Chapter 52
Trans*Forming Higher Education to Advance Workforce Diversity

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ABSTRACT

The discrimination transgender persons experience in their educational pursuits, as well as their personal, public, and private lives, negatively impacts their ability to obtain and to maintain work. Trans individuals experience frequent harassment and violence in school, discrimination in the workplace, and high rates of poverty. This chapter reviews the prevalence and implications of trans targeting before surveying judicial opinions and legal statutes that work to protect or to discriminate against transfolk. Although the laws are mixed, more and more legislative codes and judicial opinions advance trans rights and consider gender identity and expression a protected class of people. This chapter suggests different policies, programs, and protocols college campuses can adopt to create a safe, inclusive, and productive educational environment for trans students. Doing so will educate cisgender individuals about trans issues and legal rights as well as prepare trans workers to enter into the workforce.

INTRODUCTION

Classified medically with Gender Identity Disorder, transpersons experience gender dysphoria, the disjunction between their biological sex organs and their psychological gender. Transpersons signify a definitional rupture to the gender binary, representing gender in a variety of ways (West, 2011). Trans (transgender, trans, or trans*) is an umbrella term, referencing people who identify as transman, transwoman, MTF, FTM, transsexual, transvestite, intersex, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, androgynous, drag, pangender, intergender, gender variant, gender bending, and neutrois. Important to this essay, transpersons may adopt a preferred gender role by the time they enter college or begin their transition during schooling.

The discrimination transgender persons experience on campuses of higher education negatively impacts their personal and professional lives. A report published jointly by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay (NCTE) and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) characterizes trans violence in education as "severe and pervasive" (Grant, et al., 2011, p. 46). Fostering safe and supportive educational environments is important to the personal wellness, professional success, and public reception of transgender persons.

Unfortunately, most colleges and universities do not address transgender needs. Particular to each transperson, their needs relate to their transition goals, location in the process, psychosocial and biological needs, and previous experiences of support or discrimination. The World Professional Association of Transgender Health's (WPATH) 2012 Standards of Care recommends gender transition protocols be flexible (Coleman, et al., 2012).

As a part of Perspectives on Future Workforce Diversity Direction in Higher Education, this chapter surveys harms perpetuated against transgender individuals before considering the legal protections afforded them via judicial opinions and legislative statutes. This chapter next suggests specific policies, procedures, and programs institutions of higher education should adopt to facilitate safe and supportive educational environments for trans students.

BACKGROUND

As an umbrella term, trans (transgender, trans, or trans*) references people who identify as outside the gender binary system of male or female. Whereas gender identity refers to the preferred gender people use to define themselves, gender expression refers to how people communicate their preferred gender to others. A transman, or a FTM, identifies as male. A transwoman, or a MTF, identifies as female. A transsexual seeks to transition from the gender assigned at birth whereas a transvestite dresses in clothing associated with a different gender. Intersex persons can have a variety of conditions in which a person's sexual anatomy does not fit the gender binary of male or female. Genderqueer, non-binary, or third gender persons do not identity as either female or male. Androgynous people can have male and female characteristics or be genderless. Two-spirit individuals, used in indigenous communities, have male and female spirits within them. Genderfluid individuals identify as different genders at different times. Gender non-conforming or gender variant people dress and behave in a fashion considered atypical for their gender. Agender, non-gendered, genderless, genderfree, or neutrois individuals all have no gender. Intergender people identity with a gender midway between male and female. Bigender persons move between male and female genders or identify with both simultaneously. Trigender persons move between male, female, and a third gender that can manifest in different ways, including genderless or polygender. Pangender individuals identity with all genders.

Although psychosexual scholars locate the onset of Gender Identity Disorder predominantly between 2 and 4 years of age (Zucker & Bradley, 1995), the development of gender occurs in stages. In their consideration of transgender issues in workplace diversity, Chaney and Hawley (2014) detail several models that survey transgender identity. Importantly, transgender employees may alter their gender identity and gender expression during employment. During transition, an individual begins to live as the preferred gender. During this time transpersons will adopt a new name, dress and groom themselves as the preferred gender, and inform relevant people (employers, family, friends, etc.) of their preferred gender identity. Importantly, treatment of Gender Identity Disorder varies from person to person so no

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