

**Scholarship, Allyship, and Making It Better:  
A Sabbatical Report for the Spring 2015 Semester**

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### Abstract

This study/project combination project involved doctoral coursework in educational leadership from the University of La Verne as well as work writing, directing and leading educational programming for the national *it gets better* tour.

The study component included courses in organizational behavior and organizational development theory as well as dissertation research focusing on “allyship” in the LGBTQ community. Allyship can be described as a combination of ally behavior and leadership skills. My coursework also involved a substantial consultation project with Vox Femina, a respected LGBTQ-aligned womens’ choral group led by Cal Poly Professor of Music Dr. Iris Levine. I researched Vox Femina’s readiness for adding educational outreach programming to their mission.

The *it gets better* tour is a theater-based outreach collaboration between the It Gets Better Project, The Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA) and Speak Theater Arts. The stage production is an original work I created through a series of interviews with individuals from across the country including NBA star Jason Collins and West Hollywood Mayor John Duran. The performance tours in conjunction with a week of outreach activities designed to reduce bullying and improve the local or campus climate for LGBT youth, for whom suicide is still at a significantly elevated risk. The project toured to six states in Spring 2015 and received significant social media attention due to coverage on multiple nationally televised shows.

Among the direct contributions of this work to Mt. SAC are updated course outlines, new class assignments, and a professional development workshop that has already yielded important steps toward improving our campus LGBTQ climate.

### Statement of Purpose

This semester-long sabbatical leave had a dual function. The first purpose was to permit adequate time for the completion of my final semester of coursework for the doctoral program in organizational leadership at the University of La Verne. The second was to support work and travel with an original performance project entitled *it gets better*. The aim of the *it gets better* tour is to help communities identify ways in which they can improve the social environment for LGBTQ youth toward reduction of youth victimization (bullying) and associated suicides. A central tool for this work is an action research model known as the World Café.

While the majority of my activities in Spring 2015 occurred off-campus, Mt. SAC was always in my sights as a community in need of this work, as well. While I consider Mt. SAC to be a premier community college when it comes to student support services, The LGBTQ student population is underserved. We have just one student club (currently inactive without an adviser), few LGBT events, no LGBT faculty organization, no safe space initiative, no LGBTQ center, no dedicated LGBT counselors, and very little professional development in this arena (some ally training was offered through Health Services). Students searching the Mt. SAC website for LGBTQ resources will find almost nothing on campus available to them. One of the top results for a search of the word "gay" on the Mt. SAC website is a reference to a staff member whose last name happens to be "Gay."

Most tellingly, there is essentially no acknowledgment of the LGBTQ population in our most critical document – our 2010 accreditation self study report. This document fails to report on any institutional planning regarding this population. In fact, the words "gay,"

“lesbian,” “bisexual,” and “transgender” appear just once in Mt. SAC’s entire 2010 Accreditation Self-Study Report in regard to plans for a sociology course on this topic. Despite the espoused goal, [webcms.mtsac.edu](http://webcms.mtsac.edu) lists no current or pending sociology courses with this subject matter.

Failure to address a range of pressing LGBT issues may be a ticking time bomb for our campus. With no attention given to adapting policy, facilities, and attitudes to a growing “out” population of transgender individuals, Mt. SAC is at risk for both public criticism and lawsuits. Suicide risk within the LGBTQ population is another matter we do not assertively address, though multiple studies show 15-24 year olds in this group to have an elevated risk four to eight times higher than non-identified students (Ahuja, et al, 2015). Our own campus newspaper has documented suicide attempts by multiple LGBT Mt. SAC students, but that appears to be our only record-keeping on the subject.

It seems unlikely that Mt. SAC has overlooked our LGBTQ students as a matter of malice. More likely the cause is a simple limitation of time and energy. I deeply appreciate that I was given time to devote some energy to this issue and, as the fall semester of 2015 begins, am excited to already see steps toward meaningful change on this campus as a result of this work. It is most certainly of the essence.

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## Introduction

When undertaking a sabbatical leave, it's hard to know the potential scope of the project's impact. One can hope that the work will bring increased attention to a critical issue, provide important information to communities in need, contribute to critical scholarship, revitalize the individual faculty member, and/or generate practical tools for colleagues and students. What is impossible to anticipate is seeing one's work become part of a major national social movement – and one of the biggest media events of the decade. That's what happened when my sabbatical project became the subject of Caitlyn Jenner's ninth tweet (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Screenshot of Caitlyn Jenner's Twitter Feed, June 11, 2015.**

In April of 2015 Bruce Jenner disclosed his transgender identity during a television interview with Diane Sawyer and then "came out" as Caitlyn Jenner on the June 2015 cover of *Vanity Fair* magazine. Both events were global news stories, focusing an unimaginably bright spotlight on transgender issues. Jenner's twitter account launched in June 2015 and became the fastest Twitter account in history to reach one million followers, and a

documentary television series about Jenner's life, *I am Cait*, premiered in July 2015 on E! television.

This report will reveal how my project ended up featured on not just one – but two top-rated television shows in the summer of 2015 – while also summarizing my doctoral coursework, travel with the project, scholarly pursuits, and the impact of my work both on the Mt. SAC campus and across the United States.

### Definition of Terms

Because some of the terminology used in this report is not comprehensively taught in academic settings (hence this project), the following definitions may be useful to readers:

**Bullying.** aka Victimization. Verbal or physical harassment intended to minimize the power of an individual through fear. Can include cyberbullying – acts of harassment conducted via online media. An example of this is the covert videotaping of college student Tyler Clemente and a gay partner by his roommate – who shared the video online without consent. Clemente killed himself, likely as a direct or indirect result of the disclosure.

**Community.** A basic definition from Muller (2011): a group of people in immediate periphery. Communities “function as social groupings that perpetuate a shared identity through a commonly held value system” (p. 271).

**LGBTQ.** Common term used to collectively refer to people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bi(sexual), trans(gender or sexual), and/or queer. Sometimes truncated to LGBT or LGB or reordered to GLBTQ, GLBT, or GLB. The letter “Q” was added more recently to represent the “queer” community – a broad term for individuals who do not consider themselves heterosexual and/or cisgender.



**Trans or Transgender.** Term referring to individuals who do not identify with their originally designated gender. The opposite of “cisgender” individuals who identify with their gender assigned at birth.

### **Development of the *it gets better* Touring Production**

#### **Project Background and Research Foundations**

A June 2015 United States Supreme Court granted the right to marry to same-sex individuals in all 50 US states. The case was nearly identical to one brought before the court in 1971, though the earlier case resulted in a *denial* of marriage rights to same-sex individuals. Constitutionally no changes have occurred since the earlier case; what did change is the climate within the United States with regard to homosexuality.

**Climate.** Climate is a broad term describing the invisible yet tangible feeling about the relative warmth or coolness of a community toward certain individuals, first described by Jack Gibb in 1961 and now widely studied in a range of fields from communication to psychology and business (Forward, Czech, & Lee, 2011).

Climate correlates with many variables related to the health, well-being, and academic success of young people, including LGBTQ youth. A study in the journal *Pediatrics* in 2011 found “living in environments that are less supportive of gays and lesbians is associated with greater suicide attempts among LGB youth” (Hatzenbuehler, 2011). Academically, a school’s climate impacts student adjustment and learning as well as

adherence to rules and reduced interpersonal bullying (Bandyopadhyay, Cornell, & Konold, 2009).

The reality is that LGBTQ climate on many college campuses needs improvement. A 2010 national found that the fear of irrational prejudice is prevalent among LGBTQ college students (Cramer, 2010). The Campus Pride Index is a widely used instrument for assessing LGBT climate on college campuses. Thiel and Diehl (2010) note that physical and verbal anti-gay and lesbian harassment has been documented on all campuses where research about gays and lesbians has been conducted.

Fortunately, research also demonstrates that programs can improve LGBTQ climate (i.e. Hatzenbuehler, 2011) even though many schools find it challenging due to limited resources, a shortage of vocal leaders on the issue, and – in particular – persistent social pressures related to a lack of acceptance of the LGBTQ community. In other words, many people still fear talking about or acting on LGBTQ issues at the community level even though state and national LGBT policy issues are making progress. More communication is needed.

**The It Gets Better Project.** In the summer of 2010 a rash of suicides by young LGBTQ individuals filled news headlines across the country. One of those who died was Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University who became a victim of intense cyber-bullying by some of his peers. He ended his life by jumping off the George Washington Bridge at eighteen years old.

These news stories caught the attention of journalist Dan Savage who related to the painful, unsupportive climate he experienced in his own youth. Without much planning, he

recorded a YouTube video with his partner Terry Miller talking about life after he found a supportive community and encouraging young people to hang in there because, “it gets better.” Within two months more than 45,000 user-created videos were also uploaded and have since been viewed more than 60 million times around the world. A non-profit organization, The It Gets Better Project, as the organization is now called, continues to serve an online community of users from around the world.

While the response to It Gets Better Project was overwhelmingly positive at first, it soon received criticism for one critical missing component: it doesn’t provide immediate relief for young people facing adversity in their immediate social environments (Muller, 2011, p. 275). Many have called for ways to make life better for LGBTQ youth *right now*. It was from this critique that I mustered the courage to approach the It gets Better Project and the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA) with a proposal for a touring theater production and outreach program to engage directly with communities in the hopes of providing immediate improvement in their LGBT climate. My proposed name for the tour was simply, *it gets better*.

### **The Production**

The original production of *it gets better* premiered in October 2013 at Iowa State University— an iteration that featured a cast of all-male performers from the GMCLA in a fictional musical play of my composition about a young gay male in a rural community grappling with bullying at school. While artistic feedback about the show was positive it was also accompanied by frequent questions about the omission of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender storylines – as well as those of allies. The show – while an honest

representation of common experiences among gay men – did not fully represent the range of diverse experiences that are part of the larger “it gets better” community. It needed to change.

With the endorsement of the It Gets Better Project and GMCLA, I created a plan in the to completely revision the project from the ground up - this time using the real words and real stories of diverse individuals from across the country. The plan also called for a somewhat historic decision – the addition of the first *female* performers in the 36-year history of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles. Fortunately everyone involved saw the potential of this new direction. In January 2015 we met to begin workshops for the new project with just three weeks until our first performance.

The new *it gets better* production is an approximately 90-minute stage performance with music delivered by a cast of eight. The entire text of the show is crafted from the words of real individuals who were interviewed and agreed to share their stories. The twelve characters depicted in the final script represent gay, lesbian, transgendered, gender queer, and straight ally individuals who also come from Latino, African-American, Japanese-American, Filipino-American, Jewish, Catholic, and Mormon backgrounds. The show is presented on a sparse stage with large projected video images serving as backdrops. A pianist accompanies the musical numbers that primarily occur between stories. Excerpts of three scenes from the show can be found in Appendix C.

### **Touring**

In spring 2015 the project premiered at Oxnard College in Oxnard, CA. It was attended by many local community college students, faculty and community members as well as the

interim president of the college and several managers. Students from an intercultural communication course from Mt. SAC also took a field trip to see the play and completed an assignment based on what they observed.

Immediately following the premiere, the project toured to performing arts centers at the University of Ohio (Athens, OH), The Fox Coities Performing Arts Center (Appleton, WI), the University of Hawaii (Hilo), The Lied Center (Denver) , and the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (CA). The audience size ranged from 400-1200. Each production included a follow up Q&A conversation on stage with the writer/director and cast members.

The production of *it gets better* is funded by a grant from AT&T and is also sponsored by Southwest Airlines. The project is entirely non-profit and I do not benefit financially in any way from this work. Any proceeds from the project are directed to the It Gets Better Project and the school music program of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles.

### **The Residency Program**

The goal of the *it gets better* residency program is to create opportunities for dialogue, reflection, training, and community-based action research among members of each community we visit (including students, educators, civic leaders, and community members). The "residency" part of each engagement includes a full week (five to six days) of activities in the community themed around the stage production.

For *it gets better*, the residency menu available in each community include work with a local chorus of singers, two different high school student workshops, a faculty dialogue on LGBTQ climate, a presentation about the It Gets Better project itself. A copy of the Spring 2015 brochure of activities is provided in Appendix E, though the document does

not reflect all activities since each city may make custom requests. One of the most powerful components of the residency is always the creation of original video public service announcements (or PSAs) with younger students. These are especially effective because students compose them in their own voices, developing a sense of personal agency, and then can share the messages on social media –the very place where some students are bullied. Videos are also posted on websites for clubs or other organizations. One of the videos created by students at a youth outreach center can be viewed using the link in Appendix G. Even though our *it gets better* PSAs can be flashy and energetic, the centerpiece of the residency in each city is always the world café.

### **The World Café.**

The World Cafe facilitation model for large groups is applicable to the exploration of challenging, current issues within a community that are addressed through “a living network of collaborative dialogue” around “conversations that matter” (Delaney, 2006). The World Café is a conversation-based methodology for development of a collective vision, developed through a series of experimental sessions starting in 1995 by Juanita Brown and Chris Isaacs. Participants engage in a series of facilitated table dialogues. The goal of a World Café first and foremost is to engage participants in a *conversation that matters*.

**Appreciative Inquiry.** Underlying the design of the World Café is a theoretical model known as AI, which is short for Appreciative Inquiry. AI is often described as a methodology (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010, p. 2), though it shares some qualities with philosophical paradigms. David Cooperrider first outlined the concept while a graduate student at Case Western Reserve University in 1986 (Mishra & Bhatnagar, 2012, p. 544). Appreciative

inquiry doesn't have a specific list of required practices. Instead, AI is said to begin when an organization decides, "to focus on the positive as the focus of inquiry" (Watkins, Mohr, and Mohr, 2010, p. 112). Schooley (2008) explains that questions are used to drive productive conversation among organization stakeholders.

AI stands in contrast to other popular approaches to organizational development because it doesn't employ a traditional problem-solving model. The goal of this project was to utilize the World Café method as a tool for conducting "action research" within communities as they begin their work improving the climate for LGBTQ individuals. The procedure involved facilitation of three separate half-day community dialogues attended by a cross-section of approximately 30-60 individuals in each of three communities across the United States, inviting civic leaders, law enforcement, students, educators, business owners, LGBT leaders, health care professionals, parents, artists, and others to join in the discussion.

**The *it gets better* World Café.** The *it gets better* World Café was designed as an opportunity for communities to engage in a collective inquiry about the topic of LGBT climate, allowing for reflection on the current climate, visioning about an improved climate, and planning for steps to help achieve that vision. In all, seven *it gets better* World Café sessions were held in spring 2015 in each city of our spring tour (two were conducted in Denver).

By facilitating these sessions, I gained valuable insights into the unique challenges and ideas within each community, and the participants generated a meaningful first step in collective community action toward improving their own climate for LGBT individuals. A detailed report including discussion questions and detailed participant responses was

created following each session to be shared with participants and other community stakeholders. Though not a formal part of this project, some participants have since sent updates of their follow-up efforts after their World Café session. Samples of three reports are presented in Appendix F.

### **Special Events and Media Coverage**

The confluence of a U.S. Supreme Court decision about same-sex marriage and the Dianne Sawyer interview of Caitlyn Jenner created quite a whirlwind of interest in LGBTQ issues in late spring of 2015. As a result, we did not experience the typical struggle one expects to gain attention for a modest project such as *it gets better*. In fact, there was a great deal of interest from an unusual array of sources.

**Special Events.** In addition to the regular touring presentations of this project, some performance-related opportunities emerged during the spring of 2015. One of these was a live stage performance at the Voice Awards at Universal Studios – a fundraising event attracting \$400-a-plate donors to support the work of GMCLA. Honorees included the creators of the groundbreaking Amazon show *Transparent*, the Executive Producer of *I am Cait* (the Caitlyn Jenner docu-series), Star Trek alumnus George Takei, and many others. My cast took the stage to perform a scene from the show, and I was asked to write remarks for several of the speakers and honorees.

Not long after, we were invited to stage a special live performance of a song from the show for an episode of the Lifetime television series *Dance Moms*. This three-day collaboration involved flying out one of the subjects of my *it gets better* script to meet with a group of young dancers to help them understand the storyline behind their transgender-



themed performance. The experience is well-documented in two different videos from the show, both available on line. I also posted a story about the collaboration in the *Huffington Post* (see Appendix G for links to all media).

**Media.** Changing a climate requires a good communication strategy, so engaging with media was a critical component of this project. In the world of digital (online) media, my communication strategy involved frequent posts to our Facebook page for the project. After experimenting with a traditional website, it was determined that the Billion-plus person Facebook community was the most suitable place to share information. The Facebook group quickly attracted several thousand members and the bi-weekly posts there often received over 10,000 views. To view the collection of photos, videos, tour updates, articles (scholarly and popular), discussion topics, and more visit [www.facebook.com/itgetsbettertour](http://www.facebook.com/itgetsbettertour).

**Regional news outlets.** I also did several media interviews while touring, including an in-depth piece for a Denver radio station that provides a lot of information about the project tour, and our objectives that did not all fit within the page limits for this report. See Appendix G for a link to the complete interview online as well as a variety of other articles about the production.

***I Am Cait.*** As of the publication date of this report, I am legally unable to fully disclose any information about our participation with the *I Am Cait* television show, other than to verify that the cast and I did meet with Caitlyn Jenner and are scheduled to appear on an upcoming episode of her docu-series on E! television . After the airdate I will post additional details online about our participation.

### **The Mt. SAC World Cafe**

Closer to home, a component of the project worth noting was my Flex Day presentation on August 21, 2015 for a group of approximately 30 colleagues. The description was:

*This facilitated "world café" dialogue will explore our LGBTQ campus climate through a series of engaged table conversations among students, managers, and faculty. Liesel Reinhart has led more than a dozen of these sessions across the country as a part of her work with the "It Gets Better Project" and will share findings from her experiences at other campuses - though the focus is definitely on the discussion among participants. Everyone is welcome regardless of your familiarity with the topic!*

The session also included five students who I invited to participate as a means to include student voices in the dialogue. Even though the session began a bit late, the participants jumped head first into their inquiry about the climate for LGBTQ students on the Mt. SAC campus. A nine-page summary of the session is found in Appendix H.

### **Doctoral Studies**

The study component of my sabbatical leave included courses in organizational behavior and organizational development theory as well as dissertation research focusing on "allyship" in the LGBTQ community and its relationship to LGBT climate. Allyship can be described as a combination of ally behavior and leadership skills. I am focusing on the role allyship within unsupportive climates through a mixed-methods study of a group called "The Mama Dragons" who are all mothers of LGBTQ-identified LDS (Mormon) children. The Mama

Dragons are vocal advocates for change within the church while also providing critical support for their children and, notably, one another. The results of this research hold promise for understanding how allies can assist in culture transformation within other highly unsupportive communities, including those within other faiths or cultural groups.

My coursework in organizational theory involved a substantial research and consultation project with Vox Femina, a respected LGBTQ-aligned womens' choral group led by Cal Poly Professor of Music Dr. Iris Levine. I researched Vox Femina's readiness for adding educational outreach programming to their mission and later facilitated that organization's strategic planning process. My papers and reports from that project contain potentially sensitive information that was not cleared for publication, though copies can be provided to limited readers upon special request.

## Spring 2015 Activities Summary

My sabbatical project activities ranged from January to August, 2015 and included the following activities:

### January 2015

#### *Primary accomplishments:*

Adapting transcripts of two dozen hour-long interviews into scenes for the stage; working with musical director to select and arrange songs to accompany the scenes; casting the roles (including two female performers); rehearsing with the actors; staging the piece; developing multimedia videos and images to accompany the piece; creating residency guide; training cast as World Café facilitators; ULV classes and coursework.

#### *Specific activities:*

1/6 Retreat with lighting designer and musical director

1/7 Guest speaker at Mt. SAC

1/8-1/9 Editing script

1/10-1/13 Classes (8 hours/day)

1/14 Nine hour rehearsal



1/16 Meeting with Vox Femina Board Chair

1/17 Residency Training with Cast

1/18-1/19 Final script revisions

1/20 Dissertation meeting with Chair

1/21 Nine hour rehearsal; meeting with GMCLA and It Gets Better Project representatives

1/22-1/23 Video editing

1/24 Ten hour rehearsal – staging

1/26 Six hour rehearsal – choreography

1/27 Meeting with Vox Femina Board Chair

1/28 Six hour rehearsal – run throughs

1/30 Costume fittings and pick up rehearsals

1/31 Ten hour rehearsal – run throughs and edits; travel to Oxnard

## February 2015

### *Primary accomplishments:*

Premiering production; beginning Vox Femina consultation research; travel to multiple cities; surviving sub-zero temperatures in Appleton, WI; dozens of powerful workshops and community outreach sessions across the country.

### *Specific activities:*

2/2-2/3 Oxnard, CA Twelve-hour days; load in and technical rehearsals



2/4 Oxnard, CA Student workshop and premiere performance with Q&A



**New Stories. New Cast. Same Heart.**

GMCLA, in collaboration with the It Gets Better Project and Speak Theater Arts, is thrilled to announce a new chapter of the *it gets better* journey. This all-new production takes our story one step further, showing how it's gotten better for many in the LGBT community in hopes of saving young lives.

[itgetsbettertour.org](http://itgetsbettertour.org)

2/5 Strike and travel home

2/7 Attend Vox Femina event

2/9 Travel to Athens, OH.

**Athens, OH Detailed Schedule:**

**Tuesday February 10**

Time: 10:30am-11:50am

Activity: Facilitated Educator Discussion

Location: Ohio University

Audience: future teachers at Ohio University (20-30 ppl). This is an upper division class entitled Education & Cultural Diversity

Time: 12:40pm-1:20pm

Activity: IGB Journey

Location: Ohio University

Audience: Intro to LGBT Studies class (20-30 ppl)

Tech: Computer (Andrew's), projector (in the room), PPT

Time: 1:30pm-2:50pm

Activity: Facilitated Educator Discussion

Location: Ohio University

Audience: future teachers at Ohio University (20-30ppl). This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the upper division class entitled Education & Cultural Diversity

Time: 4pm-5pm

Activity: IGB Journey

Location: LGBT Center at Ohio University

Audience: LGBT students and allies

Time: 6pm-8pm

Activity: Rehearsal (of music and scenes)

### **Wednesday February 11**

Time: 10am-12:30pm

Activity: World Café



Time: 3pm-4pm

Activity: Roundtable discussion

Location: Athens High School (1 High School Rd, The Plains, OH 45780)

Audience: Gay-Straight Alliance

Time: 4:30pm-5:30pm

Activity: IGB Journey

Location: Ohio University

Audience: Democracy, Diversity, & Education class (20-30ppl)

Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm

Activity: Community Chorus Rehearsal

Location: MemAud at Ohio University

**Thursday February 12 (SHOW DAY)**

1:30pm Cast Call Time

2pm Sound Check

4pm CC Call Time (smaller Take Me To Church group)

4:15pm Take Me To Church rehearsal on stage

5pm More Friends Than You Know rehearsal on stage

6pm Break

Show: 7:30pm

Q&A after the show



**Friday February 13**

Time: noon-1pm

Activity: IGB Journey

Location: Ohio University

Audience: School of Theater and College of Fine Arts

**Appleton, WI Detailed Schedule:**

**Sunday February 15**

Travel

**Monday February 16**

**Time: 12:50pm-1pm**

Activity: WHBY Radio Interview

Location: 2800 E. College Ave. Appleton, WI 54915



**Time: 4:30pm-5:30pm**

Activity: IGB Workshop

Location: Boys & Girls Club of Fox Valley (160 S. Badger Ave Appleton, WI 54914)

Audience: a group of kids (ages 14-18) affiliated with a Goodwill program (they provide a safe space for LGBT kids to hang out) + could be other LGBT students in the area.

**Time: 6pm-6:30pm**

Activity: TV Interview for Wisconsin's CW

Location: First English Lutheran Church (326 E. North Road Appleton, WI 54911)

**Tuesday February 17**

**Time: 11am-noon**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Appleton East HS (2121 E. Emmers Dr. Appleton, WI 54915)

Audience: all students were invited

**Time: 1:30pm-2:30pm**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Menasha HS (420 7<sup>th</sup> Street Menasha, WI 54952)

Audience: approx. 250 students (10<sup>th</sup> graders)

**Time: 7:30pm-9pm**

Activity: Piano Cabaret

Location: Fox Cities PAC (400 W. College Ave Appleton, WI 54911)

**Wednesday February 18**

**Time: 8:45am-9:45am**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Appleton North HS (5000 N. Ballard Rd. Appleton, WI 54913)

Audience: all students were invited

**Time: noon-2pm**

Activity: Dance Rehearsal

Location: Black Box Theatre

**Time: 4:30pm-5:30pm**

Activity: Facilitated Faculty Dialogue

Location: Appleton East HS (2121 E. Emmers Dr. Appleton, WI 54915)

Audience: all Appleton teachers; the district is incentivizing them to attend, so it could be a nice sized group



**Time: 7pm**

**Activity: Common Council Meeting**

**Location: TBD**

**Audience: city council**

**Notes: this will most likely take place at City Hall**

**Thursday February 19**



**Time: 11am-noon**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Kaukauna HS (1701 County Road CE Kaukauna, WI 54130)

Audience: all students were invited

**Time: 1:25pm-2:25pm**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Appleton West HS (610 N. Badge Ave Appleton, WI 54914)

Audience: all students were invited



**Time: 6pm-9pm**

Activity: World Cafe

Location: UW-Fox Valley (1478 Midway Rd Menasha, WI 54952)

**Friday February 20**

**Time: 8am-9am**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Neenah HS (1275 Tullar Rd. Neenah, WI 54956)

Audience: approx. 300 students

**Time: noon-1pm**

Activity: IGB Journey

Location: UW-Fox Valley in Perry Hall (1478 Midway Rd. Menasha, WI 54952)

Audience: UW students and other community members

**Time: 6:30pm-9:30pm**

Activity: Community Chorus Rehearsal

Location: Fox Cities PAC (400 W. College Ave. Appleton, WI 54911) Black Box Theater

**Saturday February 21**

1pm Cast Call  
1:30pm Sound Check  
2:30pm tech interactive scenes/dance call  
4:45pm CC call time  
6pm Break  
7pm Doors  
7:30pm Show (with Q&A after)  
2/22 Travel

2/23 Dissertation meeting; Consultation project conference call

**Lancaster, CA Detailed Schedule:**

**Thursday February 26**

**Morning: Travel**

2pm Cast Call  
2:30pm Sound Check  
3:30pm Run Scenes  
5:30pm Actor dinner/Tech notes

**Time: 6:30pm-8pm**

Activity: CC Rehearsal  
Location: Lancaster PAC (750 W Lancaster Blvd Lancaster, CA 93534)

**Time: 8:30pm-9:30pm**

Activity: Piano Cabaret  
Location: Cedar Memorial Hall (44857 Cedar Ave. Lancaster, CA 93534)

**Friday February 27**

**Time: 11am-noon**

Activity: IGB Experience with GMCLA special guests  
Location: Lancaster PAC (students being bussed in from multiple schools)



**Noon-1pm** Lunch/break for all

**1pm** Actor call

**1:30pm** sound check with actors

**2:30pm-4pm** Dress rehearsal and/or scenes in costume (Liesel will dictate)

**4:30pm** CC onstage

**6:30pm** Doors

**7pm** Show

### **Saturday February 28**

Time: 10am-noon

Activity: World Cafe

Location: Lancaster PAC (tables will be set up on stage)

HOME TO LA

### **March 2015**

#### *Primary accomplishments:*

Continuing touring; completing Vox Femina consultation research; progress on narrowing dissertation focus; frequent social media posting; more coursework.

#### *Specific activities:*

3/2-3/5 Conducting eight interviews for research project (over one hour each)

3/6-3/8 Classes (8 hours/day)

3/9 Call with Denver presenter regarding upcoming engagement (2 hours)

3/10-12 Conducting five interviews for research project (over one hour each)

3/14 Attending Vox Femina event

3/19 Class webinar: organizational theory

3/23-3/24 Qualitative data analysis for Vox Femina project; draft of report

3/25 Dissertation research at ULV Library

**Hilo, HI Detailed Schedule:**

**Sunday March 29**

Travel

**Monday March 30**

**9am**

Activity: Radio Interview

Notes: Lee is meeting Liesel at the hotel to go to the interview together

**10am-11am**

Activity: Coffee Meet & Greet

Location: the Green Room @ the PAC

Notes: This is an opportunity for you all to meet the collaborators, community partners, and campus LGBT leaders

**11:30am-12:30pm**

Activity: Campus Tour with the LAVA group

Location: University of Hawaii @ Hilo

**2:30pm-3:45pm**

Activity: Workshop (PSA)

Location: Hilo Intermediate School (587 Waiuanue Ave Hilo 96720)

Notes: this is their LGBT ally club on campus (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders).



**3:30pm-4:30pm**

Activity: IGB Journey PPT Presentation

Location: UH @ Hilo

Audience: a musical theater class (approx. 15 ppl)

**5pm-6:30pm**

Activity: Community Chorus rehearsal

Location: UH @ Hilo (on stage at the PAC)

Notes: The CC is comprised of 2 groups: the Kapili Choir (the elite chorus at UH @ Hilo) and the Hilo Community Chorus (an adult chorus in town).

**Tuesday March 31**

**8:30am-9:30am**

Activity: Workshop PSA

Location: Waiakea Intermediate School (200 W. Puainako St Hilo 96720)

Tech: bring ipad and iphone

Notes: this school had originally scheduled an assembly, but the principal got cold feet and went with this option instead. The group of kids you will be working with is the student government/leadership group.

**11am-12:15pm**

Activity: Community Chorus Rehearsal

Location: UH @ Hilo (music rehearsal room)

**5pm-7pm**

Activity: CC Rehearsal

Location: UH @ Hilo (music rehearsal room)

**Wednesday April 1**

**11:50am-1pm**

Activity: Workshop PSA

Location: Waiakea High School (155 W. Kawili St Hilo 96720)

Audience: drama class



**Noon-1pm**

Activity: Brown Bag Facilitated Faculty Dialogue

Audience: UH @ Hilo faculty and staff

**6pm-9pm**

Activity: Piano Cabaret aka "The Flow"

Location: The University Plaza (outdoor area)

Audience: UH @ Hilo students

**Thursday April 2**

11:30am Actor Call

2pm sound check

3pm Tech interactive scenes

5pm-6pm CC onstage

7:30pm Performance (Q&A after)



**Friday April 3**

**11:30am-2:30pm**

Activity: World Cafe

Location: The Fishbowl (aka the campus center) UH @ Hilo



**April 2015**

*Primary accomplishments:*

Continuing touring; transcriptions of data; completing Vox Femina consultation research; progress on narrowing dissertation focus; frequent social media posting; more coursework.

*Specific activities:*

4/6 Meeting with research faculty regarding special project; data transcription

4/8 Meeting with Dissertation committee member; call with additional member

4/10 Consultation with dissertation advisor

4/17 Call with Denver presenter regarding last-minute details

4/20 Conference call with ULV instructor and classmates

**Denver Detailed Schedule:**

**Monday April 20**

TRAVEL

**6pm-9pm**

Activity: First Investors World Cafe

Location: First Investors Office (7900 E Union Avenue, Denver CO 80237)

Audience: First Investors employees and clients; local community members

**Tuesday April 21**

**9am-10am**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Denver Univ-Morgridge College of Edu/Ruffatto Hall

Audience: Ricks Center students (approx. 60 gifted & talented students; grades 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)

Some DU students (who are future teachers) will sit in on the presentation

**Noon-1pm**

Activity: First Investors IGB Journey

Location: First Investors Office (7900 E Union Avenue, Denver CO 80237)

Audience: First Investors employees and clients; they are inviting community members

**5:30pm-6:30pm**

Activity: IGB Journey (but treat as a hybrid faculty dialogue)

Location: Denver Univ-Morgridge College of Education/Ruffatto Hall

Audience: College of Education students (future teachers; some who observed the AM presentation); approx. 175 ppl

**6:30pm-9pm**

Activity: Community Chorus Rehearsal

Location: Christ United Methodist Church (690 Colorado Blvd. Denver)

Audience: 60-70 people (local gay chorus and women's chorus)



**Wednesday April 22**

**9:55am-10:40am**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Pomona High School (8101 West Pomona Dr. Arvada)

Audience: 250 arts & humanities students

**2pm-2:55pm**

Activity: IGB Experience

Location: Atlas Preparatory School (1602 South Murray Blvd. Colorado Springs)

Audience: a public high school that operates like a charter school



**3pm-4:30pm**

Activity: IGB Workshop (PSA)

Location: Atlas Preparatory School (1602 South Murray Blvd. Colorado Springs)

Audience: members of the GSA; Atlas Prep is a public high school that operates like a charter school

**Thursday April 23**

**4pm-5pm**

Activity: Dialogue with students

Location: The Center (1301 East Colfax Ave. Denver)

Audience: Rainbow Alley (after school program at The Center for LGBT youth ages 12-21)

**5:30pm-7pm**

Activity: IGB Workshop (PSA)

Location: The Center (1301 East Colfax Ave. Denver)

Audience: Rainbow Alley (after school program for LGBT youth ages 12-21)



**7pm-9pm**

Activity: CC Rehearsal

Location: Gates Concert Hall @ The Newman Center (2344 E. Iliff Ave. Denver)

**Friday April 24**

**12:30pm** Sound Check

**1:30pm** Tech Interactive Scenes

**5pm** End rehearsal/all break

**6:30pm** On-stage Conversation with Director

**7pm** CC call time

**7:30pm** Show (plus Q&A from the stage)

**Saturday April 25**

**10am-1pm**

Activity: World Cafe

Location: onstage @ Gates Concert Hall (2344 E. Iliff Ave. Denver)

Notes: One Colorado; all students; see parking map and parking details below:

Travel to LA

4/30 ULV Class (3 hours)

**May 2015**

*Primary accomplishments:*

Finalizing course assignments and attending classes; coordinating Voice Awards performance; progress on dissertation research; preparation of World Café summary reports; radio interview; review of Mt. SAC courses for LGBTQ dimensions; Submission of Mt. SAC Flex Day proposal; official advancement to candidacy in doctoral program.

*Specific activities:*

5/1 Voice Awards technical rehearsal

5/2-3 ULV Classes (8 hour days)

5/3 (evening) The GMCLA Voice Awards



5/6 Dance Moms production (all day)

5/7 Dance Moms production (all day)

5/9 Dance Moms production (all day)



5/14 ULV Class (3 hours)

5/20 Vox Femina Board Meeting Presentation of Results

5/25-5/29 Focused Dissertation research; meeting with dissertation chair

### June 2015

#### *Primary accomplishments:*

Drafting sabbatical report; working on project-related assignments and activities; participation in *Dance Moms* and *I Am Cait* productions; planning Vox Femina strategic plan session; writing Huffington Post article.

#### *Specific activities:*

6/10 Taping: *I am Cait*



<student artwork>

### Project Outcomes

Thanks to the Salary and Leaves Committee and the Mt. SAC Board of Trustees, I had a rare opportunity in spring 2015 to be on the ground with one of the first national outreach programs targeted at improving LGBTQ climate and reducing bullying and suicide through a program I designed. I consider this project to be part of my scholarly work and also my life's work.

This document has already described my completion of several expected deliverables of this project. As we know from our own work with outcomes, however, assessing the outcomes of work is different than simply assigning a grade based on whether or not an assignment has been completed (and more meaningful). In fact, I do wonder why we don't use a learning outcomes model for sabbatical projects. Perhaps food for thought for the Salary and Leaves Committee...

While preparing this report I realized how my work in spring 2015 is similar to the sabbatical I completed 10 years ago. The previous endeavor was a year-long project with no graduate coursework, but in many ways my current project is more rigorous and holds promise for being even more impactful to our campus and beyond. In addition to creating an original performance piece that can be staged for years to come, my work also yielded a residency program of reproducible lectures, workshops and facilitated dialogues for students, educators and community members all designed to improve LGBTQ climate. My work on the road in Oxnard, Athens, Appleton, Hilo, Lancaster and Denver provided information and hope to many individuals while also generating community-driven reflection and planning through the world café sessions. I was particularly moved when a

mother who brought her son to the show wrote a piece for the Huffington Post about their positive experience. A link to the article can be found in Appendix G.

Additionally, as outlined in my sabbatical proposal, I posted at least two times a week to project-related social media to create an open, supportive online climate for individuals in need. I also submitted my own piece about the project to the Huffington Post and received many positive comments. The reach of my work was greatly amplified by the unexpected coverage of the project on two major cable networks and through its association with Caitlyn Jenner. I thought I would have a front row seat to the civil rights movement of our time and ended up having a few minutes out on the court.

Because of my project's involvement at the 2015 GMCLA Voice Awards at Universal Studios, I was able to meet and, in some cases, develop professional connections with some of the most influential people in the LGBTQ community today, including George Takei, Lance Bass, Candis Cayne (the first transgender actress on a television series), country singer Ty Herndon, NBA star Jason Collins, Joe and Jane Clementi (parents of Tyler and founders of the Tyler Clementi Foundation) and, of course, Caitlyn Jenner. My own intercultural competence in the LGBTQ arena has been magnified still more through my interactions with an unbelievably diverse group of individuals from across the country, each facing challenges and forging paths in different ways. I will never fully understand the LGBTQ experience, but my empathy and familiarity with this culture are very strong as a result of this project.

While I am proud of my personal growth and the work I have done in other communities, I'm most excited about the potential of this project to contribute substantively to our campus community. My sabbatical proposal described my desire to bring some of the

programs from the touring project to our campus. I relied, in particular, on an article by Thiel and Diehl (2010) entitled, "Campus Gay and Lesbian Issues in the New Millennium" in which they recommended campus-wide educational workshops and speakers on gay and lesbian issues as a specific way campuses can improve their LGBT climate. While this obviously informed by work on other campuses, it also inspired my Mt. SAC Flex Day World Café activity in August, 2015.

While I felt very good about the session as it progressed, I was stunned at the amount of unsolicited feedback I received following the session. Comments I received in email included:

*"I wanted to thank you for the VERY interesting flex day presentation. I hope that one day things that were brought up during the discussions become non-issues, but in the meantime there's work to be done....thank you for your efforts."*

*"Thanks so much for doing the LGBTQ World Cafe, I'm so glad that I was able to participate. I am very interested in moving this work forward and think report is a great start for a Senate task force."*

*"Thank you Liesel for leading the workshop on Friday and for all your work - it was refreshing to be in a room of like-minded individuals devoted to this important issue..."*

*"THANK YOU SO MUCH for bringing this much needed seminar to our campus!!!! It was such an energizing way to start off the semester, and although I won't be able to amend my syllabi for this semester, it has given me much to think about for future semesters and gives me a way to bring more to the topics of "safety" and "acceptance" into my first day intro lectures. It is so exciting to be on the forefront of advocacy and change and it warms my heart that our community of staff, faculty, and students are working together to BE THE CHANGE!!!!*

*Thank you again, and I hope that this is the beginning of something amazing :-)"*



In my sabbatical proposal I also touted my ability to bring initiatives to the campus through the appropriate governance bodies. I proposed to the Academic Senate that LGBTQ issues should be a high priority this year and recommended a task force be created. I forwarded my flex day world café report to the senate office and am pleased to report that the task force proposal will be on the first senate executive board agenda of fall 2015. If appointed I intend to continue my work via that group, including implementation of a campus LGBTQ climate survey so the work is data-driven.

My classroom will also be a place in which the outcomes of this project are realized. I have created a class project in which students in Speech 1AH Public Speaking Honors and Speech 6 Group Communication will learn to facilitate World Café sessions as a means to conduct basic action research projects. I am excited to share this tool with our students in because it is relatively new, adaptable to many fields and settings, and simple to implement. It is also appealing because of its proven effectiveness across a range of global settings – making it useful for students in multicultural communities. The handout and rubric for that activity is provided in Appendix L.

Students also need to be exposed to LGBTQ culture in their Mt. SAC courses. As Ahujia, et al argue, “the greater the density of young people that say they have resources and support and say that they have learned about LGBTQ issues in the classroom, the less the frequency of harassment.” (2015, p. 143). Thiel and Diehl (2010) recommend inclusion of LGBTQ as an aspect of multiculturalism in all coursework associated with cultural studies and diversity. A simple but critical component of my project was to review our departmental courses for opportunities in which we can enrich our courses to improve the

LGBTQ climate on campus. My proposals for amendments to SPCH 6 Group Communication, SPCH 7 Intercultural Communication and SPCH 8 Business and Professional Speaking can be found in Appendix I, J, and K, respectively. The proposed amendments will be added to an upcoming departmental agenda for consideration.

Finally, a very hot topic in current LGBTQ communication research at the moment is heteronormativity – the pervasive cultural bias to represent heterosexuality as “normal.” Many questions came up at the Flex Day World café about the subject, and students in SPCH 7 have expressed some confusion about the term. To aid in improving understanding about this construct, I developed an additional activity suitable for either the classroom or a professional development session on the subject (see Appendix M).

Overall I am deeply grateful to the College for this opportunity to be a part of such a fascinating and deeply fulfilling experience and look forward to helping to lead a culture change at Mt. SAC with regard to LGBTQ issues. This project has provided me both the scholarly foundation and the practical experience to begin that important work.

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**Appendix A  
Sabbatical Leave Proposal**

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November 26, 2013  
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**Sabbatical Proposal  
Spring 2015 Academic Year**

**Abstract**

This study/project combination project involves one semester of study to complete coursework for the doctoral program in educational leadership from the University of La Verne while also conducting a national research project and work as a visiting scholar in partnership with the It Gets Better Project. The research and teaching component aims to help rural communities improve the climate for local LGBT youth with a focus on reducing bullying and associated suicides.

**Nature of the Activities**

I began doctoral studies in Organizational Leadership University of La Verne in September 2010 and successfully completed the first two years of the program (36 units). I took an approved leave of absence from the program in 2013 to address some health issues and the need to balance my professional and academic pursuits. If this project is approved, I will resume my final year of study for 2014-2015 using the spring term to complete my final nine units of coursework as well as the research activities for my dissertation, which requires out-of-state travel. *The University of La Verne considers 9 units to constitute full-time enrollment in a doctoral program (as do many universities).*

To enhance my project, I will work and travel with the It Gets Better Tour, a collaboration between the It Gets Better Project, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and Speak Theater Arts. I initiated leadership of this collaboration in Fall 2011 and have continued my pro bono work as a writer, director, and teacher (as feasible) since that time. I am unable to engage fully in the project and reap the professional benefits of the work without approved sabbatical, as my annual professional development travel limitation is three days. Each engagement of this project requires a full week of activities with high school students, college students, educators, community leaders, artists, and others – as well as substantial preparation and follow-up before and after the engagements. I have a rare opportunity in Spring 2015 to be on the ground with one of the first national outreach programs targeted at reducing LGBT bullying

and suicide in rural communities – a program I designed. I consider it to be part of my scholarly work and also my life's work.

After learning in my doctoral program of a newer research approach, *action research*, and its use for addressing social issues in a number of global settings, I integrated an action research method known as the the World Café into the It Gets Better Tour program. The It Gets Better World Café shows promise as an outstanding tool for facilitated community dialogue on LGBT issues.

To date, the It Gets Better Tour has facilitated this model at six colleges: Penn State, Iowa State, University of Texas, at Austin, the University of Kansas, Miami University, and the University of Wisconsin. These preliminary sessions have helped refine the program and data collection method. Sample data has also been used to create a coding system for future World Café data. I am fortunate that the faculty at the University of La Verne have found this work to be of sufficient merit to function as my doctoral research work. In fact, many are hopeful about its potential for publication.

As part of my project, I will create a detailed summary analysis (approximately 10-12 pages each) for three World Café dialogues.

The It Gets Better Tour is much broader in scope than just the World Café component, and these activities will further enhance my project. Each week that the company is "in residence" within a community typically includes three or more activities per day that I will participate in, such as:

- Leading workshops for LGBT high school students
- Leading assemblies for middle- and high-school students
- Leading discussions with future K-12 educators
- Guest lecturing for speech and theater courses
- Speaking at community events
- Facilitating dialogues between people or groups with opposing views
- Appearing on local TV and radio programs and speaking with journalists
- Hosting Q&A sessions with company members before and after performances

The It Gets Better Tour was initially funded through Kickstarter and was covered in the *New York Times* when it became the top funded project in the history of that website. It is also funded by a grant from AT&T and is also sponsored by Southwest Airlines, who will underwrite the costs of my travel. Lily Tomlin appeared on stage to endorse the project at our Los Angeles premiere, and I was able to persuade the writer of *Avenue Q* to write an original song for the project, which was recently featured on the TV show *Glee*. The project is entirely non-profit and I do not benefit financially in any way from this work. Any proceeds from the project are directed to the It Gets Better Project and the Alive Music Project for the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles.

More information about the project can be found at the website [www.itgetsbettertour.org](http://www.itgetsbettertour.org).

This work collectively sits squarely within the discipline of communication studies, specifically the arenas of persuasion, social movements and queer studies.

### **Outcomes of this Study/Project**

#### ***To the Applicant***

Personally – I am driven to pursue the work of the It Gets Better Project by a desire to support young members of the LGBT community achieve their goals. At Mt. SAC we have been a part of the national suicide crisis among this community. One of our former students took his life because he felt hopeless and abandoned by his family. I've known so many students over the years whose ability to succeed in school and life is impacted by their struggle for acceptance. This semester I have a transgender student who faced direct harassment in my classroom when another student started whispering about him and snickering during his speech. It is a very challenging situation to address as an educator, and my work with this project is improving my ability to understand and manage situations like that one.

Professionally – the University of La Verne doctoral program has been a valuable tool in my ongoing development, requiring personal reflection, skill improvement, extensive reading, and substantial research in the field of communication (a major component of leadership studies). Completion of a doctorate will also serve as a significant milestone for me as a life-long learner.

#### ***To the Department***

My doctoral studies hold great promise for my ability to update and improve the curriculum of variety of courses for currency. Reading the most current research in group communication and organizational dynamics is highly relevant to courses like SPCH 6 (group communication) and SPCH 8 (organizational and professional speaking). Our intercultural course (SPCH 7) will benefit from my review and revisions with regard to transgender issues, as well as some of the activities that I will design for the touring project. Also, the research method for my work – action research – has value as a research method for our honors students, particularly those interested in continuing studies at a CSU campus where their research will more closely resemble that of a scholarly practitioner – the approach of action research. I intend to adapt my work into a new activity for one or more of my Mt. SAC honors courses.

Additionally, I have already been able to provide both internships and paid work for current and recent Mt. SAC students to participate in the work of this project, and would be able to extend those opportunities with additional time to supervise the student work.

### ***To the College***

Discourse about LGBT life still remarkably rare at Mt. San Antonio College, though my interactions with individual students reveals a need for more visible sources of support. We have one mildly active student club, few events, no LGBT faculty organization, no safe space initiative, no anti-bullying policies, and very little professional development in this arena (some ally training was recently offered through Health Services). I intend to bring some of the programs that I will refine at other colleges and universities to Mt. SAC for flex day presentations and professional development opportunities. In particular, I would like to bring to our campus a session about reducing heteronormativity in the classroom.

Mt. SAC also has few (if any) public resources for LGBT students, especially transgender students. We have much work to be done to assess the safety of our campus for transgender students, how welcoming we are, how much appropriate support we provide, how inclusive our courses are, etc.. Bathrooms, shower facilities, sleeping accommodations on field trips – these are just a few of the practical issues that public colleges and universities will face in the coming years. My research and engagement with other campuses will be beneficial as we begin this important work at Mt. SAC. I have a strong track record of involvement with a wide range of campus committees and governance organizations and am equipped to bring initiatives to the campus through the appropriate governance bodies.

I also hope to bring recognition to our school through my work. Doctoral degrees among faculty are considered by many rating systems as a measure of academic strength of an institution. Several news stories and features have already been written about the It Gets Better Tour and my work with it, and more will come as the project expands. The work from my last sabbatical, a similar project, yielded over a hundred news articles and was a significant factor in my recognition by the ASCCC last year for the Steinback Stroud Diversity Award.

### ***To the Broader Community***

As part of my project, I will share the findings of my work in two ways. I will write and propose articles to a mainstream publication – the *Huffington Post*— where I am currently a columnist. I will also prepare and submit the work to an appropriate academic journal, such as the *Community Development Journal*, or *Leadership*.

I will also share progress on the project on a twice-monthly (or more) basis using social media using the Facebook page “It Gets Better Tour.” Sharing photos, reflections, articles, and feedback about the project using a transparent public interface is a highly effective way to involve a broad audience with this work.



## Timeline of Activities and Tentative Itinerary

- February 2014. Commence spring semester coursework at U. La Verne (3 courses)  
*Continues through July 2015. Exact schedule is not available until Fall 2014.*
- Courses (all three semester units) will be:
- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| ORGL 680  | Organizational Theory                     |
| ORGL 683  | Organizational Development                |
| ORGL 698b | Dissertation in Organizational Leadership |
- Early March 2015 Complete pre-work for World Café sessions (secure location, materials, contact participants, confirm participants, secure IRB).  
Update social media with information about the project.
- Late March 2015 Week-long It Gets Better Tour engagement, TBA\*  
*Note: the itinerary for each engagement will be determined 1-2 months prior to the engagement in collaboration with the local performing arts presenter. A typical schedule is provided below of a recent schedule for this project in Oxford, Ohio from November 2013, not inclusive of travel days:*
- Monday November 11<sup>th</sup>**
- 9:30 (approx.)** Meet to drive to campus
- 10am-10:55am** Miami University classroom guest lecture
- Noon-1:30pm** Miami Univ Staff Facilitated Dialogue
- 5pm** meet to review evening program
- 6pm-9pm** Public event/presentation of key to city from the mayor's office
- Tuesday November 12<sup>th</sup>**
- 9:15** Meet to review day's schedule and drive to venue
- 10-11** Miami University classroom guest lecture
- 11:30-12:30** Miami University classroom guest lecture
- 1:30-2:30** Miami University classroom guest lecture
- 7pm-10pm** Community Chorus Rehearsal
- Wednesday November 13<sup>th</sup>**
- 11:15** Meet to review program
- 1pm-2pm** It Gets Better Experience High School Assembly
- 3pm-4:30pm** Gay-Straight Alliance and student leader workshop
- 3pm-4:30pm-** Facilitated Faculty Dialogue (high school)
- 7pm-8:30pm** It Gets Better Journey - Public Lecture

**Thursday November 14<sup>th</sup>**

**10:15** (approx.) meet to drive to venue

**11am-1pm** Facilitated dialogue with community organizations

**2pm** Meet to prepare for World Café

**4pm-7pm** World Café

**7:30pm-10pm-** Review session

**Friday November 15<sup>th</sup>**

**11:00-5:30** Tech rehearsal for show and national anthem

**6:30pm-7pm** National Anthem at local hockey game/media interviews

**7pm-10pm** Performance and Post-show Q&A

April 2015 Two week-long It Gets Better Tour engagements, TBA\*  
*See previous sample for details about these engagements.*  
Post twice-weekly updates to social media about the project

May 2015 Draft three World Café reports  
Write and submit article to Huffington Post (by May 30)

June 2015 Finalize and submit three World Café reports (my June 15)  
Write and submit article to academic journal (by June 15)  
Draft sabbatical report

\*Exact dates for each engagement will be determined between April and July of 2014, subject to scheduling of performing arts series' at each venue. Tentative locations and venues for Spring 2015 It Gets Better Tour engagements, per David Lieberman Artists Representatives (managers of the tour: [www.dlartists.com](http://www.dlartists.com)):

- Ford Center: University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS
- Omaha Performing Arts: Omaha, NE
- Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK
- Anchorage Concert Association: University of Alaska, Anchorage, AL
- Des Moines Performing Arts: Des Moines, IA
- Fox City Performing Arts: Appleton, WI

**Further Detail: Purpose of the Project Component of this Sabbatical**

The purpose of my project is to identify ways in which communities can improve the social environment for LGBTQ youth toward reduction of youth victimization (bullying) and associated suicides while also exploring the World Café method as a viable tool for conducting "actin research." The procedure will involve facilitation of three separate half-day community dialogues attended by a cross-section of approximately 30-60 individuals in

each of three rural communities, including civic leaders, law enforcement, students, educators, business owners, LGBT leaders, health care professionals, parents, artists, and others. The World Café data will be utilized at a later date in my dissertation, but my Spring 2015 World Café project work focuses on addressing two specific questions:

1. When provided a framework for engagement in “conversations that matter,” what strategies will communities devise to improve the social environment for their LGBT youth? Are these strategies applicable to other communities, including my own?
2. Is the World Café action research model a viable tool for Mt. SAC students wishing to conduct research?

### Significance of the Research

Victimization of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer) youth remains prevalent in many US communities, leading to a poor quality of life and, in several notable cases, suicide. According to a 2010 report by the Williams Institute in the UCLA Law School and the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), more than 85% of LGBTQ youth report harassment as a result of their gender or sexual identity and one in five indicate they have been physically attacked (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010. p. 2).

The suicide rate for LGBTQ students continues to be “3-4 times higher than that of their straight counterparts, and in some parts of the country LGBT runaways may comprise up to 40% of the entire teen homeless population” (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010. p. 2).

The issue is also serious for college students. A 2010 study found that “the fear or experience of customary and irrational prejudice” is prevalent among LGBTQ students on campuses, especially those in the Midwest and south (Cramer, 2010). My own understanding of the situation as a faculty member at Mt. SAC for 17 years suggests that Walnut, CA has much in common with rural America with regard to our LGBT climate. In fact, while the climate for LGBTQ individuals has improved for some politically, there are still many areas in which homophobic views are prevalent in interpersonal and educational settings. Certain religious groups and political groups retain anti-LGBTQ positions, and state and national laws and policies continue to differentiate between rights of this population and others – even in states where marriage equality has been adopted.

In September 2011, the *It Gets Better Project* was introduced online and quickly found an international audience. The project as originally conceived involves the creation of informal videos by older LGBTQ individuals for viewing by young LGBTQ individuals. The videos contain positive messages intended to help young people persist through the challenges of adolescence. While the response to the project has been overwhelmingly positive, it has also received criticism because it doesn't provide immediate relief for young

people facing adversity in their immediate social environments (Muller, 2011, p. 275). Many want to know how to make life better for LGBTQ youth *right now*.

### **About the World Café Method and Theoretical Foundations for the Project**

The World Café is a conversation-based methodology for development of a collective vision. It was developed through a series of experimental sessions starting in 1995 by Juanita Brown and Chris Isaacs. In World Café, a diverse group of stakeholders constitute the “world” while a casual setting of small, round tables with refreshments and casual décor represent the “café” in the title. Participants engage in a series of facilitated table dialogues. The goal of a World Café first and foremost is to engage participants in a *conversation that matters*.

This project will add to and expand the burgeoning area of action research employing the World Café approach. World Café is an increasingly popular approach to participatory research and policy-making and is part of a wider move in research toward participation by subjects in the research process (Aldred, 2011, p. 57). It is highly suitable to the field of communication because it focuses on the researcher as facilitator, and may be an effective research method for many of our students who pursue study in communication in the CSU system because of its focus on applied study.

Literature for this project will include consideration of the theoretical perspective known as appreciative inquiry, or *AI*. David Cooperrider first outlined the concept of *AI* while a graduate student at Case Western Reserve University in 1986 (Mishra & Bhatnagar, 2012, p. 544). Appreciative inquiry doesn't have a specific list of required practices. Instead, *AI* is said to begin when an organization decides, “to focus on the positive as the focus of inquiry” (Watkins, Mohr, and Mohr, 2010, p. 112). Schooley (2008) argues that the underlying premise is the *unconditional positive question*. Questions are used to drive productive conversation among organization stakeholders.

*AI* also directs organizations to be concerned with learning “what gives life in a situation” (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010, p. 33). This often involves the solicitation and sharing of personal stories from participants. Using stories is said to create excitement and a sense of “delight” among participants (Watkins, Mohr, and Mohr, 147). Through the sharing of positive, personal stories participants can imagine a preferred future and once this future is envisioned participants will move inexorably toward it (Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

The *AI* paradigm is somewhat of a bold direction, especially when some organizations have migrated toward highly punitive, problem-oriented structures. Disney Corporation, for instance, tracks demerit points for their park staff every time they make a mistake on the job; once an employee receives the maximum number of points, she is fired – no exceptions. It is no surprise that Watkins, Mohr, and Mohr (2010) describe appreciative inquiry as a “major shift in the practice of organization development and transformation” (p. 23).

The AI strategy has been shown to have organizational benefits. Stratton-Berkessel suggest the use of the AI methodology in an organization yields improved decision-making ability, organizational ability, and employee performance, and along the way it activates the “hopes and dreams” of participants (p. 3). Mishra & Bhatnagar (2012) found that the use of AI in an organization triggers a high level of engagement which subsequently leads to higher ownership of the change process.

AI is becoming more accepted as an approach to research. Boyd and Bright (2007) demonstrated the utility of AI for participatory action research (PAR) – even though traditional PAR typically involves the identification (or diagnosis) of a problem (p. 1034). They argued that the PAR approach should be expanded to include the opportunity-based AI perspective – especially in “facilitating organizational and social change interventions.”

**Appendix B**  
**Sabbatical Leave Proposal: Supplemental Information**

**Liesel Reinhart Sabbatical Proposal: Additional Information**

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide additional information regarding my proposal. I'm hopeful that the following will serve as clarification for my objectives:

***1) How my research will directly impact curriculum in SPCH 6, 7 and 8***

Changes in our country in recent years have brought LGBT topics (and individuals) into mainstream discourse. As more people live lives as "out" individuals, our students need to be equipped with an understanding of the communication-related aspects of these cultural groups such as identity, nonverbal expression, language, symbols and norms – not to mention changes in public policy and law that influence our interactions in community and professional settings. My project will expose me to a range of research highly relevant to this subject area (specifically understanding influences of the communication climate on LGBT individuals), while also bringing me face-to-face in collaborations with faculty at other campuses so I can learn more about other approaches to this work.

A minimal four-year review is pending for these three courses, but a more comprehensive modification is needed, including (potentially) measurable objectives, course outline, sample assignments, and – in some cases – course/catalog descriptions. Specifically:

SPCH 6, Group Communication, is in desperate need of a rigorous update to include all aspects of diversity in the course outline and measurable objectives, not just LGBT matters. When the course was listed as one of the key courses for the AA-T in the TMC, this infrequently-offered course suddenly became a key offering in our curriculum. Interactions in groups are highly influenced by cultural affiliations of group members and the course should reflect this.

SPCH 8, Professional and Organizational Speaking, is also sparse with regard to this content. It does include a reference to gender in relation to intercultural competence in the workplace (course topics and sample assignments), but not sexual identity. Workplace communication is highly sensitive. When people do not have competence and sensitivity in communication about LGBT individuals, far more than interpersonal relationships hang in the balance; employees can be penalized or fired and employers can be sued. It is essential that this course be updated.

SPCH 7, Intercultural Communication, obviously concerns diversity – though shockingly only through the lens of ethnicity and nationality. There is *no mention whatsoever in this course curriculum of gender or sexual identity*. It is possible for faculty to elect to address LGBT topics as part of the course based on broad terms like "culture," but it is not *required*.

It is feasible that students could actually complete this course without *any* content pertaining to a cultural group comprising approximately 4-8% of our population.

I am eager to dig in and bring from my research and project not just new topics for the course outlines of all three courses, but also new approaches to integrating diversity *throughout the course*. Ideally all three courses can be designed so that LGBT (and broader cultural) inclusivity is woven throughout rather than appearing briefly during the term as a tacked on "unit."

Of course, changing the curriculum of these courses will require that faculty teaching the courses be informed of changes and prepared to adapt our course assignments and delivery accordingly. The lectures and activities I design for workshops while on tour with the project will be adapted to topics in the course outline and/or sample assignments for these courses. I will provide examples of this in my sabbatical report. If my department and the Academic Senate approve my suggested course modifications, I will modify my project workshop activities into assignments (such as case study examinations and cultural self-expression projects) as well as means of assessment (test and essay questions) to support faculty as they work to incorporate the modified content into their courses.

I'm optimistic about the prospects for these modifications to meet the approval of my colleagues. I have discussed these potential revisions and course materials with full-time faculty in my department who also teach these courses and/or have worked on previous revisions. They are supportive of this work and believe it will provide a benefit to our students. They have also been supportive of my graduate students, generally. We only have one current faculty member in our department with a doctoral degree – well below the campus average.

## **2) How I plan to educate Mt. SAC students on the issues I will be researching.**

I can't claim to educate Mt. SAC students on the exact content that I am researching. Most of my work is at the doctoral level and not level appropriate for lower-division undergraduate students. However, I do intend to bring at least one specific tool from my research to Mt. SAC students: the World Café Facilitation Method (see my main application packet for details on this method and its growing use as a tool for conducting action research).

Two student populations will be exposed to the World Café method: honors students and communication majors. I will introduce the tool in my SPCH 1AH honors public speaking course as a means of conducting basic research for persuasive speeches. Currently students must conduct simple one-on-one interviews for the persuasive assignment. By teaching students how to utilize the World Café method, they will actually be conducting comprehensive *primary research* while also accomplishing the course objective of *audience analysis*. The students will – for the first time - synthesize these two concepts while also enhancing the quality of their persuasive speeches, and generating findings suitable for publication at an undergraduate research conference, if desired.

Communication majors will be exposed to this method in SPCH 6: group communication. This course currently includes facilitation of group discussion as a topic area. The World

Café is a new, dynamic method our communication majors can use as both a research tool and as a simple facilitation strategy for managing group discussions.

I am excited to share this tool with our students in these two courses because it is relatively new, adaptable to many fields and settings, and simple to implement. It is also appealing because of its proven effectiveness across a range of global settings – making it relevant for students even if they plan to live or work one day in non-Western cultures.

### ***3) How what I do will make the campus a safer place.***

While we may associate campus safety concerns with images of students terrorizing a campus with guns, it is far more likely that our students will face challenges to their well-being from issues like bullying, harassment, and insensitivity. Dozens of studies demonstrate that LGBT students are far more likely to experience these phenomena than their counterparts, leading to a number of risk factors for this population ranging from academic failure and depression to self-harm.

Communication climate is a significant variable in determining the perceived safety and supportiveness of a campus for LGBT students. Mt. SAC has not conducted a comprehensive LGBT climate study, so we do not have concrete data on our campus climate, but Thiel and Diehl note that physical and verbal anti-gay and lesbian harassment has been documented on all campuses where research about gays and lesbians has been conducted (2010).

The Campus Pride Index is a widely used instrument for assessing LGBT climate on college campuses. A cursory review of the questions for this instrument paints a quick picture of how Mt. SAC would likely fare in this assessment: poorly. Mt. SAC would almost certainly fail to meet all eight listed criteria in the category of “LGBT Support and Institutional Commitment” and all seven criteria in the area of “LGBT Academic Life.” Other areas would also be highly problematic. Questions from the instrument are viewable at <http://www.campusprideindex.org/>

There are other indications that our campus does not have a supportive LGBT climate. The words “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” and “transgender” appear just once in Mt. SAC’s entire 2010 Accreditation Self-Study Report. The one occurrence is in regard to plans for a sociology course on this topic. Despite the espoused plans, [webcms.mtsac.edu](http://webcms.mtsac.edu) lists no current or pending sociology courses on this subject.

Scant information is available about LGBT climate at Mt. SAC. Our campus newspaper provides one of the only insights. Stories published there provide anecdotal evidence of elevated risk to our students in a very serious area of safety: suicide risk. For instance, a *Mountiewire* story posted on January 16, 2012 documents suicide attempts by multiple LGBT Mt. SAC students.

The potential impact of my project on our campus climate and, with it, LGBT campus safety, is demonstrated by Thiel and Diehl in their article “Campus Gay and Lesbian Issues in the



New Millennium.” They provide a list of specific ways campuses can improve their LGBT climate; I have underlined those the four that directly align with my project:

“Sponsoring campus-wide educational workshops and speakers on gay and lesbian issues, integrating gay and lesbian issues into existing courses throughout the curriculum, increasing the number of gay and lesbian books and periodicals in the library, encouraging scholarship and research on gay and lesbian history, culture and theory, defining "multicultural" studies to include gay and lesbian culture, and requiring all undergraduates to take courses in multicultural studies (n.p., 2010).”

Finally, my own personal growth and increased visibility as an LGBT ally will impact individual student well-being through our one-on-one interactions. On a modest scale, this is already happening. A student approached me after the final exam last week and said that he “googled” me and read about my involvement with the It Gets Better Project. He spoke freely with me about a range of issues, including our LGBT student club, his feeling of social alienation on campus, and some non-LGBT topics, too. He told me that he was excited when he found out that I am “on record” as an ally and felt he could be himself around me. We need, at a very basic level, more publicly supportive LGBT allies on campus. My time and attention to this work, *and college sponsorship of it*, would speak volumes to our LGBT students and to our whole campus community.

#### **4) Flex Day/Professional Development Presentations: Sample Announcements**

Please see additional page (in pdf format).

#### **5) Alignment with Departmental Mission and Goals**

While not specifically requested by the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to note that my study/project request closely aligns with our department’s published (ePIE) mission statement:

*The Mt. San Antonio College Department of Communication promotes better understanding among diverse groups of people in both personal and professional environments.*

The project will also provide forward movement for our department on three goals we have identified in our planning process:

- *Maintain currency of department course offerings and instructional materials*
- *Promote diversity and intercultural understanding*
- *Maintain staff and faculty excellence through ongoing professional development*

Work Cited

Thiel, Mary Jo and Diehl, Steve. "Campus Gay and Lesbian Issues in the New Millennium."


*Allies and Advocates*. Grand Valley State U. 20 Dec. 2010. Web. 18 Dec 2013.

**Appendix C**  
**Academic Transcript and Verification Letter**

*NOTE:* Both documents in this appendix were provided in a .pdf format and have been included here on subsequent pages to preserve formatting. They retain their own original page numbering.

11026087 Lieselott A. Reinhart  
Aug 27, 2015 01:42 pm

# Display Transcript

 This is NOT an official transcript. Courses which are in progress may also be included on this transcript.

[Institution Credit](#)   [Transcript Totals](#)   [Courses in Progress](#)

### Transcript Data

#### STUDENT INFORMATION

**Name :** Lieselott A. Reinhart

**Student Type:** All but Dissertation

**Curriculum Information**

**Current Program** Education and Org Leadership

**College:** Organizational Leadership,  
Organizational Leadership

**Major and Department:** Organizational Leadership

**Secondary** Education and Org Leadership

**College:** Organizational Leadership,  
Organizational Leadership

**Major and Department:** Organizational Leadership

\*\*\*Transcript type:WEB is NOT Official \*\*\*

#### INSTITUTION CREDIT -Top-

**Term:** Fall 2010

**College:** Education and Org Leadership

**Major:** Organizational Leadership  
**Student Type:** New  
**Academic Standing:** Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Start and End Dates	R...
ORGL	675	Doctor of Education	04	Executive Leadership	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	677	Doctor of Education	04	Decision Making	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	684	Doctor of Education	04	Applied Research Methods	CRD	3.000	0.00		

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

Attempt Hours	Passed Hours	Earned Hours	GPA Hours	Quality Points	GPA
9.000	9.000	9.000	0.000	0.00	0.00
9.000	9.000	9.000	0.000	0.00	0.00

Unofficial Transcript

**Term:** Spring 2011

**College:** Education and Org Leadership  
**Major:** Organizational Leadership  
**Student Type:** Continuing  
**Academic Standing:** Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Start and End Dates	R...
ORGL	678	Doctor of Education	04	Resource Development	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	687	Doctor of Education	04	Intro Dissertation Research I	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	694	Doctor of Education	04	Resource Management	CRD	3.000	0.00		

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

Attempt Hours	Passed Hours	Earned Hours	GPA Hours	Quality Points	GPA
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**Current Term:** 9,000 9,000 9,000 0.000 0.00 0.00  
**Cumulative:** 18,000 18,000 18,000 0.000 0.00 0.00

Unofficial Transcript

**Term: Fall 2011**

**College:** Education and Org Leadership  
**Major:** Organizational Leadership  
**Student Type:** Continuing  
**Academic Standing:** Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Start and End Dates	R...
ORGL	681	Doctor of Education	04	Communication Theory	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	682	Doctor of Education	04	Conflict Management	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	688	Doctor of Education	04	Intro Dissertation Research II	CRD	3.000	0.00		

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

**Current Term:** 9,000 9,000 9,000 0.000 0.00 0.00  
**Cumulative:** 27,000 27,000 27,000 0.000 0.00 0.00

Unofficial Transcript

**Term: Spring 2012**

**College:** Education and Org Leadership  
**Major:** Organizational Leadership  
**Student Type:** Continuing  
**Academic Standing:** Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Start and End Dates	R...

Academic Transcript

ORGL 686	Doctor of Education	04	Quan & Qualitative Research	CRD	3.000	0.00
ORGL 695	Doctor of Education	04	Innovation	CRD	3.000	0.00
ORGL 696	Doctor of Education	04	Evaluation	CRD	3.000	0.00

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

<b>Current Term:</b>	9.000	9.000	9.000	0.000	0.00
<b>Cumulative:</b>	36.000	36.000	36.000	0.000	0.00

Unofficial Transcript

**Term: Fall 2014**

**College:**

**Major:**

**Student Type:**

**Academic Standing:**

**Subject Course Campus**

**Level Title**

ORGL 674	Doctor of Education	04	Change	CRD	3.000	0.00
ORGL 679	Doctor of Education	04	Planning & Futures	CRD	3.000	0.00
ORGL 698A	Doctor of Education	04	Dissertation Research I	IP	3.000	0.00

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

<b>Current Term:</b>	9.000	6.000	6.000	0.000	0.00
<b>Cumulative:</b>	45.000	42.000	42.000	0.000	0.00

Unofficial Transcript

Term: Spring 2015

College: Education and Org Leadership  
 Major: Organizational Leadership  
 Student Type: Continuing  
 Academic Standing: Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Start and End Dates	R
ORGL	680	Doctor of Education	04	Organizational Theory	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	683	Doctor of Education	04	Organizational Development	CRD	3.000	0.00		
ORGL	698B	Doctor of Education	04	Dissertation Research II	IP	3.000	0.00		

**Term Totals (Doctoral)**

	Attempt Hours	Passed Hours	Earned Hours	GPA Hours	Quality Points	GPA
Current Term:	9.000	6.000	6.000	0.000	0.00	0.00
Cumulative:	54.000	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.00	0.00

Unofficial Transcript

**TRANSCRIPT TOTALS (DOCTORAL) -Top-**

	Attempt Hours	Passed Hours	Earned Hours	GPA Hours	Quality Points	GPA
Total Institution:	54.000	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.00	0.00
Total Transfer:	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00	0.00
Overall:	54.000	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.00	0.00

Unofficial Transcript



**COURSES IN PROGRESS -Top-**

**Term:** Fall 2015

**College:** Education and Org Leadership

**Major:** Organizational Leadership

**Student Type:** All but Dissertation

**Subject Course Campus Level Title Credit Hours Start and End Dates**

CE	0000	Doctor of Education	04	Cont Enrollment-- Dissertation	0.000	
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**RELEASE: 8.4.1**

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# UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership

August 25, 2015

To whom it may concern:

Liesel Reinhart has completed course 698a in Fall 2014, Dissertation Research I and 698b, Dissertation in Research II in the Spring semester of 2015 in Organizational Leadership at the University of La Verne. Although she has completed two semesters of work on her dissertation, these courses remain IPs (In Progress) until she has successfully defended her doctoral dissertation and it is signed off by the Dean.

If her grade was INC, this would signify unfinished projects for the course, and this is not the case with 698a and 698b. Once she has successfully defended, these grades will turn into CRD (credit) and her doctorate will be posted. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary F. Townsend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Mary F. Townsend,  
Department Administrator,  
Organizational Leadership  
909-448-4378  
mtownsend@laverne.edu

cc: Lieselott Reinhart

**Appendix D**  
**Excerpts, *it gets better* by Liesel Reinhart**

**SCENE 4: MARYANN**

Hi. I'm Maryann. I grew up here in central OH with my mother and my stepfather. Uh, they were both very abusive for many years. I do try very hard to forget it all - but I figure it's worth me being uncomfortable for a while if this story could help somebody. So here goes.

About halfway through my senior year I got home from work one night and told my mom that I -- I was a lesbian. Um, her and my stepdad both, they just started screaming and then they just started hitting me. They told me I was going to hell.-And then they told me to leave. They took my car keys because my car was in their name. They took my cell phone. I had a backpack with some of my books from school, and a lightweight jacket, and I left.

Um, and it was very cold out. It was January, and unfortunately, because of the way that my parents raised us we couldn't have a whole lot of friends so I was just standing there for a long time. I had no idea where to go. And then it started snowing....

**<guitar begins>**

So I finally remembered these two people -- their names were Ashley and Phil. I had babysat for them a couple times. Uh, they lived in a mobile home community but it was like 6 miles away. and at one point, I had showed up with bruises, uh, on my face and Ashley... she told me if I ever needed, um, somewhere to go that, you know, I -- I could come there. Who knows if she was telling the truth? But I didn't have nowhere else to go. So I started to walk.

**SONG: Barefoot**

I just -- I was --so cold. I remember knocking on the door and Ashley opened the door. At that point, I- I was kind of in shock, And, uh, her and her husband wrapped me in a blanket and she started asking me, What happened? And I remember them helping me into the car and being at the hospital ...and when they told me that, um, I had some busted blood vessels in my face, uh, from where I'd been hit... and I had frostbite on my fingers and my face.

It took a very long time to get better. I was homeless, um, for a couple of years. I slept, um, many nights in a storage shed. These people they would leave it unlocked. And I could get in and sleep. It was shelter.

**<music stops>**

And then I met Amanda. And that was the beginning of my life now. We got married in Central Park. Um, our marriage is not recognized here in Ohio but we have a really good life and two kids. But it's really not important to us. As long as I'm okay with who I am, life is so amazing. We just got our first car. It's a 2004 Kia. And that's pretty nice with winter coming.

**SCENE 6: GARY + off stage INTERVIEWER**

**GARY:** Oh it was very apparent very early.

**INT:** How was it apparent?

**GARY:** Well, I have a younger sister who got a Barbie doll for Christmas when she was three and I was six. And I was the one fascinated with this Barbie doll thing and her little booklet with all the outfits you could buy that I memorized from front to back.

**INT:** Do you remember any of them?

**GARY:** All of them.

**INT:** Like...

**GARY:** Um, there was this one outfit that was a red like a car coat. And it was very full. And she had a pill -- red pillbox hat. Mmmm.

**INT:** Wait -- is this the one?

**<slide -- vintage Barbie>**

**GARY:** Oh fabulous (laugh). Oh how fabulous. You just found that. Oh yeah. It was exciting to me. But I also I felt shame about it because I got the message that this is not what boys should get excited about.

**INT:** From your father?

**GARY:** Oh he would make comments. I remember once I was talking and he just snapped "Don't talk like a girl." And I said "like what?" And he said "Like that -- where your voice goes up at the end." And he wasn't raging there was this edge about it, this anger. It freaked me out. And I didn't understand what in the friggin heck he was talking about -- because I didn't -- as far as I knew -- I didn't talk like a girl. Of course I finally got it when I first heard my voice being recorded. It sounded so effeminate - and I was shocked and very ashamed about that.

**INT:** But as a singer this made you special.

**GARY:** I sang soprano until I was 14. It was very unusual. I literally sang like a girl. People said that to me all the time but that they didn't mean like "you sing like a fag." Though I took it that way.

**INT:** How did you father feel about you singing soprano.

**GARY:** He loved it. He was really proud of it. It would move him to tears.

**INT:** Really?

**GARY:** Well it was in Church. And it was classical music which to my father was legitimate. So yes I knew I could sing like that but not talk like that -- though I'm still not sure I really know what "like that" means.

**INT:** Did that feeling eventually go away?

**GARY:** Ha. When I was doing seminars for Exodus I would talk in my lower range like I'm doing now. Pitching it lower. But it also cuts off all my expression... So I would try to keep that tone... but when I started getting into whatever I was talking about it would just go out the window!

**INT:** Did you say Exodus? The ex gay ministry?

**GARY:** Yeah -- I joined that organization and traveled the world telling gay people that you could be healed. And at about the fifth year, it started to like dawn on me that the proof was not in the pudding. I'm still attracted to men.

**INT:** Who were you attracted to?

**GARY:** Oh when you work in an ex-gay ministry, you're constantly running into guys who are like you who are Christian and want to be good -- but -- they're hot. Oh my God, they're so hot. You know, and you have to refrain, but it's pretty tempting. I'm telling you.

**INT:** And today Exodus is no longer?

**GARY:** Exodus is no longer.

**INT:** And so how do you feel about that?

**GARY:** It's about damn time.

**INT:** What do you do now?

**GARY:** I'm a psychotherapist. I do -- one of the areas that I focus on is helping people acknowledge that they have a voice and try to find the courage to express it. Which is maybe ironic because when it comes to accepting my own voice - I will always be self-conscious about it. Like I just saw there's this documentary coming out called Do I Sound Gay? And it was on Kickstarter and I gave so much money to that shit.

But there's something significant about this voice of mine. Even though it's not the voice of authority or the voice of God -- My clients will tell me that "you have a very soothing voice" -- It's nonthreatening. It doesn't have an edge. My favorite compliment ever was - you know you sound like the voice in my head.

So I know speaking up is scary. Take that leap of faith anyway. Someone may hear what you say, or sing and it could affect them deeply. It's just taking that first step. Standing up, opening your mouth, and letting the sound come out.

**SCENE 13: JAY**

I'm Jay. I live in Lawrence, Kansas with my wife and our two kids. We just finalized the adoption of our second child. Um--I say finalized in the sense that Jessica was able to adopt her. We are not, uh, allowed to adopt as a couple. According to the law, I am still female.

I grew up in a little redneck town of 500 people. I can't remember exactly when I started having suicidal thoughts but it was pretty early on. I thought about killing myself pretty much every day. I remember especially my 6<sup>th</sup> grade year when I had to start wearing a bra I was really uncomfortable. All the things that girls were supposed to be doing embarrassed me and I thought I'm clearly a freak I just need to get out of here.

I called a radio station when I was 14 to say all gay people should be shot. I was a mess. **<piano cue>** Life for me was really hard all through high school. I didn't see any options for myself and I just wanted an out.

**SONG: RUN RUN RUN, Part 1**

After high school I just decided fuck it. I wrote a suicide note basically saying, "I'm gonna run away. I'm -- I got my dad's gun. And some point when I'm running, I'm either gonna do something illegal and get shot by cops or I'm gonna drive off an overpass so that if the bullet doesn't kill me, the wreck will." I wrote this all in letter to my family and I put it in the mail. And I planned my escape. Well, I didn't count on the fact that in a small town if you put it in mail in the afternoon, they might get it the next morning.

My brother stopped me on my way out of town and took the gun out of my globe box. My family drove me to the Shawnee Mission Medical Center, um, in Overland Park, Kansas. Um, I finally started working with a therapist. It was time.

**SONG: RUN RUN RUN, Part 2**

April 1st, 2001. Most trans guy know the date. The first shot of testosterone. I really took my transition really slowly. I used to call it brain fog. It was hard to keep my mind on anything else. It was a constant internal conversation about - If I should and what would happen if I did. What would my family think.

In the beginning, my mom didn't understand. I was her baby girl. But then I was home one time my sister said something about me being a handsome guy. And mom had this, like, aha moment and she put her hands on both sides of my face and said, "I just want you to know that I get it."

From that point on, she called me he. She actually lived to be 91. Uh, and she got dementia, and of my favorite stories is one day my brother Johnny and I were at her house and Oprah had Dr. Oz on. And they were talking about the importance of getting your prostate checked. And my mom said, "Boys, Johnny, Jay, come in here. You need to pay attention to this." I said, "Mom, I don't have a prostate. I used to be a girl." And she just roared.

I think that sometimes people would often like it if I would just shut my mouth and just be a regular guy. It's tempting. I mean, I saw a guy in town a couple weeks ago that, uh,

transitioned with me. And I asked him like, hey “You know, do you see any of the old group?” And he said, “No, man. We’re not part of the Queer Community anymore. We’re just, uh -- we’re really enjoying heterosexual privilege.”

And maybe some people that are trans wanna meld into the woodwork. But I’ve never been that person in my life anyway. And I’m not a man. I’m a trans man. Taking a shot of testosterone doesn’t make me a man. I’m a gender queer. I’m both man and woman. And – shit I’m gonna cry – I have a close friend – a trans guy that even though he was living stealth he could never get over the fear of being found out and ...a year ago in June he stepped into a bathtub and blew his head off. And, for me because I was a suicidal person much of my life... it just reminded me that there’s a lot of trans people who kill themselves because they just can’t ...can’t take it.

So even if people want to fucking stare at me because I am different I don’t care. I made a decision that I would be an out trans man and that was it. I live out so people know that there’s people like me that do exist. And that we can be functional human beings. And we can raise kids. And we can be happy.

**SONG: RUN RUN RUN, Part 3**

**Appendix E**  
**Residency Guide for *it gets better***

**NOTE:** The document in this appendix was originally published in a .pdf format and has been included here on subsequent pages to preserve formatting. They retain their own original page numbering.



# it gets better Artist in Residence Programs

## FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

### 1) The Community Chorus

A powerful collaboration between company artists and community singers culminating in a critical on-stage performance in the *it gets better* production. Creates opportunities for dialogue, artistic growth, and community solidarity. Each community will identify a local choir (or combined choir) suitable for performance on stage with the company artists (subject to approval by the Company). A local chorus "leader" will receive advance music and training materials. During the week in residence, company artists will work with the group for a minimum of three two-hour rehearsals under the direction of the Company Music Director. One rehearsal must be held in the performance space. (Ideal chorus size is 40-80 individuals, though other sizes have been accommodated.)



### 2) The *it gets better* World Café

World Café is an emerging global facilitation model for community dialogue utilizing the approach of appreciative inquiry. Company members will facilitate an examination of an issue of particular interest to each community. For this project, the suggested topic is the local climate for LGBT youth. Participants (to be secured by local presenters) should include a breadth of stakeholders in the topic arena. To date, these have included teachers, students, parents, civic and campus leaders, law enforcement, clergy, LGBT leaders, school board members, local business owners, artists, and others interested in the dialogue. The company artists serve as impartial facilitators, leading a series of constrictive, engaged vision of the future. (24-48 community participants; 120-180 min.)



## SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

### 1) School Program 1: The *it gets better* Experience

The artists of GMCLA are outstanding in their work with students. In this assembly-style session, artists perform selected scenes and songs from *it gets better* and share personal narratives about the harms of bullying and ways in which they have overcome adversity. Q&A opportunity. This session is suitable for small or large school audiences of junior high and high school age (30-300 students). A music-focused session is also offered for choral music classes. Large venues may require professional amplification by presenter or host. Piano required. (25-60 min.)



## 2) School Program 2: Workshop for LGBT/Ally Students

LGBT and ally students often engage more fully during smaller, interactive group interactions. For sessions with these students, company members offer two options. The first is a simple round-circle, discussion in which experiences and shared among participants. This works well for meetings with existing GSA groups, for instance. The second option is an activity-based workshop in which students create video PSAs related to bullying, self-image, LGBT issues, and more. NOTE: Parental permission slips/releases must be solicited in advance of this workshop by local faculty. (90 min. workshop can be modified in length; maximum participants: 20)



## 3) The *it gets better* Journey

It may be meaningful in some communities to introduce the It Gets Better Project and explain the purpose of our work, while also allowing an opportunity for inquiry and dialogue. In this straightforward session, a select group of 2-3 company members will conduct a multimedia journey through the brief but powerful history of the It Gets Better Project, including a discussion of the development of the live stage work, *it gets better*. Two to three company members share their personal stories and reflections about the mission of the project. The session can be customized. (Up to 50 min. including Q&A; maximum participants: 40).



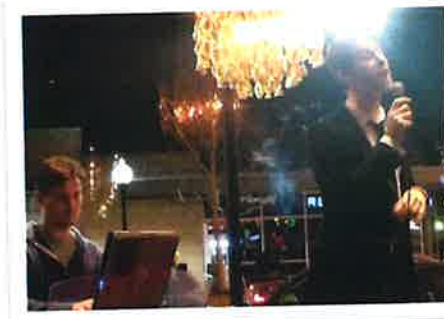
## 4) Facilitated Faculty Dialogue

A select group of 3-4 *it gets better* tour company of artists engage a group of teachers and/or future teachers for a stimulating dialogue about topics and issues related to the touring project. Company members do not serve as experts; rather, they draw on their personal and professional experiences to share stories, case study scenarios, and provocative questions to generate meaningful conversation. The philosophy of the *it gets better* tour is that the answers to every community's questions can be found within that community. General topic areas include bullying, school and classroom climate for LGBT students, supporting at-risk students, and using It Gets Better Project videos in the classroom (40-70 min. Suggested attendance is 15-40).



## 5) Open Mic *it gets better* Piano Cabaret or Karaoke

In order to create an opportunity for informal interactions related to the project, company members can host lively evening of piano cabaret or karaoke. Past sessions have been hosted in a local restaurant/bar and also in college residence halls, and community chorus students as well as high school students – and their parents – are among the most common participants. This event can be held before OR after the stage production of *it gets better*. (Approx. 90 minutes).



## ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Local transportation to be provided for company members to and from sessions.
- Sessions scheduled back-to-back must include a suitable meal or snack break for all company members.
- Custom sessions available with sufficient advance notice.
- Please contact the company at least 2-3 weeks in advance of activities to make final scheduling decisions.



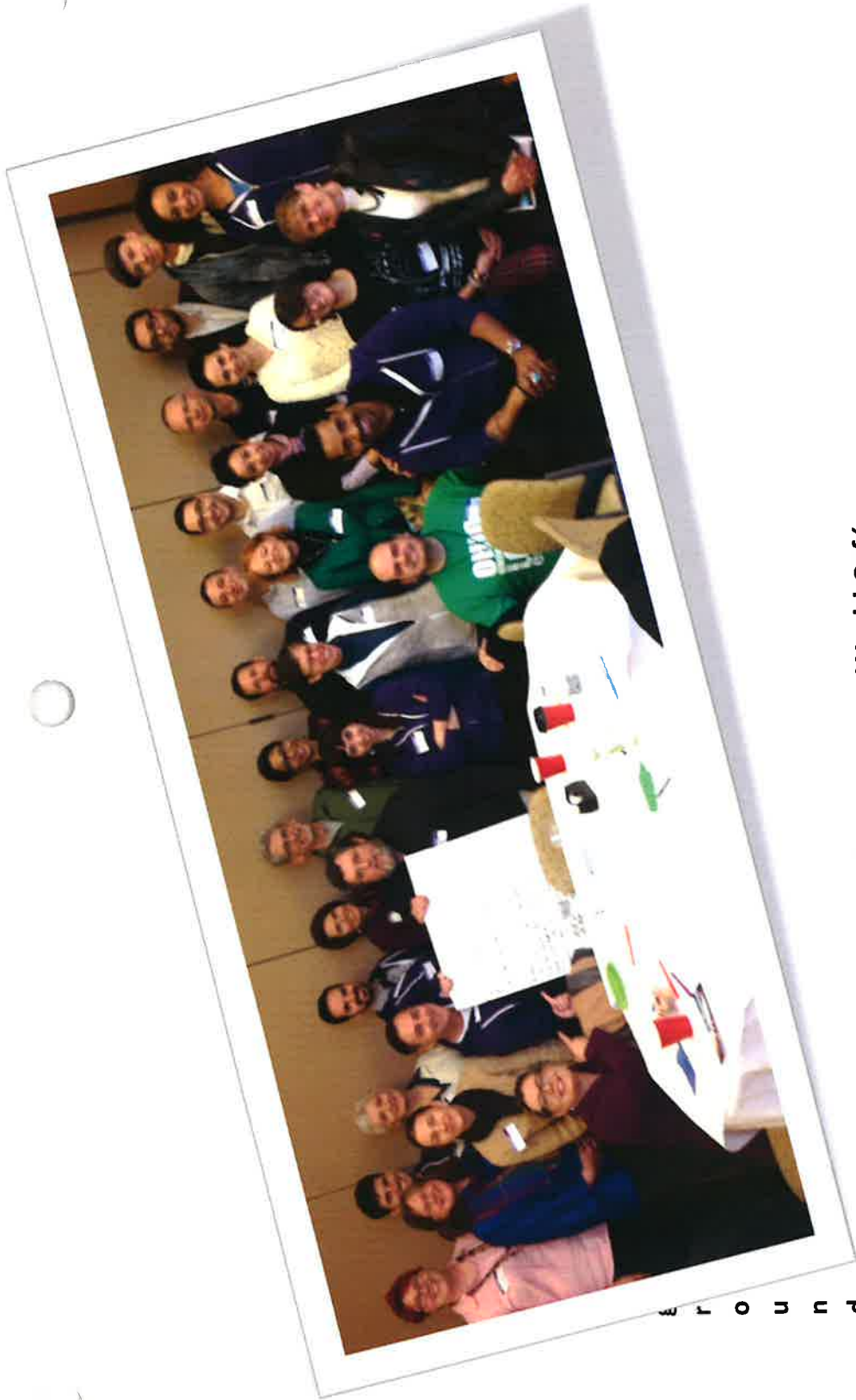
**GMCLA**  
GAY MEN'S CHORUS  
OF LOS ANGELES

**SPEAK**  
THEATER ARTS

**IT GETS  
BETTER**  
PROJECT  
ITGETSBETTER.ORG

**Appendix F**  
**Sample World Café Summary Reports**

*NOTE:* The documents in this appendix was originally published in a .pdf format in landscape orientation and have been included here on subsequent pages to preserve formatting. They retain their own original page numbering.



**It Gets Better World Café**

Ohio University

Athens, OH

February 11, 2015

Victimization of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer) youth remains prevalent in many US communities, leading to a diminished quality of life for impacted individuals and, in several notable cases, suicide. According to a 2010 report by the Williams Institute in the UCLA Law School and the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), more than 85% of LGBTQ youth report harassment as a result of their gender or sexual identity and one in five indicate they have been physically attacked. The suicide rate for LGBTQ students continues to be “3-4 times higher than that of their straight counterparts, and in some parts of the country LGBT runaways may comprise up to 40% of the entire teen homeless population” (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010, p.2).

The issue is also serious for college students. A 2010 study found that “the fear or experience of customary and irrational prejudice” is prevalent among LGBTQ students on campuses, especially those in the Midwest and south (Cramer, 2010).

While the climate for LGBTQ individuals has improved in some parts of the country in recent years, there are still many areas in which homophobic views are prevalent. Certain religious groups and political groups retain anti-LGBTQ positions, and state and national laws and policies continue to differentiate between rights of this population and others.

In September 2011, the *It Gets Better Project* was introduced online and quickly found an international audience. The project as originally conceived involves the creation of informal videos by adult LGBTQ individuals for viewing by young LGBTQ individuals. The videos contain positive messages intended to help improve young people persist through the challenges of adolescence. While the response to the project was overwhelmingly positive, it also received criticism because it doesn’t provide immediate relief for young people facing adversity in their immediate social environments (Muller, 2011, p. 275). Many want to know how to make life better for LGBTQ youth *right now*. The *it gets better* theater production and community outreach program was created in 2012 to help address this need.

Prior research has identified programs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in secondary schools that can improve the LGBTQ social environment (i.e. Hatzenbuehler, 2011). Still, in many communities find it challenging to gain community commitment for this issue due to limited resources, a shortage of vocal leaders on the issue, and – in particular – persistent social pressures related to a lack of acceptance of the LGBTQ community. In other words, many people still fear talking about or acting on LGBTQ issues at the community level even though state and national LGBT policy issues are making progress.

To advance community dialogue on this issue, the *it gets better* company of artists were trained in a facilitation method known as “the World Café.” This method originated in the early 1990s as a method of exploring challenging, current issues within a community that are addressed through “a living network of collaborative dialogue” around “conversations that matter” (Delaney, 2006).

## Overview of the Ohio University World Café Dialogue

On February 11, 2015, members of our community gathered at Ohio University for a three hour session with members of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles *it gets better* touring company for a World Café community dialogue. The session was hosted by Ohio University. The purpose of the session was to engage participants in a visioning dialogue about improving the climate for LGBT youth and all individuals in and around Athens.

World Café conversations allow large groups and opportunity for sharing knowledge toward a better understanding of the sense of a whole issue within a community. As the conversation progresses, participants are encouraged to move toward visioning about future possibilities. Participants should leave the session with a better understanding of the issue at hand, their role and responsibilities in that arena, and, ideally, the start of a collective vision for the future of the community.

This session included a short orientation by *it gets better* cast member Tod Macofsky and director Liesel Reinhart followed by three rounds of table dialogues, each with a specific discussion prompt. Members of the *it gets better* company served as table facilitators for the conversations and encouraged participants to share verbal comments and write or draw on paper tablecloths as a means to document the most meaningful contributions. Participants moved twice during the session to new tables with different participants to “cross-pollinate” the discussion and make new connections. At the conclusion of each discussion session, comments were shared out with the group as a whole.

The session concluded with the facilitators asking members of the community to make personal commitments for action. Additionally, the participants were asked to identify any additional actions they would like to make personally as a result of the session.

Following the session, staff transcribed tabletop notes from inside of three concentric circles—innermost, middle and outermost — each representing one of the three “rotations” in the table dialogue. For each level of the dialogue, a summary and basic analysis is provided. The complete comments are also included here (in Appendix B).

Special thanks to the presenting team at Ohio University led by Andrew Holzaepfel for such a strong commitment to their community. The lives of people in central Ohio will most certainly be better because of their work.

## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle

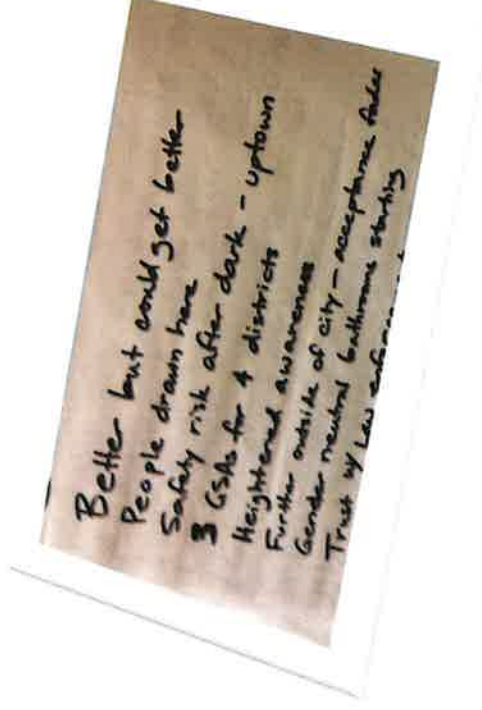
*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Athens?*

#### Most common responses:

- Things have gotten better but could still get better. Awareness is good, action is slow. Hope is up.
- There is a big difference between city and county ("Further outside of city - acceptance fades")
- The local city council is passing some progressive policies
- There are vastly different services for people on and off campus

#### Noteworthy responses:

- Trust w/ law enforcement is an issue
- Lack of spaces for LGBT
- Only 3 GSA's for 4 districts
- Elitism-classism can be an issue.
- Safety risk after dark-uptown
- Health care at OU
- Trans support on Univ. Campus



#### General analysis:

Many who live and work within the campus community were optimistic and felt positive about progress in recent years. Some participants were surprised to hear examples of people feeling fearful or being outed outside the University community. Many expressed frustration about the state of high school support and GSAs and also noted the influence of "appalachian culture" in some areas. The idea that the campus was a model or "beacon" of acceptance for the region was a common sentiment.



## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #2: The Middle Circle

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- Need for infrastructure to provide support (more full-time staff, better LGBT center location on campus, LGBT center in community,
- Need for youth social support (LGBT Teen group at public libraries; LGBT Bars/dance clubs; Alcohol free social opportunities; Fun events off-campus open to all)
- Need for youth services (Early Youth outreach; middle school support; Scholarships for LGBT youth
- Equal protection for all under state laws

#### **Noteworthy responses:**

- Gender neutral restrooms
- Centralized HUB of information for community
- Sensitivity training for ALL educators, for faith-based leaders
- Delfin for president
- More national events touring through (Speakers, Activists, Artists and Performances)
- Include LGBTQ Safe Zone training for all freshman with alcohol & sexual assault awareness training

#### **General analysis:**

The group seemed to share a general frustration about/impatience with the lack of marriage equality in Ohio and tolerance for housing/employment discrimination and felt uncertain that it would be forthcoming in the near future – despite progress in other states. One called it a “wildest dream” just to get access to marriage. The group reacted with a lot of enthusiasm about the idea of adding LGBT curriculum to schools. A major theme in the discussion was the need for better communication networks so existing services and social opportunities can reach people in need.

## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #3: The Inner Circle

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- Facilities are a realistic way to make quick improvements (Facility access- Baker; Library)
- The center on campus can and should be expanded
- There have to be ways for the campus community to reach out to the neighboring communities – especially the schools.

#### **Noteworthy responses:**

- Americorps
- Reach out to LGBT Alumni
- Sign leading to LGBT center
- Fund college students talking to High Schools Targeted programs for incoming freshmen

#### **General analysis:**

Several ideas were shared about facilities and finding ways to better optimize them to improve both social and service access and individuals indicated a willingness to pursue the matter. Some in the group indicated that they could do more to help advocate for a full-time second coordinator for the LGBT center. The group was inspired by a suggestion to reach out to LGBT alumni as a possible financial resource. The group agreed that supporting LGBT arts and culture programming is critical to demonstrating a need for additional content. Many feasible ideas were shared for better connecting the campus and community to help advance the climate in surrounding areas.



## Summary: Commitment

As a final activity for the session, participants were asked to make *personal commitments* based on the conversation and then were encouraged to write them down as part of that commitment. These documented commitments included:

- Sex up “safe zone” for my staff
- Bring up topics to “MOU” (Univ/City) group
- Talk with ACPL (Library) and health department
- Connect with memorandum of understanding group re: city/ university partnership on LGBTQ Issues
- Advocate for full-time LGBT center programming person
- Conversations with upper administration re: inclusive mission

**Appendix A**  
World Café Resources and References

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- Cramer, E. P., & Ford, C. H. (2011). Gay Rights on Campus, circa 2011. *Academe*, 97(5), 38-41.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2011). The Social Environment and Suicide Attempts in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth. *Pediatrics*, 127(5), 896-903. doi:10.1542/peds.2010-3020
- Isaacs, D. & Brown, J. (2005) *The world café: shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

**Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle**

*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Athens?*

- High school students in the GSA got outed??
- Lack of spaces
- Divide between School and the rest of town
- Classism against townies
- It's accepting here!! (At least outwardly)
- Friday-Sunday a different atmosphere during the week
- Safety issues on Court St.
- Town/Gown differences
- GSA at High school
- Hetero-normative in bars
- Queer only spaces
- Weeks are fine, but the weekends make people feel unsafe (drinking)
- Outward acceptance, but how deep does it actually go?
- 4 school districts/3 GSA's
- Better than it was, still can get better
- "Risky" after dark
- Need a formal community center/organization to support
- People are drawn to Athens for the more open and accepting
- Many advocates and role models safe zones
- Day time is safe, night time is sketchy
- "Beacon" for LGBTQ people throughout the region
- LGBT center at O.U.
- Lack of resources for LGBT youth in the city/ county. No structural resources/ institutional support
- The world should know....
- Time of day in Athens city after 8pm-10pm uptown is less safe for LGBT people (women, people of color)
- GSA 3 out of 4 Athens county- POSITIVE schools have a GSA.
- Lack of historical support for GSA in local schools
- Above average for S.E. Ohio- awareness
- Confused

- Trust issues with community? Locally speaking, above average outreach opportunities
- Supported
- Strong city government support
- Marriage equality resolution
- Heightened awareness in Athens vs the rest of S.E. Ohio
- Religious/Spiritual community is open accepting in Athens
- Safer sex discussion "out" not always ok for media, health is.
- Assimilation pressure
- City government resolution
- Only county voted as "D.O.M.A"
- City wide partner registry
- Press covers well
- Gender Neutral starting (ADA still an issue)
- Students discuss it-open to talk about
- Safe zone training
- Ride week
- Faculty training
- Despite our assumptions, there is an un respected queer, rural culture, "there are queer fairness"
- A liberal college community
- Great trans health care at Hudson when compared to other schools
- City University, churches non-profits drive positive change in the city but rural Athens is underfunded.
- Queer youth of color or gender
- Churches in Athens more welcoming then they might suggest
- University and community trans support group
- Forward thinking policies but patchy
- Trans support group
- Many safe spaces in churches
- Trans friendly bathrooms still an issue
- Trans health options
- Rural "Appalachian" issues
- Appalachian culture of knowing many be an advantage
- Harder to concentrate on social change w/ high poverty
- Rural communities in need
- Inside Athens city good resources

## Conversation #2: The Middle Circle:

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

- Training specific to LGBT needs, amongst educators in country
- Gate keeper training
- Community LGBT center
- Top down
- Fun events off campus! Library LGBT teen group
- LGBTQ space off campus!
- Middle school
- More national programs/ events touring through!
- MBLGTACC comes here or some other conference
- Big events open to whole community
- Money goes to sports instead
- LGBT 4-LI club
- Youth programs at community center and in every school
- Real free health care, group spaces for all people, centralized in Athens
- Outreach teams
- Endowment dollars for programs, staff, space! Academic appointments, visiting friends (#itgetsbettertour)
- Visible health resource
- Legalize and normalize, uptown central location LGBT center
- Infuse LGBT conversation into curriculum
- Removes Biases
- Future leaders education
- Outreach to younger student gay club-dance! Issue 2
- Integrate into curriculum
- Early outreach for kids
- Dump issue 2
- Gay dance/bar/club
- More centers uptown or have 2+
- More centralized location for LGBT centers
- Better integrate the intersectional natures of identities in curricular.
- Outreach
- Money for restrooms
- All are welcome truly mean all are welcome

- Full administrative support/staff
- Centralized HVB of information for the entire community!
- Legal protection for everyone!
- Expanding safer spaces programs and publicizing participation – “reward people for doing something right”.
- Outreach from O.U to individuals and institutions throughout SE Ohio—an administrative commitment that “connecting with our neighbors” is part of who we are.
- University must set a goal to become an actively anti-heterosexist/ actively gender- inclusive institution = cast a vision we all can aim for
- A.B.C.D “Asset Based Community Development”
- Conduct an asset
- Outreach or map of local straights, add organizations that work with youth... and think about integrating with existing missing and community based organizations
- Legal protection for all in Ohio
- Sustainable professional development training for all school staff, teacher. Administrators; a community LGBT center with localized satellites; GSA’s at all schools
- Asset- mapping- youth development relationship building- plus maintaining commitments.
- Full administrative support/staff
- Centralized HUB of information for the entire community
- Legal protection for everyone!
- All are welcome truly mean all are welcome
- Institutionalized programs, services
- Marriage equality!
- Gay dance club
- LGBT services coordinated through gout
- Include LGBTQ couples in local bridal show sponsored by WYTO and Athens news
- LGBTQ club/gym/bathroom
- Scholarships
- Larger LGBTQ centers
- LGBT Students
- LGBT online training for LGBT added to freshman curriculum
- Ohio Level funding for LGBT center

### **Conversation #3: The Innermost Circle**

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*



- Diversity and inclusion office partnering university and city government
- Full-time program corp. for the LGBT center
- Grant development for state- funded school- based and community education staffed by community members.
- Partnering w/ Hopewell (local social svcs) org
- Middle school GSA's school board membership
- Innovation strategy (fund)
- Connecting with allies
- Targeted programs for incoming freshmen
- Library connection
- Sustaining momentum
- Diversity advocate
- Partner with training communities to add queer topics to curriculum
- UC classes
- Ambassadorships
- Online safe zone for students
- Expand GTNH- Advertising
- Election campaign for Delfin
- Alumni organization LGBT officer – scholarships/ endowments
- LGBT center open on weekends- Saturday night events/ after hours
- Sign leading to LGBT center
- Fund college students talking to High Schools



**It Gets Better World Café**  
University of Hawaii  
Hilo, HI  
April 3, 2015

## Background

Victimization of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer) youth remains prevalent in many US communities, leading to a diminished quality of life for impacted individuals and, in several notable cases, suicide. According to a 2010 report by the Williams Institute in the UCLA Law School and the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), more than 85% of LGBTQ youth report harassment as a result of their gender or sexual identity and one in five indicate they have been physically attacked. The suicide rate for LGBTQ students continues to be “3-4 times higher than that of their straight counterparts, and in some parts of the country LGBT runaways may comprise up to 40% of the entire teen homeless population” (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010, p.2).

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Prior research has identified programs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in secondary schools that can improve the LGBTQ social environment (i.e. Hatzenbuehler, 2011). Still, in many communities find it challenging to gain community commitment for this issue due to limited resources, a shortage of vocal leaders on the issue, and – in particular – persistent social pressures related to a lack of acceptance of the LGBTQ community. In other words, many people still fear talking about or acting on LGBTQ issues at the community level even though state and national LGBT policy issues are making progress.

To advance community dialogue on this issue, the *it gets better* company of artists were trained in a facilitation method known as “the World Café.” This method originated in the early 1990s as a method of exploring challenging, current issues within a community that are addressed through “a living network of collaborative dialogue” around “conversations that matter” (Delaney, 2006).

## Overview of the University of Hawaii-Hilo World Café Dialogue

On April 3, 2015, members of our community gathered at the University of Hawaii @ Hilo for a three hour session with members of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles *it gets better* touring company for a World Café community dialogue. The session was hosted by the University of Hawaii-Hilo. The purpose of the session was to engage participants in a visioning dialogue about improving the climate for LGBT youth and all individuals in and around Athens.

World Café conversations allow large groups and opportunity for sharing knowledge toward a better understanding of the sense of a whole issue within a community. As the conversation progresses, participants are encouraged to move toward visioning about future possibilities. Participants should leave the session with a better understanding of the issue at hand, their role and responsibilities in that arena, and, ideally, the start of a collective vision for the future of the community.

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The session concluded with the facilitators asking members of the community to make personal commitments for action. Additionally, the participants were asked to identify any additional actions they would like to make personally as a result of the session.

Following the session, staff transcribed tabletop notes from inside of three concentric circles—innermost, middle and outermost – each representing one of the three “rotations” in the table dialogue. For each level of the dialogue, a summary and basic analysis is provided. The complete comments are also included here (in Appendix B).

Special thanks to the presenting team at the University of Hawaii-Hilo led by Lee Dombroski for such a strong commitment to their community. The lives of people in Hilo will most certainly be better because of their work.

## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle

*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Hilo?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- Safe Zone
- No LGBT Center; lack of resources
- Invisibility
- Bullying
- Climate not as accepting as people think
- Feeling of isolation

#### **Noteworthy responses:**

- Lack of resources
- It's a small town-everyone knows your business
- Not many visible out people

#### **General analysis:**

The influence of the community at large seems to be the biggest issue in Hilo. Many of the responses dealt with the fact that things seem “ok” from the outside, but were they really? There were lots of comments on the invisibility/isolation of the LGBT community and the fear of speaking out or coming out to family and/or the community. Hilo is a small town, so there is a sense that everyone is involved in everyone's business, which can lead people to take on a “let's not rock the boat” mentality.

## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #2: The Middle Circle

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

#### Most common responses:

- Gay churches
- LGBT curriculum
- Elimination of fear
- System of accountability
- Community workshops
- No more categories or labels

#### Noteworthy responses:

- World Café club
- LGBT social clubs
- Incorporate LGBT curriculum

#### General analysis:

There were a lot of responses to the “wildest dreams” question. They ranged from LGBT teachers and gay churches to safe zone training in high schools and LGBT curriculum in schools at all levels. Overwhelmingly, the group reacted with a lot of enthusiasm about the idea of adding LGBT curriculum to schools. A major theme in the discussion was that there is quite a bit that can be done in Hilo to make it a more safe and nurturing environment for the LGBT young people.



## World Café Dialogue

### Conversation #3: The Inner Circle

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- Safe zones in schools, work places, and churches
- More specific/centralized University policies
- Mentorship program
- Resources in high schools and intermediate schools (like the University has)

#### **Noteworthy responses:**

- Resources/outreach in schools (i.e. GSAs)
- Mentorship program

#### **General analysis:**

Several ideas were shared about resources and them trickling down from the University, to the high schools, and to the intermediate schools. Some in the group indicated desire to start a mentorship program with university students and high school students. Many feasible ideas were shared for better connecting the campus and community to help advance the climate in surrounding areas.

#### **Summary: Commitment**

As a final activity for the session, participants were asked to make **personal commitments** based on the conversation and then were encouraged to write them down as part of that commitment. These documented commitments included getting the University of Hilo more involved with the community and schools so we are more a Ohana (means “family”).

**Appendix A**  
World Café Resources and References

- Aldred, R. (2011). From community participation to organizational therapy. World cafe and appreciative inquiry as research methods. *Community Development Journal*, 46(1), 57-71.
- Biegel, S., Kuehl, S., & University of Colorado at Boulder, N. (2010). Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through Policy and Legislation. National Education Policy Center.
- Carson, L. (2011) Designing a public conversation using the World Café method. *Social Alternatives* 30:1 (10-14).
- Cramer, E. P., & Ford, C. H. (2011). Gay Rights on Campus, circa 2011. *Academe*, 97(5), 38-41.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2011). The Social Environment and Suicide Attempts in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth. *Pediatrics*, 127(5), 896-903. doi::10.1542/peds.2010-3020
- Isaacs, D. & Brown, J. (2005) *The world café: shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.



**Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle**

*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Hilo?*

- There are places where you know you'll get beat up for it
- Safe zone
- Women's center
- No LGBT center
- Invisibility
- It's accepting... but not really
- Theory to practice disconnect
- Who's going to do the work?
- Things have changed
- Bullied for being perceived as gay
- Everyone has gay people but they don't know what they go through.
- Scared to speak out
- Coordinator-stress
- Invisible
- Accepting-not true
- Adoption
- 3 suicides
- Changes-middles school- bullied
- Violence
- Sister afraid to come out
- Safe zone
- No LGBT center
- Love yourself
- Accept yourself because who you are is beautiful
- Starting the conversation at home
- World café for kids
- Bullying of students with gay parents
- Climate may not be as accepting as people think

- “Let’s just not talk about it” Embedded in the culture.
- More open conversation now than before.
- Keep the status quo social media –pros-cons
- Time without parents and listen
- Access to the world through the internet
- Places to express
- We teach them
- Not acknowledge it
- Not “rock the boat”
- Disconnect
- Open climate with family support
- Encourage each other to be positive
- Smile
- Be happy
- Something’s wrong with me
- Pahoa need help \*
- Administration need to step up
- Understanding your point of views
- Big LGBT community but little to no resources
- Community needs to participate to change things suicide rate 4 times as high for LGBT\* people here
- Lack of resources
- LGBT\* is an invisible identity
- How will you contribute to the community?
- Hilo is accepting but doesn’t have the resources that people need!!
- Town of many faces!
- Religion adds to resistance
- Lots of covert discrimination
- Accepting of a lot of diversity but unknowledgeable of LGBT
- Little to no resources for trans youth
- Older generations are resistant to LGBT youth
- Participation is key\*
- That youth are too encumbered by daily life stressors to recognize the struggles peers maybe go through
- Isolation
- Execution
- Goals, timelines, commitment

- Transition from small, private group campus to a big group that is very involved
- Stick out like a sore thumb if you're different
- Teachers spiteful about being high school teachers
- Mainland transplants that don't understand the culture of Hawaii
- Dead end for teaching; high quit rate
- Isolation of the individual
- Deflecting rather than helping
- Team-building programs
- Safer on college campuses
- How to extend the safe bubble?

### **Conversation #2: The Middle Circle:**

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

- LGBT teachers
- Unicorns
- Gay churches
- More diversity
- Safe zone training for high schools
- More gay friendly places
- Anew gay dictionary
- Gay b-c's
- No lab
- Clear out top – replace with LGBTQ & Allies
- Openly gay/LGBT in work environment
- Flash drag!
- Chief diversity for changing the culture
- CC Registry
- DOE: place LGBTQ\* member in a position of power
- Not a place of tourism- quit worrying about what the rest of the world thinks for income
- Non-alcoholic
- Club like dances on and off campus like that palace theatre just started to do
- \*Churches start accepting LGBTQ people
- They are very very anti-gay here
- Online forum

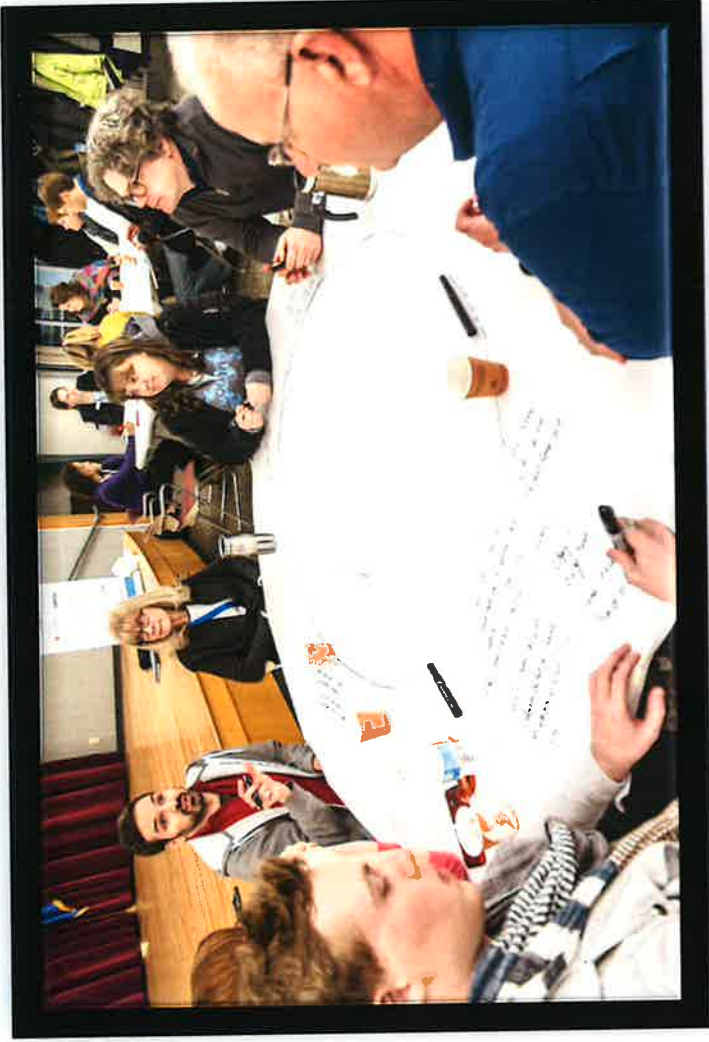
- Queer studies major
- Major/ Department bondings
- School wide bondings (concerts, parties, waterslides)
- Bruno Mars concert
- More connection between groups
- Incorporate LGBT\* curriculum without puchback
- App
- World café for kids at school. W ho would facilitate? How would it work?
- How to get people from different groups to get to know each other
- Curriculum
- Peer mediation
- Counseling departments
- World café club-different topics
- Eliminate the fear
- Erase preconceived ideas/perceptions
- Build a system of accountability
- Community workshops
- System of public accountability
- Community workshops
- Increase the love component then you eliminate so many negatives!
- No more categories
- Community workshops!
- Eliminate the fear of the unknown
- Accountability
- No support
- What fears hold back the people that are involved?
- Judgement
- How do we fix this?
- No labels necessary
- Why do we need boxes?
- Why should we need categories?
- We don't fall in love with genitals; we fall in love with people
- What should be important: personality, are they good person?
- Negativity is a choice
- Take away fear

- Come back to Hawaii and stay!
- Teach about sexual & gender identities in schools: teach acceptance
- Trans need covered by insurance & made more easily available
- More resources for LGBTQ & youth; support in schools & community
- Free hormone therapy

### **Conversation #3: The Innermost Circle**

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*

- LGBTQ events for all ages
- Safe zone REQ's for work places including churches
- More outreach/ education to high intermediate school (bring GMCLA Back)
- No labels necessary
- Drag shows!
- More safe zone trainings
- Alcohol-free all ages safe events
- "The flow" campus open mic include high school
- More staff & staff trainings
- World café- club for parents
- Less vague policies
- \*Parks & Rec: has facilities
- Blog/research
- Coming out- work/corp
- Networking/online resources –find others, find services/resources
- No role models for students
- Still fear of losing your job
- More specific university policy
- Book more shows
- Centralized hub of info
- Mentorship programs opposite day
- Shift marketing tool
- Business alliance
- EHCC East Hawaii Cultural Center for community workshop
- Setting up a mentorship program through the college
- University LGBTQ awareness day can trickle down to high schools & intermediate schools



**It Gets Better World Café**  
Sponsored by First Investors  
Denver, CO  
April 20, 2015

## Background

Victimization of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer) youth remains prevalent in many US communities, leading to a diminished quality of life for impacted individuals and, in several notable cases, suicide. According to a 2010 report by the Williams Institute in the UCLA Law School and the National Education Policy Center (NEPC), more than 85% of LGBTQ youth report harassment as a result of their gender or sexual identity and one in five indicate they have been physically attacked. The suicide rate for LGBTQ students continues to be “3-4 times higher than that of their straight counterparts, and in some parts of the country LGBT runaways may comprise up to 40% of the entire teen homeless population” (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010, p.2).

The issue is also serious for college students. A 2010 study found that “the fear or experience of customary and irrational prejudice” is prevalent among LGBTQ students on campuses, especially those in the Midwest and south (Cramer, 2010).

While the climate for LGBTQ individuals has improved in some parts of the country in recent years, there are still many areas in which homophobic views are prevalent. Certain religious groups and political groups retain anti-LGBTQ positions, and state and national laws and policies continue to differentiate between rights of this population and others.

In September 2011, the *It Gets Better Project* was introduced online and quickly found an international audience. The project as originally conceived involves the creation of informal videos by adult LGBTQ individuals for viewing by young LGBTQ individuals. The videos contain positive messages intended to help improve young people persist through the challenges of adolescence. While the response to the project was overwhelmingly positive, it also received criticism because it doesn't provide immediate relief for young people facing adversity in their immediate social environments (Muller, 2011, p. 275). Many want to know how to make life better for LGBTQ youth *right now*. The *it gets better* theater production and community outreach program was created in 2012 to help address this need.

Prior research has identified programs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in secondary schools that can improve the LGBTQ social environment (i.e. Hatzenbuehler, 2011). Still, in many communities find it challenging to gain community commitment for this issue due to limited resources, a shortage of vocal leaders on the issue, and – in particular – persistent social pressures related to a lack of acceptance of the LGBTQ community. In other words, many people still fear talking about or acting on LGBTQ issues at the community level even though state and national LGBT policy issues are making progress.

To advance community dialogue on this issue, the *it gets better* company of artists were trained in a facilitation method known as “the World Café.” This method originated in the early 1990s as a method of exploring challenging, current issues within a community that are addressed through “a living network of collaborative dialogue” around “conversations that matter” (Delaney, 2006).

## Overview of the First Investors World Café Dialogue

On April 20, 2015, members of our community gathered at the First Investors corporate office for a three hour session with members of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles *it gets better* touring company for a World Café community dialogue. The session was hosted by First Investors. The purpose of the session was to engage participants in a visioning dialogue about improving the climate for LGBT youth and all individuals in and around Denver.

World Café conversations allow large groups and opportunity for sharing knowledge toward a better understanding of the sense of a whole issue within a community. As the conversation progresses, participants are encouraged to move toward visioning about future possibilities. Participants should leave the session with a better understanding of the issue at hand, their role and responsibilities in that arena, and, ideally, the start of a collective vision for the future of the community.

This session included a short orientation by *it gets better* cast member Tod Macofsky and director Liesel Reinhart followed by three rounds of table dialogues, each with a specific discussion prompt. Members of the *it gets better* company served as table facilitators for the conversations and encouraged participants to share verbal comments and write or draw on paper tablecloths as a means to document the most meaningful contributions. Participants moved twice during the session to new tables with different participants to “cross-pollinate” the discussion and make new connections. At the conclusion of each discussion session, comments were shared out with the group as a whole.

The session concluded with the facilitators asking members of the community to make personal commitments for action. Additionally, the participants were asked to identify any additional actions they would like to make personally as a result of the session.

Following the session, staff transcribed tabletop notes from inside of three concentric circles—innermost, middle and outermost – each representing one of the three “rotations” in the table dialogue. For each level of the dialogue, a summary and basic analysis is provided. The complete comments are also included here (in Appendix B).

Special thanks to the presenting team at the First Investors corporate office, led by Forrest Strickland, Mikey Pusnik, and Koren Vining for such a strong commitment to their community. The lives of people in Denver will most certainly be better because of their work.



**Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle**

*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Denver?*

**Most common responses:**

- Lack of awareness of the climate
- Double standard

**Noteworthy responses:**

- Don't know
- Harder to come out today
- LGBTQ youth need a support system
- Fractured community

**General analysis:**

The single most common response was that the participants don't know what the climate is or don't know someone is out. There is a lack of awareness on the topic of LGBTQ youth. Some people said that it is harder to come out now and that there isn't a real sense of community in Denver, whereas others labeled the city "progressive" on the topic of LGBTQ youth.

### **Conversation #2: The Middle Circle**

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- Stand up for others
- No judgment
- Control hate on social media

#### **Noteworthy responses:**

- World Cafés in high schools
- Every school has a GSA

#### **General analysis:**

This group was very creative and specific in their wildest dreams. Despite describing a lack of familiarity with the LGBT community in the first session, a broad variety of ideas were generated for this prompt.

### **Conversation #3: The Inner Circle**

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*

#### **Most common responses:**

- World Cafes in high schools (as a requirement; funded by Foresters Grants)
- Open, public discussions

#### **General analysis:**

Getting World Cafes in high school was mentioned repeatedly. The idea even came up to have Foresters (aka First Investors) Community Grants help to fund World Cafes in other cities. That is a very solid, tangible goal to have. Also, the group expressed interest in continuing these open discussions and becoming more aware of LGBT issues.

### **Summary: Commitment**

As a final activity for the session, participants were asked to make *personal commitments* based on the conversation and then were encouraged to write them down as part of that commitment. These documented commitments included:

- Spread the word!
- Bring friends to show
- I will ask more questions and offer more opinions
- I will organize a world café in a local school
- Spread the word
- Recognize LGBT for who they are
- Work with educators to implement this in school districts
- I will bring people to the event Friday and start to become a role model
- I will SPEAK UP!!

**Appendix A**  
World Café Resources and References

- Aldred, R. (2011). From community participation to organizational therapy. World cafe and appreciative inquiry as research methods. *Community Development Journal*, 46(1), 57-71.
- Biegel, S., Kuehl, S., & University of Colorado at Boulder, N. (2010). Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through Policy and Legislation. National Education Policy Center.
- Carson, L. (2011) Designing a public conversation using the World Café method. *Social Alternatives* 30:1 (10-14).
- Cramer, E. P., & Ford, C. H. (2011). Gay Rights on Campus, circa 2011. *Academe*, 97(5), 38-41.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2011). The Social Environment and Suicide Attempts in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth. *Pediatrics*, 127(5), 896-903. doi::10.1542/peds.2010-3020
- Isaacs, D. & Brown, J. (2005) *The world café: shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

**Conversation #1: The Outermost Circle**

*What would you want the world to know about the climate for LGBTQ youth in Denver?*

- Does it change based on sub-communities & their respective biases?
- What does it say that we aren't aware of the climate?
- Didn't know anyone open...
- Strong church presence, but many fail
- Kids express gay (primary identity)
- None of us know.... hmmm...
- Several kids are out...
- Other fell less supported
- The facture... is that we don't know?
- NCCJ Joyce Bignell
- Teenage issues
- Double standard
- Sole mission/ crusade
- Gay/Straight/Alliance
- School
- Acceptance
- What climate/
- Lesbian
- Double standard
- Rural conservative
- Accepted by society, by peers, by adults & by family
- Does not exist
- Double standard
- Harder to come out today- social media
- Double standard
- Overall feeling/understanding
- Progressive community
- Arts & music scene
- Most people are form somewhere else

- Forward thinking
- Kids feel accepted
- Heading down a more accepting path
- Champion & courageous
- Role Modes
- Staff meetings
- Don't pre-judge
- Stigma
- Transient diversity
- Opportunity to be involved
- Tolerance/ acceptance
- Non-violent outreach
- Affinity group
- Social media is really mean
- Make it hard to come out
- Pre-judged perceptions
- Need support system
- Accepting
- Niche market- advantage for First Investors
- Community involvement
- Forward thinking
- Gays come together

### **Conversation #2: The Middle Circle:**

*What in your WILDEST DREAMS could be done to make the climate here better?*

- \*Schools without judgments on students, staff, parents etc...
- \*World where "hiding" is not an easier option or more acceptable
- Flip a switch! And it doesn't matter.
- Every school has GSA, every school has gay teacher(s)
- Overcome "defining factors"
- Every school has GSA
- World café in high schools
- Stand up for what's right!
- "Champion"

- Control social media
- Convince people to accept and not judge
- Teach people to stand up for others
- Find a way to control hate in social media
- Lose labels
- Educate parents
- No judgments
- Safety in #'s (numbers)
- No judgment
- Control social media
- People to accept
- Just love
- Stand up for others
- Lack of parenting
- Too many media tools
- World café in all high schools
- Courage to stand up for self and others
- Open communication
- Religious acceptance everywhere
- Repair sexual education
- Local role models
- World café in high schools
- "It Gets Better" commercial
- Change the way some religious indoctrinate
- More role models in the local community
- Understanding begins with education
- Local role models
- PSA

### **Conversation #3: The Innermost Circle**

*What collaborations, partnerships, or action steps could make some of these dreams come true?*

- Student governments
- Local churches
- Real consequences for homophobia (like racism)

- NFL/NBA
- Collaborate with schools (superintendants)
- PTA
- Open discussions
- Punish for wrong behaviors
- Churches
- Business-to-business?
- Public declarations?
- I belong
- Collaborate all levels
- Educate media programs
- Role model- just showing up for others
- Grants to fund world-café in all high schools
- Getting message out sharing
- Just showing up
- Follow up on new relationships that have been established
- Positivity day
- Email blast letters home after school
- Local spotlight or profile
- Ensure kids feel like they belong
- Have those who determine curriculum implement café graduation requirement
- More open discussions leads to more info
- Asking more questions
- Exclusive H.R./ LGBTQ crowd
- Funding organization
- World café in high schools.



**Appendix G**  
**Links to Media Coverage and Publications**

***Oxnard College Latino Thought Makers Coverage***

<http://amigos805.com/latino-thought-maker-series-to-present-it-gets-better-free-musical-at-oxnard-college-on-feb-4>

***Lifetime Television: Dance Moms (excerpts)***

<HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=DCOMBOAXAOM>

***Lifetime Television: Dance Moms (full dance performance)***

<HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=GGWO9U1WX0A>

***KGNU Radio "Outsources" with Sean Kenney***

Full interview: <http://www.kgnu.org/outsources/5/18/2015>

***WOUB Radio***

Interview (Athens, OH)

<http://woub.org/2015/02/12/gets-better-tour-visits-athens-performance-local-outreach/>

***Appleton, WI Post Crescent***

<http://www.postcrescent.com/story/life/2015/02/14/gets-better-puts-spotlight-bullying/23362639>

***Athens, OH The Post***

[http://www.thepostathens.com/culture/it-gets-better-performance-brings-emotional-narratives-to-memaud/article\\_0bc2652c-b320-11e4-8aeb-37f569b13c47.html?mode=story](http://www.thepostathens.com/culture/it-gets-better-performance-brings-emotional-narratives-to-memaud/article_0bc2652c-b320-11e4-8aeb-37f569b13c47.html?mode=story)

***Hilo, HI, UH Hilo Stories***

<http://hilo.hawaii.edu/news/stories/2015/03/16/dynamic-theater-production-on-bullying/>

***Story of Kansas Trans Man Told in "Dance Moms" Performance***

by Liesel Reinhart

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/liesel-reinhart/story-of-kansas-trans-man\\_b\\_7814550.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/liesel-reinhart/story-of-kansas-trans-man_b_7814550.html)

***Rainbow Alley PSA***

<http://www.glbtcolorado.org/rainbow-alley/>

**Huffington Post** article by a grateful audience member who came to the show with her son:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/heather-risinger/something-to-talk-about\\_b\\_7074668.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/heather-risinger/something-to-talk-about_b_7074668.html)

**Appendix H**  
**Mt. SAC LGBTQ Climate World Cafe Summary Report**

*NOTE:* The document in this appendix was originally published in a .pdf format and has been included here on subsequent pages to preserve formatting. It retains its original page numbering.



**Summary Report World Café Dialogue on LGBTQ Climate  
Mt. San Antonio College Flex Day, August 21, 2015**

**PRESENTER/FACILITATOR**

Liesel Reinhart, Professor of Communication and writer/director of it gets better – a nationally touring production geared toward improving community climate for LGBTQ individuals.

**SPECIAL GUESTS**

Journalism student representatives Albert Serna, Christopher Ayala, Breanna Lopes Jennifer Sandy, and Nicholas Moore. The Journalism program has, to date, done the most consistent published reporting on LGBTQ individuals and issues at Mt. SAC.

**PARTICIPANTS** (registered)

- |                    |                     |                      |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Albertson, Toni    | Ezzell, Sun         | Nixon, Bruce         |
| Archibald, Jeff    | Gilbert, Cheryl     | Nolan Marion, Meagan |
| Arntson, Roxan     | Gonzales, Barbara   | Ramey, Martin        |
| Arterburn, Pamela  | Hernandez, Corie    | Rowley, Dianne       |
| Avila, Rocio       | Jaimes, Franciella  | Salinger, Aaron      |
| Bacigalupi, Stacy  | Klawitter, Kenny    | Uyeki, Elizabeth     |
| Carrillo, Barbara  | Lackey, Hilary      | Wakefield, Jeff      |
| Chavez, Raul       | Mahlke, Jennifer    | Willis, Roger        |
| Christopher, Micol | Necke, Donna        | Zicree, Steve        |
| Earhart, Kimberly  | Nguyen, Hoang-Quyen |                      |

## SUMMARY

Reinhart provided a brief summary of her work with the *it gets better* touring project, including visits to schools across the country where LGBTQ initiatives are often very organized, public, and well-funded. She shared some findings from her sabbatical report noting that Mt. SAC has not conducted an LGBTQ climate survey, has no dedicated LGBTQ counselors, has no LGBTQ center, and has no LGBTQ courses. She also shared the confusing results of her search for LGBTQ resources using the Mt. SAC website. She noted that it is impossible to know the climate of a campus without a formal assessment, but Thiel and Diehl (2010) report that every campus studied to date has reported incidents of bullying, harassment and violence against LGBTQ individuals. She invited the participants to begin the world of exploring the climate for LGBTQ students on our campus - and the participants held their World Café Dialogue.

## THE WORLD CAFÉ

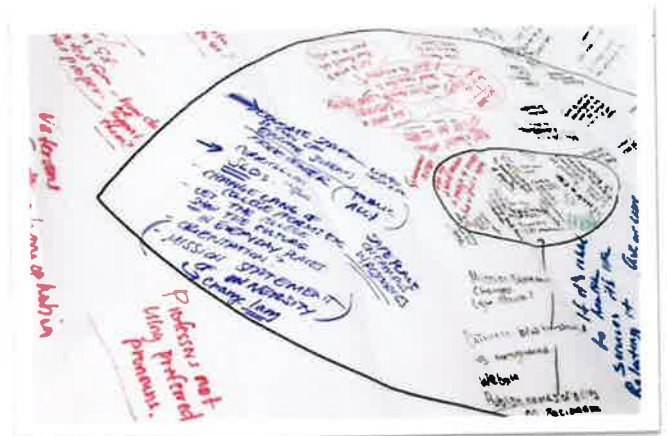
The World Café is a globally recognized facilitation model centered around facilitated table discussions by knowledgeable and concerned members of a community. World Café conversations allow large groups an opportunity for sharing knowledge toward a better understanding of the sense of a whole issue within a community (Isaacs & Brown, 2005). The underlying philosophy is that the answers to all a community's issues can be found within that community - if we only take the time to have critical discussions that will reveal them. A World Café is often a precursor to formal planning efforts or direct action steps.

## MT. SAC LGBTQ CLIMATE WORLD CAFÉ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are significant experiences, or observations you can offer to help us understand the LGBTQ climate on campus?
2. What in your wildest dreams can be done to improve the LGBTQ climate on campus? Think about services, policies, events, awards, staff, facilities, policies, training, information resources, best practices,
3. What steps should be taken immediately to make some of these dreams come true?

## RESPONSES

Each group documented significant responses (observations, experiences, ideas, realizations, proposals) on tabletop butcher paper. These responses were transcribed (exactly as written) and roughly coded <thematically> for ease of review.



## **QUESTION 1: What are significant experiences, or observations you can offer to help us understand the LGBTQ climate on campus?**

### **THEME 1: General climate assessment is poor or unknown**

- Currently ABSENT
- Closed
- Silent
- No communication, no understanding, easier to ostracize
- Not noticeable
- No idea!
- Uncomfortable. Unsafe. Unsupported.
- We might be living in a delusion of a positive climate

### **THEME 2: Climate varies based on the situation/context**

- Classroom is a "bubble" with some climate control but it pops when students leave.
- Some students don't feel safe at home or school
- Forensics is an informal place for support
- Veterans' Center – homophobia culture
- Basic skills/continuing ed. separated from campus – how do we support students there?
- How do we take a supportive classroom and bring it to the whole campus?
- Not all students feel safe being who they are (holding hands w/a partner) outside classroom
- Inconsistent acceptance within classrooms
- Depends a lot on instructor
- Mixed – depends on who the student interacts with
- Support among students is greater

### **THEME 2: Shortage of resources, services and support**

- No structural organization
- Lack of consistent support
- No safe zones
- LAMBDA – no advisors!
- Support poor – bad experiences
- Faculty involve and support
- No advisers, no leaders
- Little resources
- Support for students who come out to us??
- Gender non-confirming students need support @ health services
- More options needed than 51/50–referred suicidal LGBT students get no support after hold
- No support services – mental health counseling

### **THEME 3: Lack of safety**

- Students do get bullied – we don't hear about it
- Zero tolerance?
- Not clear who you can safely talk to – even in counseling – look for clues
- Safe community: there isn't one.

#### **THEME 4: Lack of openness**

- No idea who is LGBTQ or an ally
- Forcefully censored but there has been witness of progressive growth, particularly in the last 10 years
- Keep it to themselves in certain spaces
- No positive role models
- Students out themselves in class more than they used to 10-20 years ago

#### **THEME 5: Need for education/awareness**

- Faculty need training
- Lack of understanding with regard to gender
- Some faculty are just clueless
- People are unaware of their own biases

#### **THEME 6: Existence of bias/privilege**

- Straight privilege
- Heteronormative language
- Professors not using preferred pronouns
- Homophobic culture
- Level of homophobic thinking that dominates
- Gendered language/norms

#### **THEME 7: LGBTQ student isolation/separation**

- Invisible. Timid/fearful
- LGBTQ individuals are sheltered within their own community but not fully accepted outside
- Keep it to themselves in certain climates
- Hide
- I shouldn't make myself obvious
- Silent small group all familiar with each other
- Negative comments and weird looks when holding hands
- No chance for students to get to know one another and share

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Current generation seems overly concerned about political correctness
- Critical time for students 17-25 to receive support – high need
- Religious issues
- Undocumented gay students are very high risk
- No outreach
- We don't reach out for this target group
- LGBTQ not as cool on campus as in the real world
- Better here than CSUF Cal Poly Arizona
- Ally climate up

## **QUESTION 2: What in your wildest dreams can be done to improve the LGBTQ climate on campus?**

### **THEME 1: Classroom/course changes**

- Equality statements on all syllabi
- Training and policies for handling homophobic and heterosexist comments in class
- Normalization in the classroom
- LGBTQ course and/or curriculum
- Make it a requirement for students to attend seminar/event for the LGBTQ community
- LGBTQ History class
- Sociology class
- LGBTQ Courses/Major
- LGBTQ course
- Curriculum review should require vague references to "culture" and diversity in course outlines to specify that course will cover LGBTQ culture

### **THEME 2: Facilities**

- We need an LGBTQ Center
- Pride center
- Resource center for students
- We need a dedicated LGBTQ center
- LGBTQ Center and safe spaces
- Dorms for homeless LGBTQ Youth
- ARISE-style center – dedicated
- Unisex bathrooms

### **THEME 3: Events**

- College Gay Pride Day
- Gay Day on Campus
- College Pride Month
- More films on the issues
- Speaker series (Anderson Cooper! George Takei? Laverne Cox?)
- Panel discussion
- 1\One "celebrity" speaker per semester
- Campus-wide speakers
- Gay (GLBT) Prom
- Arts-based – part of the center's mission
- Campus events – social events
- clubs
- Diversity Day



#### **THEME 4: Training**

- Workshops/training for faculty: face2face better than online
- know how to manage uncomfortable situations in the classroom
- student seminars to explain LGBTQ issues, environment, etc (which faculty can offer for extra credit)
- Professional development training on how to support LGBTQ students
- Required student diversity training (online) which requires certification
- Difference between transsexual and transgendered
- Ally training and identification – more widespread
- Student orientation
- Know how to report harassment and discrimination; know the college rep you talk with is LGBTQ supportive and will protect privacy
- Transgender sensitivity training needed
- Faculty training

#### **THEME 5: Transparency/visibility of LGBT individuals and allies**

- More visibility of faculty
- Mt. SAC list of allies
- LGBTQ faculty come out
- Public allies
- Leaders needed
- LGBTQ work group (like sustainability group)
- LGBTQ Faculty committee to direct activities
- Faculty role model responsibility

#### **THEME 6: Professional services**

- LGBTQ counselors
- LGBTQ counselor
- "if it's related to health services it's like relating it to a disease."
- Specialized LGBTQ mental health services
- Trans health services
- All health services staff are knowledgeable and accepting of LGBTQ individuals

#### **THEME 7: Policy changes**

- Administration support
- Institutionalized support
- Mission statement changed
- State should require as part of equity plan
- Campus-provided safe zone and ally signs/pins
- Mandatory training- non-target responsibility to interrupt oppression
- Mandatory training for faculty and staff
- Need documented procedures and processes



## **THEME 8: Organizations and coordination**

- Lambda Club visibility
- Ask LGBTQ members of staff, faculty, admin to come together to support our students. Need community.
- Create "it gets better" Mt. SAC involving faculty and staff
- Coordination of all campus resources in one place

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Need a college sized "bubble" (see "bubble comment under question #1)
- Donations for major LGBTQ charities
- Focus on non-LGBTQ persons
- Call out gendered language
- Encourage higher-level thinking about LGBTQ issues
- Scholarship program for LGBTQ
- Financial resources for homeless students
- Paint buildings rainbow colors

## **QUESTION 3: What steps should be taken immediately to make some of these dreams come true?**

### **THEME 1: Conduct research**

- Data is needed about this population; survey will require assured privacy. Learn what other colleges do. Track the group.
- Research populations
- How have other campuses done it? Look to campuses with positive climate as models.
- Take campus climate survey immediately
- Is there any existing data about this we can review?
- More time for conversation like this

### **THEME 2: Create immediate space**

- Need a social space first
- Dedicated space
- Safe place on campus with resources
- LGBTQ Center/safe space
- Gender neutral bathrooms
- Dedicated space for student club
- Ask facilities committee to address gender neutral bathroom access
- Until we get an LGBTQ center, get a space. A door. One staff person.

### **THEME 3: Dedicate staff to these students/this issue**

- Faculty adviser/director for LGBTQ center
- Request LGBTQ counselor this year

- Support first then organize events, fundraisers, etc
- LAMBDA – needs desiccated space and adviser
- Ask counseling department to request dedicated LGBTQ counselors with specialized training

#### **THEME 4: Take shared governance actions**

- Write a senate resolution
- Senate Task Force for LGBTQ issues
- Show support for Senate resolutions and task forces
- Faculty must add a statement of supportiveness on syllabi
- Communicate to board of trustees and student equity to make it happen
- Include in student equity plan

#### **THEME 5: Create events**

- Harvey Milk Day – Humanities sponsored (like human trafficking conference) ; with speakers and maybe a speech contest.
- Diversity Day
- Hold LGBTQ Info fair
- LGBTQ Fair

#### **THEME 6: Create POD Programs**

- POD trainings
- Work with POD & health center to get ally training abd list going
- Offer training led by LGBTQ staff

#### **THEME 7: Immediate individual faculty actions**

- Door sign
- Incorporate LGBTQ discussions in class
- Change language
- Normalize language
- Write a class or amend existing classes
- Class assignments everywhere to help increase awareness
- Encourage LGBTQ scholarship
- Tell faculty reps to support senate Task Force
- Faculty should not avoid tough discussions in class – challenge students to examine issues that don't align with their world view
- Respect contract in all syllabi

#### **THEME: Improve health center services**

- Health services incl. psych services
- Hotline
- Clear ally signs/badges on all health center staff/safe zone signs

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Publish list of allies on Mt. SAC media
- Extend all services to non-credit students, as well
- Ethnic/cultural factors/communities respond differently – training and special support?
- Student voices important
- Student suggested reaching out to LGBTQ services outside
- Scholarships
- Review library resources
- LGBTQ students run for office
- Contact student life for events and resources
- LGBTQ student senator

NOTE FROM A PARTICIPANT: If ally resource lists are to be published, we first need to train people on the list about legal mandates regarding privacy, referring students in crisis, etc.

ED NOTE: The acronym LGBTQ was used throughout for consistency unless a specific population was directly noted.

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## **COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS**

Contact Prof. Liesel Reinhart at [lrinhart@mtsac.edu](mailto:lrinhart@mtsac.edu).

## Appendix I

### Proposed Course Amendments: SPCH 6

#### Course Outline:

- Comparisons of conflicting definitions of a "group"
- Examination of influence of size of group
- Exploration of types of groups
- Comparison of advantages and disadvantages of working in groups
- Review of theories about group membership, such as symbolic convergence and membership theory
- Exploration of the task and social dimensions of groups
- Comparison of in-group and out-group behaviors
- >ADD - Examination of group attributes, including norms, culture, climate, and communication networks
- Exploration of group discussion methods
- Explanation and exploration of group roles
- Managing assertiveness and nonassertiveness among group members
- Review of theories of group leadership
- Discussion of group member ethics
- Examination of decision-making in groups: theories and techniques
- Review and practice with problem-solving models in groups
- Examination of types of group conflict, including groupthink
- Experimentation with resolution and reduction of conflict, such as bargaining and negotiation
- >ADD - Practice in group facilitation methods
- >ADD - Examination of the influence of perceived difference on group dynamics, including ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other variables.
- Examination of meetings: principles and techniques for coordination
- Exploration of principles and methods for virtual group communication
- Review and practice presenting material as group
- Evaluating group process
- Final exam

#### Course Measurable Objectives:

1. Identify and evaluate roles played by individuals during small group interactions.
2. Facilitate effective group discussion and decision-making.
3. Apply critical thinking and creative thinking to solve problems as a group.
4. Compare and contrast theories of group leadership.
5. Deliver content effectively during group presentations.
6. Identify and manage conflict within groups.
- >ADD - Demonstrate adaptation to cultural differences among group members to work effectively in group processes.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of group interactions.

**Appendix J**  
**Proposed Course Amendments: SPCH 7**

**Course Outline:**

**MODIFY:** Definitions of intercultural communication and culture to be inclusive of ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender (including cisgender, transgender, gender fluid, and gender non-conforming), religion/non-belief, age, disability, and other factors.

- Benefits of intercultural communication study.
- Relationship between communication and culture
- Manifestations of culture
- Cultural self-exploration.
- Relationship of communication to cultural identity.

**MODIFY:** Verbal communication and cultural context, including culturally insensitive language, appropriation, and heteronormativity.

- Intercultural functions of nonverbal communication.
- Intercultural listening.
- Intercultural conflict: power, culture shock, stereotypes ethnocentrism, and prejudice.
- Managing intercultural conflict.
- Mediated intercultural communication (social media, texting, email, etc.)
- Ethical facets in intercultural communication.
- Communication, culture, and family.
- Intercultural communication in contexts: business, education, health care, tourism.
- Intercultural competence: displays of respect, empathy, knowledge discovery, tolerance of ambiguity, cultural flexibility, and interaction management.
- Final exam.

**Course Measurable Objectives:**

1. Analyze the intercultural communication process.

**MODIFY:** 2. Compare and contrast the ~~hazards~~ **challenges** and benefits of intercultural communication.

3. Apply theories of nonverbal communication to case study examples.

4. Communicate with others using effective nonverbal techniques.

5. Define culture.

6. Apply intercultural communication principles to listening experiences.

7. Evaluate personal intercultural competencies.

8. Develop and write specific goals for increasing intercultural competence.

9. Write critical analysis papers using appropriate formatting standards.

**Course Methods of Evaluation:**

**Category 1. Substantial written assignments for this course include:**

>**MODIFY** One page weekly **topic-directed** personal journals where students record experiences related to class topics, such as communication, culture, and family

>**ADD** One 4-6 page critical analysis paper examining a recent public intercultural conflict in the news and applying intercultural communication theory to analyze the event and subsequent discourse about it

- >ADD Two one-page presentation outlines in which students examine a cultural group in depth, including properly attributed quotations from individuals within the cultural group
- > ADD Two three-page critical self-reflections each examining different components of the student's personal intercultural competence

**Sample Assignments:**

- REPLACE: 1. Critical Self-Reflection: Empathy.** Watch the free online pilot episode of the Amazon series Transparent. Identify one characters with whom you relate or somewhat identify and describe at least three areas of similarity between you. Then identify a character with whom you do not relate and write an imaginary conversation of at least 20 lines of dialogue between you and this character. Demonstrate your ability to build empathy through deep, respectful questioning and self disclosure in the dialogue. End with a reflection of your overall impression of the episode and how, if at all, your perceptions were altered by this assignment. Approximately 3 single-spaced pages including the dialogue.
2. Class presentation: Using a small group of classmates, present a 3-4 minute role-play of a realistic intercultural conflict that might occur in a business or public setting. At the climax of the conflict, ask the audience to suggest a conflict resolution strategy that could be useful in this setting. Continue the role- play utilizing the strategy. After the role-play has concluded, verbally summarize the effectiveness of the technique and factors which may have enhanced or limited its effectiveness in this setting.
3. Case study evaluation: Read the provided intercultural case study. Using one of the theories of intercultural communication discussed in class, conduct an evaluation of the intercultural competence of the two primary participants in the case study. Use specific evidence from the case study to justify your conclusions.

**Appendix K**  
**Proposed Course Amendments: SPCH 8**

**Course Outline:**

- Organizational communication networks
- Organizational culture
- Diversity within organizations
- Communication channels in the workplace
- Verbal and nonverbal messages
- Intercultural communication in the workplace,
- Sexual harassment, avoidance and response
- >ADD- Workplace discrimination and bullying, including LGBTQ discrimination**
- Delivering and receiving criticism
- Managing workplace conflict
- Principles of employment interviewing
- Types of employment interviews
- Organizational leadership
- Professional work groups and teams
- Types of meetings
- Conducting meetings
- Audience analysis in the workplace
- Types of professional presentations
- Developing a presentation: thesis, main points, transitions, introductions and conclusions
- Supporting material and research techniques
- Visual aids in professional presentations
- Computer mediated visual presentations (PowerPoint)
- Creation of professional charts and graphs for visual aids
- Speech delivery techniques: nonverbal and verbal
- Persuasive message structures
- Persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos and logos
- Ethical persuasion in the workplace
- Final examination

## Appendix L World Café Assignment

### Group Facilitation: The World Café Project

- Overview:** The World Café is a facilitation tool that allows large groups to hold *conversations that matter* as a means to move a community forward in an area of concern or interest. For this assignment, you will work in teams of 5-6 to plan and facilitate a World Café session for your classmates.
- Resource:** A Quick Reference Guide for Hosting World Café, published by The World Café Community Foundation found at [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)
- Time Limit:** The entire session should last no more than 75 minutes including set up and clean up. Approximately 5 minutes should be utilized for opening remarks and to set the context (see resource guide). One break of no more than 5 minutes should be included in the session.
- Tools:** One flip chart and a single wipe board may be used in the project. Butcher paper and markers for each individual table will also be provided but must be set up by the group.
- Technology:** Powerpoint projection will be available, visual only (no audio or video).
- Speaking:** All group members should present during opening remarks and then serve as table facilitators during the session. Facilitators may not contribute ideas but should aid in recording of ideas on the tabletops and encourage participation from quieter members.
- Topics:** Topics should be legitimate issues relevant to the students in the class as well as topics for which the students have some familiarity and authority to create change. Remember that the philosophy of the World Café is that *all the answers to a community's challenges lie within that community*. A poor sample topic would be the death penalty (because students may not have expertise or experience on this issue and have only an indirect way to influence policy change). A good topic could be housing challenges for community college students in California. Even though all students may not have a housing issue, they are likely to know someone who does and/or be able to speak about variables related to the issue.
- Questions:** Three discussion questions you select should follow the principles of appreciative inquiry (AI) discussed in class and progressively move the discussion toward a more focused plan of community action. Be sure to try out each question with your own group to see if it sparks discussion.
- Hospitality:** A goal of the World Café is to create a hospitable space for dialogue to occur, so be sure that your group addresses this need by providing some or all of the following: comfortable seating, background music, refreshments, or inviting décor (such as table centerpieces).



**Rubric:**

	1	2	3	4	5
Room set up is appropriate and hospitable.					
Welcoming remarks build rapport.					
Topic is appropriate for this audience.					
Topic and context are explained clearly.					
Instructions for participants are covered thoroughly.					
Discussion questions are effective in generating conversation.					
Facilitators record accurately and thoroughly.					
Facilitators encourage balanced participation.					
Facilitators remain neutral and exhibit active listening.					
Time is managed effectively.					
Visuals are utilized effectively.					
Key ideas are solicited and recorded in "sharing out" discovery discussion.					
Group members remain professional and engaged throughout session					
Participants are thanked and encouraged to continue work on critical areas identified during the session.					
Totals					

**Rubric Scoring:** 1-Missing skill 2-Early practicing 3-Consciously practicing 4-Competent 5-Proficient

**Median Rubric Score =** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Group Grade:**

4.2-5.0 = A

3.7-4.2 = B

2.9-3.6 = C

2.5-2.8 = D

Under 2.5 = F

Appendix M  
Heteronormativity Exercise

**Heteronormativity in Language: Identification and Improvement**

Heteronormativity has been defined as:

- denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation
- a cultural bias in favor of opposite-sex relationships of a sexual nature, and against same-sex relationships
- A privilege afforded to heterosexual individuals that often goes unacknowledged due to the pervasiveness of heterosexual bias in society

*Instructions:* Read each statement below to yourself and then discuss with a partner any potentially false or biased assumptions you perceive. Then work together to compose a revised statement that reduces bias. Assume that the scenario for all interactions is a workplace or classroom setting.

**1. Asking a classmate, "What are you looking for in a boyfriend?"**

Assumption(s):

Improvement:

**2. Telling a co-worker, "It's always awkward when kids have that first crush on the opposite sex."**

Assumption(s):

Improvement:

**3. Saying, "I totally respect your choice to date both men and women."**

Assumption(s):

Improvement:

**4. Explaining to employees, "We shouldn't assume that everyone is straight. Some people are different."**

Assumption(s):

Improvement:

**5. Seeing a photo of someone's daughter and saying, "She's gonna have the guys swarming around her!"**

Assumption(s):

Improvement:

**6. Asking a group: "Who here is gay? Can you share something about being gay?"**

Assumption(s):

Improvement: