

# SAFE ZONE LEVEL 2

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ASEE ACTION ON DIVERSITY

**PROMOTING LGBTQ  
EQUALITY IN STEM**



# A letter from a reader to ASEE Prism

September 2013



## Is All Diversity Good?

“As a member of ASEE for a number of years, I have been rather fascinated by diversity articles in Prism and on the website. The commentaries seem to suggest that diversity is to be strongly promoted in education: Any and all diversity is good and therefore should be encouraged. But is diversity in sexual preference good if:

- The behavior takes 5 to 15 years off a person’s life expectancy?
- The behavior **proliferates** sexually transmitted diseases?
- The behavior promotes a sexually promiscuous lifestyle?
- The behavior is addictive and abusive?

We would do well to teach the truth about the homosexual/lesbian/bisexual/transgender lifestyle.”

--ASEE Member

# Agenda

- Heterosexual and Cisgender Privilege
- STEM Climate
- Disrupting discrimination
- Safe Zone Conduct
- STEM-Specific Resources



# Safe Space Agreement

- Respect
- Ask Questions
- Listen
- Learning leaves, names stay





# **RECOGNIZING PRIVILEGE**

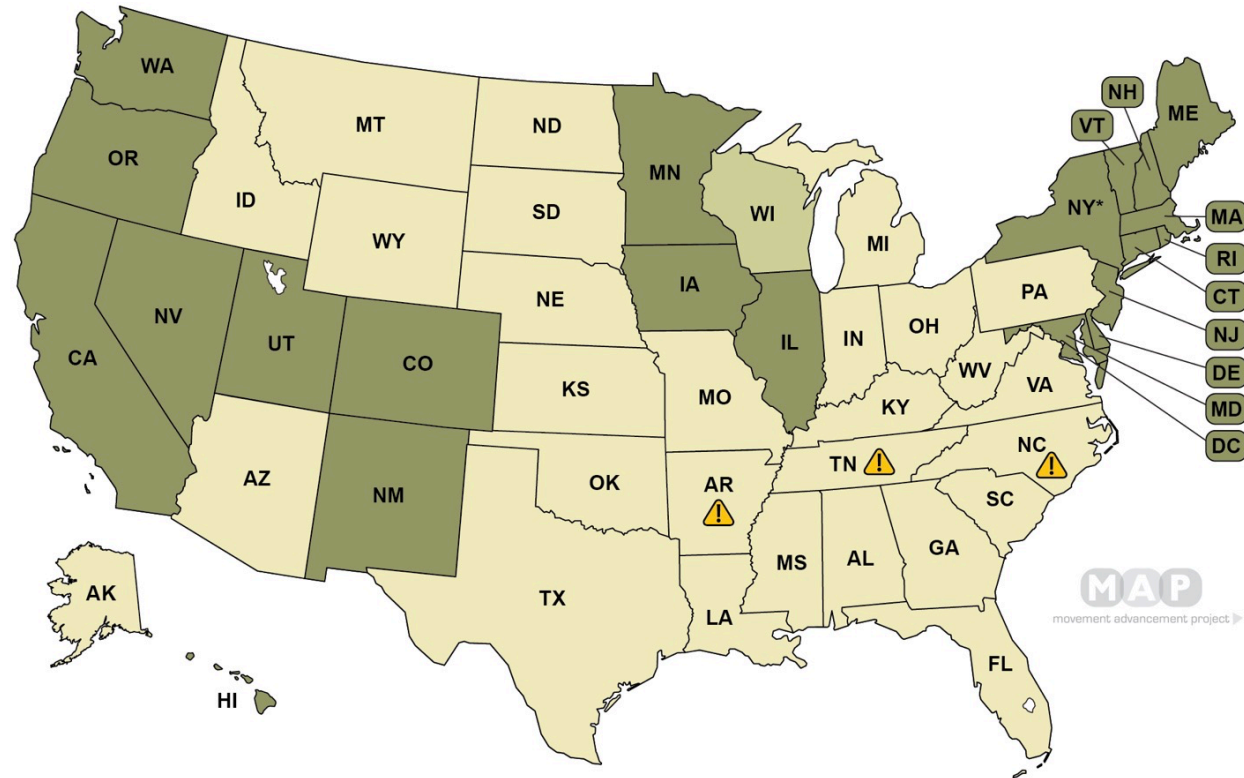
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# Heterosexual / cisgender privilege

Unearned advantages that LGBTQ individuals do not have

- Acceptance, affirmation by your religion
- Being allowed to use the restroom of your gender ID
- Adopting children jointly with your partner
- Not being fired from your job due to sexual orientation or gender identity
- Being able to travel around the world with your family

# Employment nondiscrimination laws



- Sexual orientation, gender ID (21 states + DC)
- Sexual orientation only (1 state)
- No protection for LGBTQ employees (28 states)
- Law prevents passage or enforcement of nondiscrimination law



# **ENGINEERING CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

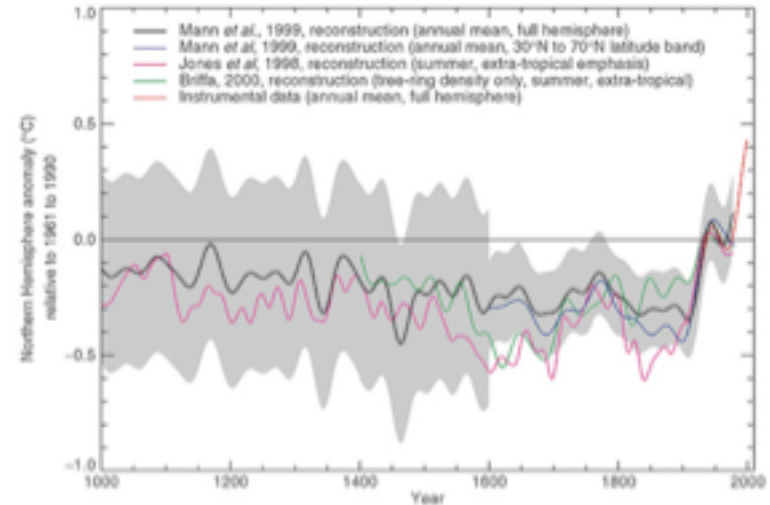
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# Climate Vocab

## Climate

- *Campus Climate*
- *Chilly Climate*
- *Climate Change*



# Why climate matters

34%↑

The U.S. needs  
1 million additional STEM graduates by  
2022

*President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (2012)*

Most viable way to achieve  
this is to

**Increase  
retention**

One of the key reasons for  
leaving STEM is  
**Chilly climate**

*President's Council of Advisors on Science and  
Technology (2012)*

Creating an inclusive  
climate benefits

**ALL students**

Diversity is essential to the  
intellectual and social  
development of  
**ALL students**

*Milem (2003), Smith (2010), Reason (2006)*

Creating an inclusive  
climate

30%↑

Employee engagement  
*Human Rights Campaign (2014)*

Diversity increases  
**Innovation and  
productivity**

*Herring (2009)*

# We have a problem

## Anti-LGBTQ bias, discrimination, and hostility in the classroom and workplace

**29%**

Experienced  
discrimination/harassment

**37%**

Not comfortable in  
the classroom

**30%**

Seriously considered  
leaving

*Rankin (2010)*

**CAMPUS CLIMATE**

**62%**

Hear homophobic  
jokes  
*HRC (2014)*

**53%**

Hide LGBT identity  
at work  
*HRC (2014)*

**52%**

No workplace antidiscrimination  
protection

*Movement Advancement Project*

**WORKPLACE CLIMATE**

# Research: LGBTQ Students\* in STEM

- More likely than women, URM, non-LGBTQ peers to report a chilly climate
  - Marginalized
  - Not Respected
- Personal consequences
  - Emotional stress
  - Difficulty sleeping
  - Exhaustion



\*1729 students from 8 U.S. institutions

# Research: LGBTQ Faculty in STEM

In comparison with faculty in other departments, STEM faculty are:

- Most likely to observe and experience exclusionary behavior
- Least comfortable in their departments

Faculty who are not comfortable are >2.5 times more likely to consider leaving their jobs

Patridge, et al., JWMSE (2014, p. 91)

# Heteronormative Climate

1. Heteronormative statements and assumptions
2. Unwelcoming environment – discussions of equality, power, hostility are not considered appropriate
3. Gendered conceptions mapped to orientation
4. Passing and covering demands



# Navigating Engineering Culture

- Passing and covering strategies
- Achieving expertise
- Compartmentalization



# The cost of passing and covering

People who change how they act in order to pass

People who change how they act in order to cover





# Activity (Not So) Simple Small Talk




10 Minutes


# Don't Ask, Don't Tell

LGBTQ professionals top 5 concerns

1. Might not be considered for advancement
2. Possibility of losing connections/relationships with co-workers
3. Possibility of rejection
4. Talking about sexual orientation or gender identity might be considered unprofessional
5. Belief that it is not co-workers' business



# **RESPONDING TO NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF LGBTQ STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES**



# Responding to needs and concerns of LGBTQ students and colleagues

- Create a positive, inclusive climate...
- Send a strong message of acceptance and welcoming
  - Reduce anxiety over coming out
  - Be actively inclusive of those who do come out. Include them in conversations about family; include their families in family/work events
- Seek ways to be visible as a supporter



# Institutional Policies

- Workplace anti-discrimination policies
  - LGBTQ employee resource groups
  - Safe Space programs
  - Gender inclusive restrooms
  - Healthcare
  - Parental leave policies
  - Domestic partner benefits
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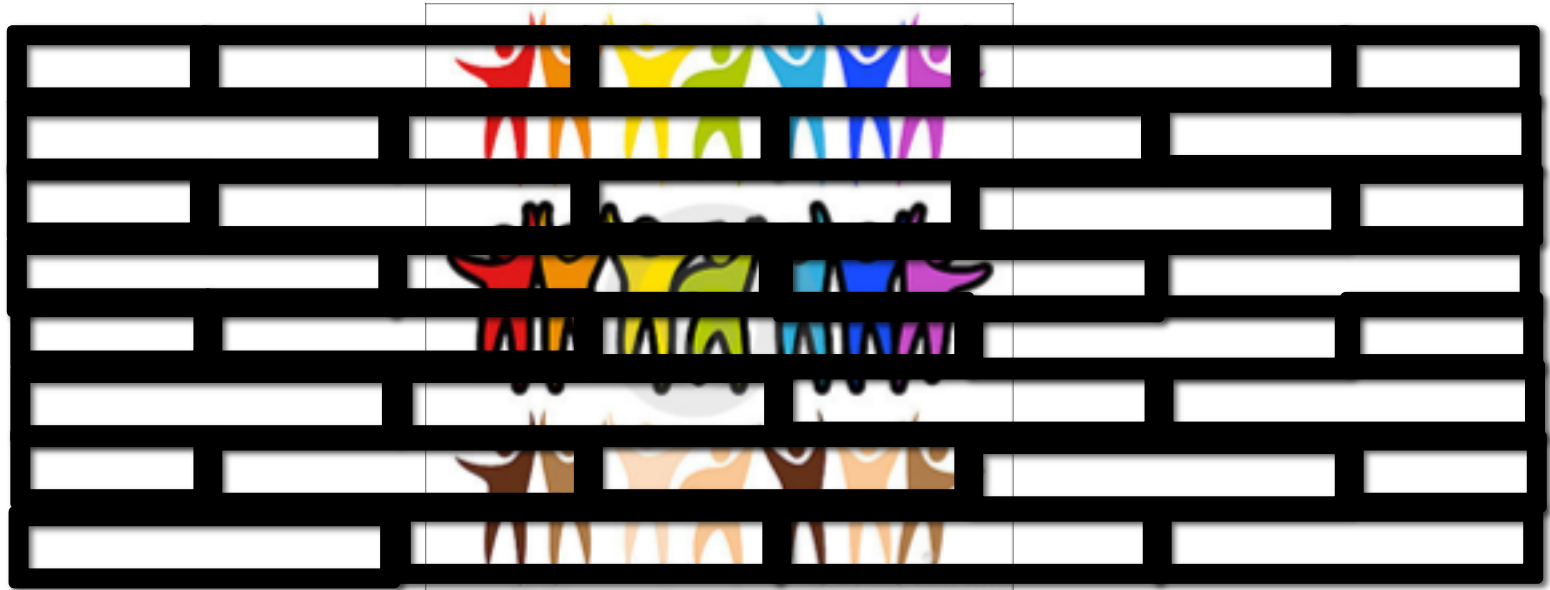


# **RESPONDING TO BIAS**

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# Microaggressions

What are they? Why do they matter??







# Responding to bias

- We all make mistakes! It's OK. Apologize, correct it and move on.
- Try to be self-aware, listen to your language
- If you hear a microaggression
  - Call it
  - Own it
  - Stop it

- When people say \_\_\_\_\_, It makes me feel like \_\_\_\_\_ because it sounds like \_\_\_\_\_

- Example: When people say things like that, it upsets me because it sounds like a stereotype that lesbians are not feminine

# What Would You Do?...

- Using Case Studies
  - Use what you have learned in this webinar to react to a given case study.
  - Each group will be given 10 min and a unique case where a microaggression (or macroaggression) is made against someone who is LGBTQ.
- Read & discuss your group's case study.
  - What are the consequences of the events described in your group's case study?
  - Allow a couple minutes for discussion.
  - What would be your response?
- At the end, one person from each group will report back to the room



**10-15 Min**



# **STEM-SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES**

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# Student and young professional concerns

- If /when to come out in an interview?
- Should one “de-gay” one’s life at school or work?  
(Passing and Covering Demands)
- What companies are gay-friendly or trans-friendly?
- Should I join a student or Employee Resource Group?

# Student / Professional Resources

- o-STEM - [www.ostem.org](http://www.ostem.org)
- NOGLSTP - [www.noglstp.org](http://www.noglstp.org)
- MENTORNET - [www.mentornet.net](http://www.mentornet.net)



**Spread the  
Word!**

**Join!**

**Start an oSTEM  
chapter!**

# Resources

**Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG)**

[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

**Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

**Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)**

[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

**Lambda Legal**

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

**Out and Equal**

<http://www.outandequal.org/>

**National Center for Transgender Equality**

<http://transequality.org>

(202) 903-0112

**The GLBT National Youth Talkline**

(youth serving youth through age 25):

(800) 246-7743

**The Trevor Project (suicide hotline):**

(866) 488-7386

**The Gay & Lesbian National Hotline:**

(888) 843-4564



# More Strategies for Supporting LGBTQ Students, Colleagues, and Friends



**Ways to Be an Ally\***

*In honor of the victims  
of the Orlando tragedy  
June 12, 2016*

# Thank you!

[lgbtq.asee.org](http://lgbtq.asee.org)



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