

## **Report by Andrea D. Thorson-Hevle delivered at College Council April 17, 2015 Regarding. State Senate Plenary Report**

At a break out session on cultural competence and equity it was articulated that state is disappointed with the number of equity plans that have ignored the LGBTQI population. The Senate collected data from the LGBTQI students at various colleges and discovered that this population of students is facing very high dropout rates, do not feel safe on campus, and do not feel their college is supportive in various ways. Bullying and derogatory language on campuses are a problem. In the end, we are asked to include the LGBTQI community in our Equity plans and make changes in our curricula, co-curricular activities, and campus practices for inclusion of GLBTI people; employ appropriate venues to increase awareness of the issues affecting GLBTI people in the California community colleges; and amend diversity definitions to include gender identity and expression.

The information below was not distributed by the Senate, but is some data I collected on the community in an effort to demonstrate the need for solutions on our campus. The data discussed from Plenary was far more devastating than what you will see below.

### **LGBTQI College Student's Report:**

- 1) An National Gay and Lesbian Task Force study found that 29% of students did not feel that their curriculum adequately represents contributions of LGBT individuals.
- 2) According to the NGLTF, 20% of college students fear for their physical safety due to their gender identity or their perceived sexual orientation.
- 3) The most common form of harassment towards LGBT college students is derogatory remarks. However, verbal threats, graffiti and the pressure to keep quiet about sexual orientation and/or gender identity are also common.
- 4) According to an NGLTF study, only 31% of college students feel that their college's administration thoroughly addresses LGBT issues on campus.

### **Important Statistics to Consider:**

*Survey of more than 7,000 examined the effects of school [social] climate and homophobic bullying on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth and found that:*

- 1) LGBQ youth were more likely than heterosexual youth to report high levels of bullying and substance use;
- 2) Students who were questioning their sexual orientation reported more bullying, homophobic victimization, unexcused absences from school, drug use, feelings of depression, and suicidal behaviors than either heterosexual or LGB students;
- 3) LGB students who did not experience homophobic teasing reported the lowest levels of depression and suicidal feelings of all student groups (heterosexual, LGB, and questioning students); and
- 4) All students, regardless of sexual orientation, reported the lowest levels of depression, suicidal feelings, alcohol and marijuana use, and unexcused absences from school when they were
  - In a positive school climate and
  - Not experiencing homophobic teasing.

### **Some Things We Can Do:**

- 1) Incorporate this group in our Equity Plan.
- 2) Encourage non-discriminatory statements about LGBT students in the school codes, handbooks and classrooms.
- 3) Increase Safe Zone Training offerings.
- 4) Make changes in our curricula, co-curricular activities, and campus practices for inclusion of GLBTI people and discussions about oppressive language.
- 5) Remember that campus experience for LGBT students can be affected by what the faculty, staff, and administrators have to say on the matter as well as how they communicate and deal with various forms of bullying and derogatory language.

**\*LGBTQI = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex**