



Evaluation of Gender and Sexuality Climate and Resources in the Pacific University Undergraduate Community

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INTRODUCTION

Gender and sexuality based discrimination are commonly reported among persons of non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other gender and sexual minority (LGBTQ+) students are more likely to experience discrimination, hate crimes, poverty, sexually transmitted infections, anxiety, and depression compared to heterosexual and cisgender students. These marginalized experiences create a unique need for education, resources, support, and community. Greater awareness of sexual and gender minorities encourages college students to feel comfortable sharing their experiences, and openly identifying as a gender or sexual minority. Consequently, to retain the full breadth of diversity within university communities, centers on campus that provide programming, education, and advocacy for sexuality and gender minority (SGM) communities are essential for an inclusive campus climate that nurtures diverse student populations.

Pacific University's Center for Gender Equity was established in 2001 with the goal of providing student-led programming, education, and advocacy for all undergraduate students, and community specifically for LGBTQ+ students. Prior to the pilot study conducted in 2018, no program evaluation had been conducted to establish efficacy of CGE. Therefore, the purpose of this research, was to:

- 1.) Develop a viable, self-report measure of gender and sexuality attitudes, knowledge, and awareness, as well as perceived value of CGE, that can continue to be distributed and used by CGE; and may also be generalizable to similar centers in the United States; and,
- 2.) Provide meaningful evidence and recommendations for Pacific University and CGE in a time of substantial budget cuts and low retention rates.

The program evaluation focused on self-report data collected through the CGE Interest, Knowledge and Attitude Survey (IKAS) distributed to Pacific University staff, faculty, and undergraduate students ($N=218$). The IKAS was designed to answer questions regarding perceived community value of CGE, CGE's contributions to community understanding of gender and sexuality related topics, and CGE's visibility on Pacific University's undergraduate campus.

PURPOSE

This formative program evaluation provides outcome analyses of *The Center for Gender Equity (CGE)* in order to help them secure institutional support from their university through an evaluation of the efficacy, growth, and community's perceived value of the organization.

Empirical Questions

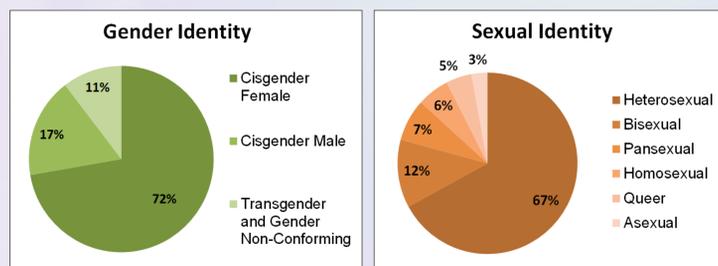
We developed the five IKAS domains to answer questions of perceived value of CGE; what role CGE plays in education and understanding of gender and sexuality related topics; how visible CGE is; what general personal attitudes and knowledge of gender and sexuality related topics the target population holds; and if the target population feels safe, included, and respected on Pacific University's undergraduate campus.

- 1) Is there a significant difference between CGE's contributions to **recruitment** of LGBTQ+ participants and heterosexual participants?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between CGE's contributions to **retention** of LGBTQ+ participants and heterosexual participants?
- 3) Does the PUO undergraduate community feel CGE contributes to their understanding of identities other than their own?
- 4) Does CGE change PUO community members' attitudes to be more accepting of those different from them?
- 5) Does CGE help PUO undergraduate community members understand issues that may not directly relate to them?
- 6) Does CGE help PUO undergraduate community members learn how to be a better ally for people different from them?
- 7) Does CGE enhance PUO community members' understanding of gender pronoun use?
- 8) Do PUO community members think it is important to use others preferred gender pronouns?

METHOD

Target Population

Our primary target population was Pacific University undergraduate students ($n=186$). Our secondary population was Pacific University faculty ($n=26$), staff ($n=9$), and alumni ($n=6$). Within these populations, we were particularly interested in SGM responses. Participants were collected through snowball, convenience sampling via e-mail, social media solicitation, and verbal communication. Participants were able to complete the survey online through Qualtrics. All participant data remains confidential through assigned participant ID numbers.



Materials

CGE Interest, Knowledge, Attitude Survey. The questions of the IKAS aim to understand CGE's perceived value and contribution to experiences at Pacific University. The IKAS also contains a domain of personal attitudes and knowledge statements to inform recommendations for CGE's future programming. The measure includes 69 statements under five domains, with a maximum total score of 346 points. Cronbach's alphas were calculated for score reliability by measure domain, yielding an overall score reliability of $\alpha = .93$.

- > **Domain 1: Perceived Value of CGE & Role in Recruitment/Retention**
 - 13 items, max. 65 points, $\alpha = .92$
- > **Domain 2: CGE Role in Education & Understanding**
 - 12 items, max. 60 points, $\alpha = .92$
- > **Domain 3: CGE Visibility**
 - 5 items, max. 21 points, $\alpha = .51$
- > **Domain 4: Personal Attitudes & Knowledge**
 - 30 items, max. 150 points, $\alpha = .89$
- > **Domain 5: Perceived Pacific University (PUO) Safety & Inclusion**
 - 9 items, max. 45 points, $\alpha = .72$

The survey includes reverse coded statements. All responses are based on a 5-point Likert scale of agreement, except for one question regarding the physical location of the Center for Gender Equity in the CGE Visibility domain which was a multiple choice question with one correct choice.

Design and Procedure

This qualitative, descriptive study consists of five phases: 1) literature review and CGE archival data collection; 2) development and pilot distribution of the IKAS; 3) revisions and redistribution of IKAS; 4) data analyses; and 5) acknowledgments and recommendations for CGE.

To complete the program evaluation, we utilized Microsoft Office; IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26); Qualtrics; the CGE Interest, Knowledge, Attitude Survey; and various archival data regarding the history, CGE Advisory Board, stakeholders, programs, and information collected from the founder of CGE.

The literature review was of SGM general issues, SGM programming and student support services at undergraduate institutions, and retention of SGM students at undergraduate institutions. This review included information of current existing organizations similar to CGE, their format, and their primary programming for students.

CGE Archival Data. We collected all relevant, existing archival data on the history, founding, and growth of the organization, history of CGE's programs, records of: media coverage, donations, board members, student staffing, and annual budget.

This included information regarding the Gender and Sexuality Studies program (GSS), as it was a precursor to the establishment of CGE and existed underneath the umbrella of CGE until Spring 2019. Data collected regarding the GSS minor included a history of GSS courses offered, academic disciplines or cross-listings of GSS courses, and annual number of GSS graduates and/or declared GSS minors.

Development of the LGBTQ+ IKAS. The IKAS was developed by the evaluators in consultation with CGE's staff members and director, the GSS Faculty Committee (GSSFC), and a selection of PUO professors. It also included questions adapted from Dr. J. Warner's Diversity and Cultural Awareness Profile (2002) as contributions to the Personal Attitudes and Knowledge domain.

The IKAS was revised following the pilot participant data collection to include demographic questions that better fit the needs of CGE's questions regarding target populations and outreach. One item was removed due to redundancy; and one item was removed because of lack of clarity in language leading to unreliable scoring.

Based on information from the literature review and data analyses, evaluators provided acknowledgments of strengths and positive attributes of CGE as well as recommendations for improvement moving forward.

RESULTS

We conducted a Pearson's r correlation across all IKAS domains. Most domains were significantly positively correlated except PUO Safety & Inclusion. The most significant correlation coefficient was between Perceived Value of CGE & Role in Recruitment/Retention and CGE role in Education & Understanding ($r = 0.71, p < .01$).

Correlations between IKAS Domains

	CGE Value and Retention	CGE Education	CGE Visibility	Personal Attitudes and Knowledge	PUO Safety and Inclusion
CGE Value and Retention	1.0 197				
CGE Education	.71** 183	1.0 196			
CGE Visibility	.61** 182	.43** 192	1.0 195		
Personal Attitudes and Knowledge	.48** 171	.30** 179	.50** 178	1.0 181	
PUO Safety and Inclusion	.03 173	.12 179	.07 179	.22** 172	1.0 172

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

In order to better understand CGE's ability to reach gender minority populations, we conducted independent samples t-tests to examine the difference between cisgender and TGNC participant domain scores. The results of the test illustrated that:

- TGNC participants ($M = 50.95, SD = 7.72$) scored higher than cisgender participants ($M = 45.57, SD = 8.02$) on **Domain 1**, $F(1,194)=8.16, p < .01$;
- TGNC participants ($M=137.74, SD=12.02$) scored higher than cisgender participants ($M=126.29, SD=12.91$) on **Domain 4**, $F(1, 178)=13.54, p < .01$;
- TGNC participants ($M=31.32, SD=5.31$), scored lower than cisgender participants ($M=36.51, SD=4.51$) on **Domain 5**, $F(1,180)=21.81, p < .01$.

In order to better understand CGE's ability to reach sexual minority populations, we conducted independent samples t-tests to examine the difference between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participant domain scores. The results of the test illustrated that:

- LGBTQ+ participants ($M=49.78, SD=7.50$) scored higher than heterosexual participants ($M = 44.32, SD=7.93$) on **Domain 1**, $F(1,195) = 21.708, p < .01$;

- LGBTQ+ participants ($M = 135.34, SD = 10.04$) scored higher than heterosexual participants ($M = 123.40, SD = 13.06$) on **Domain 4**, $F(1,179) = 40.394, p < .01$;
- LGBTQ+ participants ($M=34.55, SD=4.96$) scored lower than heterosexual participants ($M=36.66, SD=4.64$) on **Domain 5**, $F(1,181) = 7.957, p < .01$.

There are no significant findings in independent t-tests for Domains 2 or 3. These findings mostly support our hypotheses, excluding H_2 for Domain 1. Although the results suggest all community roles perceive value in CGE, there are significant between-group differences suggesting higher perceived value among LGBTQ+ and nonbinary participants.

DISCUSSION

The results of the IKAS measure suggest that the Pacific University Center for Gender Equity (CGE) is valued among undergraduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The results also suggest that SGM members of the target population(s) hold higher perceived value of CGE, and/or that CGE plays a more significant role in their decision to be part of Pacific University's community. These findings differ from our pilot study findings which suggested no significant difference of perceived value between SGM participants and their heterosexual/cisgender counterparts. It is possible that these findings differ from the pilot study due to this distribution yielding a higher LGBTQ+ and TGNC participant response. The lack of significant findings for CGE Role in Education & Understanding is a meaningful finding for CGE, as it suggests they are equally reaching SGM and heteronormative participants with their programming efforts.

SGM participants reported lower Perceived PUO Safety & Inclusion scores than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. This disparity is one for both CGE and the larger Pacific University undergraduate campus to be aware of as they continue with programming. It would be reasonable for CGE and Pacific University administration to take a role in addressing this disparity through further education for professors on campus regarding the importance of respect and dignity for community members of all gender and sexual identities.

Following our pilot study in 2018, we provided preliminary recommendations to CGE. One of the key recommendations was to relocate from the basement of Carnegie Hall to a more accessible and centralized location. In 2019, we again found that only few participants (37%) were able to accurately report where CGE is located on campus ($n=201$). Six months later, CGE was able to relocate from Carnegie Hall to Clark Hall where they joined a handful of other groups, staff, and faculty from the student life department. Due to the recency of CGE's relocation, we are unable to assess how well the PUO community can access the Center. Future distributions of the IKAS could yield meaningful results regarding location of student resources.

The Pacific University Center for Gender Equity has grown since its establishment in 2001; it has become an important, valued part of the community. Based on the self-report data from the IKAS, PUO community believe CGE has remained relevant and is an important resource on campus.

Moving forward from this phase of the program evaluation, we will provide recommendations and acknowledgments for CGE and Pacific University. We also hope this measure will prove useful as an annual or biannual tool for CGE to continue to gauge campus needs, climate, and their own visibility. Further, we hope this measure can be adapted for similar centers and organizations to establish efficacy, perceived value, and general attitude and climate information within their own communities.

REFERENCES

- For a copy of the reference list, please email the corresponding author, Kaira Bird, kaira.bird@pacificu.edu.
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