



PRIDE Initiative Outreach

Cultural Stipend Internship Program
Allyson Lent



Nature of the Project

- Information gathering endeavor to increase PRIDE's outreach efforts
 - Networking with other HEIs
- Guiding questions:
 - What are the best ways for the PRIDE Initiative to outreach to the LGBTQ members of your community?
 - What may be some of the obstacles to reaching the LGBTQ members of your community?
 - What are your suggestions to address some of these obstacles?
- Grounded in cultural humility and intersectionality

General Reception

- Mostly positive
 - Warm welcome and responsive
 - Given time
 - Conversation starter
- Many HEIs have continued to follow up with me
 - Events in the area
 - Curious about the results of the conversations
- Short and rushed conversations

Common Threads

- Stigma
- Collaboration

Growing Edges

- Sitting with discomfort
 - My own as well as some members of other HEIs
- Ambiguous project description
 - Ultimate aims of project?

Summaries from HEI Visits

Chinese HEI

- Reaching out to schools/teens is necessary
 - Schools need support and would be eager to build a connection
- More collaboration among Initiatives
 - Idea: youth-oriented parent/child workshop promoting greater understanding of one another
- Reaching out to parents
 - Psychoeducation
 - Family support group
 - Ways to include grandparents
- Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1997, and was removed from an official list of mental illnesses in 1999.
 - However, access to mental health services is weak, and “correction treatment” and institutionalization is still too common.

Chinese HEI

- Stigma

- Break down in the family between youth and parents, as well as with family still in China
 - Familial pressure brought on in part by China's one child policy.
 - "You only have one child, so you want your child to be as "normal" as everybody else," says Xiaogang Wei, Beijing Gender Health Education Institute.
- Kids don't often come out until after college
 - Fear of being disowned or having financial support revoked.
- Cultural gap: because it still feels very taboo to discuss, oftentimes Chinese families lack the language to begin to have the conversation.
 - "The misconception and negative connotations associated with homosexuality are the root of the embedded disapproval received from older generations. Instead of blaming them for their lack of knowledge on the subject, we need to surpass the media's portrayal of gay stereotypes that are simply not accurate depictions of homosexuality. It's up to us, Millennials, to educate them on what being homosexual means if we want to see change in the way we are viewed by the public and older generations.

African American Community HEI

- Collaboration between HEIs
 - How can we make PRIDE space more inviting and meaningful for other HEIs to encourage participation?
 - Competitions (like at the Amazing Dialogue)
 - Travel kits
- How to work together in a culturally appropriate way?
 - This conversation/work might be a good place to start
- Religiosity as a pillar of life for many African Americans
 - Stigma around being LGBTQ still exists in many African American churches
 - “LGBTQ people and issues are just not really discussed and certainly not embraced in the African American Community.”

African American Community HEI

- Religion, cont.
 - “When white families are homophobic, she said, they are more likely to kick their LGBT children out of their homes. Black families tend to turn to leaders in the church to “get rid of the demon of homosexuality...They are much more likely to say, ‘I love you. I don’t love your sin.’” -Faith Cheltenham, a black bisexual woman, head of BiNET USA
 - Difficult to divorce race and religion (black church)
 - Larry Duplechan, novelist who wrote *Blackbird*
 - “The center of the black community is the black church, and that changes everything. So coming out in the black community is like trying to come out as an Orthodox Jew. You’ll lose your family. You’ll lose your culture. You’ll lose your community, because usually, you are ejected. Even now, that’s true.”
 - However, while this remains a stronghold in the larger black church culture, many churches are addressing this issue and see it as an important and necessary growing edge

Latino Collaborative

- Directory of clinicians with specialty area
- Generational conflicts:
 - Reaching out to youth and parents
 - High schools and teen centers
 - Literal language barrier: monolingual parents at home
- Amazing Dialogue for others
- PRIDE Initiative serving as triage point to connect folks to appropriate agencies and services
- Religious conflicts
- There is a growing group of Latinos recognizing the damage done to their community as a whole through discrimination.
 - Bolstered by research that shows that LGBT Latinos maintain traditional Latino values and including family unity which engenders support networks that enable the communities to thrive.

Latino Collaborative

- In general, issues faced by Latinos are exacerbated for LGBTQ Latinos
 - Employment discrimination
 - Economic insecurity
 - Health care shortfalls
 - Immigration
 - Housing
- This leads many LGBTQ Latinos to not come out or try to hide their sexuality/gender identity
- In particular, children decide not to come out to their families at all, or some may choose to postpone
 - Desire to protect their families from more pain
 - Many view their sexuality as a problem that can only compound an already difficult life for their family.

Native American Initiative

- NAI is still in the early stages themselves of networking with their community in the area.
- Students attending college for the first time face challenges
 - May be first time they are encountering people who are very different from themselves
 - Sometimes being in a new place affords them the opportunity to question parts of their identity, including their sexual orientation/gender identity.
 - This is a time when risk of suicide is great for students
- More collaboration between Initiatives
- Think about ways to make Tx more inclusive to Native Americans in particular, and to other cultures in general, to improve and increase access
 - “We can work outside with sage and have a blessing, but we can’t bring it inside.”
 - If Tx is not culturally sensitive and appropriate as much as possible, it becomes inaccessible and exclusive.

Native American Initiative

- Stigma

- Life on reservations tends to be less accepting and welcoming
- Strong cultural taboos against homosexuality
 - Youth again face challenges of having to navigate what can feel like two worlds
 - Sometimes feeling like they don't fully fit in in either place
 - They may receive more support in cities away from their communities and families, but then face alienation and isolation.
 - Often these kids remain closeted

- Two-Spirit people

- “Refers to both masculine and feminine spirits simultaneously living in the same body”
- Modern term use by Native Americans to describe gender-variant individuals
- “Two-Spirited people are looked at to be in balance because they live in two worlds.”
- Sometimes, revered as elders in their communities, some like shamans
- Othertimes, shunned.

Spirituality Initiative

- Stigma
 - Differs across communities of faith
 - For some it is a moral issue
 - We would not be welcome in their community; partnerships would not be possible
 - Can't see a meeting point
- Mutual respect is needed
 - How do we get to a meeting point?
- Network with Interfaith Community in San Mateo
- Some churches have ministries looking at this already
 - Reconciling Ministry in the United Methodist Church
 - Welcoming Congregation: UU
 - Open and Affirming: UCC

Pacific Islander HEI

- Sexuality is not discussed in general
 - Difficult to know to what degree queer sexuality is ignored on top of this
 - Family functions in very specific and set way
- Pacific Islanders often contend with families and cultural traditions that do not embrace their identities
 - There may be tolerance, but no one will speak of someone being gay
 - As such, there's a lot of shame for anyone who falls out of the mainstream
- Definitely a need for dialogue
- UTOPIA is a Pacific Islander LGBTQ organization working on this now.

Pacific Islander HEI

- Stigma is rooted in religion
- Fakaleiti:
 - In Tongan, an individual assigned male at birth, who behaves in an effeminate manner
 - “Mainstream society treats fakaleiti with a complex mixture of impatience, mockery, tolerance, and occasional admiration for their dress-making, hair-dressing, and decorating skills.”
 - Sexuality of these individuals is still not discussed

Next Steps

Thoughts for PRIDE to consider

- Outreach is difficult when stigma is great
 - How do we combat stigma in it's myriad forms?
 - Suggestion from AACI: "Drill Down the Stigma"
- QTPOC working group
- Intersectionality workshop(s)
- Cultural humility training
- Prioritizing efforts
- What moves us from tolerance to acceptance to embrace to celebrating?

BHRS/ODE Recommendations

- Formalizing collaborations between Initiatives
 - Yearly? Bi-annually?
 - CSIP interns as connectors
- Intersectionality workshop(s)
- How can ODE support Initiatives showing up for one another while preventing overwhelm?

Thank you!

