

Transgender Inclusion and Equity Program

An Occupational Therapy Master's Capstone project
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Why does Transgender inclusion matter?

Transgender people must be aware of their gender presentation as they go about their daily lives (Pryor, 2015). Whether that be masculine, feminine, both, or neither, they must be aware of how they will be perceived in society. Cisgender individuals often do not think about their gender and how their gender identity is presented or defined. Because of Transgender people being outside of society's perception of gender, which is typically binary, they experience transphobia. Transgender Americans have experienced and **continue to experience discrimination** for the ways they challenge the established gender systems for the entirety of their documented existence (Beemyn, 2014). This inherently affects their higher education and participation in schooling, including college and university campuses. 24% of people who were out as or perceived to be Transgender in higher education **report experiencing transphobia in their college environment** and Transgender people are **significantly less likely to complete a college degree than their cisgender peers** (James et.al., 2016).

Many other factors can contribute to preventing Transgender students from continuing their higher education, including job employment. In 2015, the unemployment rate amongst Transgender Americans (15%) was 3 times higher than the unemployment rate in the US population (5%) (James et.al., 2016). Due to these issues, Transgender individuals experience barriers, especially in education, thus making it less likely for them to complete a college degree than their cisgender peers. Although we have yet to identify occupations that are unique to the Transgender community, there should be an understanding that the occupations Transgender individuals engage in may be experienced differently than cisgender individuals.

Occupational Therapy Master's Capstone

We implemented a study on UC Berkeley College campus and on social media (due to COVID-19) to see the equity of accessible resources and educational experiences for **Transgender and Cisgender students**. Participants include individuals from Berkeley and from across the United States. We had **19 Berkeley students** (18 transgender, 1 cisgender), 4 Berkeley staff (3 transgender, 1 cisgender), and **17 current and former students from colleges/universities across the USA** (9 transgender, 8 cisgender). We received responses from both cisgender and transgender peers to compare and contrast how they view existing resources on their college or university campus.

Inclusion Criteria

- Binary and non-binary transgender people
- All sexualities and majors
- Located in US
- Undergraduate and graduate
- Attending in-person classes in 2018 and/or 2019

Exclusion Criteria

- Located outside US
- Alumni before 2018
- Solely virtual college attendance

Methods

Mixed-methods were used in this project. , Quantitative and qualitative data collection was utilized in this project. Anonymous surveys were distributed on QR codes **via flyers on Berkeley's campus and social media**. **Likert scale** ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” written in the survey to understand how **cisgender and Transgender** student answers differ. Questions provided were open-ended to allow full explanations for answers and questions were coded via inductive coding.

SCAN ME



Hover your camera over this QR code to see our Occupational Therapy Master's Presentation Poster!

Findings

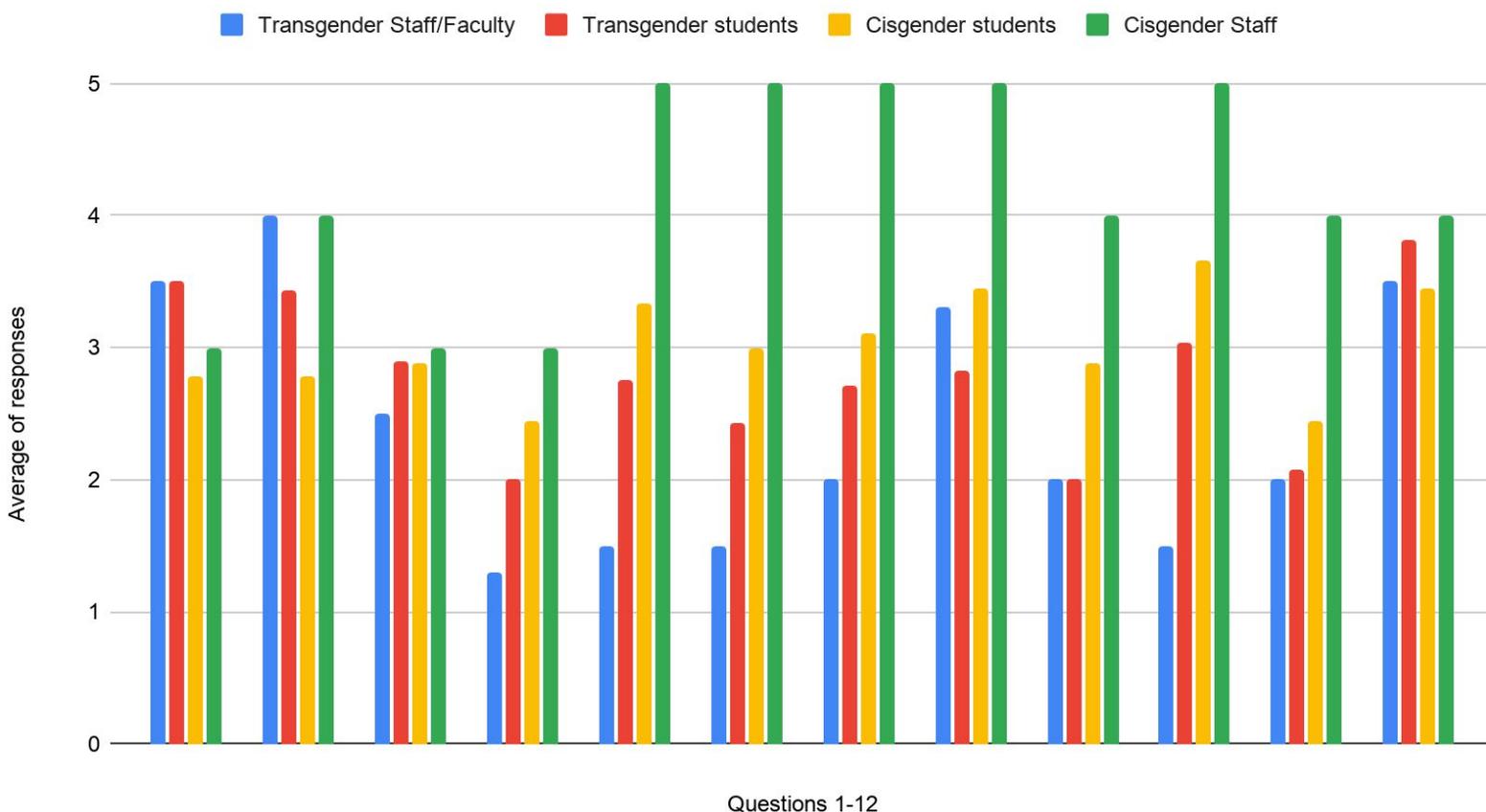
Transgender students and staff reported numerous instances of person-to-person and systemic transphobia.

Students reported instances of **deadnaming**, (usage of a person's non-lived name), **misgendering** (use of incorrect pronouns or other gender terms), **lack of resources and scholarships** that address systemic barriers to higher education faced by transgender people, **lack of bathrooms, changing rooms, and living facilities** where Transgender people can safely go about their daily activities without fear of harassment, and **health care inequities** when health care services are delays due to referral to Transgender health specialists for non-Transgender health care needs.

Information from participants regarding existing programs and services provided insight into effective methods and ineffective methods or oversights.

Cisgender staff, faculty and students are not aware of the multi-faceted barriers and systemic transphobia Transgender students face.

Averages of Survey Responses (Quantitative Data)



1. The college I currently go to provides support for Transgender students on campus.
2. There are resources and programs on campus that meet the needs of Transgender students.
3. The resources and programs provided on campus assures the safety of Transgender students/helps them feel safe on campus.
4. This college campus meets the needs of Cisgender students and Transgender students equally.
5. The faculty/staff at this college treat Cisgender students and Transgender students equally.
6. The faculty/staff have an appropriate understanding of the Transgender community.
7. Other students treat Transgender students equally to their fellow Cisgender peers.
8. Transgender students are safe to come out/express their gender identities on campus.
9. Campus facilities (i.e. bathrooms, dorms, locker rooms) provide safe and equitable options for Transgender and Nonbinary students (including non-gendered options).
10. Transgender Students have equal opportunity and ability to succeed at this university as their Cisgender peers.
11. Transgender students **do not** face discrimination for their gender identity on campus.
12. Transgender students **do** face discrimination for their gender identity on campus.

Codes Analysis (Qualitative Data)

Existing Transgender Resources

Benefits and Limitations:

“[The existing trans support centers] are great but cannot do everything it takes to ensure safety and equal access”

Physical and Psychosocial Environment

Gender-neutral facilities:

“Gender-neutral and otherwise trans-friendly restrooms, changing spaces, etc. are few and hard to find, even locked at times. It’s hard to dependably find these spaces in all parts of campus, and they’re generally on higher floors or in the sides and back of buildings.”

Transphobia and invalidation on campus:

“Cis students, faculty, and staff comfort is prioritized over basic needs of trans students.”

Cultural competency of faculty and staff:

“Professors often lack competency”

Student-to-student transphobia:

“A lack of understanding really creates a disconnect between cis and trans students.”

Experiences inside the classroom:

“I am misgendered daily, sometimes in front of other students. I experience regular looks and comments that make it known I am neither understood nor welcome.”

University Accountability:

“Transgender individuals on this campus have faced repeated harassment and outright discrimination with absolutely NO support from administration... the [University] administration has made it very clear how disregarded we are on campus.”

Resources as environments

“[LGBTQ+ program offices] are nice safe spaces”

Systemic Transphobia

Economic Barriers to Access

“The economic barriers to university attendance faced by trans people, especially trans women, aren’t especially alleviated by the university... The resources and opportunities aren’t the same.”

Project Implementation

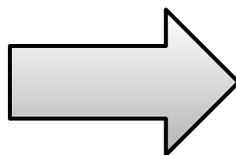
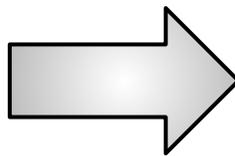
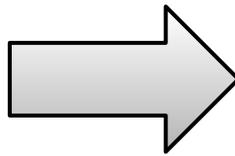
The findings informed our development of a Transgender Student Inclusion program. The codes identified were translated into **program sections with suggested changes according to our survey findings.**

Outcomes:

collaborative discussion about what changes are possible, timeline for implementation, and commitment to improving Transgender inclusivity on campus.

Met with the following departments and groups

- **PRIDE club** → Student advocacy
- **Diversity Action Group (DAG)** → faculty and staff
- **Facilities**
- **Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD)** → OT student advocacy
- **Campus Health Center**
- **Housing**
- **IT**
- **Registrar**
- **Alumni Relations**



- ★ Team developing gender support plan
- ★ Scheduled Transgender DEI trainings
- ★ Student advocacy and peer-education
- ★ Inclusive housing options and forms
- ★ Healthcare working towards providing resources for transition care
- ★ Inclusive language on health-center forms
- ★ Beginning development of LGBTQ+ alumni group
- ★ Researching SIS to enable name change
- ★ Work towards increasing gender-neutral bathrooms
- ★ Plan to install sanitary trash cans in men's bathrooms
- ★ Alumni emails with lived name
- ★ Integration of transgender curriculum

Transgender Inclusivity and Equity Program Sections

Codes that were created from findings were curated into 10 sections of the Transgender Inclusivity and Equity Program as follows:

Gender Neutral Facilities

“It shouldn't be that hard for us to find a place to pee”

Transgender Housing

How this looks at a larger facility versus a smaller facility

Name Change in Registrar

Emails should be set up with students lived name instead of their dead name

Healthcare Accessibility

“Receiving adequate transition care is difficult or impossible”

Programs for Transgender Students

“Regardless of professional stance of the university, students and faculty can be individually transphobic”

Addressing Transphobia

“The lack of gender neutral facilities and a broader culture of not speaking up in the face of anti-trans [discrimination] shows this institutional silence has a broad impact on students”

Faculty/Staff Training

“A lack of understanding creates a disconnect between cis and trans students”

Transgender Curriculum

Bring in Transgender people to share their stories; not cisgender professors lecturing Transgender students about the Transgender experience

Integration of Scholarships for Transgender Students

“It is clear we are not on their radar and nothing has been done to ensure trans folk are materially safer on campus”

Transgender Students

Take them seriously. Listen to what they have to say and put meaningful effort into correcting these issues

Gender Neutral Facilities

“Cis students, faculty, and staff comfort is prioritized over trans students basic needs” - Transgender student talking about inaccessibility of gender-neutral facilities as compared to the accessibility of binary gender facilities

Gender-neutral and all-gender facilities should be made as accessible and available as the gender binary bathrooms. Binary bathrooms can be adapted to make them more Transgender-friendly, such as having trash-cans in the stalls for Transgender men to dispose of pads and tampons.

There should be clear signage of where these facilities are so Transgender students know where they are located so they can use them. A good way to indicate this is to have a campus bathroom map to show where these different bathrooms are located and can have access to them, as well as make them available on class websites.

Putting sanitary product receptacles in stalls of all men's bathrooms and baby changing tables in all bathrooms will also allow binary bathrooms to be Transgender accessible.

“Every single bathroom must be gender neutral in order for us to be equal.” - Transgender student

“It shouldn't be that hard for us to find a place to pee” - Transgender student

Transgender Housing

Large Universities:

A housing building dedicated to LGBTQ+. There would be adequate space to potentially have a dorm solely for LGBTQ+ students. Students would get to live with others of their gender identity as opposed to only being allowed to dorm with people of the same sex.

Small Universities:

Although they may not be able to dedicate a whole dorm building for LGBTQ+ students, there is still the capability to have residency forms include a nonbinary or Transgender housing option. Students can request to be housed and live with other LGBTQ+ students regardless of the assigned sex at birth. An LGBTQ+ hall of existing housing buildings can be made, where students can specifically request to live with other LGBTQ+ students to make them feel safe.

All universities need to have Transgender-inclusive housing policies regardless if it is big or small. Transgender people should have the ability to decide what gender they feel most comfortable rooming with.

Name Change in Registrar

Emails should be set up with students lived name instead of their dead name (example: firstname.lastname@students.dominican.edu)

Class website and rosters should indicate student's lived name instead of their dead name when it comes to attendance of class and identifying who is who. Their dead name should not be indicated anywhere. Exposure of dead name can lead to misgendering and non-consensual outing of the person. Not only that, but it can lead the student to feeling singled out and exposure to transphobia.

Another idea is to have degrees given out with student's lived name. There is a potential that this can be accomplished, where a student must indicate a plan to achieve legal name change within a certain number of years post-graduation.

What to take into consideration:

Be realistic about requirements like this. In a perfect world, this can be easy to achieve. The reality of this expectation is that name changes take significant time and money and new graduates may not have the resources to accomplish this immediately.

This was perceived to have the *highest level of difficulty to implement.*

Name Change in Registrar (cont.)

Changing the names of students in their registration has many complicating factors. These challenges have been identified during meetings with IT and DAG as well as research into other universities.

1. DUC has mandated government reporting that requires the use of a student's legal name.
2. Registrar, IT, admissions, advising, financial aid, and others all use slightly different programs or different aspects of the same program.
3. A different name for the same student could cause difficulty coordinating their files across multiple departments.
4. The price of a new program and the staff-hours to implement the system puts the cost of these type of changes at upwards of one hundred thousand dollars.
5. The entire process of finding a system and implementing it would take at least 2 years to complete, during which the school would still be operating with the existing system.

This does *not* mean we have no responsibility to change these outdated systems. It means that these changes require a ongoing collaborative effort on the part of faculty, staff, and campus advocates.

Name Registration: Is name changing achievable? *YES!*

- A. CampusPride.org lists over 260 colleges and universities that allow students to change their name in at least some areas of campus records, 66 colleges that allow for students to change their gender marker, and 42 colleges which allow for students to indicate their pronouns on class rosters. (<https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/records/>)
- B. Colleges and universities that enable students to go by their chosen name and pronouns (as well as other meaningful efforts to support the equity and safety of Transgender students) are often included in lists that LGBTQ+ groups publish of the best campuses for Transgender students.
- C. Many Transgender legal groups, such as Lambda Legal, make the case that not allowing Transgender students to change their names, gender, and pronouns on class rosters and student IDs constitutes a violation of FERPA (34 C.F.R. § 99.7(a)(2)(ii)) which allows for students to request a correction of any information on their school records that is “**incorrect, misleading, or in violation of the students rights of privacy**”
 - a. Maintaining a transgender student’s legal name on all records violates student’s privacy by outing that student to every staff and faculty who has access to their records.

Healthcare Accessibility

“Receiving adequate transition care is difficult or impossible”

Smaller colleges:

HRT and gender affirmation procedures available through campus health care plan. All health care and mental health counseling staff should be trained in Transgender terminology and experience. Not only that, but have a health care team that has specific off-campus resources to refer to students as well as places to get HRT and gender affirmation procedures through the campus healthcare.

Larger Colleges:

A dedicated transgender health care staff, trained in Transgender terminology and experience. HRT and gender affirmation procedures available through university health services if possible. Paid LGBTQ+ mental health counselors with Transgender education and training. Provided in the same quantity and accessibility as other mental health counselors.

All healthcare staff, including mental health counselors, should be educated on transgender terminology and experiences. A larger school may have trained transgender-health specialists who are able to provide gender-affirmation transition procedures. This will prevent health disparities caused by delayed access to healthcare.

Healthcare Accessibility

Beware the Transgender broken arm!

There is a phenomenon where Transgender students experience barriers to health care access for non-transgender-related issues due to their gender identity being Transgender.

Transgender student comes to health center with broken arm

Referred to transgender health specialist with fewer staff

Students may have to wait longer to access the services

Transgender students have had to pretend to be cisgender in order to receive proper services. Otherwise, they could be treated and delayed health services because they are “different”. Transgender students should not be denied or delayed healthcare just because they do not identify with the binary gender.

“Often trans folk pretend to be cis ... and have reported better experiences [than when they outed themselves as trans]”

Example of allyship: Dominican’s Health Care Center’s Commitment

They planned to actively look to see if transition services are covered by student health insurance plan. They plan to have a resource compiled of where students can receive transition services off-campus. They have counseling interns they would like to have educated specifically about LGBTQ+ care. They have expressed interest in changing language and vocabulary on health forms to be more inclusive and creating a sign for the health center door to inform students that they can ask about transgender healthcare needs.

They are open to attending trainings and learning more about the Transgender communities health needs.

Programs for Transgender Students

“Regardless of professional stance of the university, students and faculty can be individually transphobic”

Ensure LGBTQ+ programs and/or Transgender groups and programs (including student run groups) are accessible for and inclusive of graduate and undergraduate students

This would mean a plethora of things, such as: give the same funding and involvement on campus as other minority groups and programs and establishing a LGBTQ+ safe-space because the ultimate reality is that it is not always possible for the whole campus to be a safe space. Space can also be located where LGBTQ+ and/or Transgender groups and programs are for easier accessibility

Transgender students are statistically more at risk to experience harassment, assault, sexual assault, and violence in romantic and sexual relationships.

Have programs and/or counselors specifically trained to address these issues. Some college campuses already have an existing center and student training to address sexual violence and harassment, however, Transgender students report that these spaces are very heteronormative and cisnormative and Transgender students often feel unwelcomed and unsupported.

Ensure these spaces, groups, and programs are **properly advertised** so that all students know what supports exist, where the supports are located, and how to access these supports

Programs for Transgender Students (cont.)

Programs mentioned in survey responses

All of the following programs were mentioned by survey participants as providing for some of the needs of Transgender students. Many of these programs were limited by lack of Transgender knowledge and inclusion, and/or lack of funding, paid staff, and equitable support from university administration. Universities should explore which of these programs could be implemented on their campus, which services could be incorporated into existing programs, and if there are oversights of the needs of Transgender students in these programs already being run on campus

Counseling and Psychological Services

- Transgender informed care

Office dedicated to support gender minorities and gender equality

- Advocate for needs of Transgender students

LGBTQ office in student center

- Address broad spectrum of LGBTQ+ student needs and experiences

Domestic violence and assault support center

- Transgender people are at increased risk for domestic violence but were often overlooked or not included in these programs

Student run queer support organizations

- Student organization run and centered by Transgender students
 - Providing Transgender support group/group therapy
 - “Helpful in finding resources and connecting with other trans people”

Addressing Transphobia

“The lack of gender neutral facilities and a broader culture of not speaking up in the face of anti-trans [discrimination] shows this institutional silence has a broad impact on students”

It is important to take a **proactive approach** to transphobia and inequity. Faculty/staff as well as cisgender students should report others who intentionally and repeatedly misgender, deadname, or out students or engage in other transphobia language and behavior.

There needs to be a reality check that not all campuses are Transgender friendly. There can be systemic transphobia that has been integrated in the system for so long, both in faculty/staff and students, that they do not realize that they are contributing to the issue. Be aware, educate yourself always.

“Relying on trans students feeling safe and empowered and knowledgeable enough to reach out about issues” - Transgender student talking about insufficient “reactive approach” of university to instances of transphobia”

Important note: The responsibility cannot be entirely on Transgender students to feel knowledgeable and empowered to address this alone. Cisgender faculty, staff, and students should be aware of when transphobia occurs and address it before a transgender student has to make a report.

Faculty/Staff Training

“A lack of understanding creates a disconnect between cis and trans students”

There needs to be **mandatory Transgender terminology and experience training for all staff**. This includes but are not limited to professors, faculty who interact with students, counselors, campus healthcare workers, et cetera. Colleges may already have some sort of training provided on campus, but it is often an optional training to attend when it should actually be mandatory. Student reports indicate that the professors who need the training most are the ones who do not attend. Issues that specifically address deadnaming and misgendering would need to be addressed.

Additionally, **have definite avenues for students to report these occurrences and ensure the awareness these avenues to** show that they are supported and will be protected from transphobia. It is also important to have actual consequences for professors who deadname/misgender students. This can be warnings and mandatory trainings, escalating to further consequences if change is not made.

This is one of the steps to take to de escalate systemic transphobia in the school system.

Faculty/Staff Training (cont.)

“Things that seem helpful such as having everyone introduce their names and pronouns at the start of the semester is nice until you realize not a lot of people actually remember your pronouns and often misgender you”

It should be normalized to introduce name and pronouns at start of class and actually follow up by correctly naming and gendering students. It is not the student’s responsibility to repeatedly remind professors of their pronouns. Ensuring the training includes graduate staff and not just undergraduate students. Graduate students rated faculty and staff lower in terms of inclusivity and Transgender knowledge than undergraduate students at the same university.

“I am misgendered daily, sometimes in front of other students. I experience regular looks and comments that make it known I am neither understood nor welcome”

Transgender Curriculum Integration

Healthcare field students (i.e. nursing, occupational therapists, physical therapists, et cetera) receive little to no curriculum on Transgender experiences and health care needs.

Gender and minority studies that are available on university campuses should include Transgender experiences in curriculum. Often it discusses binary genders, gays, lesbians, but not as much coverage with Transgender knowledge and curriculum.

It is important to bring in Transgender people to share their stories and not cisgender professors lecturing Transgender students about the Transgender experience.

Safety trainings for students should assimilate Transgender terminology and experiences for students. Most campuses have some form of mandatory sex safety and sexual assault education seminar for students.

Scholarships for Transgender Students

“It is clear we are not on their radar and nothing has been done to ensure trans folk are materially safer on campus”

Transgender specific scholarships and programs should be readily made to address systemic inaccessibility of higher education.

Scholarships, jobs, and grants made accessible to Transgender students who are struggling financially. This can be due to independent living, individuals who are not quite out to their family and friends yet, and other potential reasons. Rather than allowing cisgender people to teach Transgender studies, hire Transgender people to run programs and teach courses.

“Specific work is not put into counteracting these broader cultural realities, so therefore the issues and disparities remain”

“Resources and opportunities aren’t the same because the university does not lift up trans scholars”

“Being trans means having to explain yourself in a place where it honestly isn’t necessary. ... I am not afforded the same opportunities or freedoms as my cis classmates”

Listen to your Students!

Transgender students are still students who are human beings. They still face issues that cisgender students go through and deserve to be treated as equally as their peers. They still continue to face barriers to education, occupational engagement, healthcare, insufficient programming and supports. Furthermore, they continue to experience transphobia from students, faculty, or staff, whether it is intentional or not. They may not speak it out front and clear, but that does not mean that they deserve any less. Put them on your radar.

Take them seriously. Listen to what they have to say and put meaningful effort into correcting these issues

“Every nonbinary student I know has horror stories about people refusing to use their pronouns, people not knowing how to use their pronouns, being scared to tell people about their pronouns, being scared about going into restrooms, etc. While we do have trans inclusive health care, that does not offset the many small indignities we still face on a day to day basis on campus.”

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