-minded peers. However, it would also be a massive statement of acceptance and protection by WPI in the modern political climate.

When polling the campus on their general knowledge of the LGBTQIAP+ community at WPI, we found that our participants were not only somewhat familiar with it but also extremely supportive of it. The majority of responses indicated that they felt WPI's atmosphere was open and accepting. The education that was generally lacking was with regards to transgender issues facing nonbinary folks. In addition to this fact, among the individuals that were interacted with not one could name the full range of resources available to the LGBTQIAP+ community. When we asked students and faculty about their suggestions for an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center and their thoughts on it's usage, every participant expressed that they would feel comfortable spending time there and that it should inhabit at the very least an entire floor of a building. The majority of participants also said that this is the best way that WPI could provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community. During the focus group sessions that we held for the first draft of the gender neutral pronoun trainings, the question of effectiveness was raised. Focus group members discussed the fact that a simple one hour session may not alter the behavior of the trainees in their practices at WPI. They also stressed the inclusion of "it" being an offensive pronoun. In spite of this, the training was generally well received.

The progress towards diversity and inclusion on this campus made by this IQP team is vital to the quality of life of WPI's LGBTQIAP+ population. The gender neutral pronoun training that was drafted specifically for this campus will grant visibility to the nonbinary students, staff,

and faculty on this campus and validate their identity in the minds of the less knowledgeable. Using an individual's preferred pronouns is the most basic form of respect and acknowledgment. The concept of asking a new acquaintance what their preferred pronouns are should be normalized as common courtesy and that is why this training needs to be administered by organizations like the Safe Zone Committee. A similar argument can be made for the importance on building an LGBTQIAP+ Resource Center. WPI's administration should seriously consider this because every individual should have access to a space where they feel metaphorically at home. A space where they can be connected with like minded peers and have all resources relevant to their identity on this campus at their fingertips. If an individual is uncomfortable or anxious, then they cannot operate at their maximum capacity for greatness. We urge WPI as an institution to review this project and use its data and resources to further the cause of inclusion with regards to all minorities and not just with this specific population.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Resource Center Interviews

Interview 1:

Interviewer: Okay, so our first question is; how is the campus climate around LGBTQIAP+ community members and issues?

Participant: Um, from my perspective as someone that's probably not as involved as they could be, I'd say from what I've heard around that it's pretty good. But, I'm definitely not personally involved so I don't know how accurately I could say what level it's at. But, generally people seem to be pretty accepting.

Interviewer: Alright. Our second question is; what do you know about resources on campus currently available to the LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Personally, I don't think I could name a single resource.

Interviewer: So our third question is; if there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus would you go there? Um, yes, no, or you're not sure.

Participant: Um, I don't - I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Is there any particular reason why you're not sure, or?

Participant: Mostly because, personally, I don't feel like I need support. But, as an ally I definitely think that me going and showing my support would be a good thing. But, I don't know exactly what they would be planning to use the resource center for, so, it just kind of depends.

Interviewer: Thank you. Our fourth question is; what could WPI do to better provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Probably a ridiculously large amount of things since I can't even think of a single thing that they do that is helpful. Um, probably making it more accepting and making it a bigger priority that the community is actually taken care of and given rights and help *laughs*.

Interviewer: So, our last question is; if there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on this campus what resources would you expect to be available? Is the first part of the question.

Participant: I would hope that they would have some sort of counseling because I'm sure there's a lot of people that are unsure of themselves and they need some direction and a little bit of guidance. Especially because this topic it's kind of pushed under the rug a lot.

Interviewer: The second part to that question is; what services/ amenities would you expect to be available?

Participant: Well, definitely people to talk to. I hope that they would have a bunch of different bathrooms that people felt comfortable using - and it would be pretty awful if that was the only place on campus that people felt comfortable using the bathroom but, I mean, you gotta start somewhere. Um, definitely a safe space with some nice couches that make you feel good and you can talk to other people that are like-minded.

Interviewer: The third part; how would you expect it to be staffed?

Participant: Definitely depending on the size of the space and what resources they were planning to offer, I'd probably see a staff of maybe five to ten people. I think that would be pretty fair.

Interviewer: And the last part of our last question is; what kind of space would be most effective for this sort of center, for example, an office, a building, an entire floor, a specific location on campus, et cetera.

Participant: I think at the very least, a whole floor. I think it's pretty important that it's one space not just like a little piece of a room that's kind of roped off. I think the whole point of feeling comfortable in the space is important and in my head it looks very comfortable.

Interviewer: Thank you!

Participant: You're very welcome.

Interview 2:

Interviewer: So our first question is; how is the campus climate around LGBTQIAP+ community members and issues, in your opinion?

Participant: How is it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: I think it's actually - I'm - I've been surprised by the - I think it's pretty good. I think that a lot of it has to do with the last campus I was on was a year and a half ago and I think things have changed. So I'm not being personally affected by it on campus but I still think it seems to be pretty decent.

Interviewer: What do you know about resources on campus currently available to LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Well, I'm doing the SafeZone training, I haven't done it yet. There's also a whole bunch of stuff on - actually I don't know which part of the website it is - but it's about how to address people in class, how to if someone comes up with an issue because they are then how to direct them to somebody who can help or if it's like harassment or just it's getting me down, you know?

Interviewer: If there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus would you go there? Yes, no, or you're not sure.

Participant: It depends on what its focus is since I don't fall into any of those letters. I wouldn't go there specifically for help but I would go there to help if asked - like if I was asked by the diversity department and so on.

Interviewer: What could WPI do to better provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Well, these are hard questions for me because I'm not on campus very much. So I don't actually know everything that's here. But I think a center that combines social and practical stuff would be really cool.

Interviewer: So, this next question is a multi-parter. So, the umbrella question is if there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on this campus, first part, what resources would you expect to be available?

Participant: I would expect there to be counseling. I would expect there to be, actually a full range of resources as there are to every other student. I would match it. Even though people could use that as well but I would have them particularly for the community.

Interviewer: So, the next part of that question falls under the same thing it's just what services/ amenities would you expect, so I assume it's like similar answers.

Participant: Uh, a whole bar.

Interviewer: *laughs*

Participant: Um, no *laughs*. I've always found I gravitated more towards places like that. Uh, no. I would - what's the question? Sorry.

Interviewer: What services/ amenities would you expect to be available?

Participant: Again, everything that's available to everybody else and without trying to make a subset of it.

Interviewer: How would you expect it to be staffed?

Participant: I would hope it could be staffed with both LG..B..

Interviewer: T

Participant: There are a bunch of letters. LGBT people but as well as not. I think it should be a cross section of the community. I think everything should be diverse I think there should be Muslim students, you know, everything.

Interviewer: So the last part of the last question is what kind of space would be most effective for this center? For example an office, an entire building, an entire floor, et cetera.

Participant: I think it should have its own space. Offices I don't think. Maybe there could be offices as part of it when you're doing one on one counseling or help of some kind. But, I think there should also be an activity place for people, a social area. So, I think I'm talking about at least a floor. I think on a campus this size asking for an entire building might be a little difficult. But I think a floor of, like, the campus center, or something like that. Or a place in the Campus

Center. Like it's own area that would have to have some sort of controlled entrance so you can't just wander in at lunch. Something like that. Is that okay?

Interviewer: Yeah! Thank you for your time.

Interview 3:

Interviewer: How is campus climate around LGBTQIAP+ community members and issues?

Participant: As a whole?

Interviewer: As a whole.

Participant: I think that I see less negative issues because I try to surround myself with people who aren't close minded. But, overall I think that people aren't educated and there's a lot of microaggressions that go on on-campus that I've noticed from people in and out of the community. That's something that I think needs to be worked on for it to become at all welcoming enough for students.

Interviewer: What do you know about resources on campus that are currently available to self-identifying community members?

Participant: I know about the initiative for names on your - preferred names on your emails different - Blackboard - websites. I know about the gender neutral bathroom initiative. I know that... What else do I know? I don't know.

Interviewer: You know about the Alliance.

Participant: Oh! Wow! I do know about the Alliance.

Interviewer: I mean, maybe you know about the Alliance.

Participant: Maybe I know about the Alliance. I mean, hypothetically as an anonymous data point. I know that there's different gender equality clubs. That's pretty cool too. They try sometimes.

Interviewer: If there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus would you go there?

Participant: Yes, I would because I'm tired of the cishet community here at WPI.

Interviewer: What could WPI do to better provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Acknowledging them would be - as a larger focus - would be a lot more... A lot more better [sic] is what I was going to say but if you're quoting me at all -

Interviewer: We're probably not going to quote you.

Participant: Good because words are hard. Can you repeat the question?

Interviewer: How can WPI better provide.

Participant: Providing more resources. I know that there are attempts to make things better like with the IQP last year and the gender neutral bathrooms. I still don't know of the signs being put up around campus and I think just having those around would be a lot more "in your face" response. It shows that WPI is actually standing with the trans community at large and I would love to see it but it's been over a year since that order went out to put those signs up... So. You know what. I'd like to see that. I'd like a larger emphasis with professors because I know students who have come to me about different professors responding badly about names and pronouns and just being disrespectful of various identities. It's really frustrating when someone in that position of power is dismissive to how you identify and I don't think that's the community WPI should be supporting. I think we should be putting a heavier emphasis on acceptance overall. Also, housing sucks. Yeah.. I'm going to leave it, housing sucks.

Interviewer: If was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on campus what resources would you expect to be available?

Participant: I think expanding on media resources that the OASIS house has would be really cool. But also, like, non-depressing movies... Just resources for mental health and counseling. Just a fun hangout space. It's really great to have a space you can go where people there understand at all what you're going through and I think it's especially beneficial for people because there's such a high prevalence of depression and anxiety within the LGBTQIAP+ community. I think it's a really great way to allow that type of support to help them with self-care and just being able to support these kids as we go through the term.

Interviewer: What services and amenities would you expect to be available?

Participant: Five course meals 24/7.

Interviewer: *laughs* Every hour is another five course meal?

Participant: Yeah! We're hungry people!

Interviewer: We are hungry.

Participant: Amenities? I don't think it really needs to be that fancy or anything. I think having a place to sit with a couple shelves. Maybe a TV but, like, seating and books. I like reading so I think a cool place to hang out maybe have a table or a couple tables to maybe sit and do work would be really cool.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, so do we sit on the tables?

Participant: Yeah. Sit on the tables and then do your work on the chairs. *joking*

Interviewer: How would you expect it to be staffed?

Participant: Like?

Interviewer: Like a faculty/ staff member like a real life adult or like a work study person or maybe the Alliance would have office hours or maybe just a student worker...

Participant: I think having either a student worker or I think Alliance office hours would be really cool now that you mention that. Whoever executive people are on the Alliance. I don't know who they are but whoever ends up being exec would have a lot of fun doing that, I think.

Interviewer: What kind of space do you think would be most effective for this resource center? Like an office? Or like a whole building? Or the floor of a building? Or one of those off campus house office things?

Participant: I think the whole Foisie Innovation Studio should go to the Alliance. But honestly -

Interviewer: If we're thinking fiscally.

Participant: Fiscally, I hesitate to say an entire house. I would love an entire house but a floor of a building like that, an off campus building. It's on campus technically, but one of those houses,

off the hill buildings that are reformatted to hold different apartments I think having maybe a room or a couple rooms would be really beneficial.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you so much!

Interview 4:

Interviewer: The first question is how is the campus climate around LGBTQIAP+ community members and issues?

Participant: I think it's generally pretty good. Because whenever I see something pop up about that, I don't usually see like opposition for anything and, I mean, the Alliance has a good presence, they table sit a lot. That kind of thing and there's the little stickers everywhere. I think the SDCC and other organizations that already exist are like inclusive, so.

Interviewer: What do you know about resources that are currently available to LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: Well, there's the Alliance. The SDCC has something, I think. I'm not really sure.

Interviewer: They have a support group. Is that what you mean?

Participant: Yeah, something like that. I don't know that there's anything else specific to it.

Interviewer: If there was an LGBTQIAP+ resource center on this campus would you go there?

Participant: Probably if I had time.

Interviewer: What could WPI do to better provide for its LGBTQ community members?

Participant: I mean, that resource center sounds like one of the best ideas I've heard for that in a while.

Interviewer: If there was an LGBTQ resource center on campus, what resources would you expect to be available?

Participant: Um, probably a similar support group thing like at the SDCC and, I don't know, probably something to help you, like, navigate campus related things especially with, I guess like pronouns and stuff. Probably there'd be like visibility resources for the many letters that

people forget. I guess probably trans resources would be a big one because there are a lot of things that are sometimes hard to access.

Interviewer: What services or amenities would you expect to be available? I think you kind of answered that with, like, support groups. But do you have any?

Participant: Amenities? I don't know exactly how that would fit in except with just general building things. Maybe they could push for a gender neutral bathroom type thing or at least inclusive gendered ones.

Interviewer: How would you expect it to be staffed? So maybe like a real life faculty/ staff person or like a student worker?

Participant: I mean, I guess having some staff would be ideal. I guess they wouldn't need necessarily additional therapists or whatever because the SDCC has those and they can direct you to that. I mean, maybe an LGBT specific one, like, experienced in that or something.

Interviewer: What kind of space to you think would be most effective for this kind of center? Like an office, a building, like a whole floor? And where on campus.

Participant: You know how SDCC is in like one of the houses over there?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: So, probably something like that would be good because, i don't know, it feels kind of home-y and has a lot of space. It's not like a, you know, clinical office kind of thing.

Interviewer: Awesome. Thank you so much!

Interview 5:

Interviewer: How is the campus climate around LGBTQIAP+ community members and issues?

Participant: It's definitely inclusive to a point but there's definitely a higher rate of inclusivity compared to other communities I've been in.

Interviewer: What do you know about resources on campus currently available to those community members?

Participant: I know that we have The Alliance which is a pretty great student organization, they do a good job with that. Then there's the Safe Zone Committee which is faculty and staff based.

Interviewer: If there was a queer resource center on campus would you go there?

Participant: Heck yeah.

Interviewer: Why?

Participant: Because I think it would be a very valuable resource for LGBT students and also those seeking to get information just in general.

Interviewer: What could WPI do better to provide for its LGBTQIAP+ community members?

Participant: I would say have a pronoun training for faculty and staff and potentially RAs and also a queer resource center would be incredibly valuable.

Interviewer: If there were a queer resource center on campus what resources would you expect to be available?

Participant: I would expect some type of support staff people there with like office hours or something like that. Maybe reading materials and informations... So, books, other resources. Maybe candy. Candy would be nice.

Interviewer: What services or amenities would you expect to be available?

Participant: Services? I would say just like answers to questions. Maybe a counselor contact? That would be cool.

Interviewer: How would you expect it to be staffed?

Participant: Probably in a similar manner to how the OASIS house is staffed. So, like, students working there or people having office hours there. So potentially Alliance members or exec having office hours there.

Interviewer: What kind of space do you think would be most effective for this kind of center?

Participant: Something comfortable and cozy. So, like couches... Maybe like a TV, board games, similar to the OASIS house.

Interviewer: So like a house or a building or an office or an entire floor?

Participant: An entire floor would be lovely.

Interviewer: Where on campus do you think it should be placed?

Participant: Somewhere central to campus so that it's easy to get to. It would be cool if it was in the Foisie Innovation studio but I don't know how that works. But somewhere central to campus.

Interviewer: Alright, thanks.

Interview 6:

Interviewer: How is campus climate around queer community members and issues?

Participant: I think that it's very good compared to what I'm used to.

Interviewer: Do you care to explain?

Participant: Nobody's going around saying, "you're going to burn and die in hell". So, that's, like, a plus. So, that's pretty great.

Interviewer: Pretty good base level.

Participant: Yeah. Generally people are very very accepting and that's pretty nice. Pretty great.

Interviewer: What do you know about resources on campus currently available to queer community members?

Participant: So, I know that there's the Alliance. You are the president of that.

Interviewer: That's me.

Participant: That's you. Uhm, there's the SDCC and the Safe Space stickers on people's doors and places like that.

Interviewer: If there were a queer resource center on campus, would you go there?

Participant: All the time.

Interviewer: Why?

Participant: Because it would be a place where I can just be gay.

Interviewer: What could WPI do to better provide for its queer community members?

Participant: Have a queer resource center on campus.

Interviewer: If there was a queer resource center on campus, what resources would you expect to be available?

Participant: A place where the community can go with the recent political discussions going on surrounding the queer community. We would be able to just be free of all of that. Even though the community at WPI is very accepting, the queer community at WPI is 100% accepting. So, we would all be able to just be in our little space.

Interviewer: What services or amenities would you expect to be available?

Participant: Study space. Hotline resources in case people had any mental health problems. Direct connections to the SDCC because statistically the queer community has a high mental health...

Interviewer: Prevalence?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Incident rate?

Participant: Yeah, I would say mental health rate.

Interviewer: How would you expect it to be staffed?

Participant: Either with people who are already staff or faculty members on campus who are of the community or strong allies of the community or bring in new staff or faculty that are of or strong allies to the community. Also, people who have training in handling situations where a person who - let's take for instance myself. for example. where I come from a very strong background of a family life where not everybody loves you because of who you are. So, dealing with that psychologically people would have to take that into account and be able to know that that is what that student is going through and they would have to be able to handle situations like that. If, say, a student like me were to ever get out of hand emotionally or mentally. Mentally unstable.

Interviewer: What kind of space do you think would be most effective for this sort of center? Like a small space like an office or like a whole building?

Participant: Probably a small house. Just off campus. That way you're still in the campus community but far enough that it's almost escaping the atmosphere of, like, if it's during finals week, you're escaping the atmosphere of, "I have to do everything right now!" pressures and

you could just relax, be yourself, study. It would be a nice little space to, you know, play games and get your mind off things. Life, whatever.

Appendix B: Pronoun Interviews

Interview 1:

Interviewer: First question, what pronouns do you use?

Participant: I use they/them theirs.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer to use these pronouns?

Participant: Because gender is a void. No, because I have gone back and forth a lot about gender in the past four years of my life and so they/them/theirs is just what I'm most comfortable using with people.

Interviewer: Have you ever used another student on this campus to use these pronouns?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: How did it go?

Participant: Sometimes especially with people more... Who aren't cis-het... It tends to go over a lot better. Some people, specifically different clubs that I'm in, it can be a little more nonresponsive to the suggestion. I've had friends who also identify as nonbinary and we've, in some of the clubs that we've been in asked people to respect our pronouns they don't necessarily understand what we're talking about and they don't... Very few of them actually use them. That might be because some of the people are new and then they hear the shitty people not use pronouns so they just assume and we aren't are confrontational about it... I guess as we want to be. We just make sassy looks at each other.

Interviewer: Alright, have you ever asked a faculty or staff member to use these pronouns?

Participant: Not a professor that I've had. I've had faculty that I've worked with on different committees that I've asked to use they/them/theirs pronouns for me. But, that's with varying success.

Interviewer: Do you generally feel safe or welcome in the WPI community?

Participant: Generally, I feel okay about WPI. Not, generally, about trans and nonbinary issues that I've had to deal with personally.

Interviewer: What would make you feel more safe or welcomed here in the WPI community?

Participant: I think a lot of what the negative responses I've gotten is simply due to lack of knowledge and lack of training. So, I feel like if more people understood things about trans and nonbinary issues I think it would be a lot better community and more open to people who identify because I know that's a large problem. Especially with incoming students. So, just more of an emphasis on it on campus as a whole I think would make things significantly improved.

Interviewer: Cool, thank you!

Interview 2:

Interviewer: This first question is; what pronouns do you use?

Participant: I use she/her.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer these pronouns?

Participant: Because I guess I identify as a girl.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked another student on campus to use these pronouns specifically?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: So, how did it go?

Participant: Wait, what?

Interviewer: Have you ever had to make that - go, like, "Hey"?

Participant: Oh! I thought you said if I asked someone else their pronouns. Oh, okay.

Interviewer: So, have you?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Why not?

Participant: Because people assumed she/her pronouns.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked a faculty/staff member on this campus to go by these pronouns in any specific way?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Do you generally feel safe or welcome in the WPI community?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: In class, social spaces and all spaces?

Participant: Mostly.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interview 3:

Interviewer: What pronouns do you use?

Participant: She/her/hers.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer those pronouns?

Participant: Because they're what I was raised with and it would be confusing to try and use anything else at this point for me.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked another student on this campus to use these pronouns?

Participant: Yes, I have.

Interviewer: How did it go?

Participant: It was respected and kind of understood.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked a faculty/staff member on this campus to use these pronouns?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: How'd that go?

Participant: It went fine. It was as expected.

Interviewer: Do you generally feel safe or welcome in the WPI community?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Class, social spaces, et cetera?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interview 4:

Interviewer: What pronouns do you use?

Participant: I use they/them or he/him.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer these pronouns?

Participant: Because growing up I've never felt connected to the pronouns that I was given at birth.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked another student on this campus to use those pronouns?

Participant: Yes, I have.

Interviewer: How'd it go?

Participant: It depended on the student, but more or less most of the students have been very accepting. Very accepting. More so than any students from where I'm from.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked a faculty or staff member to use these pronouns?

Participant: RA's count as faculty members, right?

Interviewer: Like, staff?

Participant: Or staff members.

Interviewer: I think they count as staff.

Participant: So, then yes.

Interviewer: How'd that go?

Participant: It went very well. Better than I expected.

Interviewer: Do you generally feel safe or welcome in the WPI community?

Participant: Yes!

Interviewer: In class, social spaces and all spaces on campus?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Cool, that's the end.

Appendix C: Resource Center Proposal

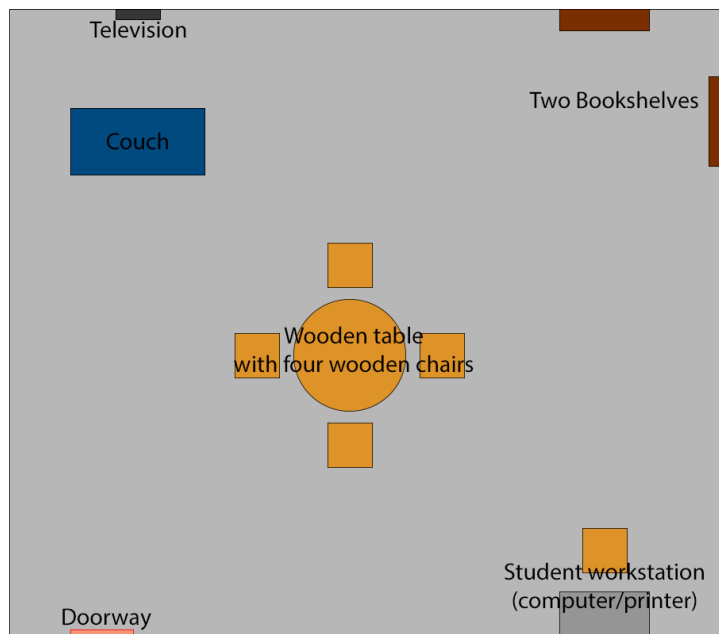
“The Safe Zone” Proposal

Based on data and experiences of the team, this is the proposed **Mission Statement** of the Resource Center:

The Safe Zone works in conjunction with the Safe Zone Committee and The Alliance to champion our celebration of diversity. We exist to create a safer campus for individuals of marginalized genders and sexualities. We teach the values of understanding, acceptance, and visibility to enrich the social awareness of our college. We provide vital resources, physical meeting spaces, and occasional events to support those that need them.

Space Specifications

- Minimum Dimensions:
 - One room, 28' X 32'
- Ideal Dimensions:
 - A house with two floors of usable space, for example, the OASIS House
 - Would ideally have access to a gender neutral single stall shower
- Space non-negotiables
 - Must have handicap accessible gender neutral single stall bathroom
 - Must be wired for ethernet connections and have power outlets
 - Must be within a ten minute walking distance from the center of WPI's main campus
- Visual of a potential layout of minimum space:



Contents

Below is a list of minimum furnishings and contents required for the resource center to be able to open its doors.

Note: These are only estimated costs. There is also potential for these items to be borrowed or shifted from other locations across campus.

Minimum Furnishings

Number Needed	Item	Total Cost
1	Computer Workstation (desktop, monitor, keyboard, mouse)	\$600
1	Printer (with scanning and faxing capabilities)	\$100
1	Couch (large enough to seat three people)	\$400
1	Television (at least 32")	\$300
-	The Alliance Library	\$0 - Moved from the OASIS

		House
2	Medium-sized bookshelves	\$200
Subscription Based	Newspapers/Periodicals/Magazines (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LGBT_periodicals#United_States)	Subscription Based
50 of each	Brochures (Planned Parenthood, Fenway Health, AIDS Project Worcester, SDCC)	\$0
1	Computer Desk	\$200
1	Computer Chair	\$50
1	Round Wooden Table (at least 4 feet in diameter)	\$150
4	Wooden Chairs	\$200

As more funding is acquired here is a list of additional items that would be beneficial for a larger space. It is also important to keep in mind that **this is not a finite list**. Other furnishings that the employees or users of the space display a need for should be promptly added or purchased.

Additional Furnishings

Number Needed	Item	Total Cost
4	Bean Bag Chairs	\$150
1	5'X8' Rug	\$75
1	Bulletin Board (at least 2'X3')	\$50
1	White Board (at least 2'X3')	\$50
1	Coffee Maker (complete with an assortment of K-Cups)	\$150

Staffing

- Minimum Staffing
 - Position: Student Employee (3)
 - Part-time
 - Minimum wage
 - Each student is responsible for opening the center and running it either Monday, Tuesday, or Friday for 3 hours, 5-8PM
 - They would also be responsible for the operation of the center outside of its normal hours in the case of events that are advertised and run by these employees in conjunction with members of the alliance
 - Would typically be a member of The Alliance to be able to hold office hours during their shift
- Ideal Staffing
 - Position: Director (1)
 - Full-time
 - \$50,000 per year salary (subject to change)
 - Responsibilities:
 - Supervises the other employees of the resource center
 - Writing and applying to grants
 - Looking for professional conferences to send students to
 - Making various schedules for the center
 - Brainstorming potential events
 - Position: Associate Director (1)
 - Part-time
 - \$25 per hour (subject to change)
 - Responsibilities:
 - Assisting the director in their endeavors
 - Serving as the bridge between the SafeZone Committee and the resource center
 - Attending professional conferences to establish relationships/networking

- Position: Program Coordinator (1)
 - Part-time
 - \$25 per hour (subject to change)
 - Responsibilities:
 - Frequently posting to the center's social media
 - All forms of advertising for the center
 - Organizing and running all planned events
- Position: Student Employee (5)
 - Is a member of The Alliance
 - Part-time (could potentially be a federal work study)
 - Minimum wage
 - Responsibilities:
 - Holding office hours during their shift
 - Helping run any events
 - Supervising the space itself

***It is important to note that all of these staff members do not need to be hired at once. For example, in the first year of the Safe Zone's operation just three student employees would suffice. In the second year the Director position can be filled. In the third year two more student employees can be hired. In the fourth year a Program Coordinator can be hired. The last position that should be filled is the Associate Director. Responsibilities of the unfilled positions will shift to the student employees and the Director.

Minimum Safe Zone A-Term Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10AM					
10-11AM					
11AM-12PM					
12-1PM					
1-2PM					
2-3PM					
3-4PM					
4-5PM					
5-6PM	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3
6-7PM	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3
7-8PM	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3

Ideal Safe Zone A-Term Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10AM	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director
10-11AM	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director
11AM-12PM	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director	Director, Associate Director
12-1PM	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator
1-2PM	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator
2-3PM	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator
3-4PM	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator
4-5PM	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator	Director, Associate Director, Program Coordinator

5-6PM	Program Coordinator, Student 1	Program Coordinator, Student 2	Program Coordinator, Student 3	Program Coordinator, Student 4	Program Coordinator, Student 5
6-7PM	Program Coordinator, Student 1	Program Coordinator, Student 2	Program Coordinator, Student 3	Program Coordinator, Student 4	Program Coordinator, Student 5
7-8PM	Program Coordinator, Student 1	Program Coordinator, Student 2	Program Coordinator, Student 3	Program Coordinator, Student 4	Program Coordinator, Student 5

Budget

Mockup budget for one fiscal year based on the OMA 2016-2017 sample budget

Account Title	Accounted Budget
Miscellaneous Gifts	0.00
Student Wages	10,000.00
Supplies (Events, Participants)	4,000.00
Postage/ Mailing Costs	15.00
Stationary	250.00
Printing	200.00
Professional Services	1,000.00
Travel Expense - Domestic	5,000.00
Food	500.00
Subscriptions	300.00
Budget total	21,265.00

Visibility and Advertisement

- WPI email address: thesafezone@wpi.edu
- Social Media Handles
 - **Twitter:** @TheSafeZoneWPI
 - **Instagram:** TheSafeZoneWPI
 - **Snapchat:** TheSafeZoneWPI
 - **Facebook Page:** The Safe Zone at Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Social Media login credentials
 - Username: TheSafeZoneWPI (subject to change)
 - Password: TheAlliance (subject to change)

Logo Mockup

Should be used as profile picture for all social media



Website Mockup



Events

Mockup of A Term Events

- Aug 24 Student Activities Fair, 3pm-5pm, Quadrangle
Tabling is fun. Email signup sheet, wristbands, buttons, pamphlet, etc
- Aug 24 LGBTQIA Safe Zone Reception, 5pm-6pm, The Safe Zone
Get to know the Alliance, The Safe Zone staff and the Safe Zone Committee, the student and faculty LGBTQIA organizations on campus. Refreshments provided.
- Sep 2 Pride Colors T-Shirt Tie Dye/Buttons, 4-6 or 5-7, The Safe Zone
Tie dye your very own WPI Alliance t-shirt your pride colors in preparation for the Worcester Pride Parade--or just to wear proudly anytime! \$5 covers shirt and dye. Refreshments provided
- Sept 10 Worcester Pride Parade, Lineup: 9am, Parade: 11am, Institute Park
March alongside the LGBTQIA communities across Worcester in the annual parade!
- Sept 10 Worcester Youth Pride Dance, time, YWCA (1 Salem Sq)

We provide the necessary transportation or organize a carpool to this event.

- Sept 23 Bisexuality Visibility Day (table on thurs and fri)
- Oct 11 National Coming Out Day Tabling, (on tues - table mon , tues, wed)
Join us at the fountain to learn about National Coming Out Day.
- Oct 8 Coming Out Stories 7pm The Safe Zone

Resources

- The Alliance Office hours
 - Time when students can ask questions about policy, finding resources, bringing up issues on campus that the Alliance/SafeZone should address
- LGBTQIAP+ Book club
 - A weekly gathering to discuss LGBTQIAP+ literature
- Support Groups
 - Perhaps something that could be done in partnership with the SDCC
- Study events
 - Held at the end of the term, helps students who need to be in this atmosphere to focus