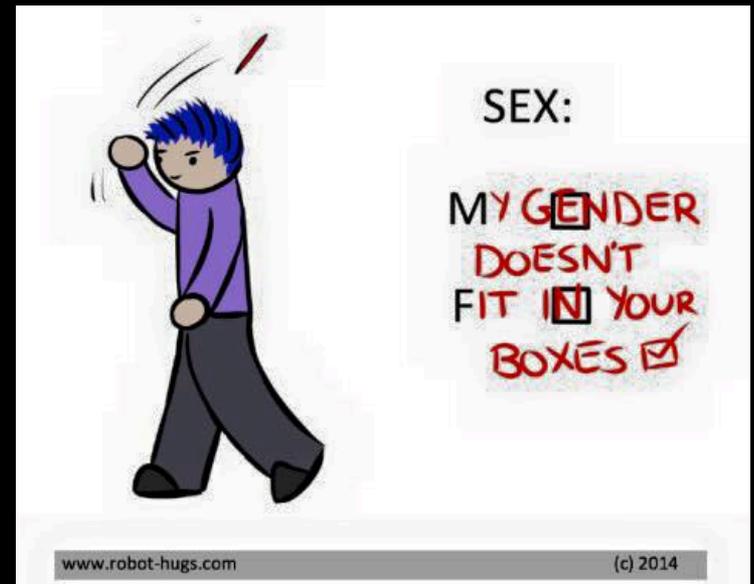


# College Students with Non-Binary Sexual and/ or Gender Identities

**Genny Beemyn, Ph.D.**  
**Director, Stonewall Center**  
**UMass Amherst**  
**Coordinator, Campus**  
**Pride's Trans Policy**  
**Clearinghouse**



# Non-Binary Identities

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**Non-binary gender identities:** includes individuals who identify as genderqueer, agender, gender fluid, non-binary trans, demigender, and androgynous.

**Non-binary sexual identities:** includes individuals who identify as pansexual, bisexual, asexual, queer, demisexual, gray asexual, sexually fluid, and polysexual.

# LGBTQ+ Identities at UMass

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First-Year Students (N=5,999)

Trans-Identified (5,768 answered):

32 (.6%)

20 non-binary: 5 genderqueer, 4 agender, 4 non-binary,  
3 gender fluid

12 binary: 6 trans men and 6 trans women

# LGBTQ+ Identities at UMass

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Non-Heterosexual Identities (5,521 answered):  
408 (7.4%)

Most frequent identities:

Asexual: 135

Bisexual: 115

Gay: 83

Pansexual: 50

Lesbian: 25



Work by Yulonda Rios

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***Campus Queer: The  
Experiences and  
Needs of LGBTQ+  
College Students***

**Genny Beemyn**

**Johns Hopkins  
University Press**

# Study Participants

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## *Criteria:*

- identify their gender and/or sexuality as outside of a binary
  - currently attend a two- or four-year college, or graduated within the last three years [all were currently in grad school]
  - are between the ages of 17-25
- Information and a link to the online survey were sent to the directors of LGBTQIA student services at 74 campuses (29 in the Northeast, 15 South, 15 Midwest, and 15 West). Fifty-four agreed to recruit students directly or indirectly through social media or listservs.

# Study Participants

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- 360 college students, from 119 different colleges, completed the survey
- 208 of these students, from 84 different colleges, chose to participate in a follow-up interview to provide more information about their experiences growing up and in college.

# Study Participants

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- More than one person was interviewed at 42 schools; one person was interviewed at 42 schools
- 38 of the schools are in the Northeast, 15 are in the Midwest, 16 are in the West, and 15 are in the South
- 50 of the colleges are public and 34 are private
- 8 of the schools are community colleges, 4 are religiously affiliated schools, 3 are women's colleges, and 1 is an HBCU
- 59 of the 84 (70%) colleges are listed in the Campus Pride Index; average rating 4.4 out of 5, 21 earned a 5

# Study Participants

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- Average age: 20.4 years in survey, 20.3 in interviews
- People of color: 26% in survey, 27% in interviews
  - of the students of color, 17 are Asian American, 16 biracial, 9 Latinx, 7 African American, 6 multiracial, & 1 American Indian
- Assigned female at birth (AFAB): 87% in survey, 88% in interviews
  - Beemyn & Rankin, *The Lives of Transgender People*: 86.5% AFAB
  - NCTE & the Task Force, *Injustice at Every Turn*: 73% AFAB

# Study Participants

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Of the 208 students interviewed:

- 111 identified outside of a gender binary—and 102 of these individuals also identified as outside of a sexual binary, so 199 of the participants were non-binary in their sexuality
- 97 identified as a binary gender identity: 79 as cisgender, 14 as FTM/trans men, 2 as female (AMAB), and 2 as another identity
- 91 of the 111 non-binary gender participants use non-binary pronouns for themselves; most (91%) use “they/them/their”

# Study Participants

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## Age at which Identified as a Non-Binary Sexuality

- Average age when participants began to use their current sexual identity label: 17.5 years old

## By specific identities:

- bisexual: 16.8
- pansexual: 17.5
- queer: 17.6
- asexual: 18.2
- demisexual: 18.3

# Study Participants

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## Age at which Identified as a Non-Binary Gender

- Average age when participants began to use their current gender identity label: 19 years old

### By specific identities:

- genderqueer: 18.3
- gender fluid: 18.8
- non-binary trans: 19.1
- agender: 19.4
- androgyne/androgynous: 19.4

# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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- 51% of the non-binary gender students were out or mostly out to at least one parent (58% of the students of color).
- 70% of the cis students were out or mostly out about their non-binary sexual identity to at least one parent (48% of the students of color).
- Of the 99 students who identified outside of both sexual and gender binaries and who discussed their family:
  - Half were out or mostly out to at least one parent about both
  - A third were out about their sexual identity but not their gender
  - Only 2 people were out about their gender but not their sexuality

# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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- ❑ In cases where there was a difference in parental acceptance for the student's sexual and gender identities, sexual identity was almost always more accepted.
- Why the students were not out to a parent(s):
  - ❑ a parent(s) holds anti-LGBTQA+ attitudes
  - ❑ a parent(s) has conservative religious beliefs
  - ❑ a parent(s) comes from a culture that is intolerant toward LGBTQA+ people
  - ❑ believe that a parent(s) would not get or not take their identity seriously
  - ❑ think that a parent(s) would be uncomfortable with their identity

# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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153 respondents were out to at least one parent about their sexual identity and/or gender identity.

How they characterized their parents' level of support:

- 44% are supportive or very supportive
  - 14% do not completely get or are uncomfortable
  - 12% are unsupportive or completely intolerant
  - 9% are OK but not great
  - 3% ignore the issue and will not discuss it
- (8% of respondents reported a difference in support for their gender and sexual identities, and 8% reported a difference in support between a mother and father)

# Learning about Their Identities

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- Where they first learned about their gender and/or sexual identity (could provide more than one answer):
  - a website(s): 58%; a friend(s): 24%; met a person/people who identifies that way or who educated them: 24%
- Individuals with less visible non-binary identities, like asexual, agender, and demigender, were much more likely to learn the terms online, typically on Tumblr.
- The students who had adopted terminology that, at least as of now, is not widely known even among trans people (e.g. condigirl) invariably learned it online.

# Support for Their Identities

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- Where respondents received support for their gender and sexual identities (could provide more than one answer):
  - a friend(s): 79%
  - an LGBTQ+ student group(s): 39%
  - a website(s): 28% (11% of the students of color)
  - a campus LGBTQ+ center/office: 27%
  - a partner/former partner: 20%
  - a family member(s): 17%
  - a faculty member: 7%
  - their therapist or a campus counseling center: 4%
  - a staff member (other than LGBTQ+ center staff): 2%

# What Colleges Need to Do

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- All but one of the 111 students with non-binary gender identities said that their college was not doing enough to support them, and they named the many ways that institutions operate from a gender binary and fail to recognize trans people.
- The 79 cis students with non-binary sexual identities had difficulty thinking of ways that their college could better support them, beyond greater education on sexual diversity, as sexuality was not forefronted in many institutional contexts.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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1. Not Providing Gender-Inclusive Bathrooms
2. Misgendering and Misnaming
3. Maintaining a Gender Binary on Records and Forms
4. Not Offering Gender-Inclusive Housing
5. Not Educating about Gender Diversity
6. Not Providing Trans-Inclusive Health Care
7. Lacking Trans-Supportive Spaces

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 1. Not Providing Gender-Inclusive Bathrooms (GIBs)

### NEGATIVE

- Because of state plumbing codes, we have relatively few gender-inclusive bathrooms in academic buildings and only a few in residence halls.

### POSITIVE

- Most single-stall bathrooms being changed to GIBs.
- GIBs included in renovations and future construction.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 2. Misgendering and Misnaming

### POSITIVE

- Students can have a chosen name on campus records and documents and change their gender marker.

### NEGATIVE

- Chosen name not always used by software.
- Pronouns not on course rosters and people do not ask.
- Can only change between M/F.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 3. Maintaining a Gender Binary on Records and Forms

### POSITIVE

- We will be asking sexual & gender identity questions on our Common Application supplement in 2017.
- Most forms in Student Affairs do not ask M/F.

### NEGATIVE

- Forms elsewhere at UMass still use a gender binary.
- How will gender diversity be recognized?

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 4. Not Offering Gender-Inclusive Housing (GIH)

### POSITIVE

- We offer GIH in several places on campus, including on the Spectrum floor.

### NEGATIVE

- GIH is never filled; most trans and gender-expansive students live in other halls, where they feel unsafe in bathrooms.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 5. Not Educating about Gender Diversity

### NEGATIVE

- Students, staff, and faculty do not learn about trans people at orientation sessions.
- Title IX education needed on gender identity/exp.

### POSITIVE

- SACL offices are generally well-educated.
- We have trans point people in key places.

# ***Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, 2015***

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TGQN (“transgender, genderqueer or nonconforming, questioning, or not listed”) undergraduates experienced the highest rates of sexual assault and misconduct on all measures:

- acts involving penetration by force or incapacitation
- nonconsensual sexual contact by absence of affirmative consent
- nonconsensual sexual contact involving coercion
- stalking
- sexual harassment
- intimate partner violence

# ***Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, 2015***

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- During the 2014-15 academic year, 19% of TGQN undergrads indicated experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact at least once, as compared to 17% of cis women undergrads.
- Seniors: 39.1% of TGQN seniors reported experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact at least once during their time at college, as compared to 33.1% of senior cis women.
- Only 15% of TGQN students reported an incident of sexual harassment to campus authorities. TGQN students were the least optimistic about a report of sexual harassment being taken seriously, and they were the most likely to say that retaliation would occur if they reported.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 6. Not Providing Trans-Inclusive Health Care

### POSITIVE

- We cover hormones and surgery.
- UHS can prescribe and monitor hormones.
- CCPH has a trans-identified therapist.

### NEGATIVE

- Trans cultural competency among UHS staff is not where it needs to be.

# How Colleges Fail Non-Binary Gender Students

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## 7. Lacking Trans-Supportive Spaces

### POSITIVE

- We have the Stonewall Center.
- We have a trans support group, and there are trans student groups at the Five Colleges.

### NEGATIVE

- Lack of supportive spaces on campus for non-binary students, especially non-binary students of color.

# Questions?

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