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Identity Affirmed: Creating Campus Awareness for an LGBTQ Resource Center

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IDENTITY AFFIRMED: CREATING CAMPUS AWARENESS FOR AN LGBTQ
RESOURCE CENTER

By

Landon B. Brooks

B.S., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2009

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree.

College of Mass Communication and Media Arts

in the Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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in the field of Professional Media & Media Management

Approved by:

Narayanan Iyer, Chair

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
METHODOLOGY.....	25
RESULTS.....	26
LIMITATIONS.....	31
CONCLUSION.....	31
REFERENCES.....	34
VITA.....	37

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
FIGURE 1 Example of “Faces of Pride” Campaign.....	17
FIGURE 2 Example of “Redbird’s Got Your Back” Campaign.....	18
FIGURE 3 Example of “Educate Before You Hate” Campaign.....	20
FIGURE 4 Example of “Educate Before You Hate” Campaign.....	21
FIGURE 5 Example of “Identity Affirmed” Campaign.....	28
FIGURE 6 Example of “Identity Affirmed” Campaign.....	29
FIGURE 7 Example of “Identity Affirmed” Campaign.....	30

Introduction

This MS research report describes the development of a marketing communications campaign for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer (LGBTQ) Resource Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU Carbondale). This project focuses on working with the coordinator of the LGBTQ Resource Center, Dr. Wendy Weinhold, to create promotional materials that will be employed during the 2013-2014 academic year. The campaign, “Identity Affirmed,” lays the foundation for a variety of marketing materials that include: a brochure, an initial contact handout, an educational poster campaign, and social media and web graphics. In addition, this campaign was designed to adhere to Southern Illinois University’s brand guidelines as listed on their website at brand.siu.edu. This campaign was developed with both the intent of creating awareness for the LGBTQ Resource Center, and with the intent of communicating a sense of affirmation to SIU Carbondale’s current, future, and potential LGBTQ population. This report begins by providing a short history of the LGBTQ community on university campuses and higher education’s significance to the LGBTQ community. Next, the paper reviews literature dedicated to university recruitment strategies of LGBTQ students and considers some of the challenges involved in these marketing efforts. Finally, the paper details the creation of the “Identity Affirmed” marketing campaign and offers conclusions about the project.

The LGBTQ, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, community is categorized as a historically marginalized group by the Council for Global Equality. The coalition explains, “Marginalized communities are often scorned by society and ignored by their own governments. Those composed of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals are frequently targeted for violence and discrimination” (Council for Global Equality, 2010, p. 1). The implications of this statement can be seen in many scenarios and on many different levels both

globally and historically, but in today's United States civil rights movement, LGBTQ issues are receiving national attention from media outlets and are beginning to make their way into the forefront of public debate.

LGBTQ in the United States

Two of the most recent political victories in the LGBTQ community's fight for equality have been when President Obama's Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 was passed and signed into law on September 20, 2011, and when President Obama announced that his administration would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act, which bans the acknowledgment of same-sex marriages on the federal level, in February of 2011. The repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell permitted gay military men and women to serve openly in the U.S. military without the threat of discharge for the first time since 1950 when President Truman signed into law the Uniform Code of Military Justice (PBS, 2010). This law created a policy that officially established discharge rules for homosexuals in the military, a practice that continued at varying degrees until the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

The Obama administration's refusal to continue defending the Defense of Marriage Act was also a significant victory for the LGBTQ community. While this action has very few functional implications, it is a signifier of progress for the LGBTQ community because it demonstrates support for LGBTQ issues from the executive branch of government. The Supreme Court's repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act could extend many federal rights to same-sex spouses that heterosexual spouses receive from the government, given that their home state recognizes same-sex marriages. Such rights include; health insurance and pension protections for federal employees' spouses, social security benefits for widows and widowers, support and benefits for military spouses, joint income tax filing and exemption from federal estate taxes, and

immigration protections for bi-national couples. The U.S. Supreme Court's June 26, 2013, decisions regarding the Defense of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8 Legislation are too recent to analyze in this paper, but the rulings will most likely have wide and long-lasting implications for the LGBTQ Community.

The LGBTQ movement has also made many strides in popular culture as well. Many celebrities have come out as either supportive of LGBTQ issues or as community members themselves. Jason Collins, an active NBA basketball player, recently made history when he announced he was gay in March of 2013. He was the first active player in the four most prevalent American sports to come out publically during his career (Sterling & Almas, 2013).

LGBTQ people also are in high-profile positions in media. For example, CNN's Anderson Cooper, MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, and Good Morning America's Sam Champion are all strong representations of LGBTQ identities in the mainstream media. In addition to these representations, many LGBTQ identities are portrayed as main characters in television shows like ABC's Modern Family and NBC's The Normal Heart. The LOGO network also provides programming devoted to exclusively serving the LGBTQ community and its allies.

LGBTQ and Higher Education

It has been noted by researchers such as Evans and Wall (1991) that college and university campuses are the microcosm of societies (p. xiii). Widely accepted statistics, first proposed by Kinsey's original study (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948) predict that roughly 10 percent of the population identify as LGBTQ. Seeing that the U.S. Department of Education reports that there are roughly 21 million college students each year, it can be estimated that, on the conservative side of statistics, there are approximately 2.1 million LGBTQ identified students who attend colleges and universities in the United States each year. This suggests the LGBTQ

community is a significant market for college and university recruitment. According to Cegler (2012), admission recruiters are beginning to target LGBTQ students specifically in their recruitment efforts. This is recognized as an emerging trend. “As this population of prospective students becomes more visible, in tandem with higher education institutions broadening their definition of diversity beyond visible differences, LGBT students are being targeted as a unique recruitment group” (Cegler, 2012, p. 19). Furthermore, researchers at the University of Illinois (Oswald & Homan, 2013) report that LGBTQ people go to college at higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts (p. 9). This shows how the community is not only ripe for marketing efforts, but also can benefit from recruitment efforts.

College campuses are often a student first chance to get to live away from their parents and peers whom they have known for the majority of their lives (Crew et al, 1978). The college experience also often associated with a time for sexual experimentation, so this combined with the generally more liberal attitudes of college campuses often makes for a more accepting environment to explore ones sexuality. One of the implications this has for LGBTQ students is that it makes the campus environment a popular place to come out (Crew et al, 1978).

Many developmental issues occur during the traditional undergraduate years. This is acknowledged by many student development professionals, who understand that this time is a key time for identity development in general. As such, the development of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identity adds another layer to this identity development. This complicates the already difficult challenge of finding oneself in college, especially because what it means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is unique to each person (Evans & Wall, 1991). Rankin (2005) discusses how “sexual-minority students on college or university campuses face unique challenges because of how they are perceived and treated as a result of their sexual

orientation, gender identity, or gender expression (Rankin, 2005, p. 17). Rankin (2005) suggests that outside of bars or HIV care centers, LGBTQ people have very little, if any, opportunities in their communities for networking, counseling, or for assistance during the coming out process.

LGBTQ at SIU

SIU Carbondale's GLBT Resource Center opened in January 2007 as a result of recommendations made in the 2005 "Provost's Ad-hoc Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Issues" report. The GLBT Resource Center was created to provide support to the GLBT community, provide teaching and learning experiences about the community, and to provide campus advocacy. Part of the center's mission was to create opportunities for community engagement through events like LGBT History Month, LGBT Awareness Week, and through its educational Safe Zone Training program.

According to Sherrill and Hardesty (1994), the Carbondale campus has long been recognized as a place of progressive action for the LGBTQ community (p. 166). Respondents in the 19-year-old report indicated they knew of hate crimes committed against LGBTQ people on campus, and that the university's security force was not supportive of them though they personally felt safe on campus (p 166). None of the respondents in the study knew of marketing materials directed toward them, and they said they would not recommend Carbondale to any friends considering the university (p. 167). The participants in the study were members of the student organization that is now known as Saluki Rainbow Network.

The Saluki Rainbow Network's website has the most reliable and complete history of the LGBTQ movement on SIU Carbondale's campus. The organization notes that the beginning of SIU Carbondale's LGBTQ movement is closely related to the Stonewall riots of 1969. Before Stonewall, the only discernible meeting place for the LGBTQ community in Carbondale, Illinois,

was a local bar/nightclub, called “The Flamingo.” After the Stonewall riots of 1969, however, college campuses became important locations for gay organization. In fact, the Saluki Rainbow network was formed just two years after the Stonewall riots, on April 14, 1971. The organization has been through many different names over the years, but it has evolved into one of the oldest gay, lesbian and bisexual student groups in the United States.

In 2011, the GLBT center became part of the newly formed Center for Inclusive Excellence, which also houses the Black Resource Center and the Hispanic/Latino Resource Center. In 2012, the GLBT Resource Center was renamed the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer) Resource Center in order to reflect current terminology. As such, the LGBTQ Resource Center is in need of new marketing materials that communicate these changes while promoting its activities. The resource center’s addition of “Queer,” a term that is both theoretical and radical in nature, to its name creates an extra imperative and additional challenges for the creation of the new marketing campaign. Dilley (2002), a member of the SIU faculty, notes how the Queer identity is a politically aligned identity that challenges heterosexual norms (p. 18). Unlike “Gay,” a word historically used as a blanket term to identify the broad LGBTQ community but rooted in the patriarchal privilege of white men who have sex with men, the word “Queer” is all-encompassing and represents identities within and outside of the L, G, B, and T of the community (Taylor, 2012). Queer also refuses to conform to a binary organization of sex, gender, sexuality, and gender identity. The term opens up a space for individuals who choose to be gender nonconforming and recognize their sexuality as fluid rather than fixed at birth (Sycamore, 2006).

This campaign seeks to identify and address the challenges that are present when creating a university marketing campaign directed toward recruiting LGBTQ students. The campaign also

seeks to identify Queer student volunteers and campus leaders for participation in the campaign. The authenticity provided by their presence and interactions provides an extra layer of genuineness that effectively connects with the campus community and communicates an ethos of support. In other words, the goal of this project is to convey the message that this campaign is for queers, by queers, and that affirmation of LGBTQ identities is not solely for institutional gain. This report is guided by two research questions. First, what challenges are present for the creation of a successful marketing campaign directed toward LGBTQ students on a university campus? Second, what markers of the Queer community should be present in order to communicate a sense of belonging for LGBTQ students on a university campus?

Literature Review

Challenges and Opportunities for LGBTQ Marketing Campaigns

Dilley (2002) acknowledges that few researchers address the issues of “identity” in reference to the LGBTQ community. Existing literature primarily focuses on the issues universities face when targeting LGBTQ individuals, rather than the affirmation of their identities. In addition, literature that discusses targeting LGBTQ individuals in marketing materials largely focuses on media use or health concerns and offers very little material about the social needs of LGBTQ people. Even the existing research on these issues is limited (Weinhold, 2013).

Universities that actively recruit LGBTQ students must be cognizant of certain ethical dilemmas set forth by the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education’s LGBTQ Programs and Services guidelines. In the ethics section of these guidelines, it states that “privacy and confidentiality [of LGBTQ students must be] maintained” and “staff members must ensure

that the confidentiality of individuals' sexual orientation and gender identity are protected (CAS, 2009, p. 22).”

One of the challenges in targeting LGBT individuals for college recruitment is that only 46 percent of undergraduate students are open with their family about their LGBTQ identity (Campus Pride, 2011). This adds a layer of complication to the recruitment of LGBTQ potential students because, in the majority of cases, an LGBTQ applicant's parents or guardians do not know about their child's non-heterosexual identity. In addition, even if they are aware of their child's identity, they may not approve (Baum, 2012).

If a student were to disclose their non-heterosexual identity in an admissions or recruitment setting, it would be inappropriate to assume that the students' family knew about their orientation. Therefore, no recruitment materials that specifically indicate the students' LGBTQ identity should be sent to their home address, or should be communicated over the phone without the student specifically requesting information regarding LGBTQ activities or opportunities. The consequences of these actions may result in many scenarios such as issues of safety for the prospective student, and may even lead to possible homelessness or financial abandonment from the students' parents or guardians (Cegler, 2012).

Recruitment strategies that incorporate efforts to target LGBTQ individuals also come with some criticism, reluctance and even hostility from the LGBTQ community. One blogger described their frustration with the practice by stating, “now, we're recruited with other minorities under the goal of the giant, dubious buzzword: diversity... we have to probe whether a school is genuinely committed to a supportive and thriving environment (Cegler, 2012).” Many historically marginalized groups are often sought out under the blanket term “diversity,” which universities use a marketable signifier. Morrish and O'mara (2011) critique this strategy by

describing the term diversity as, "...a signifier of everything and yet nothing; it is conveniently nonspecific (Morrish and O'mara, 2011, p. 194)."

Morrish and O'mara (2011) consider diversity as an umbrella term used to describe anyone who is not white, male, of European descent, able bodied, native born, Christian, or heterosexual. They argue that the term diversity is exclusive, rather than inclusive, and that LGBTQ identities should purposely fight to have an independent identity on university campuses (Morrish and O'mara, 2012). Hurtado and Dey (1997) provide support for this argument by stating that a campus' environment for diversity should "ensure that multiple perspectives from the campus are represented, including individuals who play different roles on campus (faculty, students, staff) as well as multiple campus communities that may be based on race, gender, disability, or field of study" (p. 422).

Marketing campaigns targeting LGBTQ students are important to institutions of higher education. Mitchell and Hardesty (1994) found that "30 percent of LBG students considered their sexual orientation as a factor in making their college choices" (as cited in Einhaus, Viento and Croteau 2004, 11). One notable way that institutions have tried to pursue LGBTQ students is through marketing LGBTQ supportive policies, services and communities on recruitment materials and admission websites. These indirect tactics usually include listing Gay-Straight Alliance organizations in recruitment materials, communicating gender-neutral housing on-campus (when available), listing LGBTQ scholarships on financial aid websites, or portraying (self-identified) LGBTQ students in photographs that accompany information about LGBTQ student programs (Baum, 2012).

Subtle images, like the presence of the rainbow flag, are also signifiers of recognition and affirmation for LGBT students (Baum, 2012). LGBTQ prospective students are likely to draw an

association between rainbow flags and LGBTQ-supportive environments because rainbows are recognized symbols that connect with and empower LGBTQ people (Wan-Hsiu, 2011). The rainbow flag uses the colors of the rainbow on a common symbol as a representation of the multifaceted identities of the LGBTQ community. Rainbow colors have become a signifier of diversity and inclusion for LGBTQ people (Bennett, 2010).

Baum (2012) is one of the few researchers who has studied recruiting and admissions practices for LGBTQ students. Baum describes how “subtle placement” of recognized LGBTQ friendly images, including the use of rainbow flags in images and page banners on college recruiting materials, connects with LGBTQ applicants (p. 28). The use of rainbow flags in college recruitment brochures can have a significant impact on an LGBTQ applicant, while remaining unnoticed to a heterosexual applicant. Baum states, “While a heterosexual applicant might pass over these images as quickly as they ignore ubiquitous pictures of smiling students on a verdant quad, an LGBT applicant takes notice” (p. 28).

Subtle images like rainbow flags are important, because unlike many other historically marginalized groups, the LGBTQ community is an “invisible minority,” meaning they lack visible markers that identify them as members of a marginalized community (Lesser & Wicker, 2007). Lesser and Wicker document the ways LGBTQ youth use rainbow buttons and bracelets as nonverbal messages to signal belonging and help manage their identities. Universities can take simple measures to let LGBTQ people know they have allies, and inclusion of rainbow flags in marketing materials is one way to send a subtle yet powerful signal of inclusion (Erwin, 2006, p. 103). In short, LGBTQ students recognize and are empowered by university marketing materials that incorporate rainbow flag images and colors.

External audiences are another challenge for marketers who try to reach the LGBTQ community. This is especially true in conservative settings where LGBTQ issues are in contradiction with conservative or religious beliefs (Drumheller and McQuay, 2010). Understanding the challenges with promoting an LGBTQ resource center's services to the LGBTQ community in a conservative area is important because it might be difficult for LGBTQ people to identify that they are a part of the community in an unwelcoming environment, much less pursue services that are provided by the institution (Drumheller and McQuay, 2010).

Drumheller and McQuay (2010) recommend organizations that provide outreach services to LGBTQ people in conservative areas communicate a clear sense of identity, which focuses on providing a safe environment to community members and promotes its resources as a goal of the organization. Educating the community at-large is also imperative to creating a safe environment for LGBTQ people in a conservative area. This can be achieved by expressing common grounds and shared values to the community at-large through strong internal messages that counteracts apathy towards the LGBTQ community and reinforces the message of a thriving community (Drumheller and McQuay, 2010).

Providing outreach to the LGBTQ community in any institutional environment is important. Visibility, normalcy and equity are cited by Rankin (2005) as being three themes that capture institutional-wide concerns for LGBTQ individuals. Reinforcing the idea that LGBTQ people are a part of the fabric of an institution helps create a sense of normality and visibility for non-heteronormative identities. It also helps heteronormative community members identify with LGBTQ people, which, research shows increases support for LGBTQ issues and helps create community allies (Rankin, 2005). Higher education institutions and other professional organizations that serve a diverse population of individuals are positioned in the center of many

societal tensions. In order to serve their communities effectively they must promote social justice and ensure personal equity for all members (Rankin, 2005).

Queer Culture

Queer culture is a growing place of community for LGBTQ people. According to Corber (1999), lesbian and gay activism and outreach in the United States has been ineffective in the past because it relied too heavily on projects that appealed to heteronormative, ahistorical marketing models. Corber suggests, “Rather than appealing to the state for protection, lesbians and gays should seek to ‘queer’ it” (p. 401). Corber explains that this kind of project would disentangle LGBTQ movements from heterosexual institutions and ideologies “*before* lesbians and gays pursue recognition of their identities” (p. 401).

The LGBTQ community is often considered an “invisible community” because there are no all-encompassing markers that define LGBTQ people. While displays of queer identity are important for effective marketing to the LGBTQ community, it is a challenge to demonstrate queer identity. In order for an LGBTQ organization to truly promote the identities of LGBTQ people, it must attempt to portray queerness in its community visually.

There are visual markers that work to define queerness. Mina (2011) notes, “Many individuals within the LGBTQ and queer communities identify with or practice certain visible expressions of queerness, including gender variance and body modification, among others” (p. 1). Gender variances include non-heteronormative displays of gender, such as male-bodied people who perform aspects of gender traditionally associated with being a woman, or female-bodied people who perform aspects of gender traditionally associated with being a man. Body modifications include, but are not limited to, the visibility of tattoos, piercings, and brightly dyed hair.

Political activist organizations have used their organization's websites to attempt to portray these aspects of queer identities visually, but with the ongoing prevalence of homophobia, and especially transphobia in our society, the complications of depicting visibly queer bodies outside of websites directed towards the queer community becomes complex. Even political organizations that have tried to depict visibly queer people have failed to do so in any substantial ways. Depictions of queer identities on such websites tend to normalize queer people in hegemonic notions of race, gender, age, and ability, and in ways that serve assimilationist notions of sexual identity (Mina, 2011).

It is important, however, for organizations that promote advocacy and social justice for the LGBTQ and queer community to visibly recognize members of the community, so it is an important aspect for the organization to consider when creating a marketing campaign. This is especially true for the transgender, or trans* community, who are often left out of the mainstream media and marketing materials. Rankin (2005) recognizes this phenomena and suggests that trans* students may feel invisible or disregarded if little or no effort is made to acknowledge their presence. Most university campuses offer few chances for students to learn about transgender issues or experiences, so including trans* identities in marketing materials may be an key element in beginning a dialogue that leads to the understanding of trans* people.

It Gets Better Campaign

One of the most prevalent social issue campaigns in recent years has been the 'It Gets Better' project, which started as a single YouTube video by syndicated columnist and author, Dan Savage. The 'It Gets Better' project has grown to be an influential virtual community for LGBT youth (under 18 years of age). The campaign began in September 2010, when, in response to many LGBT students committing suicide for having been bullied in school, Dan Savage and

his partner, Terry, wanted to create a personal way for allies and supporters to tell LGBT youth that ‘it gets better’ eventually. They did this by creating a simple, yet intimate video of themselves discussing how their lives have changed in an overwhelmingly positive way since middle school and high school and broadcasting this experience on YouTube.

Dan and Terry’s message was very well received by the public and became viral within weeks. The official *It Gets Better* (Savage, 2011) book states that within 24 hours, a second video was uploaded by another user. In a matter of only 3 days, there were several hundred more videos and by the end of the first week, there were 1,000 videos. By week 4, the White House put in a request to add a video from President Barack Obama, which signifies the importance of supporting bullied, LGBTQ youth.

Although the videos uploaded by additional users vary in content, they all support the same underlying message that ‘it gets better,’ so “hang in there.” Muller (2012), author of the article “*Virtual Communities and Translation into Physical Reality*” commented on the nature of Dan and Terry’s original post which set the tone for the entire campaign. Muller states, “The original posting by Dan and Terry is quite simplistic. The individual addresses the camera directly, as if speaking to another person in the same room. In all instances the message is personal and draws on the individual’s own life experiences as anecdotal proof that he or she, too, has experienced unfairness and bullying as a youth” (p. 270). Following Dan and Terry’s examples, other videos also directly addressed a camera in the room and tell the stories of each user’s unique experiences as an LGBT youth or as an ally to the community, a format which has been both criticized and praised. SIU Resource Center created an *It Gets Better* video in the spring of 2012. Seven participants, who represented a range of LGBTQ identities, volunteered to be in the video, which, as of June 26, 2013, has yielded 699 views on Youtube.com.

The campaign's critics note that "It Gets Better" paints an overly-rosy picture of post-teen years for LGBTQ people. In the blogosphere many oppositional arguments show discontent for this campaign. One blogger self-entitled "The Bitter Buffalo" critiqued Dan and Terry's original post by claiming, ".....by telling teens who feel trapped in their small towns/rural environments and/or their religious upbringings that 'It Gets Better,' Dan Savage is perpetuating a stereotype that people who are rural and/or religious are more bigoted than people who live in urban settings and are not particularly religious." Another blogger, (femmephane), claims that the message of the campaign is completely wrong, stating, "Sometimes it gets better– but a lot of times it doesn't get any better. Emphasizing that things will improve upon graduation is misleading both to young folks struggling and also to people with privilege who are looking on (or looking away)."

Muller (2012) notes one of the most positive examples of the campaign's outreach was the "Make It Better" project. This project critiqued It Gets Better and aimed to create real change in American high schools through the organization of lobby groups and letter writing campaigns. In addition, Muller also suggests that the "It Gets Better" project's coupling with the "Trevor Project," another LGBTQ anti-bullying organization that provides a 24-hour suicide hotline for youth, can be seen as a huge success for the campaign and set an example for future campaigns which start on a virtual platform as well.

Ohio University

During the 2012-13 academic year, Ohio University's LGBT Resource Center celebrated the tenth anniversary of its "Faces of Pride" campaign. This campaign is a good example of the Stage Models of development theory, originally proposed by Cass (1979). This model, commonly known as the "Coming Out Model," focuses on the stages of resolution of internal

conflicts related one's identification as lesbian or gay. The model focuses on the coming out process.

The campaign features images of a large variety of individuals who are depicted differently depending on whether they are a member of the LGBTQ community or whether they are an ally or a "closeted" individual (see Figure 1). If the person pictured is a member of the LGBTQ community, they are in a photograph by themselves and their icon on the website is "clickable," and leads the user to a separate page that displays the participant's answer to the following questions: "Why is important to be out? Why are you proud? What was the most difficult part about coming out? What advice would you give to others who come out? Thoughts for non-lgbt people about lgbt people and concerns?"

If the person depicted in the "Faces of Pride" campaign is an ally, they are featured with other allies and their collective picture is "clickable", but it leads to a page where the participants answer the following questions, one by one: "Involvement at OU: Why is it important to be an ally? Why are you proud?" (see Figure 1).

If the participant is not out, their picture is a silhouette that states, "Photo not available - still in the closet," and the description of the person is "Someone you know- Friend Relative or Staff Member." When the user clicks on the silhouette, they are taken to a page titled, "Coming out Resources" (see Figure 1). This is problematic because it assumes that the user has the privilege of coming out and reinforces the idea that coming out is the beginning of one's identity formation. It is also an unproductive method because the silhouette is incredibly non-specific and could, in reality, just be a decoy. The campaign, which used an identity appeal to connect with its audience, illustrates how identity appeals can have limited impact.



Figure 1: A selected set of images from Ohio University's Faces of Pride campaign show the kinds of people who participated in the campaign.

Illinois State University

Illinois State University does not have a free-standing LGBTQ Resource Center. Instead, it has an LGBT/Queer Studies and Services Institute, and a very active pride organization. The student-led pride organization launches LGBTQ support campaigns on campus and on its website, and manages a Facebook account that has 1,144 fans as of June 26, 2013. This university is of particular interest for this research because it was chosen as the 2015 site for

largest LGBTQA college conference in the nation, The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC).

One of ISU Pride's recent promotional strategies was a campaign called, "Gay? Fine By Me." While the campaign is not described on their website, the organization's Facebook page portrays images of this slogan in graphic cover photos on Facebook, as well on t-shirts that are being held up by their mascot, and by seventeen people in a group photograph entitled, "'Gay? Fine by me.' t-shirt photo! Thank you all for supporting LGBT students and faculty!" on their Facebook page. The correlation of time between the graphic cover photos and the group photograph imply that the "Gay? Fine By Me" t-shirts were given out during LGBT History Month. However, it appears as if this was a theme for the 2012-13 school year because the images depicted of their school mascot holding up the t-shirt was posted on July 30, 2013 (see Figure 2). The campaign was marketed as "Red Bird's Got Your Back." In addition to their mascot holding up this t-shirt, it is also holding up the rainbow flag in various locations around campus in other cover photos, which are among the organization's most popular photos of all time.

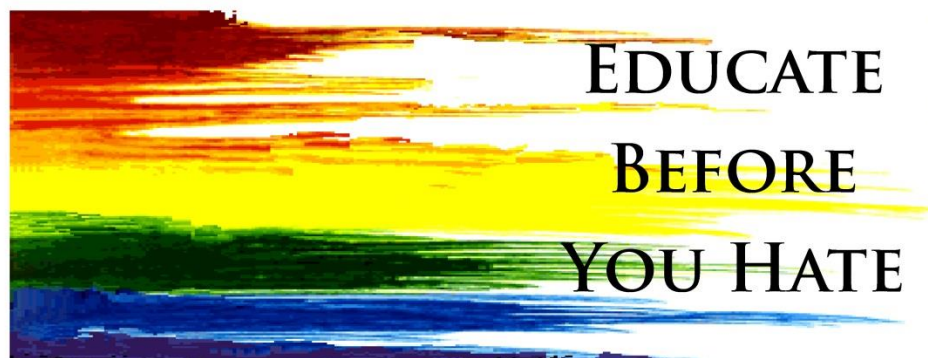


Figure 2: Illinois State University's Red Bird school mascot holding a rainbow flag.

Illinois State's most recent campaign, "Defined By Pride – A Conversation with LGBT Celebrities About College Activism" features interviews conducted between a member of the organization and LGBT celebrities, such as Teegan and Sarah, and Tyler Oakley. These interviews are featured on the ISU Pride's website, isupride.org, as well as promoted through the organization's Facebook page. These interviews ask the celebrity participants to answer the following series of questions: 1. Why do you feel LGBT rights is such an important topic to advocate for? 2. Since we are a college organization, what would you recommend for college students to do to become more active in the LGBT community? How can they make issues related to the LGBT community more prevalent on their campus? 3. In 2013, what is one thing you'd like to see happen in the LGBT community (marriage equality, trans* rights, etc.)? This campaign used a celebrity appeal to connect with the audience. Because the campaign featured students interviewing celebrities, the campaign strived to make celebrities "real."

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

In 2011, SIU Carbondale's LGBTQ Resource Center and LGBTQ Student Organization, the Saluki Rainbow Network, co-sponsored an educational poster campaign called, "Educate Before you Hate." The campaign's purpose was to put, "accomplished LGBT icons in the public eye for more than just their gender identity, or sexual preferences." Pop culture was among its many influences. The campaign featured fourteen celebrities from a variety of backgrounds, gender identities, and areas of study. For instance, Kye Allums, the first openly transgender athlete to play NCAA Division I college basketball, was chosen to be featured on a poster in order to appeal to the Athletics department (see Figure 3). Neil Patrick Harris, an actor, was chosen to appeal to the Theatre Department (see Figure 4).



Kye Allums

B. October 23, 1989

Division I Athlete

Transgender



SIU
CARBONDALE

Campaign sponsors:

GLBT Resource Center

glbtrc@siu.edu

(618) 453-5627

www.glbresourcecenter.siu.edu

Saluki Rainbow Network

salukirainbow@gmail.com

(618) 453-5151

www.srn.rso.siu.edu

Art provided by:

LGBTHistoryMonth.com

Figure 3: NCAA Division 1 college basketball player Kye Allums was the first openly transgender athlete. Allums, who was assigned female at birth but identified as a man, played for the George Washington University women's basketball team.



**Neil Patrick
Harris**

B. June 15, 1973

Actor

Gay



SIU
CARBONDALE

Campaign sponsors:

GLBT Resource Center
glbtrec@siu.edu
(618) 453-5627
www.glbtresourcecenter.siu.edu

Saluki Rainbow Network
salukirainbow@gmail.com
(618) 453-5151
www.srn.rso.siu.edu

Art provided by:
LGBTHistoryMonth.com

Figure 4: Neil Patrick Harris is an openly gay actor who is best known for his role as Doogie Howser on ABC's Doogie Howser.

This campaign was inspired by Equality Forum's LGBT History Month icons. Equality Forum is an organization dedicated to the advancement of LGBT Civil Rights. The intended audience of the Educate Before You Hate campaign was prospective students, faculty, staff, currently enrolled students, and the Carbondale community as a whole. Using information provided by Equality Forum, the campaign posters provided textual information identifying the pictured person's name, sexuality, hometown, and profession. The campaign, which used a celebrity appeal, has strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths of the campaign include that it created visibility of LGBT identified people on campus. The display of role models is important to LGBTQ people. The appearance of pop-icons is something the entire campus can relate to or recognize. The simplistic, professional design was visually appealing. The passive poster campaign was intended to educate the wide community that LGBTQ people are from many walks of life and engaged in many professions. The LGBTQ Resource Center's effort to coordinate with departments across campus to "sponsor" posters by displaying them in their main offices added weight to the educational effort.

Weaknesses of the campaign include the posters' passive efforts to discursively construct identity. While "Educate Before You Hate" tries to send a positive message, it also sends the message that people hate LGBTQ folks. The campaign reinforces oppression by including the word "hate" in the campaign text. Rather than striving to overcome hate, Educate Before You Hate includes this negative reality into its marketing materials. In addition, there was only one celebrity per page, which isolates each icon. Campaigns intended to communicate inclusion and affirmation are most effective when they include groups of people in images rather than individuals.

Another critique of this campaign is that the use of celebrities in the posters does not reflect SIU Carbondale's student population. This is a critique of any campaign that uses a celebrity appeal. While celebrities are well recognized, they are ultimately people with greater privilege than most of SIU Carbondale's students.

One of the key opportunities created by the Educate Before You Hate campaign is that it laid the groundwork for future campaigns. It also created inter-departmental relationships, which can be accessed at a later date. Additionally, the campaign was designed in-house by Dr. Weinhold, and this significantly reduced the cost of the project. The resource center is hampered by a limited budget, and marketing efforts are challenged by these constraints.

Theoretical Framework

Earnest Boyle's (1990) six principals of campus community provides a theoretical framework for how universities should work to create an inclusive and affirming environment through the creation of a purposeful, open, just, caring and celebrative community. Although Boyle's principals do not specifically address the LGBTQ community, Poynter and Washington (2005) suggest that these principals can easily be applied to meet LGBTQ students' needs (Poynter and Washington, 2005).

Boyle defined the need for his six principals of campus community by stating, in reference to higher education institutions, "Still, with all of our achievements, there are tensions just below the surface and nowhere are the strains of change more apparent than in campus life (Boyle, 1990, p. 1)." Boyer recognized that higher education officials had the legal and moral responsibilities of creating a positive and affirming campus environment. Although many things have changed since Boyer's six principals of campus community was published in 1990, higher education institutions are still faced with the task of creating a healthy, diverse student

population. Issues that upset this balance are (still) often issues such as racism and sexism, and, this paper claims, sexual identity/gender expression.

In response to overcoming the challenges of division on college campuses, Boyer proposed the following six principles that serve as a formula for day-to-day decision making for campus communities and define the kind of community that every college and university should strive to be. Boyles (1990) explains the principles:

First, a college or university is an educationally purposeful community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on the campus.

Second, a college or university is an open community, a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed.

Third, a college or university is a just community, a place where the sacredness of the person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued.

Fourth, a college or university is a disciplined community, a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good.

Fifth, a college or university is a caring community, a place where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged.

Sixth, a college or university is a celebrative community, one in which the heritage of the institution is remembered and where rituals affirming both tradition and change are widely shared. (p. 7-8)

While a marketing campaign cannot portray all of these aspects, one can seek to contribute to three of them, including, depicting an open, just and celebrative environment.

Methodology

Participants who partook in the development of this campaign were identified by LGBTQ Resource Center Coordinator, Dr. Wendy Weinhold, and the author of this research report, Landon Brooks, for their significant contributions to SIU Carbondale's LGBTQ community. Invitees consisted of members from varying races, genders, sexual identities and ages. The prospective participants represented a wide array of LGBTQ community members and allies on SIU Carbondale's Campus, including; Undergraduate Students, Graduate Students, Faculty, Staff, and members of the Carbondale community at-large.

Once identified, the prospective candidates were invited to participate in photo shoot for the campaign via email. The participants who attended this photo shoot were then asked to fill out a brief form that asked for their input in choosing the "big idea" of this campaign.

Participants were asked to circle one of three pre-conceived taglines, and then to describe what that particular tagline meant to them or how it reflected their experiences at SIU in general. The options given were, 1. Building a Legacy, 2. Identity Affirmed, and 3. Forging Ahead.

Participants were also given a fourth option for Comments/Suggestions/Ideas.

Additional Methods to this project include adhering to the brand guidelines as provided by SIU Carbondale's University Communications Department. There were three main aspects of these guidelines had the most influence on this campaign, although all of the brand guidelines were considered. The first aspect states, "Like the messaging, the images need to be tailored to fit the audience. And with a single glance a photo can convey an idea that is instantly applied to the entire institution" (brand.siu.edu). The second aspect states, "Avoid isolating subjects" (brand.siu.edu). The third aspect states:

The key element: always show the subjects in an environment where everything that they need is available to them. Tools are at hand. Mentors and peers are close by....It's important for viewers to feel as if they are standing there with the subjects-it's vital for the sense of place we need to convey (brand.siu.edu).

A consent form was also developed for the purposes of receiving written consent from campaign participants (see Index X), based upon the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's LGBT Programs and Services guidelines. Those guidelines state:

Information should be released only at the written request of a student who has full knowledge of the nature of the information that is being released and of the parties to whom it is being released. Instances of limited confidentiality should be clearly articulated. The decision to release information without consent should occur only after careful consideration and under the conditions described above. (CAS, 2009, 22).

The consent form created for this project advises participants that they are volunteering permission to SIU Carbondale's LGBTQ Resource Center for use of photographs, audio or video recordings and facsimile images of participants, without compensation, for use in its promotional activities.

Results

The majority of respondents (10 of 15) chose Identity Affirmed as the campaign theme of their choice. Some of the comments that the participants wrote to support this decision were:

Identities I feel are really important to me because they help build my confidence, give me a value system, and a community to belong to. I find my identities really reflect how I present myself as being a part of a minority group that struggles to succeed, or most importantly survive.

Another participant wrote:

The college years are an important time for students to learn about themselves and develop their identities as they grow. Identity is a huge part of the queer experience and being at SIU has been a formative part of that for me.

The second most popular campaign theme was Building a Legacy. Participants that chose this option generally liked the idea of developing a traceable history of LGBTQ people's experiences as it relates to the larger Saluki community, liked the recognition of promoting the history of queer activism on SIU Carbondale's campus, or just liked the idea that they were helping build the LGBTQ community's legacy at SIU Carbondale.

Figures 5, 6, and 7 are the initial educational posters for the "Identity Affirmed" campaign.

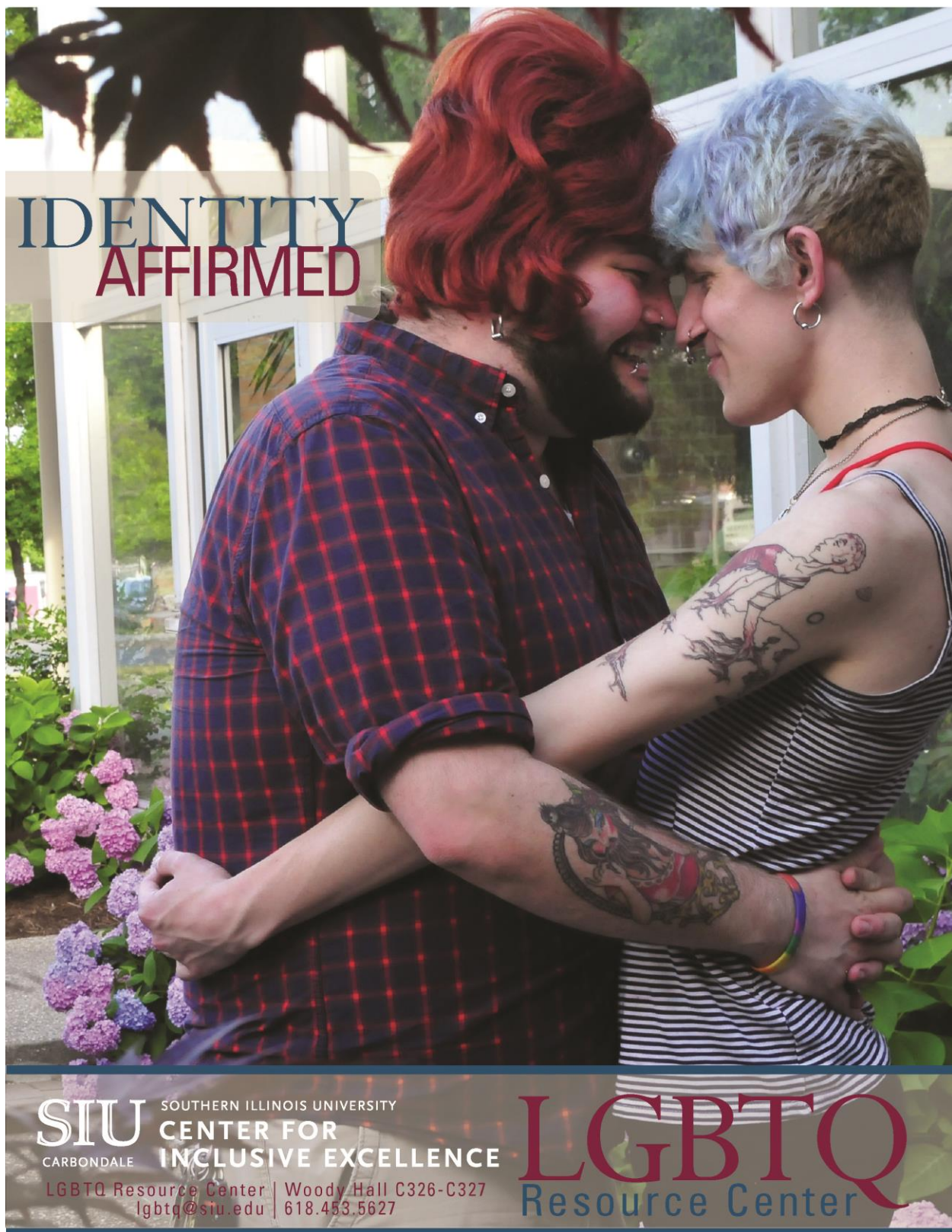


Figure 5: Educational Poster #1.



Figure 6: Educational Poster #2.



IDENTITY AFFIRMED

SIU SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CARBONDALE **CENTER FOR
INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**
LGBTQ Resource Center | Woody Hall C326-C327
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LGBTQ

Resource Center

Figure 7: Educational Poster #3.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this campaign is the university's branding guidelines, which do not define institutionally approved red, orange, or violet colors that are necessary to incorporate a subtle rainbow banner into recruitment materials. While banners that incorporate these colors are allowed on materials that promote the organization's activities, such as educational poster campaigns or event flyers, it is important to note that inconsistency in marketing materials causes frustrations for an organization that is attempting to create a distinct visual identity. The appearance of a rainbow flag in marketing materials can be one way to overcome this challenge, but ultimately, a more subtle identifier is preferable.

Another limitation of this campaign is the visual absence of participation among racial and ethnic minority students, and the lack of participation among key departments who were contacted, but never responded to the invitation. While there are important reasons why people of multiple historically marginalized identities would withhold their participation in a campaign such as this, it does limit the overall outcomes of the campaign by limiting the range of identities that can be visually depicted. The lack of participation of key departments within the university also limited the range of institutional support that could be visually depicted in this campaign. It is important to highlight, though, that a prediction of why participation in this campaign was not as institutionally supportive or as diverse as hoped may be attributed to the fact that the gathering of materials and ideas for this campaign occurred during the summer semester at an institution of higher education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the foundation of SIU Carbondale's "Identity Affirmed" campaign is built on the goal of creating a more affirming campus environment for LGBTQ people. Through the

creation of a marketing campaign that communicates an open, just and celebrative environment, LGBTQ people will hopefully feel more comfortable both on campus and with themselves. This campaign also opens the opportunity for heterosexual people to learn more about LGBTQ individuals by increasing LGBTQ visibility on campus. The following conclusions answer the two research questions that guided this report. To review, the research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What challenges are present for the creation of a successful marketing campaign directed toward LGBTQ students on a university campus?

RQ2: What markers of the Queer community should be present in order to communicate a sense of belonging for LGBTQ students on a university campus?

To answer the first question, it is clear that targeting queer identities means challenging, critiquing and creating distance from, but still within, traditional marketing campaigns. A successful campaign builds upon and extends existing marketing practices. As a result, existing normative marketing practices can present challenges to a queer marketing campaign. However, these extensions have the ability to improve queer peoples' sense of belonging and open opportunities for identity expression for people of all genders and sexual identities. In addition, this outreach can create educational opportunities for heteronormative people who know little about queer issues and may not realize there are even queer people in their community. Additionally, as the literature makes clear, issues of privacy, outing and participant safety are vital concerns to consider when creating a queer marketing campaign.

To answer the second research question, it is clear that the rainbow flag is a significant marker for LGBTQ identified people. Other visible markers include tattoos, piercings, and brightly dyed hair. Depictions of identities that challenge the gender binary are also important to consider. An example of one such identity would be a person that has visible facial hair, breasts

and Adam's apple. This person's appearance would serve as a visual demonstration intended to challenge hereonormative norms, and would likely be a signifier of one's membership in the queer community. "Identity Affirmed" includes pictures of multiple people who fit this example, or others similar. The campaign also includes images of people engaged in non-heteronorative embrace. This may be considered a form of activism that is important to the successful creation of a marketing campaign that signals an affirming space for LGBTQ students on SIU Carbondale's campus.

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