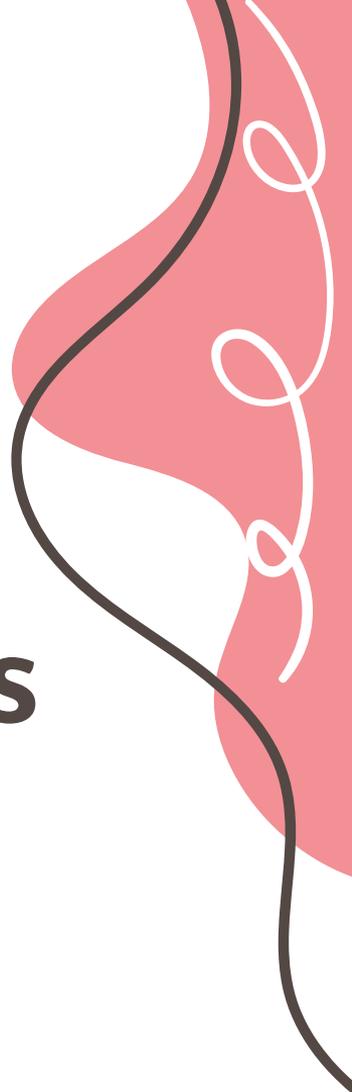




QTBIPOC Student Experiences at UCLA

Smriti Nagarajan



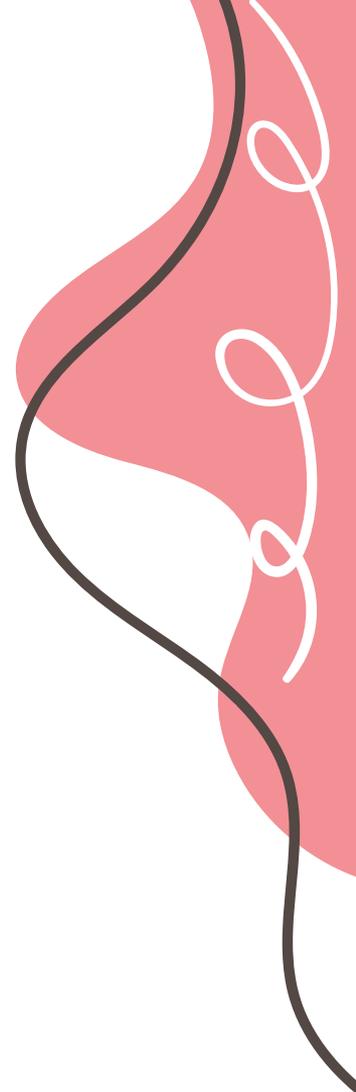
Land Acknowledgement

This Land Acknowledgment was spoken out loud, but has been pasted here for your reference:

As we begin today's Virtual Lounge, we would first like to acknowledge the land that our physical space resides. A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory we reside, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought us to reside or inhabit the land, and to seek to understand our place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.

As a part of UCLA, a land grant institution, the LGBTQ Campus Resource Center acknowledges the Tongva and Serrano peoples as the traditional caretakers of this land. We pay our respects to the ancestors, elders, and relatives and relations past, present, and emerging.



Introductions



Photo Credit: Kai Huang

Smriti Nagarajan (they/them)
Assessment and Engagement Intern
nagarajan.smriti@gmail.com



Photo Credit: Idriss Njike

Andy Cofino (he/him)
Director
acofino@lgbt.ucla.edu



This research was sponsored by the UCLA LGBTQ Campus Resource Center, with support from the Community Programs Office, Bruin Resource Center and Graduate Student Resource Center.

UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Campus Resource Center

 **UCLA**
Community Programs Office

UCLA Bruin Resource Center

UCLA Graduate Student Resource Center



Thank you:

Vanessa Warri, UCLA MSW/PhD 2025

Megan van der Toorn, Director of the USC LGBT Resource Center

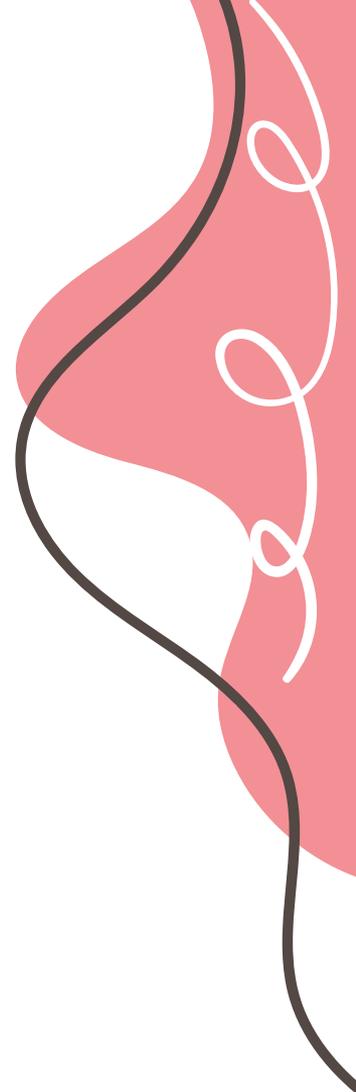
Dr. Kristen McKinney from Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO)

Dr. Bianca Wilson from the Williams Institute

Maria Blandizzi, Dean of Students

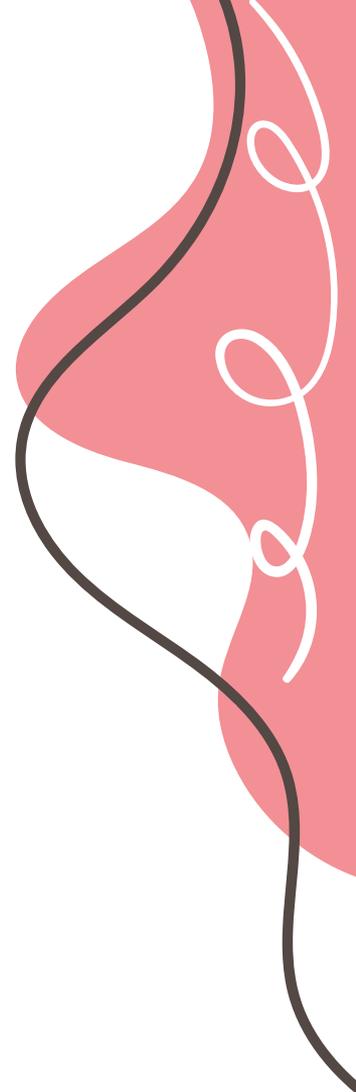
Monroe Gorden Jr, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

All of the undergraduate and graduate students who we interviewed for this study!



This presentation:

- The trajectory of this study (aims, timeline, publicity)
- Demographics of Interviewees
- Commonly visited student centers
- Feedback for all student centers
- Common themes across interviews
- Positive feedback



Previous Research

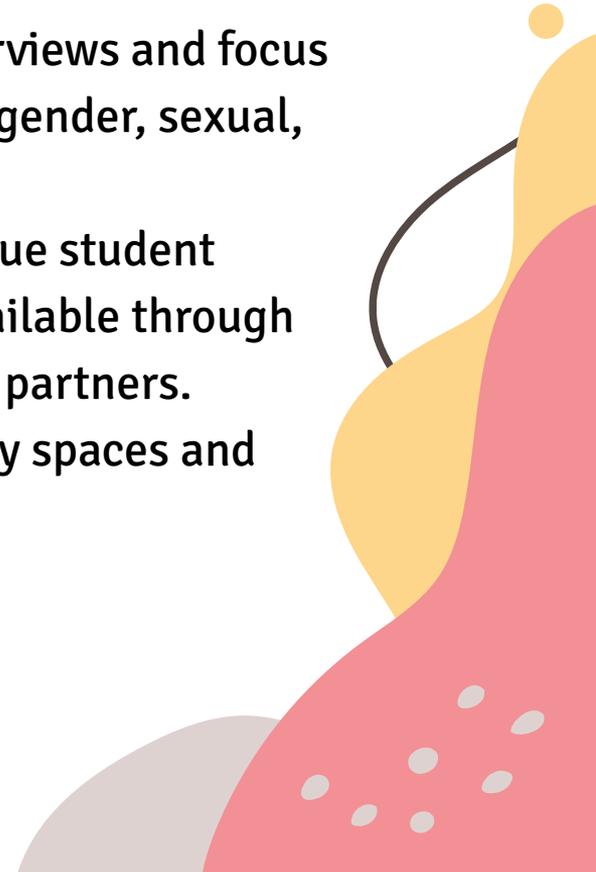
Within academia, there has historically been a lack of research on the unique experiences of LGBTQ college students of color

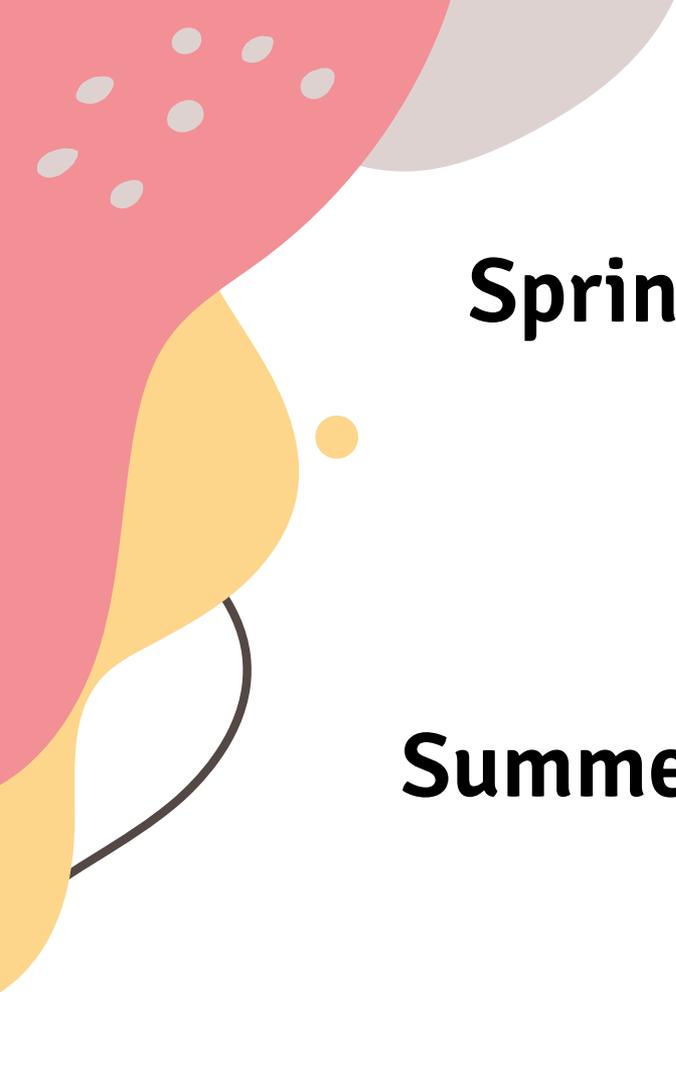
Extensive research on white LGBTQ+ college students

Extensive research on cisgender, heterosexual college students of color

Aims of this Study

1. Use a peer-driven approach to conduct qualitative interviews and focus groups aimed at capturing the range of experiences of gender, sexual, and racial minority students at UCLA specifically.
2. Conduct a systematic analysis of the needs of this unique student population, to enhance the services currently made available through the LGBTQ Campus Resource Center and other campus partners.
3. Learn what other safe and affirming campus community spaces and services are accessed by this population.





Spring 2020 **IRB Approval: #20-000306**

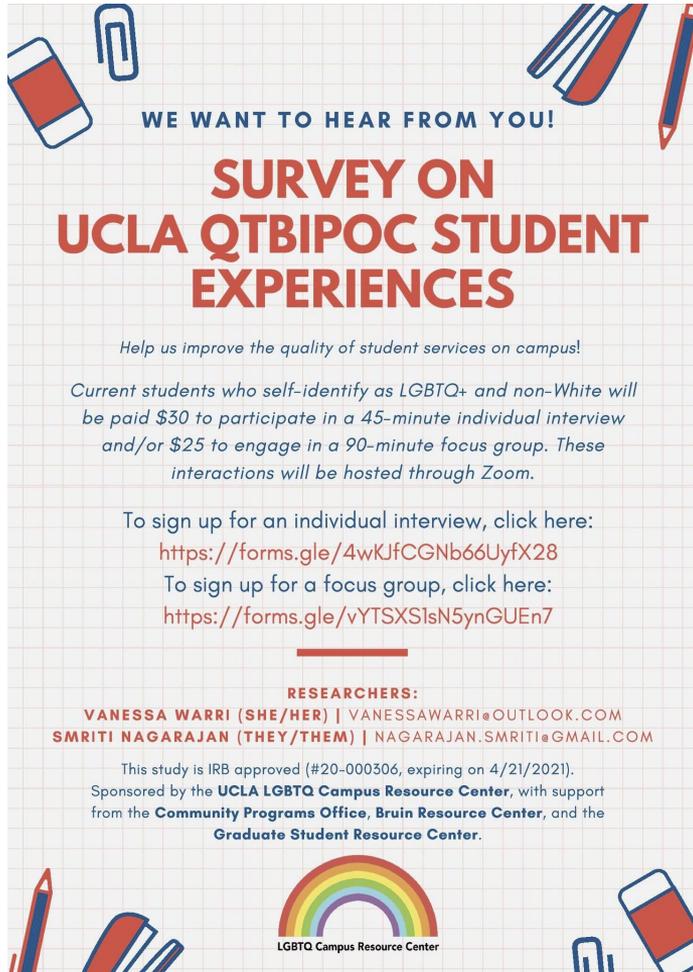
Advertising and Interviews

Making flyers, emailing student centers and academic departments, conducting interviews

Summer 2020 **Creating a Report**

Analyzing transcripts and developing recommendations for various student centers.





WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

SURVEY ON UCLA QTBIPOC STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Help us improve the quality of student services on campus!

Current students who self-identify as LGBTQ+ and non-White will be paid \$30 to participate in a 45-minute individual interview and/or \$25 to engage in a 90-minute focus group. These interactions will be hosted through Zoom.

To sign up for an individual interview, click here:
<https://forms.gle/4wKJfCGNb66UyfX28>

To sign up for a focus group, click here:
<https://forms.gle/vYTSXSI5ynGUEn7>

RESEARCHERS:
VANESSA WARRI (SHE/HER) | VANESSAWARRI@OUTLOOK.COM
SMRITI NAGARAJAN (THEY/THEM) | NAGARAJAN.SMRITI@GMAIL.COM

This study is IRB approved (#20-000306, expiring on 4/21/2021).
Sponsored by the **UCLA LGBTQ Campus Resource Center**, with support from the **Community Programs Office**, **Bruin Resource Center**, and the **Graduate Student Resource Center**.



LGBTQ Campus Resource Center

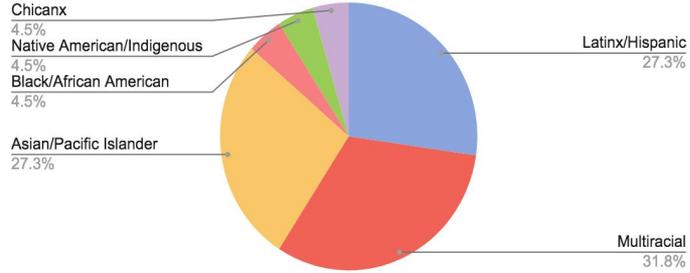
We interviewed 22 QTBIPOC students in total, over three weeks.

QTBIPOC: Queer and/or Transgender Black, Indigenous People of Color

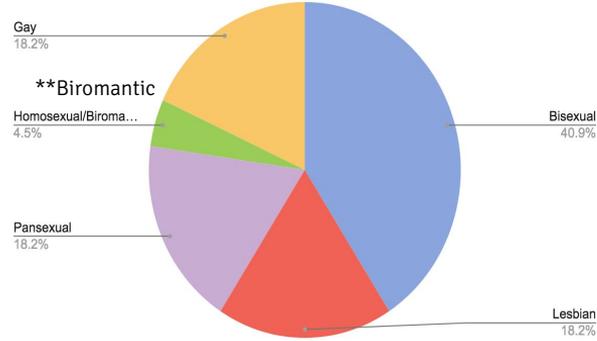
Students were compensated via BruinCard for their time.

Demographics

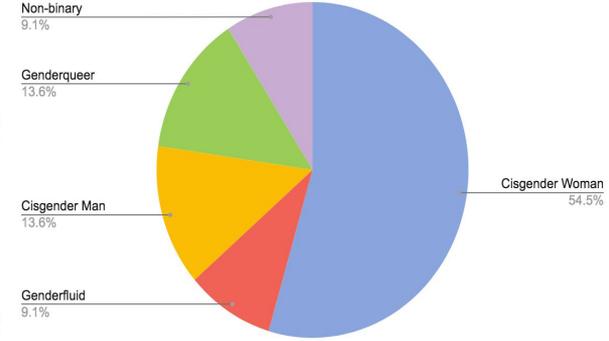
Race of all interviewed students



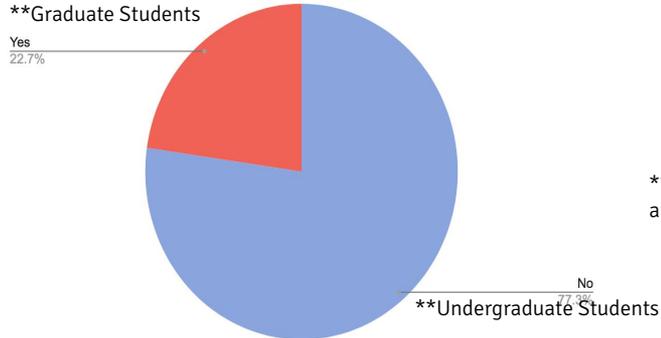
Sexuality of all Interviewed Students



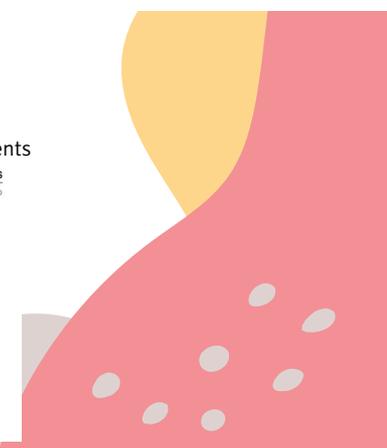
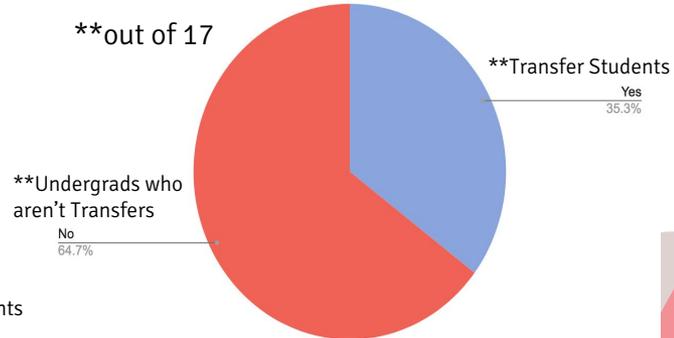
Gender of all Interviewed Students



Ratio of Graduate Students

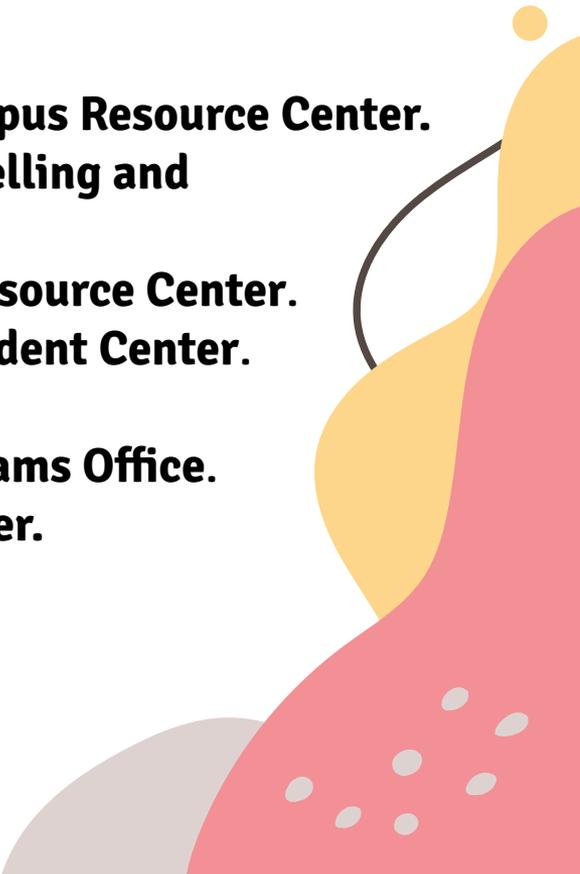


Ratio of Transfer Students



Commonly Visited Student Centers and Services

- 22 out of 22 students (100%) have visited the **LGBTQ Campus Resource Center**.
 - 15 out of 17 undergraduate students (88%) visited **Counselling and Psychological Services**.
 - 3 out of 5 students (60%) visited the **Graduate Student Resource Center**.
 - 3 out of 6 transfer students (50%) visited the **Transfer Student Center**.

 - 12 out of 22 students (42%) visited the **Community Programs Office**.
 - 1 out of 22 students (3%) visited the **Bruin Resource Center**.
- 

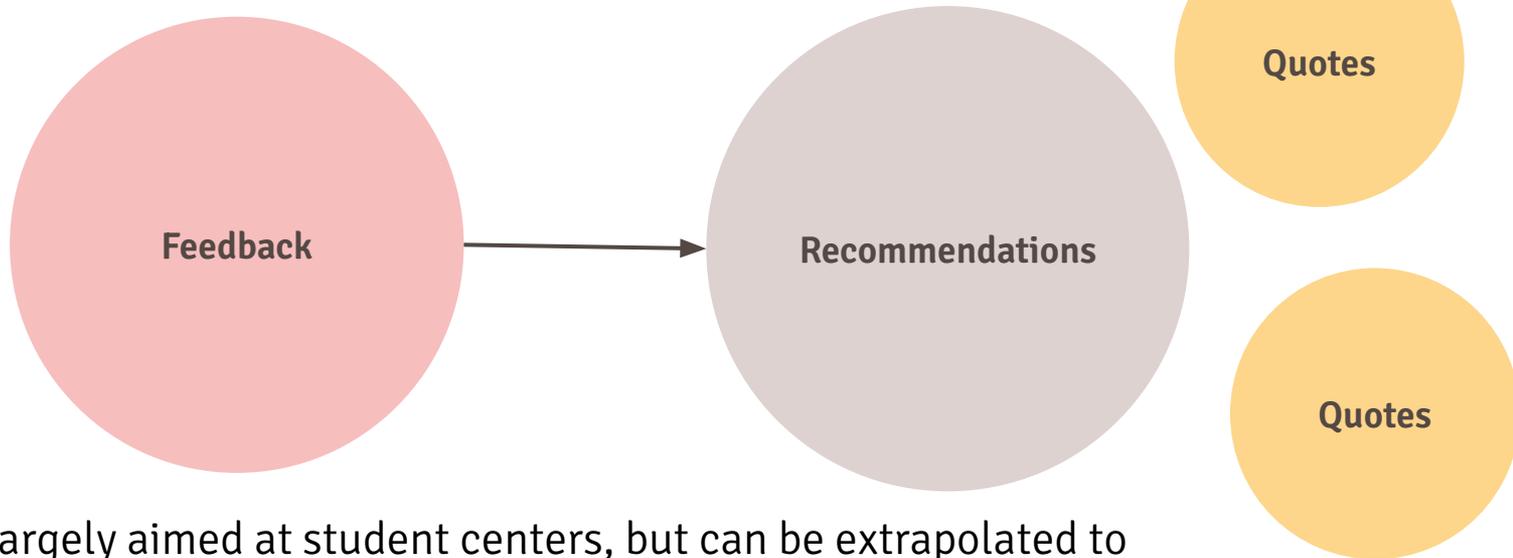
Student Centers and Services Accessed

- At the **LGBTQ Campus Resource Center**: Leadership Retreat, Counselling Services, Cookies and Queers, the Rae Lee Siporin Library, the Meal Voucher Program, Racial Programming Week, Allyship training, transportation to and from QTPOC conferences, the QTBIPOC Community space, the Ace/Aro Space, online Instagram Lives
 - At the **Bruin Resource Center**: an Intergroup Dialogue Space.
 - At the **Community Programs Office**: free printing, test bank, one-on-one writing advice, food closet, CalFresh.
 - At the **Transfer Student Center**: caseworker services, coffee or study spaces.
 - At the **Graduate Student Resource Center**: a writing workshop.
 - At **Counselling and Psychological Services**: one-on-one therapy sessions.
- 



Recommendations

Report: A Peer-Driven Assessment of the LGBTQ Student of Color Experience at UCLA



Largely aimed at student centers, but can be extrapolated to academic environments and student organizations. Various recommendations are interconnected.

Feedback #1

People are still coming to terms with their identities. Students equate going to the LGBTQ Center with ‘broadcasting your identity’, and some people don't feel comfortable coming to the Center if they're not out.

Quote: “I really don't feel comfortable being in the LGBTQ Center because I'm not gay enough to be there.”

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Recommendations

1. Be aware that everyone has different levels of outness. Everyone needs to be mindful and supportive. Can provide resources on how to navigate questioning your gender identity or sexual orientation, or community spaces for questioning folks to interact with each other.
2. Most students indicate that they socialise in their dorms. Hosting more events on the Hill would be a great way to reach these students, as they would not feel “outed” in the same capacity if they were interacting in a familiar environment.

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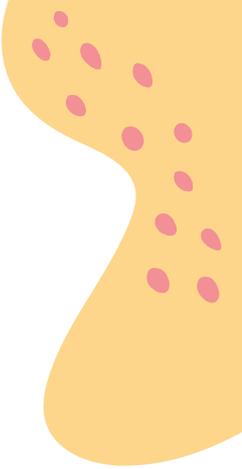
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Feedback #2

Students feel intimidated joining community spaces or discussion spaces with a small number of people, because they believe that all of the students already present know each other. They're worried about being unable to fit in.

Quote: “There'll be groups of people in there that already knew each other and were talking and it feels weird to interrupt, even though I know that it's a community space.”

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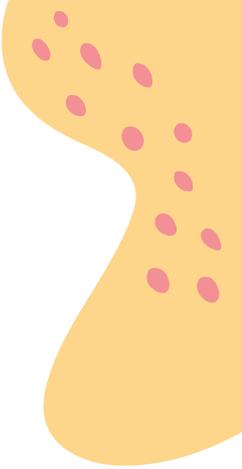
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Recommendations

1. Have the words "New people always welcome" visible on a placard for all recurring meetings.
2. Save time for introductions at the beginning of each meeting, and develop icebreakers.





Feedback #3

Land acknowledgements help Native students feel seen.

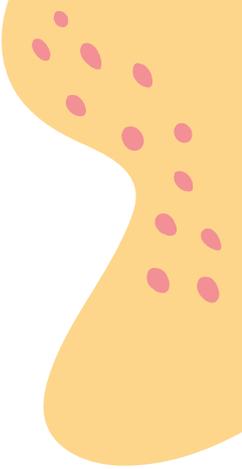
Recommendations

Each center should learn more about the cultural background around land acknowledgments, and learn about the history of the land that they're occupying. We should listen to Native American student leaders about changes that can be made to support Native students at UCLA at greater length, and then implement those changes.



Feedback #4

Brown and Black students are at a higher risk of violence when interacting with police officers. Students recall feeling unsafe when a fully suited police officer entered the LGBTQ center, and other students discussed being racially profiled by security guards at the UCLA Store.



Recommendations

1. All centers should review their protocols regarding UCPD, to clarify the circumstances in which calling the police is necessary.
2. Student employees should be advised to consult with professional staff in emergency situations, to reduce the likelihood of calling the police on Black or Brown students.





Feedback #5

Events that occur on the same days and times each week might be inaccessible to students. For example, the LGBTQ Center hosts events like the QTBIPOC Community Space already, but students who have class on Tuesdays at 12 PM can never attend.

Recommendation

It would be great to host the space at different days and times each week. That might seem confusing, but it would allow any student to attend at least once.



Feedback #6

When it comes to safe spaces on campus, students aren't looking for means to engage in activism, but rather trying to find calm and safe spaces in which they can interact with other queer students of color, and feel like their identities are protected.

Socializing or meeting new people for the first time is kind of nerve wracking for me. I feel like everyone else is relaxed, I can kind of let my guard down, and think "Okay. You're going to spend the rest of the school year with these people, so just relax and just be yourself."

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Recommendations

1. Host relaxed, informal events. Students have expressed interest in Taco Tuesdays, movie screenings, Tumblr focus groups, ice blocking down Janss/Tongva Steps, quiet coworking spaces, going on hikes or engaging in arts or crafts.
2. Host intentional weekly drop-in spaces specifically for QTBIPOC students at all centers. These spaces could function to allow QTBIPOC students to interact with one another, join a trauma support group for survivors, engage with QTBIPOC healing circles, and access case management, counselling, or basic needs support.



Feedback #7

Some students have strong social anxiety and want to learn from community spaces or events, but cannot come to student centers in-person. Other students are busy at the times that events are scheduled or cannot physically show up to the location due to accessibility issues.

Online programming is helpful for students who might not have the courage to go in person or might not have the time to. Especially for students who don't live close to campus and still want to be in these groups, I think it would be helpful to have these online groups.

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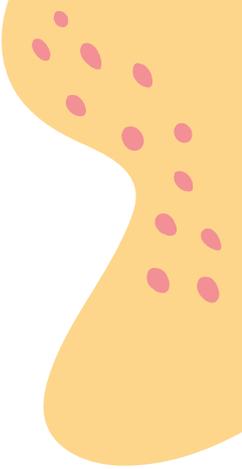
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Recommendations

We now know that everything can be recorded. Workshops and info sessions should be recorded and uploaded online so that they're accessible remotely (even if only for 24 hours afterward), even when campus reopens.

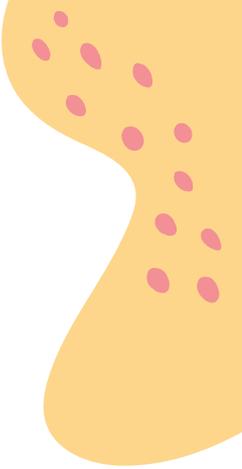


Feedback #8

Students feel comfortable when they are greeted upon entering student centers.

Recommendation

Have greeters who intentionally approach students and ask if they have questions. Interns might have a lot of other work responsibilities, but centers can develop a position specifically for this role (to have conversations or provide guidance for students).



Feedback #9

All centers should openly acknowledge that the experiences of transfer and graduate students are unique.

“The existence of a GSRC implies that the other centers are not for graduate students. All centers need to accommodate grad students, not just that one.”

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Recommendations:

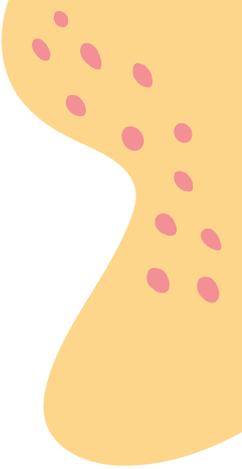
1. All centers should provide programming specifically for these students.
2. Centers should name that programming and resources are available to graduate and transfer students, to reduce any ambiguity.
3. They should be more mindful that grad students have full time jobs, and might be unable to visit during the GSRC's traditional hours (9 am - 5 pm).



Feedback #10

Many students voiced their need for resources or events that already exist, like an organization for queer Filipino students or a trans healthcare clinic. Multiple students weren't aware of newsletters / student centers until later on in the year.

Each Center needs better advertising and outreach efforts, to students who aren't currently following the Center's listservs or social media platforms.



Recommendations

1. Develop a link to join the Bruin Pride newsletter on the MyUCLA homepage, which is easily accessible for people who cannot go to the center.
2. We could develop a specific webpage to share campus-wide events, garner more publicity, and boost integration between UCLA services (this could be hosted on the Daily Bruin's website, or MyUCLA).

“I think throughout my answers, I'm sure the resources exist, but I was just not aware of its existence at all. I'm sure they're accessible, but they're not really known.”

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Feedback #11

Other students can decide if a space is right for them without being pressured to engage.

Recommendation

It is beneficial to have community spaces / events in the “main” room of student centers, to allow others to observe them.





Feedback #12

Queer/trans employees help students feel welcome, and their presence encourages students to visit student centers and attend programmed events.

Recommendation

Hire more QTBIPOC employees (Wall and Washington, 1991).



Feedback #13

Multiple students shared instances in which professors were not accommodating of their identities - by refusing to use students' preferred names or pronouns, making comments that were well-intentioned but queerphobic or transphobic, or developing assignments that were trans-exclusionary. Both undergrad and grad students felt unable to correct this behavior.

We want to stress that the impact of hurtful sayings is more important than their intention. QTBIPOC students are harmed by queerphobic statements, and this needs to be treated seriously, even if the person saying these statements had the right intentions

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Recommendations

- Students feel safe if they enter a new space and the people in charge there (TAs, professors or student leaders) offer their pronouns during introductions.
- Develop allyship training requirements for all professors and TAs, to make them more aware of the differences, but also helping students be proud of their student identities.
- Develop a reporting system beyond the end-of-quarter evaluation system, so that problematic behavior or language can be managed quickly.

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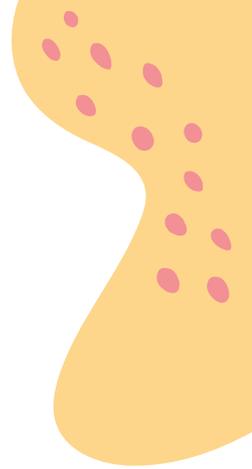
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The background features abstract, organic shapes in shades of pink, red, and yellow. A grey, wavy shape with white dashed lines is positioned at the top. A black line curves across the right side. The word "Themes" is centered in a bold, dark grey font.

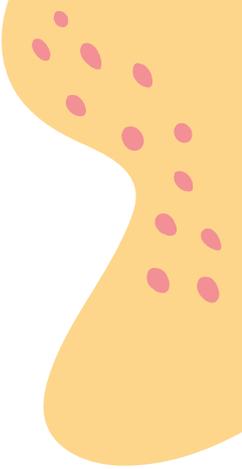
Themes

The Importance of Forming a Community

Students prefer interacting with people who share their identities - race, gender, sexuality, their academic programs, and more. This adds to their feeling of belonging.

UCLA needs to help students form communities. Students can rely on support from on these connections when facing discrimination/phobias, have confidence in their own identities and have someone to talk to in general.

For many students, going to college represents the first time that they can form friendships with queer friends.





Question: “What makes you feel safe on campus?”

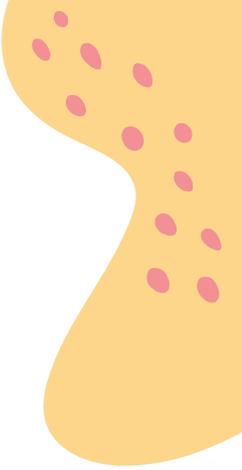
Answer: “Having a chosen community of queer friends.”

The Need for Intersectional Programming

Intersectionality, as defined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression, based on various identities – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, and more.

Students with multiple marginalised identities often have a harder time integrating on college campuses (Goode-Cross & Good, 2009).

At UCLA, these students often make community specifically through organizations aimed to connect students with specific identities (for eg. the Mixed Student Union).

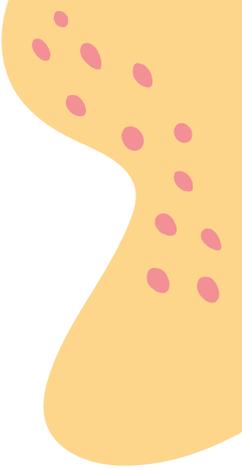


The Need for Intersectional Programming

“There are clubs for women, for Filipinx people, for pre-law students, or for queer people. As a student who holds all of these identities, I am forced to choose which ones are the most important to devote my time to.”

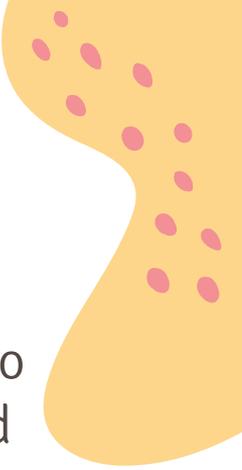
One student hadn't accessed the QTBIPOC space because they considered themselves “too White”.

Another student considered themselves “straight- and cis-passing”, and felt like they have to "bare" their identity in order to legitimise their presence in queer spaces.



The Need for Intersectional Programming

If the LGBTQ Center had a larger space, maybe it would be easier for those intersections of identities to have their own dedicated rooms - so having one physical space to honor QTBIPOC and QTBIPOC issues, and another space for trans folks and trans issues (for example) would be great.





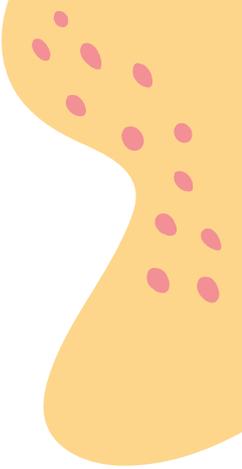
Positive Feedback

“My counselor [at the LGBTQ Center] would often try hard to acknowledge my sexual orientation, and the fact that I am an international student. So I think that's good. I felt affirmed while interacting with the counsellor.”

This is Bruin Life involved a trans student whose roommate was uncomfortable with their gender identity. This problem was brought to everyone's attention; This visibility established that UCLA is an accepting place for trans students. The use of actors made it more convincing that actual humans are affected when you engage in prejudiced behaviour. It's important to have a consistent narrative and image that normalizes trans folx.

“The pride flag outside the LGBTQ Center immediately helps people feel safer. It is nice to be among queer people, and not have to worry about being questioned about your identity.”

Students value increased visibility and support.



Further Assessment in 2020-2021

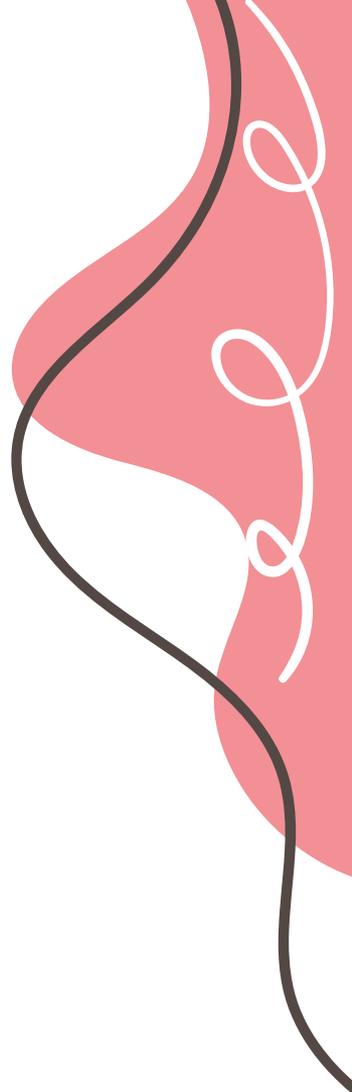
We intend to host more individual interviews and focus groups with QTBIPOC undergraduate and graduate students over the upcoming academic year.

I would **love** your support in getting the word out!

Smriti Nagarajan, Assessment and Engagement Intern

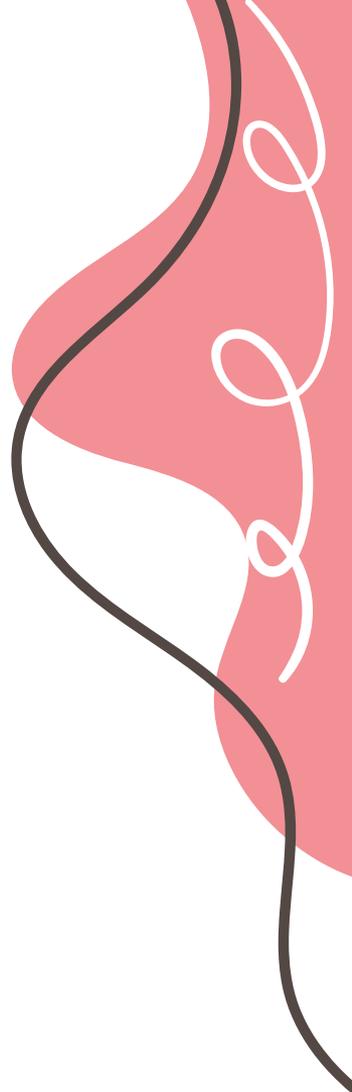
Email: nagarajan.smriti@gmail.com

We are looking to interview Black and Native American students, trans women, trans men, disabled students, commuter students, non-traditional students, students with dependents, and more.



Written Report

The report will include all of the information presented here, along with a literature review.



Overview of Recommendations

- 1) Accommodating students who are closeted or questioning.
- 2) Welcoming new students into each space.
- 3) Providing land acknowledgments and studying the history of the land we currently occupy.
- 4) Clarifying the circumstances in which student centers are required to call upon UCPD.
- 5) Vary the dates and times that events take place on, if possible.
- 6) Develop relaxed, informal spaces in which students can de-stress.
- 7) Ensure that events are recorded and remotely accessible where possible.
- 8) Ensure that greeters who can approach students and answer questions are present at each Center.
- 9) Provide intentional resources and events for transfer students and graduate students.
- 10) Develop innovative ways to advertise to new students.
- 11) Host events in “open” spaces, where possible.
- 12) Hire QTBIPOC employees.
- 13) Develop allyship trainings and a reporting system to ensure that classrooms are safe spaces.

Thank you!

The UCLA LGBTQ Center's Contact Information:

Email: lgbt@lgbt.ucla.edu.

Website: lgbt.ucla.edu

Instagram and Facebook: [@uclalgbtq](https://www.instagram.com/uclalgbtq).

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