

Fact and Information Sheet About:

51 Fabulous Ways to Support Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students on Your Campus

Across the JMU campus

1. Have a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation.
2. Value their perspectives and opinions in your residence halls, your classrooms, and your committees.
3. Don't tokenize them.
4. Assure their safety.
5. Acknowledge their presence on campus and in society publicly, at high levels, and often.
6. Attend their events once in a while.
7. Don't agree with everything they say; challenge them, too.
8. Help non-gay students understand that LGB people are a presence on campus and in society whether they like it or not. Non-gay students do not have to accept LGB students, but they must learn to live peaceably with them.
9. Support LGB students because they add to the vibrancy of thought, activity and life on your campus; not because it's politically correct.
10. Take the time to examine your own personal feelings about LGB people.

At the Career Development Center

11. Display information about local career resources, such as gay-affirmative employers, for LGB clients.
12. Provide staff with training about the social and political impact of LGB issues in the workplace.
13. Be open to discussing LGB issues with students as these relate to career choice, resumes, interviews, determining the policies of a company, and coming out at work issues.
14. Maintain a list of people who can be used as resources for LGB students.
15. Know which employers interviewing on your campus have non-discrimination and domestic partner policies for LGB people and offer that information to students.
16. "Employers should be required to affirm in writing that they do not discriminate against any classes protected against discrimination by university policy.... If legal interpretations tie the university's hands regarding Federal governmental agency access to placement services, the university should formally express its disagreement of employment discrimination against LGB students and call for a change in agency policy."

At the Financial Aid Office

17. Ensure that staff has training on how the impact of a student's "coming out" at home can affect parents' financial support.

In the Residence Halls

18. If their assigned roommates refuse to live with them, give the LGB student the options and give them freedom to choose.
19. Ensure that handbooks and contracts have a statement regarding non-discrimination as it relates to sexual orientation. Indicate where students should report if they feel harassed.
20. Orientation programs should address LGB issues and make new students understand that LGB students are a welcomed part of campus life.

At the Health Center

21. Make sure your professional and paraprofessional health educators are comfortable with phrases and concepts such as "continual condom usage" and "anal intercourse."
22. Make sure your gynecological physicians understand that "sexually active" does not necessarily mean "needs birth control."

At the Counseling Center

23. Include sexual orientation and coming out issues in the paperwork as options for discussion.
24. Include a variety of partner status options in the paperwork.
25. Display some gay-affirming materials in the center, including LGB magazines and newspapers in the waiting area.
26. Include LGB material in publicity for the center.
27. Don't automatically assume your clients are heterosexual. For example, don't ask a female client if she has a boyfriend.
28. Use inclusive language.
29. Insist there be a "coming out" support or discussion group at least once per school year.
30. Identify a counselor who has some understanding of LGB issues who can serve as a confidential referral to students.

At the Activities Office

31. Make sure the LGB student organization has adequate professional staff support and an advisor. If there is no one on the staff or faculty to take on this role, assist the group in identifying a local alum or local community member for the task.
32. Know their organization's name, acronym or letter in the proper order (even if they change it once in a while).
33. Insist that the student government allot the LGB student organization some reasonable funding. If they refuse, assist the group in finding alternative sources of funding.
34. Insist that fraternal organizations have a discussion on how they would deal with one of their members "coming out."

At the Athletic Department

35. Ask the director of Athletics to have a discussion with coaches about how heterosexism and homophobia affect athletes.

In the classroom

36. Include information about LGB people who made significant contributions in the past.
37. When discussing current events, include LGB issues.
38. Use examples of LGB people in lectures and discussions so they are not marginalized.
39. Be clear with your students that homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions are not acceptable and will be addressed in an educational, informative, and non-threatening manner.

In all Student Affairs departments

40. Include LGB people in examples in classes, workshops and presentations.
41. Ensure that publications are written in such a way that LGB students will feel included in the audiences; avoid heterosexist language and assumptions.
42. When possible, include openly LGB students as members of the student work force.
43. All student service departments should participate periodically in structured dialogues with LGB students. The purpose of this dialogue would be to raise awareness of the nature and extent of homophobia/heterosexism within the university and the particular unit, and to explore avenues for the problems related to the access and quality of services for lesbian and gay students.

Make official statements condemning assault.

44. When LGB students complain, take them seriously.
45. When they are verbally assaulted, make loud, personal statements in public venues condemning such action. Empower others to do the same.
46. When their belongings are vandalized, make loud, personal statements in public venues condemning such action. Empower others to do the same.
47. When they are beaten up, make loud, official statements condemning such action. If you know who the aggressors are, punish them judicially.

Support LGB faculty and staff.

48. Give equal benefits to their partners.
49. Assure their safety.
50. Value their perspectives and opinions on your staffs and committees.
51. Endorse an association for LGB faculty and staff.

-- *By Troy Gilbert, Stanford University.*