4

Community colleges are among the most diverse institutions in the American higher education system. Students across lifestyles, creeds, racial/ethnic backgrounds, gender groups, ability levels, and socioeconomic status reflect the legacy of two-year institutions to provide educational opportunities for many on the margins of full participation. The preponderance of community college students seeks this tier of postsecondary education, as it promises to equalize educational access across divergent student populations. Nonetheless, the unique campus climates of community colleges have not halted marginalization that occurs for sexual minority students. In this chapter, the authors trace the dearth of available literature on LGBTQ students at community colleges, provide a commentary for future research, and offer action steps for practitioners in creating visibly inclusive LGBTQ campus environments.

A Primer on LGBTQ Students at Community Colleges: Considerations for Research and Practice

Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher, Dibya Devika Choudhuri

For over a century, community colleges have provided pathways for post-secondary educational attainment for the masses, not just the elite members of the dominant culture. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), 43 percent of all undergraduate students enrolled in higher education attend a community college (AACC, 2009). With over 12 million students, community colleges are frequently the institutions of choice or the only postsecondary opportunity for students from underrepresented, marginalized groups. In fact, 45 percent of African American, 45 percent of Asian American, and over half of all Hispanic and Native American students in postsecondary education are at community colleges. Hence, two-year institutions have been commonly referred to as

the "people's college" and thought to represent "democracy's doors" allow-ing entry to participation in postsecondary education for those whose access has been limited (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

The landscape of American college students is shifting, given changing demographics in society at large. Over two-fifths of first-generation college-going adults, 71 percent of students with disabilities, one-third of nontra-ditional age (i.e., 25+ years old), and roughly half of students age 50 years and older attend two-year institutions of higher learning (AACC, 2009; Barnett & Li, 1997). Community college students are more likely than their four-year counterparts to work full time, attend school part time, and have increased concerns regarding college costs (Zamani-Gallaher, Bazile, & Stevenson, in press).

Clearly, there is pluralism in the background characteristics of com-munity college students. However, nearly 20 years have passed since Baker (1991) raised the first documented concern on the needs of homosexual students at two-year institutions. While the enrollment patterns for the aforementioned student populations have been well documented, what is known about LGBTQ students at community colleges is virtually nonexis-tent. Subsequently, this chapter endeavors to describe the limited literature on community college LGBTQ students.

LGBTQ Identity and Unlearning Falsehoods

Many myths surrounding homosexuality are often fueled by misinforma-tion regarding sexual orientation in media portrayals (Besner & Spungin, 1995). Gay men are often portrayed as unable to commit, having difficulty with long-term relationships, shallow, obsessed with fashion, and always demonstrating effeminate characteristics. Lesbians are often rendered invis-ible or portrayed as witches, emasculating bullies, or tomboys with mascu-line characteristics (Barret & Logan, 2002). Bisexual and transgendered folk can be demonized or portrayed as freakish. The preceding stereotypes are pervasive and perpetuate homophobia in society and on college campuses.

For many marginalized groups, self-definition is important relative to establishing their collective identity on their own terms. In this chapter, we have intentionally opted to move beyond the conventional referencing to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender as LGBT, to include the queer identifier. Work by Tierney (1997) and Rhoads (1994) contends that the identification of queer signals a "sense of pride and openness about one's same-sex desires as well as a degree of hostility toward heterosexism" (Rhoads, 1994, p. 3). Our conscious decision to utilize LGBTQ connotes our desire to release the muting of LGBTQ issues silenced within many two-year college environments. Additionally, given the multiplicity of iden-tities and roles that community college students occupy (e.g., reentry sin-gle mother, displaced worker, senior citizen, traditional college-goers, etc.),

we do not assume that there is a monolithic lived experience among LGBTQ folk. Nor do we assume that sexual identity is situated in a vacuum from the other microcultural group memberships to which students belong, construct meaning, or not occupy a segmented position in a different postsecondary educational context such as the community college (Zamani-Gallaher et al., in press). In sum, the term *queer* challenges heteronormativity and privileged positionality, providing a prism for examining student development across multiple identities (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Farell, Gupta, & Queen, 2005; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). However, there is a wide variance in the literature in the use of terminology to reference these populations, and some shifts may occur as we report and review current literature.

Roughly five years ago, I (i.e., Zamani-Gallaher) found it particularly disconcerting to have one of my advisees employed at a community college as an academic advisor disclose her concerns over her colleagues' response to an openly gay student. This was the story she shared:

While sharing an office space with another advisor, she overheard the advisor's meeting with a student. The student shared that he had come out to his parents and had been kicked out of the house. He expressed his distress at being disowned by his parents and his inability to focus on studying for his final exams. Prior to this, he explained that he had maintained a solid B average throughout the semester. He wanted to know what his options were from the advisor. The advisor's response was, "Are you sure you are gay?" The student perplexedly replied that he had shared his coming out story only because he felt it was relevant background so she would not think he was just blowing off the final exam. The advisor then said, "I can assist you if you want out of this gayness. Otherwise, I can refer you to someone who can assist you, given that homosexuality contradicts my religious beliefs."

My student was not the only one disturbed by this exchange. It dawned on me to search for literature that pertained to LGBTQ students on two-year campuses after hearing about what I considered discriminatory. The literature search generated few writings related to LGBTQ students in community colleges. Ivory (2005) was among the couple of publications that could be located. In fact, Ivory stated, "fewer than six articles have been published regarding this population" (2005, p. 61). More distressing is that there have been no additional publications (i.e., empirical, theoretical, or applied) in the past five years since Ivory recommended that research is sorely absent to inform student affairs professionals on the need to further their understanding of sexual minorities at community colleges.

Negative LGBTQ Affect and Campus Climate Concerns

While a [nursing] student at a community college I was approached by my clinical instructor in my final semester and was asked: "Why are you a

homosexual?" For several weeks after that encounter, it was like walking on eggshells. I received a copy of my mid-semester evaluation, it contained various references to my homosexuality and the potential problems associated with it, i.e., AIDS, STDs, potential attraction to patients of the same sex, and the potential for improper sexual conduct. (Renn, 2000, p. 131)

The preceding quote is one of the few negative exchanges documenting LGBTQ student in-class experiences at a community college. Institutional characteristics matter, and the need to know about the academic and social integration of LGBTQ students is critical to understanding their overall student satisfaction, psychosocial well-being, retention, and matriculation. For this reason, institutional type relative to the purposeful study of both two- and four-year campuses is a major oversight in the current literature. Community colleges and their students are often on the periphery of higher education (Townsend, Donaldson, & Wilson, 2005). However, two-year institutional contexts must be considered relevant in constructing knowledge about LGBTQ students and augmenting the extant literature. All told, the research examining institutional characteristics by institutional control (public or private), geographic variation, or special population colleges (i.e., historically Black colleges and universities; Hispanic-serving institutions of higher learning; tribal colleges; and single-sex institutions) is lacking.

In what can be considered the lone data-driven publication on LGBTQ and community colleges, 484 community college students were surveyed on homophobia (Franklin, 1998). While the unit of analysis still was not the LGBTQ student, cutting-edge research provided a glimpse into the hostile hallways that exist at two-year institutions. There are parallels that can be drawn between two- and four-year contexts as the challenges LGBTQ collegians face may not be mutually exclusive and bear some overlap.

The prevailing studies on campus climate for LGBTQ students is partial, as it narrowly addresses identity development, sexual harassment, violence, campus climate, and anti-affect toward LGBTQ with undergraduates at four-year colleges (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Evans, 2002; Rankin, 2003; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005; Rhoads, 1994; Sanlo, 2005; Wall & Evans, 1999; Wilkerson, Brooks, & Ross, 2010). Recently, at Houston Community College, a 29-year-old gay transgendered man, Lance Reyna. was believed to be the target of an armed robbery during Gay Pride week. He was approached in the restroom by the assailant and told, "Hey queer, I need you to be quiet, cooperate, and give me all your valuables." Reyna fought back and was beaten, suffering a concussion (Cerota, 2010).

In April 2009, student leaders at American River College in Sacramento, California, passed a resolution opposing a nationally organized day of silent demonstration in support of gay rights. The resolution states that the demonstration was an attempt to intimidate and harass religious students from expressing their views on homosexuality. Following the

passage, students galvanized in response to the antigay religious coalition, subsequently voting the right-wing religious conservative students at the community college out of office.

The inadequate coverage of open hostility against LGBTQ students at community colleges engenders a lack of awareness about the campuses with hostile hallways and the campus climates that are laudable in their efforts to have inclusive climates. The 2010 Campus Pride LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index Report of Colleges is a national assessment tool comprised of over 50 self-assessment questions for institutions interested in promoting a welcoming environment for LGBTQ students (this report uses *LGBT* as the term of choice and in the interests of accuracy, we conform to this terminology in reviewing the report). The assessment aligns with eight different LGBT-friendly factors (i.e., LGBT policy inclusion, LGBT support and institutional commitment, LGBT student life, LGBT academic life, LGBT housing, LBGT campus safety, LGBT counseling and health, and LGBT recruitment and retention) (Campus Pride, 2010). Each of the 237 institutions profiled are rated using a five-star scoring system, with a five-star rating reflective of progressive campuses with inclusive policies, programs, and practices for LGBT students. Only 12 of the 237 institutions cataloged are community colleges. Averaging a mean rating of two out of five stars, six of the 12 community colleges are located in small cities in five different states with 5,000 to 6,000 students. Two of the community colleges are in large urban areas—one with 3,000 students, ranking two out of five stars on the East Coast, and the other on the West Coast with 18,000 students coming in at four out of five stars. The remaining four featured in the LGBT Campus Climate Index are situated in medium-sized cities, with three institutions in the Midwest averaging two out of five stars, while the only medium-sized community college rating four out of five stars was on the West Coast.

Also of note, Campus Pride conducted the first national study of LGBT students slated for release in fall 2010. Item 33 of the questionnaire asks whether students attend a two- or four-year college. Two-hundred fifty-three collegians indicated attending a two-year institution, representing 4.9 percent of those responding (S. Rankin, personal communication, August 13, 2010). However, it is not discernable whether student respondents were concurrently enrolled at both two- and four-year colleges or if there had been vertical or reverse transfer among respondents that may shape their perceptions of campus climate for LGBT students (S. Rankin, personal communication, September 6, 2010). It is questionable whether community college leaders desire to advance caring-inclusive, LGBTQ climates at their respective campuses. There are more than 100 LGBT resource centers staffed at four-year colleges in Canada and the United States. In contrast, a single, formally staffed LGBT resource center exists at a community college (National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education, 2005 as cited by Villareal, 2009). Not surprisingly, it is dubious whether there are safe spaces on two-year campuses.

Only 7 of 219 colleges that offer a safe zone or allies program are community colleges (Tubbs, 2005). In a recent review of the AACC web site, using the search term *LGBTQ,* merely seven results were generated, three of which correspond with the forthcoming Welcoming Community Colleges Initiatives sponsored by the Academy for Educational Development, the Human Rights Campaign, and the National Council on Student Development. The collaborative is four-pronged, seeking to:

1. Increase awareness and build a baseline of knowledge of institutional policies, practices, and partnerships that promote or detract from LGBT students' educational success.
2. Identify and address barriers for strengthening postsecondary outcomes for LGBT community college students.
3. Develop technical assistance tools and guidance that will help to promote and sustain institutional change.
4. Implement and evaluate a model of policies, practices, and partnerships that create a Welcoming Community College (Welcoming Community Colleges Initiative, 2008, p. 2).

From Theory to Practice: Sexual Identity Development and Student Support Services

One of the important aspects of having a theoretical underpinning for services offered to any category of student is that it can inform us about our underlying assumptions that in turn infuse the services we offer. Most student services offered to sexual minority students have been framed in sexual identity formation theory, but focusing on the coming-out process as proposed by Cass (Reynolds & Hanjorgiris, 2000). In the best known of these models, Cass (1979) identified six stages of a common gay and lesbian identity formation that moved from a pregay to a gay identity through the stages of confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride, and synthesis. This model was derived from clinical and empirical data and grounded in interpersonal congruency theory, assuming that identity was acquired through a developmental process, and that the locus lay in the interaction process between persons and their environment. However, a critique of models such as this was for subsuming lesbian identity development under the rubric of gay identity and being based primarily on data from White, middle-aged males (Barret & Logan, 2002). Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) proposed a model of bisexual identity development based on three stages. Yet no empirically derived model has been proposed to account for the complicated process of moving through transgender identity development.

As mentioned by Ivory (2005), the coming-out process has been seen as crucial for LGBTQ students. However, this assumption is based on a developmental model of a traditional-aged student, leaving home for the

first time, in the stages of moving through late adolescence into provisional early adulthood. Developmental tasks of differentiation and the Eriksonian task of identity assumption versus identity confusion are associated with college students.

A significant portion of the community college population consists of students in a position such as the aforementioned. However, there are also important populations of students who are in very different life stages than traditional-age collegians (i.e., 18–24 years of age). For example, there are students firmly in adulthood who are juggling full-time work, parenthood, and academics, as well as students in middle adulthood who are returning for retraining and new skill attainment after being out of the workforce. Thus, the spaces they occupy in the sexual identity development continuum will be very different, with a need for different kinds of services. It seems necessary to account for the complexity and diversity of needs with a theoretical framework that is as complex.

A multidimensional model of sexual identity development developed by Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, and Vernaglia (2002) demonstrates the complexity of these processes for all persons even though the model focuses on heterosexual identity development. The model incorporates six biopsychosocial influences and six dimensions of individual identity, which interact with aspects of group membership identity and attitudes toward sexual minorities. In this model, Worthington et al. (2002) distinguish between sexual identity as a comprehensive process regarding one's identity as a sexual being versus sexual orientation identity regarding acceptance and recognition of one's sexual orientation. The biopsychosocial dimensions include biological factors, the microsocial context, gender norms and socialization, culture, and religious orientation, as well as the systemic homonegativity and sexual prejudice toward LGBTQ populations.

More pertinently to the community college student population, the model also describes an interactive developmental process that can occur both consciously and unconsciously at all stages in the model, and is not linear in progression through stages or tied to any specific age: (1) *unexplored commitment,* describing acceptance of microsocial and societal mandates for prescribed gender and sexual behavior roles and avoidance of sexual self-exploration; (2) *active exploration,* where there is purposeful exploration, evaluation, or experimentation (cognitive, affective, or behavioral) of sexual needs, values, orientation, or preferences for activities, characteristics in partners, or sexual expression; (3) *diffusion*, which may resemble the active exploration but lacks goal-directed intentionality, and is more likely to be chaotic or reactive and often arises from crisis; moving to (4) *deepening and commitment* as needs, values, modes, and expressions of sexual preferences and characteristics are identified; and (5) *synthesis,* characterized by congruence and consistency between both individual identity and development. Using the Worthington et al. (2002) Sexual Identity Model, we contend that educators and counselors can take action

Table 4.1.   Choudhuri & Zamani-Gallaher Modification of Sexual Identity Development: Considerations for College Student Personnel

Developmental Stage	Student Needs/Challenges	Student Personnel Actions/Services
Unexplored commitment	Social image and roles	Information, welcoming environment Invitations for exploration and learning
Active exploration	Social networking and connections; silence, invisibility, obstacles, and secrets	Socialization opportunities Support groups Clubs and social organizations Faculty and staff models, mentors, and allies
Diffusion	Discrimination; broken relationships	Hate crimes protocols and policies Supportive services Counseling services
Deepening and commitment	Leadership opportunities and advocacy	Student leadership training Social organizations Connecting academic and personal passion
Synthesis	Disconnect with self and learning	Academic projects that utilize personal learning Opportunities to teach and lead

and provide targeted services that align with the needs and challenges facing LGBTQ students at community college campuses. Table 4.1 presents preliminary actions and services that can integrate with the various stages of the sexual identity development process. Please note that a more exhaustive list of action steps are offered later in this chapter.

Petitioning Future Research

There is a clear need for increased research on LGBTQ students. To understand the educational and supportive needs of LGBTQ students, it is essential to have empirical data that is demographic, historical, and longitudinal. Many LGBTQ students choose not to identify themselves as such in student surveys and on campus forms. As more surveys and forms commonly include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity, and campuses protect students' privacy, LGBTQ students may be more responsive and identify themselves more readily.

Renn (2010) argues that the available literature on LGBTQ in higher education is short on theoretical and methodological muster in addition to failing to apply queer theory as a useful lens to understand the realities of LGBTQ students. However, although Renn felt that the bulk of studies were

campus climate related, she contends climate studies are still necessary. This is especially true of climate studies that look across multiple identities, infuse globalization, and employ large-scale survey research methods. Nonetheless, the research on LGBTQ folk, their challenges, and concerns is so scant that, arguably, more research, whether quantitative or qualitative on campus climate, on identity, or attitudinal related, should be welcomed.

Choudhuri (2003) suggests, "Social identities are complex and multiple, intersecting with each other as with the context and the shifting meanings ascribed to them by both the perceiver and the perceived" (p. 270). Given the relative absence or superficial treatment of bisexual and transgender students in general, this suggests a strong case for qualitative research in particular to ascertain their experiences. Moreover, given the diverse students at community colleges, it is open to question if LGBTQ student development can be understood divorced from other aspects of identity such as age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, and religion (Berila & Choudhuri, 2005).

Professionals serious about constructing a climate of care for sexual minority students can take a crack at securing external funding for LGBTQ programming on their campus. By undertaking grant writing opportunities, there can be initial funding for sponsoring professional development initiatives, action research, and to establish improved support services at two-year institutions. This could initiate a paradigm shift from silence and invisibility to campuses that echo ethos of care for sexual minorities. One such source is the LGBTQ Funders organization that provides a searchable database and online directory of funding agents supporting work on LGBTQ issues. Additionally, through securing outside funding, administrators, faculty, and staff committed to creating climates of inclusion for LGBTQ students could also embark on practitioner scholarship by engaging in action research that would generate best practices in student services for LGBTQ collegians to be shared with other two-year college educators.

Stepping Up Student Support Services for LGBTQ Collegians

In community colleges, the response to sexual minority student needs has often been a resounding silence. Even though there may be a student organization on campus or an office that addresses those needs, LGBTQ student services mostly tend to be absent rather than present in two-year colleges (Ivory, 2005). Student support services at community colleges must move beyond striving to duplicate and offer services akin to those at traditional four-year institutions in several ways. As pointed out previously, the composition of students at two-year institutions is different, bringing unique needs and requiring a more multifaceted, complex set of responses. In most cases, many of these responses are already present, though applied differently than to LGBTQ students.

A case in point is that many community colleges actively respond to the needs of commuter students who interact on campus for short periods rather than having a residential tenure. Technological advances have allowed some community college students to engage actively online as institutions have created an online presence (e.g., via advertising, registration, orientation, and online course offerings). As a result, students can join in the campus community remotely from wherever they are rather than only engaging in person or extracting a sense of community that requires being on campus. For LGBTQ students, this can be a fortunate thing. If the college web site addresses LGBTQ issues openly and accessibly, there is a sense of welcome. Both heterosexual and LGBTQ students will get the message about the stance of the institution that in turn leads to greater openness and safety in the overall environment.

One advantage of the benefits of technology is that students who are in the early stages of coming out or who are heterosexual but have LGBTQ friends can access information that will be helpful in their identity formation without in any way judging or steering their development. Similar to fact sheets and FAQs developed on other topics, the web site can offer dedicated links to the coming-out process, socialization experiences, available supportive services, services for allies, and so on. Additionally, while face-to-face socializing opportunities are necessary, online interaction offers anonymity and safety. If there is space available for listservs or dedicated blogs, students may participate in much higher numbers than if they have to publicly congregate in an observable location. Given the composite and age-varied nature of students attending two-year institutions, socialization opportunities need to be varied. Evening events may not work for those with family responsibilities, while those who commute long distances may prefer events that can be scheduled around their class times.

One way to break the silence on sexual orientation and its accompanying social messages, confusions, and reactivity is to frame an institutional statement of inclusion and acceptance. This should be accompanied with a well-understood protocol for dealing with incidents of discrimination and hatred. Before incidents happen, student affairs administrators should be confident in their approach and the policies. It is important that such policies should not be solely judicial in their scope and approach, but involve means of communicating to the institutional community, spreading messages of acceptance that contradict any discriminatory reactions, as well as respond affirmatively to programs and educational initiatives. This is of great benefit not just to LGBTQ students who may be impacted, but also to students of diverse identities who may have been impacted by oppression and read the messages sent by the institution as broadly affirming.

Students who have come to an understanding of their identity and comfort are often passionate advocates and strong leaders if given the opportunity to become involved. Training for student leaders that addresses diversity leadership and welcoming their involvement while supporting

Table 4.2. Action Steps for Supporting LGBTQ at Community Colleges

Institutional Commitment	Faculty/Staff/Community Involvement	Student Success
Develop institutional nondiscrimination statements and implement anti-harassment policies if absent.	Advocate for academic and social student engagement that improve the quality of life for LGBTQ persons on campus.	Recognize and address LGBTQ students from first entry, in developing recruitment, admission, and orientation materials in print, publicity, and Web-based services.
Draft a diversity goal statement that addresses sexual orientation and identity.	Acknowledge heteronormative assumptions and challenge heterosexist structural inequities at your campus.	Provide support for LGBTQ student leadership beyond the borders of campus.
Create an ad-hoc committee to assess the campus culture; conduct regular environmental scans; develop a visible mission statement that illustrates the institutional commitment to diversity along the spectrum of difference, acknowledging the multiplicity of collegiate identities intersecting with queer identity.	Encourage faculty to teach content that embeds the contributions of the LGBTQ community.	Originate leadership development opportunities for LGBTQ students, and/or sponsor student participation at state/national student leadership summits.
	Sponsor professional development in-services and/or conferences for community college faculty and staff that raise awareness, increase allies, and dismantle chilly campus climates for LGBTQ students.	
	Establish learning opportunities that call for increased cultural competencies among community college educators.	

Table 4.2. (*Continued*)

Institutional Commitment	Faculty/Staff/Community Involvement	Student Success
Develop and articulate strategic planning initiatives being purposeful in establishing a commitment to student development inclusive of LGBTQ issues together with promoting the holistic development of other diverse student groups.	Among available openly gay faculty and staff, establish an LGBTQ mentoring program to give LGBTQ community college students accessible role models on campus to provide emotional support alongside educational and career guidance for successfully navigating higher education as an LGBTQ collegian.	Incorporate diverse programming inclusive of sexual minorities by setting up an LGBTQ speakers bureau. Focus on programs, events, and activities that remove the veil of invisibility and silence.
Dedicate human and fiscal resources in the form of a stand-alone LGBTQ Resource Center or Office for LGBTQ Affairs.	Integrate LGBTQ issues into the general education curriculum and special topic queer studies courses; offer programs such as webinars and noncredit courses through continuing education as fitting.	Encourage a visible presence and acknowledgment of LGBTQ individuals on community college campuses (e.g., through bulletin board displays, fact sheets, historical timeline of gay rights, passing out gay-straight/ally pins, rainbow stickers during student activities events, etc.).
Advocate and champion for inclusion of LGBTQ matters among educational policy makers (e.g., state boards of trustees, AACC board of directors, Department of Education—Adult, etc.) in breaking the veneer of invisibility pertaining to issues of access, equity, and social justice for LGBTQ individuals in the two-year college context.	Start an institutional listserv to distribute relevant information from the research, practitioner, and policy communities that serve to promote full inclusion. This site can serve as the hub for useful links, white papers, policy briefs, best practices, working support groups, local social services, and a bibliography of readings on LGBTQ concerns, among other sources of information.	Encourage social networking, listservs, and/or blogs for LGBTQ individuals and their supporters to connect regarding campus life, workplace issues, college climate concerns, and collaboration on raising awareness.

their efforts is a critical piece in fostering lifelong leaders. The student leader, the student population, the institution, and the community will benefit from efforts in this area.

Some returning adult students may be perfectly content to have socialization opportunities in their home communities, while seeing the college solely as a site for learning. Here is where having faculty and staff allies who can assist with projects, as well as mentor and advise students on ways to combine their personal lives with their new learning, can be extremely beneficial. They serve as role models and can be extremely influential in the life of a student, sometimes making a significant impact on the retention and success of a student. Mature students' life experiences, when respected and incorporated into their new learning, can make significant differences in their ability to be confident and competent, as well as make them feel that they are connecting the various pieces of their life toward integration rather than diffusion.

Under every circumstance, leadership ought to be in front, taking on an activist stance to respond to need (Zamani-Gallaher, Green, Brown, & Stovall, 2009). Hence, college student personnel need to think "OUTside" of the box in meeting the needs of LGBTQ students that have gone unnoticed in the literature and in many community college environments. We have outlined action steps in Table 4.2 illustrating the necessity for institutional, faculty, staff, and administrative commitments to foster inclusive campus climates.

Conclusion

The existing literature on LGBTQ students largely documents sexual identity development of students on four-year campuses. To date, there are no published studies that squarely focus on LGBTQ students who attend community colleges. More specifically, literature that explores the viewpoints, reflections, coping strategies, and the impact that community colleges have in shaping the experiences of LGBTQ students on two-year campuses is nonexistent.

Community college personnel should call to question how they could be increasingly responsive, reflective practitioners in meeting the needs of marginalized student populations at two-year institutions. Considerations for increasing individual and institutional levels of support for LGBTQ matters on campus can be actualized through the creation of an action plan that instills personal and college accountability for improving the climate and sense of community afforded to LGBTQ students.

References

Abes, E. S., & Kasch, D. Using queer theory to explore lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 2007, *48*(6), 619–636.

American Association of Community Colleges. *Factsheet*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 2009.

Baker, J. A. Gay nineties: Addressing the needs of the homosexual community and junior college students and faculty. *Community/Junior College*, 1991, *15*(1), 25–32.

Barnett, L., & Li, Y. *Disability support services in community colleges: Research brief* (ACC-RB-97-I). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 1997.

Barret, B., & Logan, C. *Counseling gay men and lesbians: A practice primer.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2002.

Berila, B., & Choudhuri, D. D. Metrosexuality the middle class way: Exploring race, class and gender in "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." *Genders Online Journal*, 2005, *42*.

Besner, H. F., & Spungin, C. I. *Gay and lesbian students: Understanding their needs*. Washington, DC: Taylor Francis, 1995.

Campus Pride LGBT-friendly campus climate index: National assessment tool. Charlotte, NC: Campus Pride, 2010.

Cass, V. C. Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality,* 1979, *4*(30), 219–235.

Cerota, A. Gay student who was beaten speaks out. Houston, TX: KTRK TV/DT. Retrieved on July 9, 2010, from abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/local&id=7523020&pt=print, 2010, June 26.

Choudhuri, D. D. Qualitative research and multicultural counseling competency: An argument for inclusion. In D. B. Pope-Davis (Ed.), *Handbook of multicultural competencies in counseling and psychology* (pp. 267–282). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.

Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. *The American community college* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008.

Evans, N. J. The impact of an LGBT safe zone project on campus climate. *Journal of College Student Development*, 2002, *43*, 522–539.

Farell, K., Gupta, N., & Queen, M. (Eds.). Interrupting heteronormativity: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender pedagogy and responsible teaching at Syracuse University. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2005.

Franklin, K. *Psychological motivations of hate crimes perpetrators: Implications for educational intervention*. Paper presented at the 106th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, California (ED 423 939), 1998.

Ivory, B. T. LGBT students in community college: Characteristics, challenges, and recommendations. *New Direction for Student Services,* 2005, *11,* 62–69.

Rankin, S. *Campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people: A national perspective*. Cambridge, MA: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, 2003.

Renn, K. A. Including all voices in the classroom: Teaching lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. *College Teaching*, 2000, *48*(4), 129–135.

Renn, K. A. LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher*, 2010, *39*(2), 132–141.

Renn, K. A., & Bilodeau, B. Queer student leaders: An exploratory case study of identity development and LGBT student involvement at a Midwestern research university. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 2005, *2*(4), 49–71.

Reynolds, A. L., & Hanjorgiris, W. F. Coming out: Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity development. In R. M. Perez, K. A. DeBord, & K. J. Bieschke (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients* (pp. 35–55). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2000.

Rhoads, R. A. Coming out in college: The struggle for a queer identity. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1994.

Sanlo, R. L. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students: Risk, resiliency, and retention. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 2005, *6*(1), 97–110.

Tierney, W. G. Academic outlaws: Queer theory and cultural studies in the academy. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

Townsend, B. K., Donaldson, J., & Wilson, T. Marginal or monumental? Visibility of community colleges in selected higher-education journals. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 2005, *29*(2), 123–135.

Tubbs, N. J. *Safe zone/allies programs: Campuses which offer a safe zone or allies program.* Retrieved on July 31, 2010, from www.lgbtcampus.org/old_faq/safe_zone_roster.html, 2005.

Villareal, H. B. (2009, February). Welcoming community colleges initiative: Supporting educational and labor market success for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students. National Council on Student Development Newsletter. Retrieved from http://www.ncsonline.org/pdf/2009winter.pdf.

Wall, V. A., & Evans, N. J. (Eds.). *Toward acceptance: Sexual orientation issues on campus.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999.

Weinberg, M. S., Williams, C. J., & Pryor, D. W. *Dual attractions: Understanding bisexuality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Welcoming Community Colleges Initiative. *Supporting educational and labor market success for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students: A concept paper*. Retrieved on August 1, 2010 from www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/accessinclusion/Documents/welcomingccs_112008.pdf.

Wilkerson, J. M., Brooks, A. K., & Ross, M. W. Sociosexual identity development and sexual risk taking of acculturating collegiate gay and bisexual men. *Journal of College Student Development*, 2010, *51*(3), 279–296.

Worthington, R. L., Savoy, H. B., Dillon, F. R., & Vernaglia, E. R. Heterosexual identity development: A multidimensional model of individual and social identity. *The Counseling Psychologist,* 2002, *30,* 496–531.

Zamani-Gallaher, E. M., Bazile, S., & Stevenson, T. N. Segmentation, capital, and community college transfer students: Exploring community colleges as agents of currency. In R. D. Bartee (Ed.), *Contemporary perspectives on capital in educational contexts*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age, in press.

Zamani-Gallaher, E. M., Green, D. O., Brown, M. C., & Stovall, D. O. *The case for affirmative action on campus: Concepts of equity, considerations for practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2009.

Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher is a professor of educational leadership and coordinator of the Community College Leadership Program in the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University.

Dibya Devika Choudhuri is an associate professor in the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University.