

# Show Me the Numbers:

How Are Colleges Collecting and Using Data on LGBTQ+ Students?

CCC + LGBTQ+ Summit  
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# The RP Group

## Mission

As the representative organization for institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, the RP Group strengthens the ability of California Community Colleges to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

## Services

Research, evaluation, planning, professional development, and technical assistance — **designed & conducted by CCC practitioners to enhance student and college success**

## Organization

501(c)3 with roots as an IRPE membership organization

# Survey Stats

- Survey was sent to 138 CCC district and college research offices representing all 115 California Community Colleges
- Purpose of the survey was to better understand how colleges are collecting and using data regarding LGBTQ+
- Received 45 email responses (33%)
- All 45 respondents answered first two items
  - About 20 colleges responded to remaining questions

# Survey Results: Data Collection

Does your college collect student characteristics such as non-binary gender, transgender, or sexual orientation?

- 33 respondents (73%) said yes

Do you collect similar characteristics for faculty and staff?

- Only 5 respondents (11%) said yes

# Survey Results: When Started Collection

- AB 620 passed in 2011
- Colleges were asked when they started collecting the following data non-binary, transgender, and sexual orientation
  - Responses varied from within the past 2 years, to “When CCC Apply started,” to unsure/unknown

# Survey Results: Collection Methods

How do you collect this information?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
New applications via CCC Apply	95.24%	20
New applications via paper	4.76%	1
New applications via college web (online)	4.76%	1
Returning students asked during registration	0.00%	0
We do not collect this information	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	19.05%	4
Total Respondents: 21		

# Survey Results: MIS Reporting

Please describe your college's process for reporting new (summer 2018) MIS data elements SB36 STUDENT-TRANSGENDER and SB37 STUDENT-SEXUAL-ORIENTATION.

- Several responded that the process is run by the district Information Technology team or they are unsure.
- One college reports “unknown” for all students because data can “only be used for research.”

# Survey Results: Data Usage

Please provide examples of how the college uses these data.

- Equity research, conduct disproportionate impact (DI) studies, but the counts (n) are often too small
- Internal presentations to college committees, FLEX
- Validate counts on public websites
- Do not use it and/or cannot share it (restricted)
- Include aggregate counts in reports



## Quotes: Data Access

*Access to this data is controlled at a district level and not currently populated in our SIS 'til comprehensive data management protocol is developed.*

*This data is only accessible to the research office. It is not accessible to anyone else. Disaggregation is not possible due to the small cohort size.*

## Quotes: Data Access (continued)

*Data suppression, data storage on separate device and not uploaded into Banner. Special precautions (of course) for underage students.*

*None. Locally we treat it like any other demographic (ethnicity, age, etc.).*

## Quotes: Data Paradox

*I am an LGBT person and I know that representing the issues faced by LGBT students is important; however, the issues of representation should not take a backseat to ensuring the personal privacy and personal safety of our students. I am okay with discussing things in a strategic way, and in ways that counterbalance personal risk with the greater benefits for sexual and gender minority students at large.*



# Quotes: Larger Data Issues

*Interestingly, this has turned into a broader discussion of what information gets stored in our information system and how we handle reporting data from populations that we don't have large enough numbers to report statistically on. And also discussion of data security with our IT department.*

## Quotes: Access

*I wish [that] we have access to that data.*

*We should have direct access to this data from CCCApply.*

*These data need to be easier to access and data needs to be cleaned.*

# Quotes: Categorization

*We have a committee that would like us to report the data in two groups: heterosexual/non transgender and Gender & Sexuality Minority.*

*It would be great if there were even more expanded categories collected on the application.*

## Quotes: Use Restrictions

*We've done one high level report but am uncomfortable sharing more than that level of detail with the college. Have refrained from any individual level info (no email distribution lists, etc.).*

*The restrictions seem overmuch. These data are essentially as sensitive than DSPS data, but we aren't required to take the same extreme measures....*



## Quotes: Needed Guidance

*It would help to get some guidance on the definitions and/or terms. I've created surveys where we asked students to describe their 'sexual orientation' and one respondent suggested we use 'gender identity'. I've also read articles that suggest a two-step identification process would provide more accurate information on this issue.*

# Quotes: Negative Reaction

*We still receive negative feedback from respondents when these questions are asked. We are trying to normalize the collection of this data on our campus.*

# Discussion

What are your reactions to this information?

What questions do you have?

# Best Practices

SAN JOAQUIN DELTA COLLEGE

- Gauge when you are over-asking
  - Why do you need/want to know gender and sexuality info?
- Do not create an “other” category
- Because sexual orientation and gender identity are separate aspects of identity, colleges should never combine them into one question (not asking, for example, “Do you identify as a part of the **LGBTQ+** community?”).
- An explanation of why questions are being asked and how the data will be used (including an assurance that the information will not be used to discriminate against them) should accompany the questions
- Students should have the ability to change these identities on campus records during their academic careers.



# Thank You!

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