Supporting transgender students in the college admissions process

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Some statistics...why this matters

Transgender population
- 700,000 in 2014 (UCLA/Williams Inst.)
- 1,400,000 in 2016 (UCLA/Williams Inst.)

Americans who know someone who is transgender:
- only 8% in 2008, but 16% by 2015 (Pew/Harris)
- only 9% of those over 45 do, but 27% of millennials

- 41% of transgender people have attempted suicide at least once (9x general US population rate of 4.6%)
- 20% report being homeless or denied a place to live
- 25% have been fired from their jobs for being transgender
- 90% report job discrimination, mistreatment, harassment
- unemployment rate = double the general population, if they are even hired in the first place
- 4x the general population live in extreme poverty; up to 50% experience food insecurity
- 15% resort to prostitution just to survive
- sometimes unable to use the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity
- rejection or ridicule by medical professionals, including paramedics in emergency situations
  - 20% of trans adults have been turned away by doctors
Why this matters, at the student level

In high school:
- 80% report harassment, 15% of those drop out (lifetime $ earnings potential plummets)
- 35% report having been physically assaulted
- 12% suffered sexual violence
- youth are 13x more likely to attempt suicide when rejected by their parents

In college:
- nearly 20% report being denied gender-appropriate housing
- 5% denied all campus housing
- attempted suicide rate = 60.5% when denied access to bathrooms or housing that reflects their gender identity (Seelman, 2016)
- 11% lost or were denied financial aid or scholarships because of their gender identity/expression
1993 -
Transgender youth Brandon Teena, 21, is raped and murdered by two men in Nebraska.

1999 - Boys Don’t Cry
* Hillary Swank wins 2000 Oscar & Golden Globe, Best Actress
* Chloe Sevigny nominated, 2000 Oscar & Golden Globe, Supporting Actress
A few transgender/non-binary celebrities & other media noteables

Chaz Bono

Jennifer Finney Boylan
Writer-in-Residence, Barnard College

“Transparent” TV show: wins Golden Glob/best television comedy or musical (2015)

Mya Taylor, “Tangerine”

Laverne Cox, “Orange is the New Black”, Emmy nomination (with Gender Fluid costar Ruby Rose)

Caitlin Jenner

Sarah McBride: First-ever transgender speaker at a presidential convention (DNC, July 2016)

Model Andreja Pejic
(at a Taylor Swift concert)

“Tangerine”

“The Danish Girl” (2015)

Jazz Jennings

*Jaden Smith (son of Will Smith & Jada Pinkett
* Eliot Sumner (son of Sting & Trudy Styler
* Miles Robbins (son of Susan Sarandon)
Sex vs. gender = biology vs. culture, ...but both are more than simple binaries

Sex (biology):
- Chromosomes
- Reproductive organs
- Hormones
- Anatomy

Gender (cultural: identity & expression):
- Clothing & other appearance
- Behavior
- Speech
- Body language
- Activities
- ...stereotypes

Transgender: your gender identity does not match the sex you were assigned at birth
Cisgender: your gender identity matches the sex you were assigned at birth
Intersex: individuals born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male
- 1/1,500 - 1/2,000 of all people (http://www.isna.org/faq/frequency)
Some moments in recent transgender history

2002 - Transgender Law Center founded; transgender student Gwen Araujo, 17, murdered in California

2003 - National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) founded

2008 - First openly transgender mayor elected in United States (Stu Rasmussen, Silverton, OR)

2008 - Angie Zapata murdered; a man was convicted of the murder under the first-ever U.S. hate crime statute (Colorado)

2010 - First trans presidential appointees made: Dylan Orr & Amanda Simpson

2010 - First trans judge, Phyllis Frye, appointed by mayor of Houston, TX

2011 - First NCAA trans athlete (Kye Allums, GWU., D1 basketball; Schuyler Bailar, Harvard swim, 2015)

2012 - EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) declares transgender employees protected
More moments in transgender history

2013 - transgender student Sasha Fleischman, 18, set on fire in Oakland, CA; goes on to attend MIT

2014 - Mills, Mt. Holyoke, Simmons, Scripps accept trans women (2015 = Bryn Mawr, Smith, Wellesley, Barnard join); transgender student Leelah Alcorn, 17, commits suicide (Cincinnati, OH)

2015 - Girl Scouts welcome transgender girls

2015 - Breanna Sinclair is first transgender person to sing the National Anthem at an MLB game

2015 - President Obama is first sitting president to include transgender people in State of the Union address

2016 - Pentagon lifts ban on transgender soldiers (an estimated 12,800-15,000 currently serve)

2016 - Chris Mosier, duathlete, becomes first transgender Team USA member
College admissions process

- Common App implements non-binary gender option for 2016-17
- Coalition App & Universal College App do the same
- University of California application now has six gender identity choices
- Optional essays referring to gender identity (ex. - Elmhurst #1, 2011; Duke, fall 2014)
- Essay: identity, challenging beliefs/ideas, failures, problems to solve, transitions, etc.

Campus visits

- Non-binary option for campus tour registration (ex. - USC)
- Overnight stays: trans host, and/or gender-neutral housing option (ex. - Lawrence U.)
- Visit campus LGBTQ* center
Scholarships just for transgender students:

- some open specifically to trans students
- many more targeted at students who identify as a member of the LGBTQ* community
- some emergency funds (ex. - Indiana U, Kent St.)

Best resources for LGBTQ scholarships:

- Campus Pride: www.campuspride.org/national-scholarship-database/
- Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org/resources/scholarship-database
- Point Foundation: www.pointfoundation.org

Local LGBTQ* community centers
College LGBTQ* resource centers

The FAFSA Gender Dilemma

Advice from the Trans Youth Equality Foundation:
http://www.transyouthequality.org/college-101/
Registrar and other official forms

* Class Registration
* Student IDs
* Transcripts
* Diplomas

• Check to see if the college or university already has a procedure in place for allowing name and pronoun/gender marker changes on student records (ex. - Harvard, Lawrence U., Ohio U., Vermont, Wisconsin-Madison).

• If the campus does not have a stated procedure (or if the student does not or cannot meet the requirements of existing policy), see if the Registrar’s Office is willing to work with you to change your educational records.

• If an informal approach is unsuccessful, send administrators a letter that outlines the legal and practical reasons why the student’s educational documents should be amended.
Housing

1970s: U.S. colleges & universities begin to provide coed housing

• (Oberlin #1, 1970? Hampshire?)

2016: gender-neutral and gender-inclusive housing options:

• UMass #1, 1992; Cornell, Dartmouth, Hampshire, Harvey Mudd, Haverford, Michigan, Pitzer, Sarah Lawrence, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, Wesleyan, 150+ others)

• College Equality Index: http://www.collegeequalityindex.org/list-colleges-gender-neutral-housing

• Campus housing programs and policies can differ greatly
  • Talk to Admissions officials (good question for college fair reps, college tours)
  • Talk to current students (campus tours, Facebook pages, etc.)
Student life/LGBTQ* support on campus

- LGBTQ* affinity groups (ex. - Lehigh, U of Missouri-KC, Penn, Vassar)
- transgender affinity groups
- is the director of LGBTQ* activities a full-time position, available daily?
- Greek system: can you join a fraternity or sorority based on your gender ID? (Chi Phi, July 2016)
- other clubs: can you join other gender-based clubs based on your gender ID?
  - local (Harvard’s final clubs), national (National Society of Women Engineers)
  - sports (men’s rugby, women’s ice hockey)
Other LGBTQ* support on campus

- graduation: is there gender-specific attire, or are students free to choose their gowns/clothing? (ex. - Cambridge)
- counseling: are the counselors/psychologists familiar with the transgender population?
- campus security: are they educated & empathetic about the transgender population?
- career development/post-grad placement resources (LGBTQ*-friendly employers, job fairs, grad schools, etc)
  - Fortune 500 companies including gender ID in their Non-Discrimination Clauses skyrockets from 25% (2008) to 61% (2014)
Health and medical insurance

Is it covered, and if so, how much?

- Hormone treatments
- Minor plastic surgery
  - Electrolysis
  - Breast augmentation/reduction/mastectomy
  - Facial feminization
  - Tracheal shave
- Voice surgery
- Vaginoplasty/vaginectomy or phalloplasty
- Gender confirmation surgery (ex. - American, Duke, Emerson, UC’s, Vanderbilt)
- Note: kidney and urinary tract infections more likely when denied bathroom access
- Counseling (ex. - Skidmore)

UPenn has hosted the Trans* Health conference since 2002
Bathrooms

Ability to use the one corresponding to one’s gender ID, not birth certificate ID (best)
gender-neutral (good; ex. - all at Cooper Union, Apr. 2016)
or single-stall (a good start, but still stigmatizing, separate, and not equal)

- Dorms & residence halls
- Academic buildings: are they widespread, or limited and far away across campus?
- Library: a/the major center for studying/academic work
- Student center(s): major hub of student life
- Athletic facilities: bathrooms and/or locker rooms (Grinnell)

- Is there an app for that? Sort of, thank you Emily Waggoner!

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1hAMMQ8PSAI78aBshmaMNHUFWICA
Non-discrimination clause/anti-bias clause/mission statement/terminology

- does the school’s NDC with regard to students and employees include not just gender/sex (female/male), but specifically gender identity? (ex. - Bucknell, Univ. of Colorado-Boulder)

- thorough NDC’s include race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, military status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, citizenship status, marital status, pregnancy, medical condition and physical or mental status, etc.

- is their NDC policy stated prominently, in an easily-found place?

- is there a VP of Diversity, fulltime Chief Diversity Officer, or similar position?

- what diversity initiatives are underway at the college? (search website, student newspaper, etc.)

- other gender-neutral terminology might indicate campus climate/progressiveness:
  - “freshmen” vs. “first-years”
  - Latino vs. Latina/Latinx (Florida, Maryland, Pitzer, Pomona)
  - Chicano vs. Chicana/Chicanx (Columbia)
  - alma mater/motto (ex. - Union)
Academics: majors and minors

- **(Women's and) Gender Studies** (348 colleges)
  - because history (+art, literature, media/film/music, politics, religion, science, sports, tech) is often “his story”
- ...and Human Sexuality (ex. - Brown, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Purdue, Rice, Stanford, William & Mary)

Majors and Minors

- Arizona State: The first undergrad major in US, in Sexuality, Trans and Queer Studies
  - Hosting international transgender studies conference, fall 2016
  - Will develop the first graduate program in US (fall 2017?)
- U. of Victoria (Canada): the world’s first endowed chair in transgendered studies (January, 2016)

- Some faculty who are trans:
  - Barnard (Jennifer Finney Boylan)
  - Claremont McKenna (Nancy Williams)
  - Harvard (Stephen Burt)
  - Stanford (Ben Barres)
  - USC (Jack Halberstram)
Resources

campuspride.org - College admissions and scholarship resources LGBTQ* students and campus groups

glsen.org - Resources and services for LGBTQ* equality in education, K-12 & college

gsanetwork.org - LGBTQ* student information and advocacy

welcomingschools.org - Professional development tools on LGBTQ* youth for school faculty and administration

genderspectrum.org - Education, training and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for youth

genderjusticeleague.org - Trans justice advocacy
More resources

imatyfa.org - Trans Youth Family Allies / Resources for educators, health professionals, parents and youth

transyouthequality.org - College admissions and scholarship resources LGBTQ* students and campus groups

transactiveonline.org - Intersectional organization serving the needs of trans youth, families, and allies

transequality.org - National Center for Trans Equality / Transgender equality advocacy

translifeline.org - Hotline by transgender people for transgender people

lambdalegal.org - Legal protections for LGBTQ* individuals
Final resources!

Human Rights Campaign website

Huffington Post/Journey Beyond the Binary blog

New York Times/Transgender Lives blog

What’s Wrong With A Boy Who Wants To Wear a Dress? (August 2012)

Chronicle of Higher Education: Transgender on Campus (October 23, 2015)

Newsweek: The Mys (May 21,
Two final thoughts about bathrooms (please watch both short videos)...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJgDXC-RC8
(New York City, Commission on Human Rights)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNwVrWGQneg
(Movement Advancement Project, shown July 2016 on MSNBC during the DNC, and Fox during the RNC)
Thank you!

Questions?