

Final Report – SWS Lavender Report Card

Malaena Taylor, University of Connecticut

Rebecca Barton, Brandeis University

Gaye Tuchman, University of Connecticut

Contact: Malaena Taylor, malaena.taylor@uconn.edu

Executive Summary of PhD-Granting University Analysis

The Lavender Report Card provides a way for LGBT students and their allies to help determine which Sociology graduate departments will be most likely to accommodate LGBT-focused research interests, and/or provide a safe place for them to study in general. It also provides an opportunity for Sociology departments to reflect on—and change—their curriculum if they score a low rating. The criteria we have used were influenced by those of the SWS Gender Report Cards. We have assessed PhD-granting departments on three main criteria: faculty scholarship on LGBT issues, teaching on LGBT issues, and institutional climate on issues of sexual and gender diversity and equality.

Data and Methods

University Grades

For universities, we constructed a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest score possible on the Lavender Report Card. The details of this scale are outlined below.

We began data collection with the 2013 *ASA Guide to Graduate Schools*. Looking only at PhD-granting institutions in the U.S., we counted all tenure-track faculty members who list sexualities as one of their specialty areas. Any institution with one or more faculty specializing in sexualities was given a score of 1 towards the final grade. Institutions with no faculty specializing in sexualities received 0 in this category.

Because some professors who specialize in “gender”—but not sexualities—are also likely to do research on LGBT issues, we examined the CVs of all tenure-track faculty listing gender as a specialty area. We examined these faculty members’ CVs, as well as those listing sexualities as a specialty area, to look for specifics on past and current research on LGBT issues. Institutions with at least one faculty member who has published or received a grant to do research on LGBT-related issues received a score of 1 towards the final grade. Institutions with no faculty research on LGBT-related issues received a 0 in this category.

Consulting the ProQuest Dissertation Abstracts database, we counted the number of completed dissertations that focus specifically on LGBT-related issues since the year 2003. We believe that ten years is an appropriate window of time for this category, as it captures a diverse range of cohorts. An institution that has supported at least one dissertation with a specific LGBT-related focus received a score of 1 towards the final grade. Institutions with no LGBT-focused dissertations in the past ten years received a 0.

Consulting department websites, we counted both graduate and undergraduate courses on issues of sexual diversity and other LGBT-related issues, including special topics courses where possible. We believe that counting undergraduate courses is important, as it indicates that grad students who wish to teach courses on these topics might have the opportunity to do so. Courses have been evaluated based on both the title and description. For example, a course titled “Sociology of Gender” was only counted if the description includes reference to sexuality. Institutions that offer at least one undergraduate course related to LGBT-related issues receive a score of 1, and those that offer at least one graduate level course receive a score of 1 (two separate scores). Otherwise, the scores are 0 in these categories.

The Campus Pride Index (CPI) assesses universities on the presence and extent of LGBT university resources such as counseling, same-sex partner benefits, and campus safety, among others (see <http://www.campusprideindex.org/details/overall.aspx> for the full list of criteria). Based on Susan R. Rankin’s original research on LGBT campus climates, the index rates universities on a scale of 0-5, with 5 being the most LGBT-friendly. The exact CPI score is added to the above criteria in order to complete the final “grade” for each institution’s Lavender Report Card. This means that the highest grade an institution can receive is 10.

The CPI is based partially on self-assessment by university officials, and an official has to request a CPI assessment; twenty-eight of the 117 institutions we examine had no CPI scores. Of these 28, two have no undergraduate program. Therefore, they are excluded from the study. Another two have policies that forbid “homosexual behavior,” which is a valid justification for excluding them (although there has been one dissertation defended at one of these schools in the past few years that is LGBT-relevant—but that is the only point they would receive). This leaves us with 113 institutions included in this study, 24 of which had no CPI data.

We sent surveys to the chairs of all 113 Sociology Departments and received responses from 64, yielding a response rate of 56.6%. These surveys ask about whether there is sufficient support for LGBT-related research and LGBT-identified students, as well as whether we measured LGBT-focused courses correctly (see Appendix for questions). Of the 24 Chairs at institutions with no CPI data, 18 returned completed surveys.

Results of University Analysis

Our analysis suggests two different ways to score departments. The first method is reflected in table 1, and the second in table 2. The first method uses the departmental measures along with the CPI scores. This method only includes 89 universities, which are ranked in order in table 1. Schools with the same score are listed in alphabetical order. Thirteen universities scored a perfect ten. The second method includes all 113 universities and leaves the CPI scores out of the ranking entirely, making the total possible score 5 instead of 10. Table 2 shows that 21 universities scored a 5 out of 5 using this method.

Table 1. Full Lavender Report Card Scores for 89 Ph.D. Granting Universities

1. UCLA	10.0	39. Yale	7.5	77. Penn State	5.0
2. UCSB	10.0	40. Brown	7.0	78. University of Pennsylvania	5.0
3. UC Santa Cruz	10.0	41. University of Delaware	7.0	79. University of South Carolina	5.0
4. University of Chicago	10.0	42. University of Maryland	7.0	80. Stony Brook University	5.0
5. U of Illinois Chicago	10.0	43. University of Missouri Columbia	7.0	81. University of Akron	4.5
6. Indiana University	10.0	44. Princeton	7.0	82. Emory	4.5
7. UMass Amherst	10.0	45. Washington State University	7.0	83. Johns Hopkins	4.5
8. University of Michigan	10.0	46. Bowling Green State U	6.5	84. University of North Texas	4.5
9. Northwestern University	10.0	47. UC San Diego	6.5	85. Western Michigan University	4.5
10. University of Oregon	10.0	48. Columbia University	6.5	86. Miami	4.0
11. Portland State University	10.0*	49. U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	6.5	87. Utah State University	4.0
12. University of Southern California	10.0	50. University of Kansas	6.5	88. University of Tennessee Knoxville	3.0
13. University of Washington	10.0	51. Kent State	6.5	89. South Dakota State	3.0
14. U of Colorado Boulder	9.5	52. University of New Mexico	6.5		
15. University of Connecticut	9.5	53. North Carolina State	6.5		
16. Southern Illinois U Carbondale	9.5	54. University of Arizona	6.0		
17. UC Berkeley	9.0	55. Brandeis	6.0		
18. Louisville	9.0	56. UC Riverside	6.0		
19. University of Minnesota	9.0	57. Case Western Reserve	6.0		
20. Ohio State University	9.0	58. University of Central Florida	6.0		
21. NYU	9.5**	59. University of Cincinnati	6.0		
22. UC Irvine	8.5	60. Cornell	6.0		
23. U of Nebraska Lincoln	8.5	61. George Mason University	6.0		
24. Rutgers	8.5	62. Iowa State University	6.0		
25. University of Texas - Austin	8.5***	63. UMass Boston	6.0		
26. University of Florida	8.0	64. University of New Hampshire	6.0		
27. Harvard	8.0	65. Virginia Tech	6.0		
28. Stanford	8.0	66. University of Georgia	5.5		
29. Syracuse	8.0	67. University of Hawaii	5.5		
30. Tulane	8.0	68. Kansas State	5.5		
31. University of Utah	8.0	69. Purdue	5.5		
32. Vanderbilt	8.0	70. SUNY Buffalo	5.5		
33. Florida International University	7.5	71. Texas A&M	5.5		
34. University of Iowa	7.5	72. University of Virginia	5.5		
35. Rice	7.5	73. UNC Charlotte	5.5		
36. SUNY Albany	7.5	74. Binghamton University	5.0		
37. University of Wisconsin Madison	7.5	75. UC Davis	5.0		
38. University of Wisconsin Milwaukee	7.5	76. Michigan State	5.0		

NOTES:

*PSU's Ph.D. program began in 2008, and no dissertations have thus far been defended. However, quite a few LGBT-relevant Master's Theses have been defended over the past few years. The score of 10 reflects a score of "1" for dissertations.

** The 2013 ASA Guide lists a faculty member at NYU. However, they are retired and is now listed as emeritus on the NYU website. They are the only faculty member at NYU with LGBT-relevant publications. The score of 9.5 reflects a "1" in the LGBT research column of our score. If we were to discount this individual, the score would be 8.5, and NYU would still be in the top 25.

***Represents a tenured professor at UT Austin. Their anti-gay research agenda makes us wary of including UT Austin as a top 25 Institution, but another faculty member is also tenured at Austin, and their research on same-sex partnerships seems more methodologically sound (it also highlights positive aspects of same-sex partnerships). Survey results also indicate that UT Austin is an overall LGBT-friendly department.

Table 2. Department-Level Lavender Report Card Scores for 113 Ph.D. Granting Universities

1. UCLA	5	37. Vanderbilt ψ	4
2. UCSB ψ	5	38. Harvard	3
3. UC Santa Cruz	5	39. University of Iowa	3
4. University of Chicago ψ	5	40. Kent State ψ	3
5. Colorado Boulder	5	41. Louisiana State*	3
6. Connecticut ψ	5	42. Northeastern*ψ	3
7. Florida International	5	43. University of Pittsburgh*ψ	3
8. Georgia State University*ψ	5	44. Rice	3
9. Illinois Chicago ψ	5	45. University of South Florida*	3
10. Indiana U ψ	5	46. Stanford ψ	3
11. UMass Amherst	5	47. SUNY Albany ψ	3
12. Michigan ψ	5	48. Syracuse ψ	3
13. U of Nebraska Lincoln ψ	5	49. Tulane	3
14. Northwestern	5	50. University of Utah ψ	3
15. NYU	5	51. University of Wisconsin Madison ψ	3
16. University of Oklahoma*ψ	5	52. University of Wisconsin Milwaukee	3
17. Oregon U ψ	5	53. Yale	3
18. Portland State ψ	5	54. U of Alabama, Birmingham*	2
19. U of Southern California ψ	5	55. University of Arizona	2
20. Southern Illinois U Carbondale ψ	5	56. Boston College*ψ	2
21. University of Washington	5	57. Bowling Green State U	2
22. UC Berkeley ψ	4	58. Brandeis	2
23. Boston University* ψ	4	59. Brown	2
24. UC Irvine	4	60. UC San Diego	2
25. University of Chicago, Loyola*ψ	4	61. University of Central Florida ψ	2
26. University of Florida ψ	4	62. University of Cincinnati ψ	2
27. Florida State University*ψ	4	63. Columbia University ψ	2
28. Indiana U of Pennsylvania*ψ	4	64. University of Delaware	2
29. Louisville ψ	4	65. George Mason University ψ	2
30. University of Minnesota ψ	4	66. University of Georgia ψ	2
31. University of Missouri Columbia	4	67. U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2
32. Notre Dame*ψ	4	68. Iowa State University ψ	2
33. Ohio State University	4	69. University of Kansas	2
34. Rutgers ψ	4	69. University of Kentucky*ψ	2
35. Temple University*ψ	4	70. UMass Boston	2
36. University of Texas – Austin ψ	4	71. University of Maryland	2

72. University of Nevada Las Vegas*ψ	2
73. University of New Hampshire ψ	2
Table 2 continued...	
74. University of New Mexico	2
75. North Carolina State ψ	2
76. Princeton	2
77. SUNY Buffalo ψ	2
78. University of South Carolina ψ	2
79. South Dakota State ψ	2
80. Texas A&M ψ	2
81. University of Virginia	2
82. Virginia Tech	2
83. Washington State University ψ	2
84. University of Akron	1
85. Binghamton University	1
87. UC Riverside	1
88. Case Western Reserve ψ	1
89. Cornell ψ	1
90. UC Davis	1
91. Duke*ψ	1
92. University of Hawaii	1
93. Johns Hopkins ψ	1
94. Kansas State	1
95. Miami	1
96. Michigan State ψ	1
97. Mississippi State U*ψ	1
98. The New School*	1
99. UNC Chapel Hill*ψ	1
100. UNC Charlotte	1
101. University of North Texas ψ	1
102. Oklahoma State U*	1
103. Purdue	1
104. Stony Brook University	1
105. Utah State University ψ	1
106. Emory ψ	0
107. Howard University*ψ	0
108. Penn State ψ	0
109. University of Pennsylvania	0

110. University of Tennessee Knoxville	0
111. Texas Women's University*	0
112. Wayne State*ψ	0
113. Western Michigan University ψ	0

* Universities that had no CPI score
ψ Department chair responded to survey

Because many university officials may be unaware of the CPI, and because our study is more department-focused than university-focused (in terms of the university-wide cultural factors that go into a CPI score) we lean toward using the second method. Sociology programs that received 5 out of 5 on our department-level scale but had no CPI score, deserve recognition for being excellent choices for sociology students who wish to pursue LGBT-related research.

Survey Responses

In addition to this quantifiable data, we emailed all department heads in order to gauge their perceptions of departmental and institutional climate (see Appendix for list of questions). The scale can only tell us so much; we gain more in-depth insight from both closed and open-ended questions sent to the people who hold some degree of power at an institution that we judge to be “LGBT-friendly” or not.

Graduate and Undergraduate Courses

The majority of respondents indicated we had the correct data on undergraduate and graduate courses offered by their departments. Seventeen gave qualified responses, which reinforced our initial scoring. Of the six responses that conflicted with our data, five indicated courses that focus on LGBT-related issues that we did not find online. Based on this information, we added one additional point to each of those schools’ scores. The remaining school clearly stated that they do have an undergraduate class that qualifies, but that they have no graduate course where we counted one. It may be that the course we saw listed is no longer being taught. We lowered their score by 1 (reflected in tables 1 and 2).

Support for LGBT Research and LGBT Students

Results of survey questions that inquire as to whether a sociology department would be supportive of LGBT-identified students or those pursuing LGBT-related research are overall positive. Only eight of the 64 respondents suggested that their department would not be the best place to pursue LGBT-related research. However, all but one of these eight departments indicated the willingness to support such research. Those seven indicated that the department in general *would* be supportive of any sociological topic that a student wished to pursue, or *have* been supportive of a specific student studying LGBT issues, despite the fact that they did not have tenured faculty who specialize in this specific area.

When asked whether they have heard complaints of homophobia or transphobia from LGBT-identified students, only 7 said yes. Of these, two reported complaints of transphobia, one from other graduate students and faculty, and the other from the university in general, but not from the department. Two others reported complaints from grad students concerning homophobic statements or attitudes coming from undergraduate students. Another reported that an average of one complaint of homophobia or transphobia in general is fielded per year, though no further details were given regarding from where the homo- or trans-

phobia originated (university administration, faculty, fellow grad students, or undergrads).

Another two reported complaints of homophobia from faculty. One had a complaint from a student who was uncomfortable when an adjunct allowed homophobic statements made by other students to go unchallenged. This instructor was not re-hired after the complaint was lodged. The other has fielded complaints about a tenured faculty member who is notorious for his anti-gay research agenda. LGBT students and allies understandably do not wish to serve as TAs for this professor, and the department honors their requests.

It is noteworthy that those who admitted to hearing complaints seemed to be the most LGBT-friendly; they gave some of the most thoughtful responses to all of the questions. Many who reported hearing no complaints gave brief or unhelpful responses in general, making it hard to tell whether they are very concerned about their LGBT-identified students or if they would be the kind of person who would hear about such complaints first-hand. Most who reported hearing complaints also explained the steps they took to remedy the problem.

In addition to those seven, three more expressed general concerns about racism that also affect LGBT students. These concerns indicate that the department chairs at these three institutions understand intersectionalities, and are especially attuned to issues that affect all sexual/gender and ethnic/racial minority students. We believe that these concerns should be taken seriously, and that SWS may want to initiate a study similar to the Gender Report Card and Lavender Report Card in order to look into issues of race and ethnicity within sociology departments.

Departmental Contributions To the Promotion of Social Equality for LGBT Individuals

Nine respondents were unable to name any contributions their department has made, either explicitly stating “none,” or leaving the item blank. Seventeen made a reference to some form of symbolic support, such as the department being a “welcoming” place in general, or offering concentrations in areas of study that could include LGBT issues. Seven of these mentioned only symbolic support, with no specific contributions.

Most respondents (47) cited advocacy by professors in their departments, many in the form of faculty research, some in the form of supporting LGBT research conducted by grad students, and some in the form of having LGBT faculty members in the department. Fourteen also mentioned that their department has hosted talks on LGBT issues or research. Six mentioned an LGBT minor offered by either their department, or a Women’s/Gender studies department affiliated with sociology.

University-Wide Policies and Culture

73% of respondents (47 of the 64) gave mostly affirmative responses when asked whether they believe their institution in general is an accepting place for LGBT students. Thirty-one responded with an unqualified “yes,” and 16 qualified their affirmative responses with statements such as “it could still be improved,” or their department is “particularly accepting of LGBT students, so my vantage point is a bit skewed.”

Eight respondents indicated that, while the department itself is supportive, there are aspects of the overall campus environment that LGBT students may not find welcoming. Only one respondent said without qualification that their state in general was not a very accepting place for LGBT students.¹ However, this respondent did make it clear in their other responses that they do have students pursuing LGBT-related research and that some of these students have co-published articles with faculty in the department.

Six others gave unhelpful responses, such as “not sure,” or simply left this question blank. Respondents from two other universities said that they could not answer the question, and that it would be better to ask this of students. This is a telling response, in that it indicates that these department chairs do not care to be involved in student life and are generally unaware of the campus culture.

Overall Patterns

There was a pattern in the responses to our survey. Most of the generally unhelpful responses came from programs that received very low scores on this report card. By unhelpful, we mean that their responses were short, obviously not well thought-out, and at times dismissive. Rather than reaching out to their colleagues and grad students to get the answers that they were unsure of, they simply refused to answer some questions, sometimes suggesting that someone else would be better suited to answer the question but not providing any contact information for such people.

The most well thought-out and informative responses came from departments that scored much higher on the report card. These department chairs seemed to have spent a good amount of time carefully considering their responses, and most seemed to genuinely care about how their departments were perceived.

Others went out of their way to consult with grad students and other faculty in order to provide careful responses to the survey. One chair sent the survey to two grad students to complete. Another chair had a faculty member who specializes in LGBT research complete the survey. And still another chair consulted with other faculty in crafting her responses to the survey.

While we may have received a higher response rate and better-informed answers if we had sent surveys to faculty members or grad students specializing

¹ State name removed.

in sexualities research, this was not a feasible option. Compiling a list of department chair email addresses and sending 3 rounds of surveys to them was time-consuming; doing the same for faculty and/or grad students would have more than tripled the time we spent conducting and analyzing the surveys. It also would have given us much more information (much of it redundant) on the schools that scored higher on the Lavender Report Card and much less on those that scored lower, thereby missing the point of conducting the surveys in the first place. The point of conducting the surveys was as follows: 1) To assure that the information we had already gathered was accurate; 2) To give the department a chance to tell us more information about their relationship with LGBT research that was not available online; 3) To give the department a chance to tell us more information about their relationship with LGBT-identified students that was not available online. We stand by our decision to gather this information from department chairs; they represent power in the department, and their attitudes have an effect on LGBT students and those who conduct LGBT-related research. We believe the unhelpful responses we received from some department chairs are informative in that they highlight the lack of concern those departments have for LGBT research and students, as well as a lack of concern for how their department is perceived by those who care about LGBT research and students. While we would have preferred that only department chairs complete the survey, it is clear that the 3 chairs who sent the survey to others in their department were concerned about how their departments are perceived. In our minds, this demonstrates a level of concern that is much higher than that of the chairs who took the time to fill out the survey themselves, but gave dismissive and unhelpful responses.

Appendix

EMAIL SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you or your department offered a graduate or undergraduate course that focused on LGBT issues?
2. Do you think that your department adequately supports graduate students who wish to pursue research on LGBT issues? Why or why not? Explain.
3. Tell us about any complaints you may have heard from LGBT students about homophobia or transphobia being directed toward them from other students, or from other staff.
4. Please describe any contributions your department has made to the promotion of social equality for LGBT individuals.
5. What policies or practices in place at your institution promote social equality for LGBT individuals?

Do you believe that your institution, in general, is an accepting place for LGBT students? Why or why not?