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Faculty development programs have been at the forefront for the last decade in confronting new issues related to teaching and learning. These collective efforts have encouraged faculty to engage more directly and more deeply with students and ideas. Central to each of these efforts has been self-reflection and thoughtful analysis of the issues. Sexual orientation has not been a significant part of that personal study or dialogue. For those of us committed to strengthening our academic communities, recognizing this exclusion of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community demands that we work to reduce the barriers. This will mean a renewed commitment to faculty development efforts that enhance the teaching and learning environment for all. While the issue is complex and the questions are difficult, there are a number of beginning strategies that faculty development specialists can use in taking a proactive role.

"What does sexual orientation really have to do with teaching and learning?" asked a faculty member attending a panel discussion at a recent teaching conference at The American University. This question would have been unthinkable at our first campus-wide conference four years ago. At that time, we were just beginning to open discussion about how to make our curriculum more inclusive and focused by integrating new scholarship on gender and race into our courses. At this year's conference, with the theme "Content, Communication, and Community: Teaching and Learning in the 90s," participants extended the discussion of inclusion and raised difficult questions about sexual orientation as it relates to the classroom and the curriculum.

The Current Campus Climate

Matters of sexual orientation have generally been absent from campus dialogues on classroom activity and the curriculum. Discussions between students and administrators focus on ROTC, non-discrimination statements, campus policies extending benefits to domestic partners, and support groups for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Although faculty and academic leaders, through journals and annual meetings of their associations and learned societies, have been addressing issues of diversity, engaging in arguments about political correctness, and encouraging attention to multiculturalism in the curriculum and pedagogy, these discussions have generally not included contributions and concerns of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. The student and faculty dialogue is nearly nonexistent because of students' fears.

Current campus conditions, as documented in studies such as those at Rutgers (President's Select Committee, 1989) and Penn State (Tierney, 1992), suggest that scattered dialogues are not enough to address the pervasive fear and isolation that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, staff, and faculty feel on our campuses and in our classrooms. Our students tell us that fear and isolation are stimulated by professors who write such comments as "there is no such thing" on a student's paper on homosexuality in the *Bible*, or make statements like "Oh this is a dike—not like those other dykes," or insist "Walt Whitman was not gay!" or pronounce a book by a lesbian author "not important." Other classroom examples include letting a student carry on with a depiction of a gay stereotype, tearing down a poster for a gay event, criticizing a library display of lesbian literature, failing to consider nontraditional examples of family in a sociology class discussion, laughing at the demise of a character in a novel who is assumed to be gay, exhibiting body language which includes raising eyebrows or rolling eyes when the subject shifts to sexual orientation, and never confronting students making uninformed or disparaging remarks.

Understandably, and for reasons beyond the scope of this paper, many faculty members, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual or straight, are uncomfortable addressing sexual orientation. This discomfort is managed by giving only examples of a heterosexual nature, not asking for questions or trying to engage students in dialogue, not giving examples to support complex sexual orientation matters, providing no indication of their personal position or values on the matter, avoiding discussion by saying "Thank you for raising that point," minimizing differences between straights and gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, and having all class assignments based on heterosexual foundations.

Other faculty members are willing to focus on sexual orientation, yet student reaction is not always positive. In some instances students complain that the faculty assigns "too many" gay, lesbian, and bisexual readings or "always" leads class discussion from a gay, lesbian, or bisexual perspective. Another student complaint is about class exercises which make it difficult for students to maintain the privacy of their sexual orientation. Other students express concern that well-intentioned faculty, who want to learn more, always ask the one open gay, lesbian, or bisexual person in the class to speak for the gay, lesbian and bisexual community. Finally, some students, well-prepared to discuss sexual orientation, are impatient with faculty members who cannot advance a discussion beyond the entry level.

All these factors affect what we can and should do in faculty development. For those of us committed to strengthening our academic communities, recognizing this fear and isolation, oppression and invisibility, discomfort and misunderstanding, demands that we both join the conversation and work to reduce the barriers. This will mean a renewed commitment to faculty development efforts that enhance the teaching and learning environment for all by helping faculty and students engage in critical encounters which expose them to perspectives outside their personal experience. Are we, as faculty developers, ready for this commitment to the inclusion of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community? Are we ready to deal with our lack of knowledge and our fears?

Expanding the Faculty Development Agenda to Include Sexual Orientation

Faculty development programs have a strong history of responding to campus concerns. Our agenda is always changing and is easily revealed by a content analysis of *To Improve the Academy*. Articles several years ago reflected our interest in classroom research, student learning styles, quality of life for faculty, concerns of new faculty, support for teaching assistants, the role of the department chair in faculty development, and a variety of effective faculty development strategies. More recently, balancing teaching and research, the aging professoriate, feminist pedagogy, learning communities, and multiculturalism have been in the foreground. It is inevitable that sexual orientation will be added to the agenda.To address each of these issues, we have had to educate ourselves first and then design strategies to involve our colleagues and students. This initial starting point is particularly appropriate and necessary in this instance because of the general discomfort with the topic.

Questions about sexual orientation are not easy to ask, nor to answer. They are reminiscent of those we have previously raised as we considered ethnicity, gender, and race. If we believe, as Parker Palmer passionately argues, that teaching is not technique, but sharing who you are, then we must open up our classrooms. "It is only at the level of personhood that community happens and good work gets done," he claims (Edgerton, 1992). We cannot help our students, regardless of their orientation, at this difficult time in their development by keeping the classroom quiet and impersonal. Nor can we support our faculty by informally assuring them that minorities have equal power when their life experience tells them otherwise.

As gay, lesbian, and bisexual concerns are added to our agenda, we will have to be prepared to help individual faculty members address personal and classroom questions that will arise. A number of these questions arose at our recent teaching conference. "How can students be helped to belong in the classroom?" "How do you deal with male, white, straight and middle class students who come to the classroom with too great a sense of belonging—with a kind of power that almost prohibits real inclusion of all students in the classroom?" "Is it a zero sum game where they have to give up something for the other students to get something?" "What difference does it make if I make a safe space for students' ideas, if I don't also make a safe space for my students as persons?" "What would gay, lesbian, and bisexual students describe as a safe place and can we create it?" "How can I teach 'authentically' if I have to keep my real self hidden in the classroom?" "What will my colleagues think if I raise questions about gay, lesbian, and bisexual life and community in an open forum?" The faculty developer, interested in initiating attention to sexual orientation, must be prepared to answer questions and ask on behalf of faculty and students, "How ready am I and how ready is my campus to explore issues of sexual orientation?" In the words of one professor "the classroom is always a fragmented, difficult place; difference is not fun—it's scary."

If we use The American University as a guide, we note that the faculty were able to talk about gender long before their comfort level with race developed. Furthermore, while there have been opportunities before this year to discuss sexual orientation, this is the first year that it publicly received any direct attention. All of the other conversations over the years had to take place first, not because they were of some higher priority pertaining to inclusiveness, but in order for the faculty to develop enough trust and openness to get to what is a difficult issue to discuss.

In seeking full recognition of diversity and support for genuine inclusiveness we may well be confronted with resistance, backlash, harassment, moral judgment, and negative stereotyping. These stem from deeply held beliefs which we can anticipate and to which we will need to respond. Some colleagues and students believe homosexuality is immoral and should not be acknowledged. For some this attitude will not change even though campus policies, which provide protection, will change. Yet other colleagues will experience an evolution from tolerance to respect to appreciation to affirmation. Just as with race and gender, our understanding of the attitudes, experiences, and needs of our faculty and students will become increasingly informed by open dialogue. The roles, responsibilities, and strategies for change are parallel to those aimed at understanding the experiences of women on campus as described in the pathbreaking work "The Chilly Climate"(Hall & Sandler, 1982). These strategies can help us deal with the resistance to inclusion of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in our academic community.

The issue is complex and faculty development must take a proactive role. To encourage conversation and provide leadership, a faculty developer must be prepared to publicly answer the opening question of this essay, "What does sexual orientation have to do with teaching and learning?" Our preparation began by listening to colleagues and students, thus discovering the layers of meaning in our classrooms that make it almost impossible to avoid addressing the relationship between sexual orientation and teaching and learning. It is clear that just below the surface are assumptions, expectations, and values which shape both what is taught and how it is understood. One of our colleagues describes it as the "discourse of approval and disapproval" that affects communication and the sharing of ideas.

Beginning Strategies for the Faculty Developer

If you are going to take a leadership role in promoting a supportive conversation about including gay, lesbian, and bisexual perspectives in the classroom and the curriculum, then you will first need to prepare yourself. Pursuing one or more of the following strategies will help you gain essential sensitivity and expertise, before trying to design activities to engage faculty colleagues in this difficult dialogue.

1. Read a variety of texts

You can begin by reading a basic text that addresses gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development, such as *Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus* by Nancy Evans and Vernon Wall

(1991). As a way of becoming sensitized to the issues faced by gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, you can read *Homophobia: How We All Pay The Price*, edited by Warren J. Blumenfeld (1992). This book explores the hidden costs of homophobia in family, religion, public policy, and the arts. Also important are chapters in Herdt (1989), particularly essays by Herdt on emerging gay and lesbian identities, and by Boxer and Cohler on the "life course" of gay and lesbian youth. The resources related to teaching and the classroom are few and scattered, but you should be watching for them. Another area of reading includes those books and articles that link a discipline and sexual orientation, for example *The Sociology of Sexuality and Homosexuality: Syllabi and Teaching Materials* edited by Paula Rust and Martin Levine (1992). Each of these texts will lead you to others.

2. Explore perspectives outside your personal experience

Talking with colleagues who are dealing with sexual orientation, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons is a necessary first step. This helps you understand the language, increases your comfort level, and exposes you to the feelings behind the issues. You can start by connecting with a colleague with whom you feel comfortable. Examining syllabi for gay authored texts or subject matter, or seeking help from the advisors or members of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual organizations, or going to an event on a lesbian topic will help you find colleagues. By paying attention to your feelings, you can begin to appreciate the difficulties you and your colleagues face when exploring perspectives outside your personal experience.

3. Broaden the campus conversation

At campus forums on teaching and learning you can raise questions that pertain to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. By mentioning sexual orientation when diversity and multiculturalism are discussed, you encourage a more inclusive definition. Your participation in the development of position papers introduces the campus to gay, lesbian, and bisexual matters. Circulating articles and other materials that use an inclusive definition, such as William Tierney's article, "Building

Academic Communities of Difference" (1992), is an unobtrusive way to stimulate dialogue and begin to educate others. An informal study group for interested individuals provides a safe environment in which to explore issues and to learn.

4. Recommend inclusive campus policies

You can encourage the faculty governing body to recommend that sexual orientation be included in the college's non-discrimination statement and that campus policies on bigotry, harassment, and intimidation apply to sexual orientation. The protection of rights is an essential foundation for work to change attitudes and build a climate of respect and support, not mere tolerance. Similarly, you can ask the campus affirmative action or equity committee to include sexual orientation among its concerns.

5. Identify faculty who are interested in including sexual orientation in their teaching and scholarship

You can learn from faculty who are already working with materials or serving as sources of support. They can help you become familiar with the full range of sexual orientation issues as anchored in each of the disciplines. The issues are varied and include for example: morality (philosophy and religion), cross cultural phenomena (anthropology), social implications (law, economics, political science), determining factors (biology, psychology), and perspective (art, literature). You can work with these faculty members at the department level so that they can encourage dialogue, support lectures and colloquia, and participate in improving teaching panels and workshops that address reconceptualizing the discipline to include sexual orientation.

6. Review course content

Each faculty member has an opportunity to be inclusive in the design of a course. An examination of examples of explanation, forms, course syllabi, assignments, exams, discussion topics, handouts, and other class materials for majority assumptions or lack of inclusiveness will reveal the degree to which the course is inclusive. You can connect faculty of different orientations so they can help each other find the subtle messages and common heterosexual assumptions that may exist in any aspect of the course.

7. Stimulate curriculum reform projects

You can encourage courses that both mainstream perspectives on gender, race, class, and culture, as well as courses that take those perspectives as the organizing principle. By taking a variety of approaches you can insure that inclusion is everyone's responsibility and the issues are not ghetto-ized. A key component of the curriculum is the development of new general education courses which can be used to introduce students to the richness that a variety of cultures and people, including those of all sexual orientations, contributes to a community. By bringing together faculty interested in the sexual orientation theme, you can promote curricular integration and provide open support so that faculty members do not feel they have to sneak the issue into the curriculum.

8. Examine the classroom interactions

By visiting classrooms, you can learn what it takes to create a supportive climate that encourages students to express their thoughts so they can discover whether they are homophobic. You can observe how faculty handle the topic so that there are not attacks or a casting of blame, but rather an appreciation for ideas and a respect for persons. Positive things to look for in the classroom include a faculty member's willingness to raise the topic, engage students in dialogue, and share personal thoughts; to question students who perpetuate myths and stereotypes; to support gay, lesbian, and bisexual students who are inappropriately challenged by others.

Clearly, the first step toward enhancing your ability to work for inclusiveness is to learn as much as possible and come to appreciate the complexity of the issue. At the same time, you will be looking for colleagues who will be helpful when it is time to expand the conversation.

Reflections on Getting Started

Dealing with sexual orientation is far more complex than this simple advice suggests. Many of us fear that we cannot really understand the perspective of another. Others of us fear that we will be thought to be gay or lesbian or bisexual if we express advocacy for dealing with sexual orientation in the classroom and the curriculum. These concerns are both inhibiting and instructive. As we gain knowledge, interact with gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, try simple strategies, and learn more about our colleagues' attitudes toward sexual orientation, these fears subside and confidence develops.

You do not need to be gay or lesbian or bisexual to be an advocate for inclusion. When you step forward, however, you cannot be sure that you will avoid criticism. You cannot be sure you will be supported. You must expect that most of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual faculty will not reveal their sexual orientation. Once your willingness to address the topic is recognized, some of your colleagues will talk to you privately if they are sure you are safe. But you must be absolutely vigilant about protecting their right to privacy no matter how much you need their help. And you will need to find constructive ways to handle your own defensiveness and isolation.

Clearly, our perspective and advice is intended for those who are members of the heterosexual community and who are working in faculty development. We want to observe that the majority culture has a responsibility to break down the barriers to inclusiveness. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual colleagues (to the extent that conditions allow them to be open about their sexual orientation on the campus) can help enormously in this work by leading, collaborating, instructing, and sharing, but heterosexuals should not wait for them to take the initiative. The participation of the "majority" is critical for it adds legitimacy to the goals of recognition and inclusion.

Individual readiness will develop over time and we cannot expect to act on every one of these suggestions immediately. The work will be done slowly, as opportunities are available; however, we will need to act with deliberateness and a keen sensitivity to timing. There will be moments when some strategies feel right and others do not. And as we work, our feelings will fluctuate from a sense of "we're moving forward" to "we're going no place" to "we're losing ground." Some of our strategies for addressing this need will be judged as imperfect and our good intentions will not be appreciated. What is important is to keep hold of the broader perspective that this is not a separate agenda, but something that should be fully integrated into the ongoing efforts many of us are engaged in to transform our communities.

This effort will not make the daily work in the classroom easier. Indeed, a faculty colleague now observes that her heightened sensitivity to the variety of cultures in the classroom makes the multiplicity of subtle messages incredibly distracting. She used to be able to move through the content, lecturing with enthusiasm, answering the questions of the outspoken, and finishing as the class time ended. Now she notes every frown, sigh, and seating placement while worrying about whether all her students are finding the classroom a "good" experience. But as another faculty member observed, "Perhaps we cannot expect the classroom to repair injury as it happens in the larger society, but we can seek to set trustworthy boundaries which allow students to move into the unknown, to share their inadequate understanding of each other." Faculty developers can provide guidance and support as the academy creates a community receptive to all.

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