Visibility Matters: Policy Work as Activism in Teacher Education

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Introduction

Imagine being someone who dreams of becoming a teacher and is looking for a good certification program. Now imagine that you also identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, queer,[1]

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and/or intersexed. What would you look for in a program? Would the program's attention to gender identity and sexual orientation influence your search?

In 2005, a group of faculty who work in the field of teacher education and are invested in social justice formed a group to examine how teacher preparation programs address (or often do not address) LGBTQ lives and issues. Concern about the invisibility of LGBTQ people, movements in education, and a commitment to changing the current state of affairs propelled our gathering. Our conceptual framework for this project emerged from a desire to transform the oppressive systems of normativity, particularly heteronormativity, that constrain human flourishing and self-determination. Heteronormativity, the structures "that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and 'natural' within society" (Cohen, 2005, p. 24), is pervasive in most institutions, including K-12 schools and universities.

To challenge this invisibility in teacher education, we, a group consisting of between four and 12 members who represent 10 Illinois colleges and universities, became affiliated with the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) and established the Pre-Professional Preparation Project, or P Project.[2] We conducted an investigation from the position of a prospective student with access to the Internet, as looking at college and university websites is one of the fastest, easiest, and most increasingly popular ways to access information about these institutions and their teacher education programs ("College Admission Trends Relatively Steady," 2009).[3]

In other words, we conducted an electronic assessment (e-assessment) of all 57 Illinois teacher education programs. We then organized these data to create a snapshot of the state context for LGBTQ university students, generally, and prospective teachers, specifically. We chose to convey our findings via report cards. We called this project and our eventual report, released in 2009, *Visibility Matters*. Because our pur-

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pose is, at least in part, to advocate for greater LGBTQ presence and visibility, we returned to the college and university websites one year later. *Visibility Matters 2010*, released on May 4, 2010, recognizes those institutions that have shown improvement as well as includes our first look at social worker preparation programs in the state. An examination of the P Project is the subject of this article.

In line with Kumashiro (2008), we assert that all social justice endeavors are inherently partial. The project we describe below was therefore intended to catalyze social change by highlighting institutionalized oppression associated with sexual- and gender-based differences. We recognize that this identity-centered approach has limitations in a world rife with social and economic inequality and that LGBTQ lives are also racialized and classed lives.

As Crenshaw (1991) had documented, single-lens analysis is dangerous, as identity markers such as race and sexuality are always intersecting. Yet, we also view this report, and all of our related justice work in education, as part of a multi-pronged approach to challenging injustices when and where they arise. We view *Visibility Matters* as a temporal tool, not an end, and we link this work to our ongoing and related social justice work in education. In a different historical moment and context, our tactics will necessarily change.

Theoretical Contexts: Does Visibility Matter in Teacher Education?

There is at least 25 years of research documenting the importance of incorporating LGBTQ content into education (e.g., Duke, 2007; Epstein, 1994). For example, research has documented that reducing LGBTQ targeted violence in schools is central to creating safer learning contexts for all (Horn & Szalacha, 2009; Massachusetts Department of Education, 2002; Meyer, 2009; Szalacha, 2003). A substantial body of research also provides evidence that experiencing LGBTQ-related harassment and violence at school leads to decreased school engagement and academic achievement (Grossman et al., 2009; Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008; Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001) and increased depression, anxiety, and suicidality (D'Augelli, 1998; Russell, 2003).

Moreover, research suggests that one of the most effective interventions in reducing gender- and sexuality-based harassment and violence in schools, and the negative outcomes of this harassment on the young peoples' development, is professional development around LGBTQ issues and school safety for teachers (Szalacha, 2003). Research also confirms that listening to the experiences of LGBTQ youth in teacher preparation programs positively informs educators' ability to work effectively with

LGBTQ youth and families (Stiegler, 2008). At the same time, research also has consistently shown that teachers are underprepared by their pre-professional preparation programs to address LGBTQ-related issues in their schools (Koch, 2000; Kosciw et al., 2008; Telljohann, Price, Poureslami, & Easton, 1995). Despite all this research, LGBTQ-sensitive content and policies continue to be marginalized in teacher education.

The absence of LGBTQ visibility and policy protection in teacher education programs, as well as pervasive heteronormativity, supports a context of silencing around LGBTQ issues, people, and lives and/or *covering* for LGBTQ faculty and students in teacher education programs. As legal scholar Yoshino (2006a) noted, dominant discourses about LGBTQ people have shifted from demanding passing to promoting covering. Passing requires one to actively fake or pretend to be something that he or she is not, while covering requires that one cloak differences that deviate from the normative mantles of the profession. In other words, workplaces will often protect LGBTQ people's right to be gay but not overt expressions of "gayness," such as photos of partners or perceived overly feminine or masculine behaviors. Such disguising of these faculty members' true selves diminishes their ability to succeed and flourish in work and other spaces they inhabit.

Yoshino's (2006b) tracing of recent court cases on minority rights highlights this harmful distinction between identity and expression:

> [T]he courts routinely distinguish between immutable and mutable traits, between being a member of a legally protected group and behavior associated with that group. Under this rule, African-Americans cannot be fired for their skin color, but they could be fired for wearing cornrows. Potential jurors cannot be struck for their ethnicity but can be struck for speaking (or even for admitting proficiency in) a foreign language. Women cannot be discharged for having two X chromosomes but can be penalized (in some jurisdictions) for becoming mothers. Although the weaker protections for sexual orientation mean gays can sometimes be fired for their status alone, they will be much more vulnerable if they are perceived to 'flaunt' their sexuality. Jews cannot be separated from the military for being Jewish but can be discharged for wearing yarmulkes. (p. 17)

This distinction is salient for us because all bodies, regardless of their sexual orientations and gender identities, are attached to their acts. Demands to cover indicate a distinct regression from the civil rights gains against the systemic discrimination that we, as educators, feel compelled to challenge.

All too often, conceptual frameworks of multiculturalism do not include LGBTQ lives and communities or do so only in very superficial

ways (e.g., Galupo, 2007; Wade, 1995), making covering possible. They also avoid mentioning power and justice, whether or not "critical" is appended to them. Power and justice undergird all difference frameworks, and particular differences need to be made explicit when we seek parity, call for representation, and refuse stigma. When multiculturalism starts and ends with tolerating those different from ourselves, it does not support the acquisition of human rights. Indeed, tolerance leads to "category confusion," where the problem is perceived to be those "extremists" or outside agitators, not injustice (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2003, pp. 58-59). Moreover, tolerance translates as an inability to differentiate between claims because active tolerance demands supporting "both sides of an issue" rather than taking a stand. In short, tolerance takes the focus off of hateful and violent structures and systems and locates the problem (intolerance) and remedy (change of attitude) among individuals. Through this tolerance framing, perpetrators of hate become obscured, and audiences are asked not to acknowledge and notice hate but, instead, to "tolerate both sides of a conflict" (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2003, p. 59).

A focus on tolerance goes only so far in ensuring a more equitable and just society because it does not challenge narrow conceptions of "normal" (Britzman, 1998). For example, people often say, "I have no problem with gay people. What you do in the privacy of your own home (or bedroom) is up to you, but I don't want to have to see it in public." Although this statement expresses a degree of tolerance, it also reduces LGBTQ people to behaviors, denying them the right to be fully human and to express openly and publicly their affiliation with particular identities, relationships, and communities.

In sum, we frame this work as a form of policy activism that is aimed to counter an epistemology of ignorance (Mills, 1997). Because ignorances can be cultivated, produced, and actively maintained, they also can be challenged. The push *not* to collect data and the refusal to acknowledge policy injustices actively reproduce a willful, systemic ignorance. Sedgwick (2003) made this argument in her work on heteronormativity and HIV policy, in which she argued that particular ignorances "correspond to particular knowledges and circulate as regimes of truth" (p. 9). Around sexuality, youth, and women's health, where ideology often trumps health "facts" ("New Evidence White House Influenced," 2006), it is especially vital to collect and circulate information and to challenge this epistemology of ignorance. Thus, visibility matters because justice matters. As so many have noted, justice work in education, and beyond, is ultimately about both the redistribution of power and resources and the recognition of human rights (e.g., Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Young, 1990). Our project aims to contribute to the transformation of ideologies and structures that

currently suppress, rather than promote, inclusive, vibrant institutions and communities committed to the well-being of all.

History and Methodology of the Visibility Matters e-assessment

We began in 2005 by surveying faculty in all 57 Illinois teacher education programs to examine their inclusion of LGBTQ-related course content, attitudes toward gender identity and sexual orientation, and their ability to teach about LGBTQ lives and communities. We sent the surveys to the deans/chairs of colleges/departments of education at all 57 institutions, but it is likely that not all of them distributed the survey to their faculty. Although the return rate was low (N=63), those who responded were interested in including LGBTQ materials in their courses and felt support from colleagues and administration to do so. However, as pre-service teachers have reported about their classrooms elsewhere (e.g., Koch, 2000), faculty respondents reported being inadequately prepared to address gender identity and sexual orientation in the college classroom. Additionally, most respondents noted that their resources were outdated and that their programs introduced LGBTQ issues via the icon of a tragic, wounded, and potentially suicidal student. In other words, they approached sexual orientation via a deficit framework (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Because the survey specifically asked about gender identity and transgender issues, we also learned that the majority of respondents felt that they had no expertise in gender identity-related topics.

Based on the lack of attention to LGBTQ issues that these Illinois teacher educators reported, we decided to go back to the basics and to determine how LGBTQ lives and communities were visible, if they were, in teacher education programs and higher education institutions across the state. Therefore, members of the P-Project evaluated the websites of Illinois teacher education programs from January 2007 to January 2008. Our analyses included macro, or institution-wide, indicators as well as education department and program-specific indicators. We focused on a few basic benchmarks, namely, the presence, representation, and protection of LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty in programming, policies, codes of conduct, and campus organizations.

More specifically, we asked questions that a potential student might consider before enrolling at an institution: Do teacher education programs include sexual orientation (SO) and gender identity (GI) in their definitions of diversity and/or conceptual frameworks? Do the colleges and universities where these programs reside include SO or GI in their anti-discrimination language? Do these colleges and universities have a campus-wide positive LGBTQ presence via queer clubs or offices

dedicated to LGBTQ concerns? Conversely, do these campuses provide teacher preparation programs that ignore LGBTQ-specific content or stigmatize LGBTQ people by requiring pledges or oaths from students, faculty, and staff that they will not condone or engage in homosexual behavior? A complete list of the categories and associated points can be found in the published report on the website of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (2010): http://www.illinoissafeschools.org/page_attachments/0000/0116/visibility_matters_full_report_card_final.pdf

We hoped that the report resulting from this investigation could help students, staff, and faculty advocate for more inclusive teacher education programs and institutions. Although visible inclusion in policies and programming does not guarantee that programs and institutions value LGBTQ lives (and we knew that "under the radar" work on LGBTQ issues was happening across Illinois), we believed that our findings would press programs to be more consistent and open about their representation of LGBTQ issues and lives. Additionally, in January 2008, Illinois added sexual orientation and "gender-related identity" to the state anti-discrimination policy. Given that a number of faculty members reported struggling with how to include gender identity in courses in our survey, we viewed this e-assessment as an opportunity to see where and how institutions were addressing this policy, if at all.

Upon finding answers to our questions, we deliberated how to weight the various aspects of our e-assessment. Ultimately, we decided that institutional policies, though critical, were often of less immediate importance for a student than factors directly affecting campus climate, such as student organizations and centers representing sexual and gender diversity. Moreover, we concluded that statements about student rights and responsibilities could have more direct impact on student commitments and behaviors than could generic anti-discriminatory statements. We thus weighted the representation of gender and sexual diversity in student-focused policies more heavily (20 points) than their presence in institution-wide policies such as anti-discrimination hiring statements (10 points). We also allotted 30 points for programs affecting campus life more broadly (e.g., LGBTQ centers and clubs).

Similarly, because we were most interested in the learning experiences of pre-service candidates in teacher education, we made a large number of points (40 total) possible for programs that represented gender and sexual diversity in their conceptual frameworks and statements regarding diversity. Additionally, we made 10 points of extra credit available to institutions in which teacher education courses mentioned LGBTQ and/or gender identity issues in curricular material found online or if the website mentioned a notable, recent institution-wide special event addressing

LGBTQ issues, such as a performance of *The Laramie Project*.[4] Finally, we deducted 25 points from the total score of any institution with lifestyle statements, covenants, or mission documents that actively discriminated, dehumanized, marginalized, or excluded LGBTQ individuals and communities. In our research, we identified six Illinois institutions with explicitly anti-gay behavior and belief governing statements.[5]

To conduct the e-assessment, we searched every institution's website for the terms gay, lesbian, homosexual and homosexuality, gender and gender identity, sexuality, sexual activity, preference, orientation, queer, and lifestyle. We also drew on the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) report card model (GLSEN, 2004) to create a rubric and produce our own report card for each institution.

We first "graded" schools and programs according to this rubric in March 2008. During summer 2008, a fact checker revisited the teacher education websites to verify our point allocation and correct any errors. Although we recognized that report cards represent a "master's tool" (Lorde, 1981), we also knew that few programs in this era of high-stakes accountability would want a bad grade. Accordingly, we decided that a report card could be a powerful lever for change. We released our audit to the public and sent copies to each of the reviewed schools in January 2009. The full report, *Visibility Matters: Higher Education and Teacher Preparation in Illinois: A Web-based Assessment of LGBTQ Presence*, is available online at www.illinoissafeschools.org

Preliminary Findings

When examining the report cards, which used letter grades of A through F, the most conspicuous finding was the overwhelming number of failing grades. Of the programs evaluated, 72% (41 out of the 57) received an F, or a failing grade. Six of the remaining programs received a D, eight a C, one a B, and one, the University of Illinois at Chicago, received an A. Although a few of the failing institutions (n=4) received no points, the majority of the institutions received some points because LGBTQ content and protections were, in some way, visible in their policies or programming.

We also observed that institutions and programs used inconsistent language when referring to LGBTQ people. For example, some referred to alternative lifestyles, while others referred to homosexuals, gays and lesbians, sexual orientation, and/or sexual preference. The variance in language across the state was fascinating and made us wonder how these institutions chose the terms in their official policies and to what extent these language choices could be "read" as positions. More specifically, only a handful of institutions included gender identity in their anti-discrimination

and student code of conduct statements. Additionally, only 20 institutions had an office that focused on, or explicitly included, LGBTQ concerns.

Within teacher education programs and departments, 20 included sexual orientation, and only one included gender identity in its conceptual framework or disposition statements. Because this report emphasized the inclusion of these terms in teacher preparation programs, their absence significantly and negatively affected individual college and university grades. Of note is that, overall, public institutions fared slightly better than private institutions. The majority of C and D grades (which, as noted above, were overshadowed by Fs) went to public universities. Indeed, all schools that received -25 points for discriminatory covenants were private. Nevertheless, although the only A grade was received by a public university with strong LGBTQ faculty advocates, the only B grade was earned by a private institution.

Ongoing Outcomes: Disruptions and Transformations

Visibility Matters affected our colleagues in ways that we could not have imagined, not all of them positive. Rather straightforwardly, we assumed that receiving an F might irritate colleagues but hoped that bad grades would spark educational and policy changes. Happily, we found that the report garnered media attention, offered a map of where LGBTQ lives *are* on campuses, and fueled some teacher education faculty, candidates, and queer groups to press for changes. Unfortunately, many individuals, typically college and university faculty or administrators, focused solely on their grade, neglecting to read the short methodological summary and link the grade to our specific methodology. In these cases, the report tended to inflame readers who felt that we had unfairly judged the extent of LGBTQ activities and support on their campuses. We thus received a number of negative, sometimes hostile, reactions.

Media Coverage

The director of the Alliance bravely volunteered to be the contact person for all communication on *Visibility Matters*. When we issued a press release and mailed out the report, her first job was to field a number of irate calls that included statements such as, "*How could we get a D!?"* The *Chicago Tribune* ran a short story (Rubin, 2009) and the "top" grade-earning school, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), used the A grade to generate a lot of internal visibility and media attention within UIC. A number of local school papers also ran articles, including Northern Illinois University, with the front page headline: "NIU questions Illinois Safe Schools Alliance's failed evaluation of university" (Bruce,

2009). We were educated throughout this process about the power of the media to educate university campuses, including administrators, to bridge communities inside and outside the university, and to pressure institutions for change.

Mapping: Where the Queers Are on Campuses

Our report often highlighted where queer organizing and visibility was, and was not, on a campus. Our report illustrated that a campus may have a lot of positive LGBTQ programming and events, but all too often, these were not reflected in college of education documents, and thus a campus lost points. The staff members of a campus's LGBTQ program often organized and advanced queer curriculum and events, but these were not attached to teacher training programs. Therefore, organizations such as GenderJust, a local youth-led campaign, read the report and raised the issue of teacher competency and preparation to the head of the Chicago Public Schools, Ron Huberman.

A group of students at Elmhurst College also used the report to demand that a more extensive climate survey be conducted on their campus and to advocate for change within their teacher preparation program. Additionally, a teacher education candidate at DePaul University, Emily Manes, took the report to her administration at DePaul University. She used it to bolster her complaint that having only one class in her elementary teacher program mention LGBTQ lives was inadequate. The College of Education at DePaul has initiated a task force to examine LGBTQ content in their pre-service teacher programs.

Additionally, the report sparked a number of programs and campuses to form committees to address and to try to improve their grade. For example, at Illinois State University, the president formed a committee to review all aspects of the campus and, where deficiencies were found, to recommend changes. Additional individuals contacted us and asked how to get involved in improving campus climates and teacher education programs.

Creating Dialogue

One of the primary outcomes of the report was that it generated a dialogue on campuses among faculty, among teacher education and other departments within the university, and among students, faculty, and administration. A number of campuses (e.g., Illinois State University, DePaul University, National Louis University) created task forces or working groups both to examine the issues on campus and within teacher education and to advocate for change. At other institutions, such as the Erikson Institute, which trains early childhood and elementary school teachers, the report and the issues that it represents became a topic of their regular faculty

meetings. The provost at UIC has been proudly announcing at university-wide events, such as Lavender Graduation and the diversity forums, that UIC was the only institution in the state to receive an A.

While we recognize that a dialogue does not always lead to action, we also recognize that these discussions and dialogues happening on campuses across Illinois have begun to resist the narratives on heteronormativity and ignorance and are beginning to make the invisible visible by developing a narrative of inclusion, equity, and justice. Additionally, in some cases, this dialogue led to specific types of change in policies and practices.

Policy Changes

The School of the Art Institute was inspired by its "near-miss" grade of B to aim for an A by adding gender-related identity, following Illinois State language, to its institution-wide anti-discrimination policy and by starting a queer student organization, the first in several years. Wesleyan University and Illinois State University voted to add gender identity/expression to their non-discrimination policies. Both Illinois State University and DePaul University convened university- or college-wide task forces to address LGBTQ policy. The difficulties in the use of "gender identity" emerged, as the lack of official terminology created anxieties and institutions turned to us to ask for "best practices." Individuals and programs often did not know the difference between gender and gender identity and expressed confusion about policy language. In response to this confusion and to aid these schools in their conversations, the Alliance created a one-page resource on the inclusion of gender identity/expression in policies. (This resource can be found on the Alliance website).

Visibility Matters 2010

The changes taking place at colleges and universities around the state called out for recognition, and we decided to update the report for 2010. Using the same methodology, the P Project returned to the websites of the 60 institutions housing teacher preparation programs. The number of A grades went from one to three. Of the schools, three received a B (up from one), nine a C (up from eight), and another nine a D (up from six), improvement worth celebrating. Still, 60% of the programs received an F, so there is much work yet to be done. Social work preparation programs were included in the 2010 report in recognition of the important influence that these professionals can have on youth and families. The comparatively stronger showing of these programs (five received an A, three a B, one a C, four a D, and eight an F) likely reflects the diversity requirements for social work program accredita-

tion. Rubrics and report cards for *Visibility Matters 2010* are available in the published report on the website of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (2010): http://www.illinoissafeschools.org/page_attachments/0000/0116/visibility_matters_full_report_final.pdf

Recommendations

Although we are very pleased with this preliminary impact, we believe that queer-inclusive policies are critical to a larger human rights agenda and urge readers to consider this kind of policy activism in their states or regions. But LGBTQ equity is not our only or end goal. We hope that the P Project will serve as a catalyst for teacher educators to investigate multiple and intersecting forms of social injustice. As civil rights legal scholar Yoshino (2006a) noted, "The demand to cover . . . is the symbolic heartland of inequality—what reassures one group of its superiority to another" (p. 107). Thus the status of LGBTQ rights in teacher education programs can be "read" as an indicator of larger social justice questions in institutions, namely, Who is welcome to be a full member and who is not? Whose needs are prioritized and addressed and whose are not?

In addition, we recognize that teacher education programs across Illinois have a range of resources and are of varying size and scope. Resources and size, of course, are not barriers to including sexual orientation and gender identity in policies and public statements regarding diversity. Our findings indicate that all Illinois teacher education programs and the campuses of which they are a part can significantly improve their public attention to LGBTQ issues. The work of becoming a teacher is a complex and dynamic process that begins within a teacher preparation program. If we expect teachers and schools to support the health and well-being of all students and families, including LGBTQ ones within their communities, then teacher preparation programs must provide developing teachers with an education that includes attention to sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Based on our findings and previous work in creating safe schools for all children and families, we have some specific recommendations about how colleges and universities can more effectively include LGBTQ lives and issues in their teacher education programs.

At the campus-wide level:

- Work to ensure that anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies include sexual orientation and gender identity. (See Illinois Human Rights Act—775 ILCS 5).

- Conduct safe-zone trainings for departments and other units across campus to educate people on sexual orientation and gen-

der identity as well as campus climate issues affecting LGBTQ people and communities. For more information, see the resources provided by the Safe Zone Foundation (Resources for Safe Zone Programs, 2008) at: http://www.webster.edu/shared/shared_self-studyreport/documents/hlc1b1_safezone.pdf

• Collaborate with administrators to include sexual orientation and gender identity in definitions of diversity.

• Conduct a survey that assesses the campus climate for LGBTQ persons. (For a survey template, go to: http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/campus_climate.)

• Establish an LGBTQ resource center or student group on campus; ask the campus diversity center to include LGBTQ content and rights.

Within teacher education programs:

• Make visible the practices in which you are already engaging that prepare educators to be knowledgeable about and advocate for LGBTQ youth and their families.

• Ensure that sexual orientation and gender identity are included in all program definitions of diversity.

• Infuse sexual orientation and gender identity topics into multicultural education and diversity courses, child and adolescent development courses, and specific content-area courses, such as English and history methods courses.

• Ensure that conceptual framework and disposition statements include sexual orientation and gender identity.

• Utilize statements from national organizations, such as the National Council for Teachers of English and the American Educational Research Association, to advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQ topics into the teacher preparation curriculum.

• Seek to codify ethical standards of practice, particularly within teacher dispositions frameworks, to address conflicts between professional values, personal beliefs, and positions of faith. Establish principles similar to the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers, 2008), excerpted here: "Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and

religious beliefs and practices" (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp)

• Find allies within the university, as well as within the surrounding community, to help advocate for changes within teacher preparation programs (e.g., students, families, and teachers from local schools; local and state LGBTQ organizations; local and state human rights organizations; teacher and faculty unions).

• Network with other educators and teacher preparation professionals and join the Pre-Professional Preparation Project through the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (2010) website: http://www.illinoissafeschools.org/programs/public-education/

Notes

[1] We use queer because it encompasses all "nonnormative, nonheterosexual" identities and acknowledges the "limitless possibilities of one's sexual identity, rather than the misleading stability of sexual orientation terms such as *gay* and *lesbian* seem to imply" (McCready, 2005, p. 196, emphasis original).

[2] When this project began, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance was named the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation.

[3] A 2009 report ("College Admission Trends Relatively Steady," 2009) by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) revealed that 72% of all college applications for fall 2008 were received online, up from 68% in fall 2007, itself an increase from 58% for the fall 2006 cycle. It is thus safe to assume that this indicates an increase in high school student use of the Internet during their college research process as well.

[4] *The Laramie Project* is a play by Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project members about community reactions to Matthew Shepard's murder in 1998.

[5] Greenville College, Judson University, McKendree College, Olivet Nazarene University, Principia College, and Wheaton College.

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