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# Perceptions of Policy and Programming Needs for Emory's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

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President's Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and  
Transgender Concerns

April 2008

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# Aims and Methods

- To examine the perceptions of the needs of the LGBT community among those in key policy making positions
  - Key informant interviews with 22 decision makers – taken from all areas of Emory
  - Survey of 238 individuals at Emory to provide information on LGBT experience
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# Connectivity and Visibility

- All decision makers felt connected to the Emory LGBT community – little outside contact
  - Reliance on informal Emory networks (friends and colleagues) rather than formal channels
  - Lack of awareness of LGBT related activities, events and information sources – even in those who felt very connected
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# Connectivity and Visibility

- Feeling that LGBT are an invisible community – reportedly hard to quantify (5-35%)
  - Feeling that the size of the community had grown in recent years – but still some discomfort in issues of identifying LGBT individuals
  - Reported lack of representation of LGBT in senior administration
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# Being Out at Emory

- Most identified problems with being out – although felt it was easier than rest of GA
    - Easier for Faculty than staff
    - More difficult in SoM and F&M
    - Discomfort in potentially outing someone
    - “Spheres of outness”
  - Recognition of role of individual level of comfort
  - Most felt Emory was in general an easy place to be out – only those who were self-identified LGBT said it was not that easy
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# Information & Issues

- Many reported lack of access to information on the Emory LGBT community – desire for more info
  - Most relied on informal channels – lack of awareness of the LGBT Office functions and roles
  - Most felt homophobia was not a problem at Emory – most had not heard of experiences
  - But others felt lack of reporting was the issue – that there was a latent level of homophobia
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# Information & Issues

- Lack of communication beyond and within the LGBT community was the largest need identified
  - Need to build communities – identify common themes and foster communication between sub-communities
  - Develop openness and discussion around sex and sexuality
  - Address the specific needs of LGBT Faculty and Staff
  - Sensitivity training at all levels – particularly for staff – and training on communication
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# LGBT Experience Survey

- 238 respondents: 55% heterosexual, 42% students
  - Very high level of connectivity to the LGBT community
  - 28% had experienced homophobia, only 55% knew of a resource to deal with it
  - 30% were not aware of any information resources for LGBT at Emory – only 39% who accessed information thought it helpful
  - Discrimination, homophobia and safety most commonly reported issues
  - Lack of awareness of current policies
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# Recommendations

- Needs of LGBT staff and Faculty under-served
    - Emphasize/ refocus role of LGBT office
    - Create opportunities for interaction/ awareness
  - Lack of awareness of activities/ information
    - Central source for information – website?
  - Create awareness of key LGBT – tell their stories
  - Community and communication activities – make diversity a key Emory strategic initiative
  - Need for institutionalized sensitivity and diversity training – doesn't have to be LGBT only
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