

35 Wonderful Ways to Support LGBT Students On Your Campus

At the Career Center --

1. Display information about local career resources, such as gay-affirmative employers, for LGBT clients.
2. Provide staff with training about the social and political impact of LGBT issues in the workplace.
3. Be open to discussing LGBT issues with students as these relate to career choice, resumes, interviews, determining the policies of a company, and coming out at work issues.
4. Maintain a list of people who can be used as resources for LGBT students.
5. Know which employers interviewing on your campus have non-discrimination and domestic partner policies for LGBT people and offer that information to students.
6. Employers should be required to affirm in writing that they do not discriminate against any classes protected against discrimination by university policy. If legal interpretations tie the university's hands regarding Federal governmental agency access to placement services, the university should formally express its disagreement of employment discrimination against LGBT students and call for a change in agency policy.

At the Financial Aid Office --

7. Ensure that staff has training on how the impact of a student's "coming out" at home can affect parents' financial support.

In the Residence Halls --

8. If their assigned roommates refuse to live with them, give the LGBT student the options and give them freedom to choose.
9. Ensure that handbooks and contracts have a statement regarding non-discrimination as it relates to sexual orientation. Indicate where students should report if they feel harassed.
10. Orientation programs should address LGBT issues and make new students understand that LGBT students are a welcomed part of campus life.

At the Health Center --

11. Make sure your professional and paraprofessional health educators are comfortable with phrases and concepts such as "continual condom usage" and "anal intercourse."

12. Make sure your gynecological physicians understand that "sexually active" does not necessarily mean "needs birth control."

At the Counseling Center --

13. Include sexual orientation and coming out issues in the paperwork as options for discussion.
14. Include a variety of partner status options in the paperwork.
15. Display some gay-affirming materials in the center, including LGBT magazines and newspapers in the waiting area.
16. Include LGBT material in publicity for the center.
17. Do not automatically assume your clients are heterosexual. For example, do not ask a female client if she has a boyfriend.
18. Use inclusive language.
19. Insist there be a "coming out" support or discussion group at least once per school year.
20. Identify a counselor who has some understanding of LGBT issues who can serve as a confidential referral to students.

At the Activities Office --

21. Make sure the LGBT student organization has adequate professional staff support and an advisor. If there is no one on the staff or faculty to take on this role, assist the group in identifying a local alum or local community member for the task.
22. Know their organization's name, acronym, or letter in the proper order (even if they change it occasionally).
23. Insist that the student government allot the LGBT student organization some reasonable funding. If they refuse, assist the group in finding alternative sources of funding.
24. Insist that fraternal organizations have a discussion on how they would deal with one of their members "coming out."

At the Athletic Department --

25. Ask the Director of Athletics to have a discussion with coaches about how heterosexism and homophobia affect athletes.

In the classroom --

26. Include information about LGBT people who made significant contributions in the past.
27. When discussing current events, include LGBT issues.
28. Use examples of LGBT people in lectures and discussions so they are not marginalized.

29. Be clear with your students that homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions are not acceptable and will be addressed in an educational, informative, and non-threatening manner.

In all Student Affairs departments --

30. Include LGBT people in examples in classes, workshops, and presentations.

31. Ensure that publications are written in such a way that LGBT students will feel included in the audiences; avoid heterosexist language and assumptions.

32. When possible, include openly LGBT students as members of the student work force.

33. All student service departments should participate periodically in structured dialogues with LGBT students. The purpose of this dialogue would be to raise awareness of the nature and extent of homophobia/heterosexism within the university and the particular unit, and to explore avenues for the problems related to the access and quality of services for lesbian and gay students.

Make official statements condemning assault

34. When LGBT students come to you with issues, take them seriously and support them in addressing concerns they are sharing with you.

35. When they or their property are verbally or physically assaulted, make clear and visible statements that homophobic behavior and attitudes will not be tolerated on campus.

Adapted from "51 Fabulous Ways to Support Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students on Your Campus" by Troy Gilbert, Stanford University